



Oversight and Governance

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Published 10 February 2026

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL

Wednesday 18 February 2026
5.30 pm
Warspite Room, Council House

Members:

Councillor Blight, Chair

Councillor Wood, Vice Chair

Councillors Allison, Dann, Krizanac, McLay, McNamara, Ney, Noble, Steel and Stevens.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf. This meeting will be webcast and available on-line after the meeting. By entering the Warspite Room, Councillors are consenting to being filmed during the meeting and to the use of the recording for the webcast.

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Tracey Lee
Chief Executive

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by Councillors.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect to items on the agenda.

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 09 December 2025.

4. Chair's Urgent Business

To receive reports on business which in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

5. Q3 2025/26 Performance Report: (Pages 15 - 36)

6. Children's Services Finance Report: (To Follow)

7. Early Years Entitlement: (Pages 37 - 48)

8. CATERed Update and Next Steps: (To Follow)

9. Schools Assessments and Standards Report: (Pages 49 - 80)

10. Children's Services use of AI: (To Follow)

11. Action Log: (Pages 81 - 90)

12. Work Programme: (Pages 91 - 96)

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday 9 December 2025

PRESENT:

Councillor Blight, in the Chair.

Councillor Wood, Vice Chair.

Councillors Allison, Krizanac, McNamara, Noble, Steel, Stevens and Taylor.

Apologies for absence: Councillors McLay and Ney.

Also in attendance: Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Participation and Skills), Amanda Davis (Service Director for Education, Apprenticeships and Skills), Lisa Davies (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families), David Haley (Director of Children's Services), Louise Jenkins (Lead Accountancy Manager), Isabelle Kolinsky (Head of Education and Virtual School), Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications), Vivien Lines (Project Consultant), Siobhan Logue (Safeguarding Business Manager), Susan London (Performance Advisor), Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Advisor), Paul Stephens (Senior Performance Advisor) and Victoria Whitman (Head of Service for Strategic Int and Planning).

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 8.35 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

24. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

25. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 08 October 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

26. **Chair's Urgent Business**

David Haley (Director of Children's Services) advised the Panel of the recent Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection which monitored progress made by the partnership in delivering recommendations from the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Action Plan. The following key points were discussed:

- a) The full inspection had taken place in June 2023 and had focused on a series of recommendations and key areas for improvement identified;

- b) It was not possible to share the outcomes of the inspection as they remained provisional. The draft report was expected in the first week of January 2026, with publication anticipated at the end of January or beginning of February 2026;
- c) The final report and any subsequent improvement plans would be included on the agenda for the next meeting;
- d) Thanks were expressed to all those involved in the inspection process, noting that the inspection had gone well due to strong organisation and thorough preparation. Significant evidence had been provided to the inspection team, including at least 100 documents;
- e) The inspection team had spent three days on site, during which they held extensive meetings with individuals across the partnership, visited family hubs, alternative provision settings, and met stakeholders at all levels within the city;
- f) Inspectors had received strong reflections of the work undertaken over the past two years to improve responses and services for children, young people, and families with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- g) Councillor Blight thanked officers for their hard work and commended the efforts made to represent Plymouth positively during the inspection.

27. **Q2 2025/26 Performance Report**

Paul Stephens (Senior Performance Advisor) and Susan London (Performance Advisor) presented the Quarter 2 Performance Report covering July to September 2025.

- a) Paul Stephens highlighted that the report included several new elements following feedback from the previous committee meeting:
 - i. A more detailed breakdown of the distance children were placed away from home, which had previously only been reported as “in or out of Plymouth” or “more than a certain distance”;
 - ii. Additional information on Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) timeliness, specifically six-week and 22-week measures;
 - iii. An extra source of national benchmarking data added to the second-to-last page, bringing the total to four sources for comparative analysis;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- b) EHCP timeliness performance for six-week and 22-week targets remained well below the national average. A trajectory plan existed and would be supplied to the Panel;

- c) Members expressed appreciation for the inclusion of benchmarking material and the expanded scope of data, noting that it was informative and useful for scrutiny.

Action:

- Officers to provide the EHCP timeliness trajectory plan to the committee.

The Committee agreed to note the Quarter 2 Performance Report.

28. **2025/26 Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny - Quarter 2 Finance**

Louise Jenkins (Lead Accountancy Manager) presented the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report for Children's Services to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The report set out the financial position for Quarter 2, including growth allocations received at the beginning of the year and savings proposals within Children's Services. There was a significant budget movement in the quarter of £3.3 million and explained that the report detailed the reasons behind this variation.
- b) The service continued to face significant financial pressures due to rising costs associated with independent specialist and residential placements. Those challenges were compounded by limited placement availability both regionally and nationally, alongside increased demand for services within the city. Strategic workstreams had been initiated to mitigate those pressures, including:
 - i. The Family Homes Programme;
 - ii. Enhanced fostering and recruitment campaigns;
 - iii. Strengthened collaboration through the Reconnect Partnership;
- c) There were also staffing challenges in securing permanent appointments, resulting in the use of agency and interim staff to maintain service continuity. A service redesign was underway to align with the expectations of the Family First Partnership;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- d) The costs of some residential placements reflected accommodation, staffing ratios (which could be as high as three or four staff per child for complex needs), and additional therapeutic interventions or activities. It was noted that some children did not require residential care but were placed there due to shortages in fostering placements. The costs of placements were significant and driven by market conditions where demand outstripped supply;

- e) The government was considering mechanisms to address profiteering, as highlighted in Josh MacAlister's independent review of children's social care. While cost capping was not proposed, discussions with providers were ongoing to find a more equitable approach;
- f) Fostering recruitment remained critical to reducing reliance on residential placements;
- g) Fostering information would be sent out to all households in the city within Council Tax mailings and this had been done previously and would be considered again;
- h) The £12.603 million figure in the report represented net growth in the children's budget for the year (after accounting for £17.5 million growth and £4.9 million savings). The projected overspend at the end of the year was £3.731 million. It was noted that forecasting remained challenging due to the demand-led nature of the service, but improvements had been made in recent years;
- i) The statutory overrides for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) had been extended for two years and further detail was expected in the forthcoming SEND White Paper;
- j) Joint funding arrangements for an unregistered placement costs were shared 50:50 with Health partners.

Actions:

- 1. Officers to ensure fostering information is included in Council Tax mailings;
- 2. Officers to arrange DSG training for committee members.

Recommendations:

The Panel agreed to:

- 1. Note the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report for Children's Services;
- 2. Write to government regarding concerns over placement costs and market conditions;
- 3. The Committee supported continued efforts to promote fostering recruitment and endorsed the inclusion of fostering information in Council Tax communications.

29. **Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024-2025**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the report and highlighted the key points:

- a) The report detailed the differences made for children, how the partnership implemented learning, funding arrangements, independent scrutiny, and an

update from the Young Safeguarders. It was also noted that the Young Safeguarders had attended a recent meeting with around 40 partners from across the city, describing their contribution as a masterclass in speaking truth to power and commending their challenging demands and data insights;

- b) The involvement of young people was not a tick-box exercise and emphasised the genuine influence they had on partnership work. The report was supported by the forthcoming publication of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, which would set out the responsibilities of each agency;
- c) The report highlighted the impact of multi-agency working through “Making a Difference” sections, showcasing examples where partners had improved outcomes for children and families. The continuous learning, both locally and nationally, had strengthened the partnership, with the annual conference attended by 140 practitioners from multiple agencies;
- d) There was an extensive multi-agency training programme offered by the partnership, with feedback demonstrating its importance for effective safeguarding practice and workforce development;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- e) The partnership sought free venues wherever possible for the annual conference, but the requirement for large spaces for 140+ attendees with facilities for group exercises was difficult to find in the city. Members were invited to suggest suitable venues. It was confirmed that refreshments were included in the cost. It was also noted that accessibility for attendees, including headteachers, was a key consideration when hiring the venue;
- f) The Panel were positive on the inclusion of case studies, stating that they provided tangible examples of how multi-agency safeguarding worked in practice. It was also noted that safeguarding was one of the most important responsibilities of the Council and that the report demonstrated significant progress in partnership engagement, including new involvement from faith organisations;
- g) Siobhan Logue (Partnership Manager) acknowledged the length of the report but explained that statutory guidance required detailed content. It was confirmed that the Department for Education had recognised Plymouth’s annual report as an exemplary example under the Working Together 2023 guidance;
- h) It was suggested to increase the number of training courses and places offered to allow more practitioners and community representatives to participate, noting the positive impact of safeguarding awareness across sectors.

Actions:

1. Siobhan Logue to review and resolve access issues for conference materials on the PSCP website.
2. Officers to explore options for free or low-cost venues for future conferences.
3. Consideration to be given to expanding the safeguarding training programme to increase participation.

The Committee agreed to note the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/25.

30. **Families First Partnership Programme of Reforms**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The Families First Partnership represented a system-wide reform of family support focused on early intervention and a whole-family approach;
- b) The programme aimed to ensure that all families, regardless of background or complexity of need, could access the right help at the right time through a connected system spanning universal, targeted and statutory services. The model brought together targeted early help, child in need and child protection into a seamless continuum, with family help lead practitioners maintaining consistent relationships and multi-agency child protection teams providing statutory oversight where required;
- c) Family group decision-making approaches were central to the transformation, building family and community capacity to support families to thrive. The approach supported dynamic, needs-led planning and aimed to reduce duplication and escalation into crisis. Local implementation with key partners was progressing well, supported by engagement events and partnership working groups established for each reform area;

Lisa Davies (Service Director for Children, Young People and Families) added:

- d) The reforms were informed by lessons learned from serious case reviews and tragic child deaths, which had highlighted the need for improved expertise and systemic change to protect the most vulnerable children. The importance of combining early intervention with specialist expertise for children at risk of harm was emphasised;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- e) Locality working would enable services to build strong relationships with local support systems, including schools, midwives, and community organisations, and adapt resources to meet local needs. The 10 Wishes would remain central to the reforms;

- f) Plymouth had a strong existing family hub network and the reforms would align with the direction the city was already pursuing;
- g) Satellite hubs were already in place and further rollout was planned. Outreach models and commissioned services were being used to extend provision closer to families;
- h) Family hubs supported children from pre-birth to age 19 (and up to 25 for young people with SEND). The importance of communication was acknowledged and plans were outlined for a communications strategy, including website updates, videos, and social media content, ahead of the April 2026 implementation deadline;
- i) Governance for the reforms sat with the Families First Partnership Board, which reported to the Safeguarding Partnership Board. The scrutiny panel would continue to have a role in monitoring progress of the reforms.

Actions:

- 1. Officers to provide details of the satellite family hub rollout plan;
- 2. Officers to develop and implement a communications strategy to promote the reforms, including information for parents of older children;
- 3. Add Families First Partnership reforms to the work programme for 2026.

The Panel agreed to note progress towards implementation of the Families First Partnership reforms.

31. **Children's Homes for Plymouth Programme**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communication) introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- a) In November 2024, the Leader agreed capital investment for the development of children's homes in Plymouth and was going to help the council tackle profiteering by independent sector care home providers;
- b) The programme would provide high-quality Council-run children's homes in Plymouth. The report detailed progress made over the past year and lessons learned. The first home was expected to open soon, despite delays caused by Ofsted registration requirements, which were identified as a key risk;

Victoria Whitman (Head of Service for Strategic Int and Planning) added:

- c) The design and cost considerations for Project C, which involved a £3 million capital investment for a four-bedroom specialist home were highlighted. The build was highly specialised, incorporating features such as anti-ligature fittings, magnetic locking systems, privacy screens, calming environments, and

breakout spaces to balance safety with a nurturing atmosphere. The design aimed to allow full capacity without compromising safety or wellbeing, given the complexity of the children's needs;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- d) The cost associated with the specification of the build was essential to meet the needs of children at risk of deprivation of liberty and to avoid hospital-like environments. It was confirmed that a significant contingency had been built into the budget to manage unforeseen costs. The Council had also secured £1.5 million of Department for Education (DfE) funding through a competitive process, which was match funded by the Council to the sum of £1.4 million which was a fantastic opportunity for Plymouth;
- e) The council was acting as a corporate parent to its looked after children and the council should provide the best possible care for its children;
- f) The homes could potentially generate income by accepting placements from other authorities in the future.
- g) It was confirmed that a pipeline of future homes was being developed, with a second home secured and a bid planned for additional capital investment to fund a third home;
- h) Savings as a result of the programme would offset growth lines in the revenue budget and borrowing costs would be managed within the directorate's budget;
- i) Recruitment was underway for positions within the children's homes, with interviews planned for early 2026 and start dates in April 2026. Retention was challenging but it was stressed that creating high-quality environments would help retain staff. The service had plans to grow its own managers through training and development opportunities;
- j) Salaries were competitive and included enhancements for unsocial hours, although private providers often offered additional incentives;
- k) The Panel raised concerns about delays in Ofsted registration and asked whether the process could start before building completion. It was confirmed that applications could only be submitted once buildings were complete and Ofsted's current timescales were 6–12 months for emergency applications and 6–18 months for standard applications. The Council would emphasise the urgency of registration and maintain quality assurance for any unregistered placements;
- l) Plymouth City Council had engaged with neighbouring councils and visited other provisions to learn from their experiences of setting up their own provisions;

Actions:

1. Officers to provide a briefing for Members on the complexity of needs for children who would be placed in Project C;
2. Officers to explore a workforce development programme for registered managers in partnership with Human Resources and Organisational Development;
3. Officers to continue engagement with other local authorities to share learning and best practice.

Recommendations:

The Panel agreed to:

1. Endorse the development of Council-run children's homes in Plymouth;
2. Write to Ofsted to express concern about registration delays and request consideration of process improvements;
3. Note its support for further capital investment to expand Council-run provision.

32. **Achieving Excellence - Children's Services three year strategic plan, review of progress in year 2 Quarter 1 & 2**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The Achieving Excellence strategy was developed following the Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in January 2024, with wide engagement from staff, children and young people. Scrutiny had received its first update on progress against the ten agreed priorities in July 2025, when children and young people had held officers to account for their progress and ambition to create an equal, kind and safe city;
- b) Good progress continued to be noted, including improved arrangements for children with SEND and children in care, and an effective approach now in place to implement the Families First Partnership reforms. There however continued to be challenges, particularly high demand in some high-cost areas such as short breaks, children's placements, and the proportion of care leavers not yet in education, employment or training. The plan was being refocused to ensure the right activity was in place to respond to current pressures;
- c) The strategy was a three-year plan built from the Ofsted inspection, with extensive consultation across Children's Services and the Council. The ten strategic priorities remained constant throughout the plan and were underpinned by annual milestones. There was strengthened governance

arrangements and progress in key areas such as SEND improvements, capital programme delivery, and partnership working;

- d) Key achievements in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, included:
- i. Extension of family hubs and satellite sites, providing more early help and support for families;
 - ii. Development of a more inclusive approach for SEND, including the Plymouth Graduated Approach and targeted funding supporting 380 children across the city;
 - iii. Significant impact from targeted funding, reducing suspensions in secondary schools by 38% and improving attendance, sense of belonging and attainment;
 - iv. Launch of the Belonging Framework with headteachers to improve attendance, noting Plymouth's overall attendance had improved by 0.8%, bucking national trends;
 - v. Creative approaches to engaging priority groups of young people in education, employment or training, while acknowledging challenges for care leavers;
 - vi. Issuing 200% more Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) than 2024, achieving 100% timeliness for six-week targets;
 - vii. Delivery of 523 SEND places, including targeted funding placements;
 - viii. Improved transition experiences for children moving between educational phases, with Plymouth's model attracting regional interest;
 - ix. Progress on recommissioning alternative provision and participation in the national attendance campaign, with Plymouth chosen as one of four local authorities nationally;
- e) The success of the Mockingbird fostering model was highlighted, with three constellations supporting 40 children and no placement breakdowns reported within them. The model provided additional support for foster carers and stability for children;
- f) There was significant progress in developing the Families First front door, enabling earlier intervention and more appropriate responses for families. The commitment to family-led decision-making, including the use of Family Group Conferences and mediation to prevent escalation into care proceedings was noted and they were having a positive impact which would be expanded further;
- g) Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Apprenticeships and Skills) shared feedback from a recent school visit, where staff praised the

targeted funding model for its impact on children's confidence and engagement, describing a "ripple effect" across the school community;

- h) There were ongoing challenges, including sustaining improvements in attendance for vulnerable groups and increasing engagement for care leavers in education, employment or training.

Actions:

1. Officers to continue monitoring progress against the ten strategic priorities and report back at the next scheduled update.
2. Officers to maintain focus on attendance improvement and care leaver engagement as priority areas.

Recommendations:

The Panel agreed to:

1. Note the key strengths, challenges and next steps identified in the report;
2. Endorse the continued implementation of the *Achieving Excellence* strategy and its alignment with the Families First reforms.

33. **Elective Home Education Deep Dive**

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Apprenticeships and Skills) introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The report examined key trends, pupil characteristics and safeguarding considerations, highlighting strong correlations between Elective Home Education (EHE) and persistent absence, SEND needs and social care involvement;
- b) The report set out the Council's statutory duties under the Education Act 1996 and aligned with the Plymouth Education Strategy to ensure every child received a suitable education. While EHE remained a legal and valid choice for families, Plymouth continued to experience higher rates than national and regional averages, with 2% of statutory school-age children educated at home;
- c) Steps had been taken to strengthen oversight and engagement, including expansion of the EHE team, implementation of a new safeguarding framework and collaborative work with schools to reduce unnecessary withdrawal. Early signs of improvement were noted following the accelerated action plan, and forthcoming national reforms were expected to introduce a compulsory register and stronger powers for local authorities;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- d) While no formal data existed, anecdotal evidence suggested some parents cited working from home as a factor in their decision to electively home educate their children;
- e) The decision to electively home educate was always made by parents, although officers explored reasons for deregistration and offered support where appropriate;
- f) The main anticipated reform was the introduction of a compulsory register, but there was no indication that parental rights to home educate would be removed in any upcoming Bills;
- g) Child mental health was a key driver for parents choosing EHE, although parents were not required to provide a reason;
- h) The link between EHE and deprivation, SEND and mental health, was highlighted and officers tracked patterns by school and engaged proactively with schools and families to prevent breakdowns and return children to education where possible;
- i) Family hubs and community providers offered sessions for EHE families and the Council facilitated networks to prevent isolation;
- j) Many families provided excellent home education but it was stressed that the recent increase was driven by parents feeling they had no other choice, which the Council aimed to address through early intervention and partnership working;
- k) EHE was a collective priority for the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) strategic group and proactive dialogue was taking place with CEO's to understand drivers and strengthen the accelerated plan;
- l) The Council could escalate concerns in relation to MAT's to the Department for Education, particularly in cases of off-rolling, but had no direct authority over MATs. Ofsted's new inspection framework, had a focus on inclusion and attendance and would help drive improvements with MAT's.

Actions:

1. Officers to continue proactive engagement with MATs and schools to address patterns of de-registration;
2. Officers to maintain and expand community-based opportunities for EHE families to support socialisation;
3. Monitor national reforms and update the Committee on implications for local practice.

Recommendations:

The Panel agreed to:

1. Note the key challenges and current work programmes outlined in the report;
2. Endorse the priorities identified for reducing unnecessary EHE and strengthening oversight.

34. **Action Log**

The Panel agreed to note the action log.

35. **Work Programme**

The Panel added the following to the work programme:

- a) Family First Partnership Programme Update;
- b) SEND Inspection Outcome;
- c) Elective Home Education update.

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Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	18 February 2026
Title of Report:	Q3 2025/26 Performance Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Paul Stephens & Susan London
Contact Email:	paul.stephens@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	PSCSS-2025/26(Q3)
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To share key performance data information related to Children Services (Children, Young People and Family Services and Education, Participation and Skills)

Recommendations and Reasons

To note the attached briefing paper for information and discussion

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Not applicable

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

For information

Financial Risks

No specific financial risks arise from this report

Legal Implications

No specific legal implications arise from this report

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

Not applicable

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Performance Scorecard Scrutiny Committee Q3 2025-26							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	N/A	Leg	N/A	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Assets	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Haley											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 06/02/2026											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Laing (provided by email for review 02 Feb)											
Date approved: 06/02/2026											

Q3 2025/26 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

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I. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES

I.1. REFERRALS & RE-REFERRALS

Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	Previous Year & Benchmarking		Current Period	
				2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
1	Number of referrals received within the last 12 months	2,415	3,879	2,806	519.4 (2024/25)	578.0 (2024/25)	2,547
	Referrals received within the last 12 months - Rate per 10,000 children	467.7	748.2	538.4			488.7
2	Number of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	483	780	730	22.6% (2024/25)	21.5% (2024/25)	575
	% of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	20.0%	20.1%	26.0%			20.9%

Plymouth processed 2,547 referrals in the 12 months ending quarter three. This represents a decrease of 259 referrals compared to March 2025, returning to levels on par with the volumes seen in 2022/23.

The referral rate per 10,000 children was 488.7 at quarter three's end. This rate has decreased from Plymouth's 2024/25 published position of 538.4 and is currently at a lower level than the England average (519.4) and our statistical neighbour average (578.0).

Re-referral rates have decreased when compared to the published figure of 26.0% for 2024/25, but they remain a key area of focus following the move to the Families First Front Door model. At quarter three's end, 20.9% of referrals were re-referrals (cases where the same child had been referred within the previous 12 months). This represents:

- A 1.4 percentage point decrease on the last quarter,
- A 5.1 percentage point increase from Plymouth's 2024/25 published figure, and
- A rate that is under the England and statistical neighbour averages for 2024/25.

A reduction in contacts and thus referrals in December (due to the two- week holiday period) means that volumes in quarter three saw decreases, as did the rolling 12-month view. Along with this, the data also reflects the early impact of the Families First model, which is now embedding across the partnership. While the Front Door continues to experience a high level of demand, contacts are increasingly being responded to by the agency best placed to meet the needs of the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

This shift demonstrates improved multi- agency decision- making, more proportionate intervention, and a reduction in unnecessary escalation into statutory services. The model is supporting a more effective and timely response for children and families, ensuring that those who do require statutory assessment are identified appropriately, while others receive targeted support through the wider partnership.

1.2. CHILDREN IN NEED

Ref	Indicator Name	Previous Year & Benchmarking					Current Period
		2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
3	Number of children subject to a Child In Need Plan (snapshot)	944	1,379	857	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	791
	Children subject to a Child In Need Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	177.1	265.4	164.9	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	151.8

Plymouth's Child in Need caseload increased by 20 children in quarter three compared to quarter two. This caseload excludes children subject to Child Protection Plans or Looked After Children. The current figure remains lower than the last three year-end positions.

However, we note that children subject to Child Protection Plans or Child in Care Plans (covered in the next two sections) are currently at higher rates per 10,000 children than the published England and statistical neighbour averages for 2024/25.

In June 2025, our new Integrated Front Door was launched. At the same time, we also implemented the first phase of the Families First Reforms which saw our Targeted Support Teams now taking most of the Children in Need work alongside the Early Help and Prevention work. The teams have increased to seven teams of eight Family Help Lead Practitioners providing a significant increase in resource to ensure that children and their families receive timely and responsive support at the earliest opportunity.

The teams have worked closely with our social work teams to support with reducing the number of transitions for families which will support in building relationships, enabling practitioners to provide a more intensive package of support. We believe this will reduce escalation and subsequently support children to remain within their family.

Training is being closely developed with our Academy for staff to ensure that our workers have the right skills and confidence to work proactively with families. This will ensure that Children Social Care staff and partners have a shared understanding of need and how to respond.

1.3. CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

Ref	Indicator Name	Previous Year & Benchmarking					Current Period
		2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
4	Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (Snapshot)	230	299	361	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	312
	Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	44.5	57.7	69.3	40.6 (2024/25)	52.0 (2024/25)	59.9
5	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Neglect	45.9% (107)	50.2% (150)	52.4% (189)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	51.9% (162)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Physical Abuse	6.4% (15)	8.4% (25)	8.6% (31)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	7.7% (24)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Sexual Abuse	4.3% (10)	8.4% (25)	5.8% (21)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	2.2% (7)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Emotional Abuse	43.3% (101)	33.0% (99)	33.2% (120)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	38.1% (119)
6	% of children subject to multiple child protection plans - Within lifetime of the child (new plans starting in last 12 months)	25.8% (65)	30.1% (112)	19.7% (81)	24.5% (2024/25)	26.3% (2024/25)	31.0% (128)

As of 31 December 2025, 312 children were subject to Child Protection Plans, representing a rate of 59.9 children per 10,000. This is slightly higher than Plymouth's published 2023/24 rate of 57.7 (299 children) but less than the published figure of 361 for 2024/25. The current rate exceeds both the England average by 19.3 per 10,000 and our Statistical Neighbour average by 7.9 per 10,000.

The proportion of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan between January 2025 and December 2025, and who had previously been on a Child Protection Plan, was 31.0%. This represents a decline of 11.3 percentage points from 31 March 2025, returning to a level similar to our 2023/24 position. The increase seen in 2025/26 to date sees Plymouth return to a level that is higher than both the England average of 24.5% and the statistical neighbours average of 26.3% (England saw a small decrease on 2023/24 and the statistical neighbours saw an increase). Over the 12 months ending 31 December 2025, 128 children and young people have started repeat Child Protection Plans.

The Families First Partnership reforms that will be embedded fully by April 2026, should bring about change in ensuring earlier help and intervention take place, with better partnership working and sharing of information to identify the help and protection family's needs without there being a need to escalate. There are working groups and engagement sessions across the partnership, and this is

highlighting several practice areas to strengthen and better ways of working together to support families, we will start to embed the changes in April 2026.

We maintain strong focus on requests for repeat Child Protection Plans, with greater oversight by Service Managers. This provides more consistency and creates opportunities for reflective discussions to ensure care plans are appropriate for these children and to explore whether we can work differently with families.

We also focus strongly on Child Protection Plans lasting over 12 months. Monthly meetings are chaired jointly by the Service Manager for Safeguarding and the Service Manager for Children's Social Work Service to ensure effective oversight and timely decisions for children.

There is a lot of QA work taking place around Child Protection which is helping to identify themes so we can target improvement work.

1.4. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CHILDREN IN CARE)

				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
7	Number of children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children (Snapshot)	500	513	527	67.0 (2024/25)	90.0 (2024/25)	525
	Children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children - Rate per 10,000 children	96.9	99.0	101.0			100.7
8	Number of Looked After Children in an unregistered placement (snapshot)	6	9	7	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	7
9	% of Looked After Children placed outside of the city of Plymouth (i.e., the placement is not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9)	39.9% <small>(25% DfE: +20 miles of LA boundary)</small>	42.7% <small>(23% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)</small>	44.2% (233) <small>(24% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)</small>	Within boundary not benchmarked 17.0% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)	Within boundary not benchmarked 17.0% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)	42.5% (223)
10	Placement Type: Family Placement (fostering or connected carers)	339	368	343	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	351
	Placement Type: Children's Homes, Residential Care Homes & Residential Schools	57	57	64	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	71
	Placement Type: Hostels & other Supportive accommodation	48	47	54	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	57
	Placement Type: Lodgings or Independent living (16+)	x	x	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
	Placement Type: Other Placement	5	8	6	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	5
	Placement Type: Placed for Adoption	18	5	13	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	4
	Placement Type: Placed with Parents	32	26	42	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	34
	Placement Type: Other accommodation - NHS, Family Centres, Parent & Child	x	x	6	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
	Placement Type: Secure Units & Youth Offender Institutions	x	x	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x

Please note: where the number of children is below five, the actual figure is suppressed and shows 'x'.

As of 31 December 2025, there were 525 children and young people in care. This represents a net increase of 12 on the published 2023/24 figure, but two less than the published 2024/25 figure of 527. The average month-end position over the past 12 months was 531 children and young people.

Of the 534 children in care, 302 (57.5%) were placed within the city, while 223 (42.5%) were placed outside the city. This is currently lower than our internal 2024/25 figure of 44.2%.

This measure is based on the postcode of the child's placement address. Postcodes outside PL1 to PL7 or PL9 are considered outside the city. For example, PL12 refers to Saltash in Cornwall and is considered outside Plymouth, even though it may be less than a mile from a child's home address.

Using provisional information, approximately 24.2% of children in care (127 out of 525) are placed more than 20 miles from their home address. A more detailed breakdown is provided:

- 75.8% (398) placed within 0 to 20 miles,
- 14.2% (75) placed between 20.1 and 100 miles,
- 5.6% (29) placed between 100.1 and 200 miles, and
- 4.4% (23) placed more than 200 miles.

The number of children in unregistered arrangements reduce by two to seven at the end of quarter three (quarter two was reported at nine), of which a small number are registered by Care Quality Commission due to the complexity of the children's health needs.

The Family Homes for Plymouth's Children programme continues to address placement sufficiency issues through fostering recruitment and retention, developing our own residential provision, progressing plans to reunify children with their families and stepping children from residential to family-based care. The sufficiency of fostering households continues to be a challenge locally and nationally;

There have been young people who have been supported to move from their residential Children's Homes to supported accommodation and back into their parents' care with a robust package of support from Reconnect. We review these children weekly to ensure there are no delays in children moving to more suitable placements or home.

The Financial Offer to Special Guardians was presented and agreed at the Family Homes Board in June 2025 and was due to be further reviewed in quarter two. This has been delayed as the outcome of a bid for a Department for Education pilot in relation to Special Guardianship has not yet been received.

A Registered Manager has been appointed and is progressing the development of our own Residential Children's Homes. The first property purchase has now completed and recruitment of support staffing for this has begun whilst further searches continue for suitable properties in Plymouth.

1.5. CARE EXPERIENCED (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CARE LEAVERS)

Ref	Indicator Name	Previous Year & Benchmarking					Current Period
		2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2025/26
11	% of Care Experienced young people in Unsuitable Accommodation (Statutory Service (aged 18 to 20))	4.1% (8/192) (12% DfE)	9.5% (19/201) (15% DfE)	7.0% (14/201) (17.0% DfE)	11.0% (2024/25 DfE)	9.3% (2024/25 DfE)	6.3% (13/205)
12	% of Care Experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training (Statutory Service (EET aged 18 to 20))	50.0% (96/192) (47.0% DfE)	43.3% (87/201) (45.0% DfE)	46.8% (94/201) (41.0% DfE)	54.0% (2024/25 DfE)	52.0% (2024/25 DfE)	46.3% (95/205)

Plymouth's quarter three data shows that 6.3% of care-experienced young people are in unsuitable accommodation. This is lower than both the England average and the statistical neighbours' average (2024/25 published figures). The number of young people in unsuitable accommodation has improved compared to our published figures for both 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Following the previous Ofsted Focused visit in quarter two, weekly meetings were implemented continued through quarter three to focus on care experienced young people in unsuitable accommodation (Bed and Breakfast) due to the concern about the length of time that young people were living in unsuitable accommodation. Working closely with Community Connections, progress has been continued in moving young people on into more suitable temporary accommodation while long term homes are identified. Through quarter four, these meetings are planned to be stepped back to fortnightly.

The proportion of care leavers in Education, Employment, and Training (EET) was 46.3%, which is 0.5 percentage points lower than our internal 2024/25 figure. Our DfE published figure of 41.0% for 2024/25 (which uses slightly different criteria than our internal reporting) was approximately 11.0 to 13.0 percentage points lower than the published figures for our comparators.

While our NEET rates remain below England and statistical neighbours' averages, we have continued to see steady improvement in reducing the number of young people recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) through the introduction of EET Advocates for our 16/17-year-old children in care and the targeted EET action plan. In quarter three relationships have started to become embedded with the additional EET advocate for care leavers and the connect to work scheme, with a dedicated practitioner to support care experienced young people. This seeks to reduce barriers to education, employment and training.

The Care Leavers Hub opened in quarter three which has opened up further opportunities for support and multi-agency working for those in unsuitable accommodation and for those who are NEET.

Please note: The DfE calculation differs from our local figures. We include all care leavers (Qualifying, Relevant & Former Relevant) and use the latest information available for those aged under 21. The DfE only include Former Relevant care leavers and use information held around the young person's 19th, 20th or 21st birthday.

2. EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS

2.1. OFSTED OUTCOMES

2.1. OFSTED OUTCOMES				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	2023/24 England	2023/24 South West	Q3 2025/26
1	% of all schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	76.0%	77.6%	90.8%	90.4%	86.7%	Please see note
2	% of pupils attending Plymouth schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	77.1%	81.0%	90.4% (based on NOR May School Census and OFSTED outcomes at 31/08/2024)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	Please see note

PLEASE NOTE: From September 2024, OFSTED no longer provides a one-word judgement on the overall effectiveness of a school. Therefore, the figures will remain static for future reporting until it can be established how OFSTED will be using inspection data for monitoring purposes.

- At the end of 2024/25 – 16 schools have been inspected over the course of the academic year.
- Of these 16 schools, six have received good or outstanding in all of the four main areas of 'Quality of Education', 'Behaviour and attitudes', 'Personal Development' and Effectiveness of leadership and management' (37.5%)
- All 16 schools were judged as having effective Safeguarding.
- At the end of the first term of 2025/26, there have been no full (S5) school inspections in Plymouth.

2.2. ABSENCE MONITORING

Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Annual	2023/24 Annual	Latest published data & Benchmarking			Current Period
				2024/25 Term 1&2	England Term 1&2	South West Term 1&2	Term 1 Sep to Dec 2025/26
3	% of overall absence in all schools	8.2%	8.3% (Academic Year 2023/24)	7.5% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25)	6.6% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25)	6.9% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25)	7.3% (View Your Education Data, End of Dec 25)
4	% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) in all schools	24.1%	23.6% (Academic Year 23/24) (Of which 3.2% were severely absent)	20.2% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 3.1% were severely absent)	17.6% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 2.3% were severely absent)	18.0% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 2.7% were severely absent)	20.6% (Of which 2.5% were severely absent) (View Your Education Data End of Dec 25)
5	% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) of pupils with Education, Health, and Care plans (EHCPs)	40.5%	40.5% (Academic Year 23/24) (Of which 8.5% were severely absent)	36.4% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 8.9% were severely absent)	33.8% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 7.3% were severely absent)	36.3% (Autumn & Spring Terms 24/25) (Of which 8.7% were severely absent)	39.5% (Of which 11.1% (226) were severely absent) (View Your Education Data, End of Dec 25)

The benchmark information provided above is provided from the Department for Education; compiled from the statutory school census return completed on a termly basis. The best available report for the three indicators above is the 2024/25 Autumn & Spring Term data.

The data source for local absence statistics continues to be taken from 'View Your Education Data' (VYED) website, the DfE site for collating school absence. VYED presents absence data cumulatively from the beginning of each term and therefore the following data represents the new Autumn term 2025/26 - period from 01/09/2025 to 31/12/2025.

- The Overall absence rate was 7.3%. This is 0.2 pp lower than the published Autumn & Spring Term 24/25 for Plymouth; 0.7pp higher than the published national figure and 0.4pp higher than the published South West figure. These benchmark figures cover two terms however unlike the one term recorded for the current period. (7.3% is 10pp lower than the current published full year absence figure 23/24 for Plymouth)
- The percentage of those persistently absent was 20.6%. This is 0.4pp higher than the published Autumn & Spring Term 24/25 for Plymouth; 3pp higher than the published national figure and 2.6pp higher than the published South West figure. (20.6% is 3pp lower than the current published full year absence figure 23/24 for Plymouth)
- The percentage of those with an EHCP who were persistently absent was 39.5%. This is 3.1pp higher than the Autumn & Spring Term 24/25 for Plymouth; 5.7pp higher than the published national figure and 3.2pp higher than the published South West figure. (39.5% is 1pp lower than the published full year absence figure 23/24 for Plymouth)

Work continues across the Inclusion and Welfare Service, schools, and wider partners to reduce school absence, with attendance established as the central priority for 2025/26.

Plymouth's response recognises that attendance is not simply a measure of presence in school, but a reflection of belonging, trust, inclusion, and opportunity. To address this, the city has adopted a comprehensive Place-Based Plan, designed to understand and respond to the complex and interconnected causes of absence through early intervention, shared accountability, and evidence-informed practice.

The Place-Based Plan brings together six interlinked priorities under a single citywide commitment, supported by the implementation of the Predictive Risk Model (PRM) and the Resilience Enablement Framework (REF). Together, these tools are shifting the system from reactive intervention to proactive prevention, enabling earlier identification of risk and more targeted, timely support for children and families.

Plymouth is working collaboratively with all schools and early years settings to deliver the Team Plymouth Education (pre-16) workstream. Extensive consultation has taken place with Headteachers and Multi-Academy Trust CEOs, reinforcing attendance, inclusion, and educational excellence as shared system priorities. This collaboration is further strengthened through the establishment of the Leaders of Education Across Plymouth (LEAP) Board and a new MAT CEO Strategic Group, providing stronger governance, alignment, and collective leadership across the city.

Plymouth is also contributing to national learning through close partnership with the Department for Education as part of the national attendance campaign. In collaboration with Plymouth Marjon University, a comprehensive attendance survey was completed by 2,200 parents and 1,500 children, generating rich insight that has informed both national policy development and Plymouth's local practice.

The Belonging Framework was formally launched with schools in October 2025, providing a shared foundation for strengthening emotional safety, connection, and participation across all phases. Complementing this, Plymouth City Council has match-funded the Education Endowment Foundation to roll out The Engagement Platform across all schools, enabling consistent measurement of engagement as a key indicator of belonging and a driver of attendance improvement.

Targeted Funding continues to play a critical role in supporting pupils at risk of absence. The launch of Targeted Funding for SEN Support is enabling more children to receive the right help at the right time, with early evaluation showing positive impacts on attendance and empowering school leaders to innovate. Targeted Funding 3 now supports 380 children across 38 schools, with each school receiving funding for a cohort of 10 pupils through a clear service level agreement and robust quality assurance arrangements. In parallel, a new commissioning plan for Alternative Provision and Education Other Than at School has been launched.

Every school has an allocated Plymouth City Council Attendance Officer working closely with them to support children who are severely absent. Performance dashboards are shared with phase leaders and MAT CEOs, enabling peer challenge, collaborative problem-solving, and targeted system action. Extended Virtual School duties are fully embedded, ensuring that attendance and outcomes for all eligible children remain a priority, with impact evidenced through audits and case studies.

There has been a successful launch of the Education Strategy 2026–2029, with a strong emphasis on inclusion, early help, and improving outcomes for all learners. Progress is also evident in Elective Home Education, where the new Reduction and Prevention Plan has led to stabilisation and a modest reduction in new registrations during autumn 2025/26.

Together, these actions demonstrate a coherent, citywide approach to improving attendance—rooted in strong partnership, shared leadership, smarter use of data, and a relentless focus on belonging and inclusion for every child in Plymouth.

2.3. PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS

2.3. PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Ac.Year Plymouth	2023/24 Ac.Year Plymouth	2024/25 Ac.Year Plymouth	2024/25 Ac.Year England	2024/25 Ac.Year South West	Q3 2025/26 Oct to Dec
6	Number of pupils in Elective Home Education (EHE)	580 (1.5%) *	640 (1.7%)	930 (2.4%)	152,410 (1.8%)	17,230 (2.5%)	827 (Number at end of month) (2.3%)
7	Number of pupils considered to be missing education (CME)	230 (0.6%)	310 (0.8%)	370 (1.0%)	149,900 (1.8%)	9,360 (1.3%)	91 (Number at end of month)
8	Number of pupils on part time timetables	-	409	316	Not published	Not published	294
Ref	Indicator Name	2022 Cal.Year Plymouth	2023 Cal.Year Plymouth	2024 Cal.Year Plymouth	2024 Cal.Year England	2024 Cal.Year Neighbours	Q3 2025/26 Oct to Dec
9	EHCP Timeliness – 6 weeks	-	5.0% (45/895)	9.6% (113/1176)	81.7%	Regional 74.4% Statistical 62.8%	93.4% (240/257)
10	EHCP Timeliness – 20 weeks	44.1% (175/397)	17.8% (63/354)	6.0% (24/403)	45.9%	Regional 31.0% Statistical 38.9%	16.1%

**Percentage figures relate to the percentage of the statutory school age cohort in EHE/CME*

EHE/CME/PTTT

The Local Authority continues to hold a firm monitoring position, an understanding of the children in the cohorts and where needed, intervention to ensure that a suitable education is being provided of those in Elective Home Education, Part-Time Timetables and Children Missing out on Education.

We have launched the accelerated EHE Action Plan which brings together Family Hubs, the voluntary and community sector, health, and other local area partners to work together in a preventative way in respect of vulnerable children being withdrawn to EHE and those at risk of exclusion.

The Virtual School Extended Schools Co-ordinator continues to lead a CAFE (Children Absent from Education) approach developed in May and June to explore the possible barriers to education for those considered to be disadvantaged; this would include those with SEN, those known to social care; those with high numbers of suspensions and those at risk of permanent exclusion. Focusing on education as a protective factor for children and young people, regular discussions, practice sharing and quality assurance activity is now embedded across Children's Services Teams, conducted jointly between Education, Participation and Skills and Children's Social Care. The learning from this is

shared through team meetings and with Senior Managers. Collaboration with schools to include their involvement in this practice is now being implemented.

The Local Authority maintains a sharp focus for any child on a protection plan being in home education. Any child in home education and on a Child Protection Plan is registered as missing education and is supported to return to school.

All children with an EHCP who are home educated have a joint approach to casework which includes the Home Education Team and 0-25 SEND Service.

Every child who is deregistered to home education has a home visit within two weeks. Any child who is considered vulnerable and who is home educated is allocated a key worker who undertakes home visits; the support remains in place until the child is receiving a suitable education at school. A child who is registered as home educated but whose parents have reached a formal notice stage (where there has not been evidence provided of a suitable education) are recorded as a child missing education and assigned a key worker who will undertake home visits and casework.

A fortnightly Service Manager review of part-time timetables is now embedded with proactive follow up by Access and Attendance Officers to ensure appropriate challenge and multi-disciplinary support to schools.

EHCP TIMELINESS

At the end of December 2025, 3,606 children and young people (CYP) in Plymouth have an EHCP, compared to 3546 in November 2025. This includes the increase for completed new plans, transitions in and out of the local area and the ceasing of any appropriate post-18 plans.

Requests for assessment levels are continuing to fluctuate across the year with variation in the number of requests for assessment. There were 84 requests for assessments in December 2025. For the academic year to date (2025/26, until the end of December) there have been 380 requests for assessment, representing a monthly average of 95. *(Data from Live Tracker, taking into account any amendment since month of reporting)*

It was expected that with the new targeted funding launched in September, would start to see a decline in requests as schools can now apply for funding to enable provision and support without the requirement of an EHCP. Any reduction is not yet evidenced in the data and further work needs to take place with schools and settings to ensure that children's needs are being identified and supported much earlier and the impact from the targeted funding is having a true impact on the reduction of requests.

There were 83 EHCNA request decisions made by the end of December. The service made 78 decisions within the required timescale of 6 weeks, representing a rate of 94%. We are seeing an increasing number of decisions being made before the month they are required to be made; our data is demonstrating where cases can be brought forward for an early decision this is taking place. Out of the expected decisions due in December 95.7% were completed to timescale, compared to 93.8% in November. *(As reported in our monthly KPI data)*

In December, 26 EHCP Educational Psychology assessments were completed and submitted, of which 19 exceeded the 12-week deadline and 11 met KPI. Current capacity allows for approximately 39 assessments per term from the core Educational Psychology team, with an additional 12 from associates. As of the end of December, 378 young people remain on the waiting list up from 344 for allocation which holds a significant risk. There are currently 9 open assessments over 52 weeks where EP advice has not been received, 57 plans over 40 weeks where EP advice has not been received and 62 plans over 30 weeks where EP advice has not been received. At this stage the 16-week decision on whether to issue a plan cannot be taken.

Rapid progress has been made since June 2024, with the team increasing EHCP assurance by 200%, clearing a backlog of 641 cases. However, demand remains high, and a new backlog is quickly forming due to capacity of the Educational Psychologists, posing a risk to sustainability. Current projections

indicate the team must issue 90 plans per month to maintain compliance, which is challenging. A business case was submitted to request support to seek agency EPs, and to plan for the long-term solution. This business case was declined, and an options paper is now being developed to agree next steps and plan a way forward and an EP review of the service will take place to look at alternative models of delivery, however without agreement for additional funding the options to deal with the backlog is limited and the waiting list will continue to increase.

58 final EHCPs were issued in December having received all amendments from settings and families. This represents an increase compared to an average of 55 plans per month being issued for the academic year 2024/25. 13.8% (8) plans were issued within the 20-week timescale. However, the overall 20-week average for the calendar year to date (Sep-Dec) is 13.5% and therefore we are not meeting our statutory timeliness for 86.5% of our children. *(As reported in our monthly KPI data)*

2.4. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

2.4. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2022	2023	2024	2024 England	2024 Regional	Q3 2025/26
11	% of 16- and 17-year-olds in Education, Employment and Training	91.1%	90.4%	93.3%	94.6%	94.6%	92.9% (End of Dec 2025)
12	% of 16- and 17-year-olds with SEND in Education, Employment and Training	83.2%	81.4%	89.2%	90.2%	90.0%	89.9% (End of Dec 2025)

By the end of Q3 (reported position at end of Dec 2025), 92.9% of 16-and 17-year-olds are in Education Employment and Training. By the end of the Autumn Term of 2025/26, this figure is 0.3% higher than the figure seen at the end of the Summer Term 2024/25 (92.6%).

The percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds with SEND in Education, Employment and Training at the end of Dec 2025 is 89.9%.

Continuing the positive engagement of 2023/24 and 2024/25, the target for 16- and 17-year-olds with an EHCP, being in Education, Employment and Training has been raised by 1% to 93% for 2025/26, after the post 16 Team achieved their target of 92% in 2024/25.

Moving young people from not being in education, employment, and training (NEET) to seeking (SEET), education, employment, and training remains the focus of the team, with over 60% of the NEET young people now engaged and working towards moving into EET status. The team continue to widen their offer of extensive support to transition into employment, education or training to groups who may experience disadvantage, including (but not exclusive to) the SEN cohort, those in care, care leavers, young carers, and young parents. With interventions for children in care now commencing from year 7, the team have extended an offer to all secondary schools in the city to provide support to their top 5 students (who are most likely to be NEET). This work has continued in the new academic year, to provide focused careers advice sessions.

- NEET numbers across all cohorts of 16 and 17 years old, remain low at 4.7% (December 2025).
- The joined-up work across the skills and post-16 team, virtual school and the creation of a small team which supports children in care EET status has made excellent progress. 2024/25 started with 63% employment, education, and training status for children in care, this academic year we are starting with 77% EET status (a 14% improvement). The target for July 2026 is for 90% of year 12 and 85% of year 13 to be in EET, this would move the EET status overall to 86% (a further 9%).
- We are on target to achieve 50% of Care leavers being in EET by March 2026. 14 Care Experienced young people signed up to Connect to Work programme in week one and they are being supported into positive next steps. We are anticipating outcomes in the coming weeks.
- 82 EHCP young people are on a supported internship, following 29 young people concluding their supported internship. The number of providers offering supported internships has increased from one to six, with two more providers looking to deliver before the end of the academic year.

2.5. KEY STAGE OUTCOMES				Current published data & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2022/23 Plymouth	2023/24 Plymouth	2024/25 England	2024/25 Regional	2024/25 Statistical Neighbours	2024/25 Plymouth
13	EYFS - % of pupils achieving a 'good level of development' (GLD)	64.1%	66.7%	68.3% (2024/25)	70.2% (2024/25)	67.1% (2024/25)	67.4% (2024/25)
14	Key Stage 2 - % of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined	59.8%	62.5%	62.6% (Revised)	59.8% (Revised)	61.5% (Provisional)	65.1% (Revised)
15	Key Stage 4 - % of pupils achieving 5+ in English and Maths	41.7% (1,214/ 2,912)	46.3% (1,328/ 2,869)	45.2% (Provisional)	46.0% (Provisional)	43.5% (Provisional)	45.9% (Provisional)
16	Key Stage 4 - Average Attainment 8 score	44.9 Points (Average score for 2,912 pupils)	46.2 Points (Average score for 2,869 pupils)	45.9 Points (Provisional)	46.1 Points (Provisional)	44.9 Points (Provisional)	45.6 Points (Provisional) (Average score for 2,873 pupils)

The statistical neighbours for Plymouth have changed from February 2025 (please see Annex 3).

Assessment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage examines pupils' abilities regarding 17 Early Learning Goals. Reaching the expected standard across 12 early learning goals within the five areas of learning of communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; physical development; literacy; and mathematics, is determined as having a 'Good Level of Development'. At end of 2024/25, Plymouth's GLD is 1% **higher** than that seen in 2023/24. Published data for 2024/25 is showing that Plymouth is 1.3% **lower** than the national average; 4.2% **lower** than the regional average but 0.4% **higher** than the statistical neighbour average.

At the end of primary school and Key Stage 2, assessments determine whether pupils have met the expected standard related to their age in reading, writing and maths combined. At the end of 2024/25, Plymouth's average has increased from 2023/24 to 2024/25 by 4.2%. Revised data published in December 2025 for 2024/25 indicates that Plymouth's average at 65.1% is **higher** than the national average of 62.5%, regional average of 59.8% and statistical neighbour average of 61.5%.

Outcomes for the end of Key Stage 4 (the point at which the majority of 15 & 16-year-olds complete GCSEs at the end of their statutory education) are measured primarily through numerical values assigned per GCSE subject (or an equivalent value for a non-numerical qualification outcome such as a 'pass' at BTEC).

For each pupil, for each GCSE subject completed and assessed, a value will be provided between one and nine (nine being the highest achieved level). A 'level 4' is considered to be a 'standard' pass, a 'level 5' is considered to be a 'strong' pass. Attainment 8 is the sum of the eight highest achieved passes by a student; these figures are then averaged per school, per Local Authority and nationally to create performance measures. Further information can be found in Annex 1 – Indicator Definitions

Provisional data released by the DfE for 2024/25 is showing that 45.9% of all KS4 pupils achieved a strong pass in English and Maths at Key Stage 4. This is a 0.9% **decrease** from 46.3% achieved in

2023/24; 0.4pp lower. However, the national figure also **decreased**; dropping from 45.9% to 45.2% which equates to a 1.5% reduction from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

In 2024/25, Plymouth's average for those achieving a strong pass in English and Maths is 0.7pp **above** the National average (45.2%). Plymouth is **above** the statistical neighbour average of 43.5% but **below** the regional neighbour average of 46.0% (which increased from 23/24)

Provisional data released by the DfE for 2024/25 is showing that the average attainment 8 points score for KS4 pupils in Plymouth is 45.6. This is 0.6 points **lower** than the average in 2023/24 (46.2). The national figure has remained the **same** as in 2023/24 at 45.9 points. Plymouth is 0.3 points **below** the national (45.9) and 0.5 points **below** the regional neighbour average (46.1, an increase on 2023/24) but 0.7 points **above** the statistical neighbour (44.9) average.

In 2024/25, 25.4% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieved 'the basics' (5+ in English and Maths). This is a 6.7% **increase** from the 23.8% achieved in 2023/24; 1.6pp higher. When compared to the national average Plymouth is 0.2pp **lower** (25.6%), which is a smaller gap than that seen in 2023/24. The national average has **reduced** from 25.8% in 2023/24. The gap between Plymouth and National in 2023/24 was 1.9pp, in 2024/25 it is 0.2pp. Plymouth is 2.1pp **higher** than the statistical neighbour average (23.3%) and 1.5pp **higher** than the regional neighbour average (22.3%).

Although Plymouth is **below** the national average of FSM pupils achieving 'the basics', Plymouth's gap in achievement between FSM and non-FSM pupils has narrowed due to the larger **increase** in achievement of FSM pupils in 2024/25. In 2024/25 this is 27.7pp (53.1% - 25.4%) compared to 29.1pp (52.9% - 23.8%) in 2023/24. This is also positive in terms of the national gap which remained at 26.5pp in 2024/25 when compared to 2023/24 (52.3%-25.8% in 2023/24; 52.1%-25.6% in 2024/25). Despite the gap remaining the **same**, the national achievement of both FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils **reduced** on the previous year.

In 2024/25, 3.8% of pupils with an EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan) achieved 'the basics'. This is a reduction of 43.3% compared to 2023/24 (6.7%); 2.9pp lower. This is **below** the national average of 7.5% for EHCP pupils, regional neighbour average of 8% and the statistical neighbour average of 6.6% for EHCP pupils. National and regional benchmark groups have **increased** performance from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

In 2024/25, 24.9% of pupils receiving SEN (Special Educational Needs) Support achieved 'the Basics'. This is an increase of 1.6% compared to 2023/24 (24.5%); 0.4pp higher. This is **above** the national average of 22.3%, the regional neighbour average of 22.6% and the statistical neighbour average of 19.1% for pupils receiving SEN Support. National and regional benchmark groups have **increased** performance from 2023/24 to 2024/25.

Revised data for KS4 is due to be published in February 2026.

3. ANNEX 1: INDICATOR DEFINITIONS

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES
<p>Referrals & Re-Referrals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where concerns about a child have been raised to Children, Young People and Family Services, once the initial contact has been screened by our multi-agency hub, if appropriate, referrals will be accepted. The rate of referrals per 10,000 children is based on the number of referrals received in the 12-month period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. A re-referral is where we receive a new referral for a child within 12 months of a previous referral. The indicator is based on a rolling 12-month period (e.g., 01 December to 30 November).
<p>Children In Need – CIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the purposes of this report, the number of children within the CIN cohort are those that have been assessed as being in need (but not CP or LAC) and the number of children who are in the process of being assessed to understand their level of need. The rate of CIN per 10,000 children is based on the number of CIN at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities.
<p>Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - CP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Child Protection Plan should assess the likelihood of the child suffering harm and look at ways that the child can be protected. It should decide upon short and long term aims to reduce the likelihood of harm to the child and to protect the child's welfare, clarify people's responsibilities and actions to be taken; and outline ways of monitoring and evaluating progress. The rate of CP per 10,000 children is based on the number of CP at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. There are four categories for a Child Protection Plan; Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Emotional Abuse. The table shows the number and proportion under each category. The % of children subject to multiple child protection plans is the proportion of new Child Protection Plan starting within the period, which are for a child who has had a previous Child Protection Plan at any time in the child's lifetime. The indicator is based on a rolling 12-month period (e.g., the proportion of new Child Protection Plans that started in the period 01 December to 30 November).
<p>Looked After Children (also referred to as Children in Care) - LAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The table shows the number of Looked After Children at the end of the reporting period. The rate of LAC per 10,000 children is based on the number of LAC at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. The proportion of placements outside of the city is simply based on the postcode of the child's placement address. Those not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9 are considered outside of the city. For example, PL12 refers to Saltash in Cornwall, which could potentially be less than a mile from a child's home address, but it is outside of Plymouth. The figures provided for the placement types follow the Department for Education and Ofsted definitions, grouping multiple types into nine groups (for example, Family Placements contains six different placement types).
<p>Care Experienced (also referred to as Care Leavers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is deemed as 'Unsuitable' accommodation has been defined by the Department for Education. The following are examples of unsuitable accommodation: Bed and Breakfast / Emergency Accommodation, Prison, Temporary/No fixed abode/Street Homeless, Unknown/Not in Touch. The proportion of Care Experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training is based on our statutory service and therefore covers those young people ages 18 to 20. Whilst we work with Care Experienced young people aged 21 to 24, support is optional for the young person. Please note: The figures are likely to be different to the published Department for Education figures as they look at the age of the young person during the year at the period around their birthday and not at a specific snapshot.

EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS**Ofsted Outcomes**

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting schools and other social care services for children. There are four Ofsted ratings that a school can receive; Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate. These Ofsted grades are based on inspectors' judgements across four Ofsted categories – quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development of pupils, leadership and management as set out under the [Ofsted framework 2019](#).

Absence Monitoring

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance as set out in [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

Education, Employment or Training

The law requires all young people in England to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday, although in practice most young people continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. The responsibility and accountability for young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) lies with the local authority and is set out in [Participation Statutory Guidance](#). The Department for Education (DfE) monitors the performance of local authorities in delivering their duties, and specifically in their tracking and supporting of 16- and 17-year-olds.

Key Stage Four Outcomes

Key Stage 4 (KS4) is the legal term for the two years of school education which incorporate GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education). During this time, pupils must follow relevant programmes of study from the National Curriculum. At the end of this stage, pupils are entered for a range of external examinations. Following a phased introduction since 2017, GCSEs taken in 2020 and 2021 are all reformed GCSEs graded on a 9-1 scale. Two measures are commonly reported on at key stage four:

- percentage pupils achieving 5-9s at English and Maths GCSE in the city, and
- average Attainment 8 scores achieved by schools across the city.

Attainment 8 is calculated by adding together pupils' highest scores across eight government approved school subjects. While these numbers are not made publicly available on a pupil-by-pupil basis, scores taken from across a school year group are averaged to produce a school's overall score. The eight subjects are divided into three categories, called "buckets":

- Bucket 1 - English and maths, which are worth double marks, but English will only count for double marks if both English literature and English (i.e., English language) are taken. The higher grade of the two is used.
- Bucket 2 – The top three scores from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects taken, i.e. sciences, computer science, history, geography, and languages.
- Bucket 3 – The top three scores from remaining EBacc subjects or other government approved qualifications (e.g., other GCSEs or Level 2 Certificates in some technical subjects).

The grades are converted into points, put through a formula and finally out comes the school's Attainment 8 score.

Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) Timeliness

The time between the receipt of the request for an EHC needs assessment, and the outcome of that request being communicated to the parent, carer or young person must take no more than **6 weeks**. This is a statutory timeframe, [set out in legislation \(opens in new tab\)](#).

The whole process of EHC needs assessment and EHC plan development, from the point when an EHC needs assessment is requested (or a child or young person is brought to the local authority's attention) until any final EHC plan is issued, must take no more than **20 weeks**. [The relevant legislation \(opens in new tab\)](#) provides for exceptions to the time limits in certain situations.

4. ANNEX 2: OTHER SOURCES OF PUBLISHED INFORMATION

<p>Local authority interactive tool (LAIT)</p> <p>An interactive dashboard for comparing data about children and young people across all local authorities in England.</p>	<p>https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/local-authority-interactive-tool/</p>
<p>LG Inform</p> <p>The local area benchmarking tool from the Local Government Association</p>	<p>https://lginform.local.gov.uk/</p>
<p>GOV.UK - Explore education statistics</p> <p>Find related information and other statistical services provided by the Department for Education (DfE)</p>	<p>https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/</p>
<p>Children's Social Care - Outcomes and Enablers</p> <p>This dashboard displays data indicators to help both local and central government understand progress towards the outcomes and enablers set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework</p>	<p>https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/csc-outcomes-enablers/</p>

5. ANNEX 3: CURRENT STATISTICAL NEIGHBOURS

- Cornwall
- Dudley
- Gateshead
- Kirklees
- Medway
- Plymouth
- Rotherham
- Tameside
- Telford and Wrekin
- Torbay
- Wakefield

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	18 February 2026
Title of Report:	EARLY YEARS ENTITLEMENTS
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	April Davies (Service Manager Early Years and Childcare)
Contact Email:	april.davies@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	N/A
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

- To update the Panel on the current position and trends in Plymouth's uptake of the 30 hours early years funding entitlement (working parents).
- To set out barriers impacting up take and sufficiency.
- To update Scrutiny on the current position for Breakfast Clubs.
- To update Scrutiny on the role of CATERed in the provision of Breakfast Clubs.

Recommendations

- I. For the Panel to note the report.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This work directly supports The Plymouth Plan through improving school readiness and giving children the best start in life, reducing inequalities by targeting support to disadvantaged families and expanding provision in areas of lower childcare capacity. Strengthening communities through the growth of high quality early years and breakfast club provision and supporting Plymouth's inclusive economic growth by helping more parents access and sustain employment. It also reflects the Plan's commitment to integrated, partnership-based public services by working closely with providers, schools, PCC teams and national partners to improve access, affordability and quality of childcare across the city.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The expansion of early years entitlements continues to increase demand on the Early Years and Childcare Team, particularly around sufficiency planning, provider support, parental enquiries and funding administration. These pressures are further intensified by the national Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life plan, which places greater expectations on local authorities to improve Good Level of Development (GLD), expand access, improve quality and reduce inequalities. Recent staff retirements have also reduced capacity within the team, creating additional strain on remaining officers. While activity

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Sign off:

Fin	N/A	Leg	N/A	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Asset s	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
<p>Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Amanda Davis, Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills</p>											
<p>Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes</p> <p>Date agreed: 10/02/2026</p>											
<p>Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Cresswell approved via email.</p> <p>Date approved: 10/02/2026</p>											

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EARLY YEARS ENTITLEMENTS

30 hour uptake, barriers, Breakfast Clubs and CATERed.



1. SUMMARY

- To update Scrutiny on the current position and trends in Plymouth's uptake of the 30 hours early years funding entitlement (working parents).
- To set out barriers impacting uptake and sufficiency.
- To update Scrutiny on the current position for Breakfast Clubs.
- To update Scrutiny on the role of CATERed in the provision of Breakfast Clubs.

2. BACKGROUND

UK government policy makes clear that early years funding entitlements are a core mechanism for delivering the national ambition to give every child the best start in life.

The government's *Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life* strategy (2025) states that improving child development means making early education and childcare easier and cheaper for families, and ensuring children access high quality early learning from birth to age five.

More specifically, government policy includes:

- Expanding funded childcare entitlements, including up to *30 hours of funded childcare from 9 months old* for working parents, described as part of the "biggest expansion ever" to support access and affordability.
- Increasing additional funding streams such as the Early Years Pupil Premium (boosted by 45%) and enhanced SEND funding, to reduce developmental inequalities and ensure disadvantaged children benefit from high quality provision.
- Explicitly linking early years investment to the government's target that 75% of five year olds achieve a good level of development by 2028, making funded entitlements a key policy lever for improving school readiness.

In short

Government policy uses early years funding entitlements to deliver its core mission of giving every child the best start in life by:

- Removing cost barriers for families
- Expanding access to high quality early learning
- Targeting funding to reduce disadvantage
- Supporting school readiness and long term life chances

In more detail

Entitlement and expansion: Following the national expansion of early years entitlements, eligible working parents can now access up to 30 hours per week (1,140 hours per year) from the term after a child turns 9 months until school start, phased through 2024–2025 and fully live from September 2025.

Local authorities must administer and fund delivery through compliant early years provider markets.

Eligibility and codes: Eligibility is assessed via HMRC’s Childcare Service and approved applicants receive an 11 digit code.

Parents must reconfirm every 3 months to remain eligible, and providers must validate codes before offering funded places.

The local authority must secure free early years provision and, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare for working parents. The statutory guidance (from April 2025) reaffirms that 15/30 hours must be free at the point of use with no mandatory charges for the funded hours.

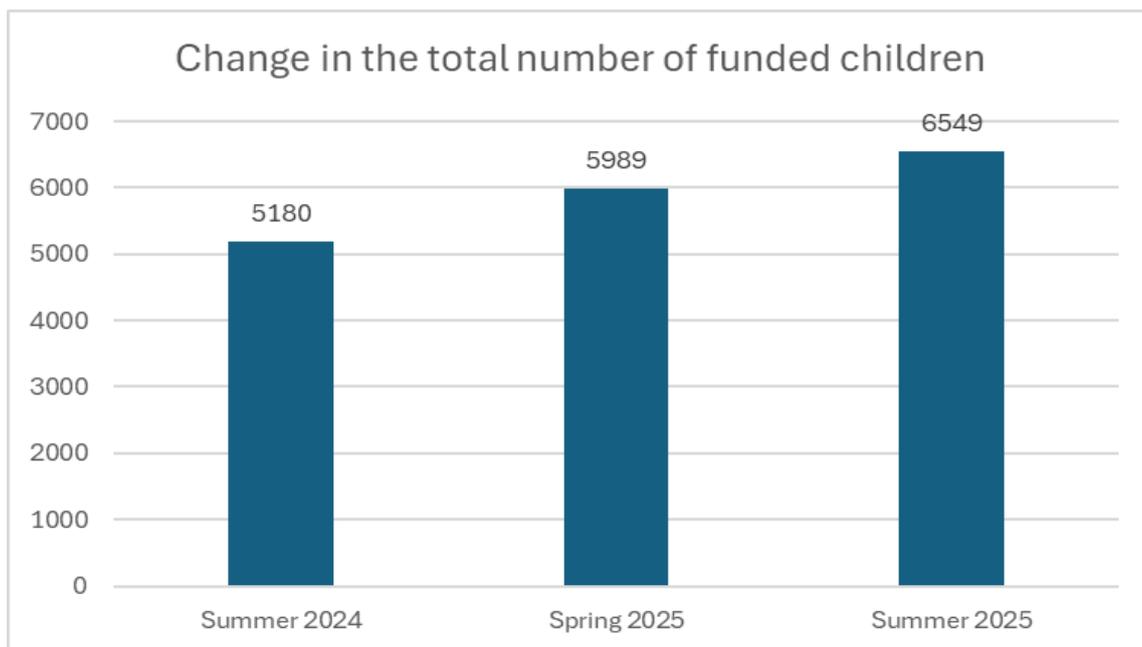
Plymouth’s Early Years Provider Portal supports headcount, checks for 30 hour codes, and census returns, underpinning local funding and monitoring sufficiency.

Breakfast Club expansion is also policy of central Government and Plymouth has welcomed expansion to support children with a good start to their day.

3. EARLY EDUCATION UPTAKE

Figures change on a regular basis and are confirmed following provider returns on the Early Years Census and Provider Portal. This information is therefore a ‘snapshot’ of the 30-hour entitlements for the last verified headcount data, collated in Summer 2025. The next headcount process is currently underway.

Timeline	Total Number of Funded Children
Summer 2024	5180
Spring 2025	5989
Summer 2025	6549
Number of additional children benefitting from a funded place	+1369



The number of children benefitting from an early education funded place has increased from 5180 to 6549. This means that over a period of twelve months from Summer 2024 to Summer 2025, 1369 more children were accessing an early education place. This is a 26.4% increase over a 12 month period. This

will increase again as 30 hours of childcare became available to all children from 9 months of age in September 2025. The full impact of this will not be known until the next validated headcount data collection during January 2026.

3.1 SUCCESSES AND PROGRESS

- The most recent parental survey from November 2025 indicated that there are sufficient childcare places across the city with 93% of respondents agreeing that they secured their first choice of provider.
- Childcare expansion in the city continues with new providers being supported by the Early Years Team. Three new providers opened in January 2026: one private day nursery, one school-based nursery and one childminder.
- The Early Years Team continues to explore new childcare opportunities and currently supports a new small nursery chain to secure premises and an existing provider in a Family Hub to expand their availability of baby places by working with teams across Plymouth City council, for example, our colleagues in Land and Property.
- A dedicated member of the Early Years Team supports childminders into the marketplace and works closely with the DWP, Job Centre Coaches and with careers services.
- The Early Years and Childcare team have supported four school-based nurseries opening for funded early years provision. Plympton St Mary Infants, Laira Green Primary and Boringdon Primary were each funded by the school-based nursery capital grant to open new provisions. Stuart Road Academy were also supported to reopen a nursery class within the school for children aged three and four.
- The local authority has further supported seventeen settings to expand, this includes two new private nursery settings due to open this term, one in Plymstock and one in Hartley. These settings have received capital funding from the expansion programme to support their projects to provide extended entitlements.

3.2 The Early Years and Childcare team are providing the following support, to ensure settings are delivering high quality sufficient childcare through the thirty hours initiative:

- Childcare Officers are visiting settings to provide an insight into the changing childcare market, with the increase in funding entitlements from nine months and the working families agenda. These are proving successful, and we have numerous businesses adapting their business models.
- PCC have commissioned Alison Roberts (Routeways) to visit settings to provide in depth and ongoing funded business support to the sector.
- The Safeguarding and Welfare team are visiting settings to support with enrolling younger children and the statutory requirements.
- The Early Years Improvement Officers are providing learning and development visits for settings who are planning to take younger children, to support settings to ensure their care for babies is in line with best practice.
- The Childcare Sufficiency Co-Ordinator is utilising and sharing sufficiency ward data to support settings with expansion and sustainability.
- Childcare officers are attending community events, speaking to parents about the extended childcare entitlements to ensure they are aware and engaging with the offer.
- Childcare officers are working in partnership with the Early Years Southwest Stronger Practice Hub to ensure early years colleagues, receive training to provide high quality early education

and childcare, which is essential for our ambitious targets to improve Good Levels of Development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- Early Years Improvement Officers provide comprehensive support to settings around SEND and administer SEND Inclusion Funding (SENIF) for the city. Over the past 12 months the SENIF fund has provided approximately 50,000 hours of additional funding for children with early SEND identification. This equates to approximately 9.5% of all funded children.

3.3 In March 2025, childcare officers hosted an event for all childcare providers titled *Early Years and Childcare Market Growth and Development*. The purpose of the event was to present supply and demand data and to support the sector in preparing for changes to childcare entitlements. Providers also received guidance on business models, marketing, and recruitment strategies.

In addition, a separate event was organised to support recruitment into the childcare sector. Its aim was to promote careers in early years and to attract new employees in response to the expanding entitlement offer.

This event attracted approximately 220 attendees. Four nurseries in the city attended to promote working in early years and childcare. The event advertised 59 positions available to apprentices, Level 2, Level 3 and managerial roles. A wide range of representation from across the city attended to advertise early years and childcare in the city, for example, early years providers, Routeways, City College, Marjon University, The University of Plymouth, DWP, Discovery College, Skills Achievement Training. The event immediately resulted in 3 new staff recruited to one PVI and 4 others interviewed at another PVI. There was also an increase in childminder recruitment interest with 4 attending an introduction to childminding session. We plan to run an annual event for recruitment.

4. SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND PROVIDERS

We have arranged for a few different routes to advertise the 30 hours of early years education funding to parents and support them in a variety of ways, some of which are described below:

- Plymouth City Council Facebook campaigns
- Instagram posts
- Improved Plymouth City Council webpage to direct parents to the Best Start in Life information and how to register with HMRC to receive a childcare code.
- Family Information Directory (FID) all providers are required to publish their early years and childcare information on our FID and parents are supported to use this to find out more about what is available in their area.
- An easy to-use online parental contact form has been developed on the Early Years section of the PCC website. If a parent makes contact our team provides individual support to help parents find a place or to resolve any problems, they have with how to apply for funding or if they need our support to resolve a complaint with their childcare provider. This can also be used by any professional supporting the family, for example, a work coach, social worker or Family Hub.

We also have access to a commissioned service specially designed to support parents with their childcare called Plymouth Childcare Possibilities.

Wraparound Care

4 years and older. Breakfast clubs, after school clubs and tax free childcare allowances.



Wraparound Childcare in Plymouth



Early Years

9 Months to 4 years old. Nurseries, day-care, preschool, childminding and your funded childcare entitlement.

Early Years Childcare in Plymouth!

5. BARRIERS AND CONCERNS

5.1 Flexibility and Cost

Issues around flexibility of childcare was highlighted by parents in the annual survey with 40.1% of respondents saying their childcare is not flexible for their needs.

These are some quotes from the most recent parent survey:

‘Nursery only take maximum 6 hours funding per day.’

‘Funding means limited times.’

‘Set hours for the funding.’

‘The rules (Statutory Guidance) mean you cannot use the funded hours when I would need them, funded hours must be taken at certain times.’

‘The cost isn’t the worst thing; it’s the inflexibility that’s the issue.’

Childcare Officers are closely monitoring this issue and have developed a database of providers we believe may be contravening statutory guidance. We are actively challenging these cases. While the majority of providers operate within the legal framework, some practices do not align with the *spirit* of the guidance, particularly where restrictions limit when parents can access their free funded hours. Many providers have been receptive to reviewing and adapting their business models; however, a minority continue to apply legally permitted, but restrictive, attendance patterns.

In response, the Service Manager for Early Years and Childcare has provided detailed feedback to the DfE on how the current wording of statutory guidance reduces flexibility for parents and creates challenges around charging. The Early Years Service Manager, Childcare Sufficiency Officer, and Expansion and Wraparound Officer meet monthly with our link DfE officer, ensuring a strong and regular channel for raising local concerns. Parental complaint themes have been shared with the DfE charging team, and further discussions have taken place with the head of policy to highlight the wider impacts on families and providers. We now await the updated statutory guidance expected in Spring 2026 and are hopeful that feedback from Plymouth, alongside other local authorities, providers and families, will lead to improved flexibility and lower costs for parents.

5.2 Parental awareness & complexity:

Despite national campaigns, families report confusion around eligibility thresholds, application windows, and reconfirmation cycles, leading to some delayed starts or gaps between terms. We have mitigated this using social media campaigns, working with providers to ensure they explain funding start dates and headcount information on their application paperwork.

5.3 Affordability:

Although funded hours must be free, variations in chargeable extras and flexibility patterns between providers can deter take up for lower income families if not clearly explained. To address this, we work with the Department for Work and Pensions, who share lists of families eligible for FRAS (Me2) funding, and our team contacts these parents directly to ensure they understand their entitlements. We also work closely with local job centres to support parents who have been charged for optional items and to help resolve complaints. Where providers apply inappropriate charges, we scrutinise their policies, meet with them, and usually secure changes to bring them in line with statutory guidance. Unfortunately, some providers are applying legal attendance patterns or charges which we do not consider to be within the spirit of the statutory guidance. We have also trained DWP work coaches to recognise non compliant charges, and they now approach our team for support when concerns arise.

5.4 Access:

Variability in local capacity, particularly among childminders and in baby rooms, means travel times and availability differ between wards. Childcare Officers are working with providers in priority wards identified through the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment to help them adapt their business models, for example by increasing the number of baby places or identifying funding to support expansion or refurbishment. We also meet monthly with PCC Land and Property colleagues to identify potential premises and expansion opportunities and have recently supported a Family Hub based setting by negotiating rent adjustments to enable them to expand their baby room and improve long term sustainability. This joined up approach is essential to strengthening childcare sufficiency across the city.

5.6 Administration:

Occasional issues with code validation and timing mismatches, such as parents receiving codes after headcount deadlines, can delay children starting their funded place. While local guidance on the Early Years Provider Portal helps to reduce these problems, it cannot remove them entirely. We are continuing to work with settings to ensure they understand these timescales and can clearly explain them to parents.

5.7 Inequality:

The expansion of childcare has primarily benefited working families, which creates an inherent inequality for some of the most disadvantaged children who only qualify for 15 hours of funded early education. To mitigate this, the Service Manager for Early Years and Childcare ensures social workers, the Virtual School and the SEN Inclusion Service are aware of discretionary or locally applied funding options that may be available in specific cases. She meets monthly with the Head of the Virtual School to identify children not currently attending an early years setting, and this information is shared with social work teams alongside an offer of support to secure an appropriate placement. Early Years Improvement Officers also work closely with the SEN Inclusion Service to identify suitable settings for children with SEND and provide training and support to help providers be inclusive.

Although there are challenges to accessing early years education for some families, the Early Years and Childcare Team has a strong and proactive action plan in place and increasing numbers of children in the city are now attending high quality early years settings. Over the past year, the number of children benefitting from a funded early education place has risen by 26.4%, and we expect this growth to continue throughout 2026. We remain committed to addressing the barriers identified above and to ensuring even more children can access the early education and support they need to thrive.

6. ARE SCHOOLS HAVING TO FILL FUNDING GAPS FOR BREAKFAST CLUBS?

The breakfast club early adopter schools have an opportunity to inform the roll-out of breakfast clubs on a national scale and bring the new breakfast club programme to their schools early, supporting them to secure the best results for their pupils and families. Plymouth currently has five schools selected that became early adopters, they have access to government funding to deliver free and universal breakfast clubs. The early adopter schools have the flexibility in how they deliver their breakfast club in a way that works for them and will receive support to help them do so. The initial five Plymouth schools were all proactive and positive in delivering the scheme and are each delivering with a model that meets the needs of the children, families and school.

The Wraparound Childcare Officer has been supporting and visiting the schools to hear about the successes and challenges as a direct result of the early adopter scheme. They note, children are thriving academically and socially, having a nutritious breakfast with a soft start to the day, ensuring they are ready to learn. For families the free breakfast clubs mean help with childcare at no extra costs allowing parents to get to work and, in some cases, find new employment. The nutritious breakfast provided also supports families with the cost of living. The positive impact on punctuality and attendance is already being seen in the schools at this early stage which is a testament to the scheme and the school's enthusiasm.

In July 2025 a briefing note was put together by the Wraparound Childcare Officer, and sent to Minister Morgan, in which they highlighted the challenge of the funding:

Plymouth is seeing many positives for children, families and schools; however, it is key to note that schools are finding some constraints and barriers. Headteachers and Trusts are raising concerns about the funding rate and the long term sustainability of the scheme. The smaller schools are finding it difficult to run the scheme without a deficit, and funding in arrears provides another barrier for these schools and private providers. The breakfast food costs as well as sourcing healthy, nutritious food has proved difficult, however, while schools have been resourceful to overcome this challenge, it will need more consideration for full roll out of the scheme.

In November 2025, the government announced an increase in funding for free breakfast clubs as part of the next application window for schools joining the programme from April 2026. The per-child funding rate for mainstream schools will rise from 60p to £1. Schools will also receive a guaranteed £25 per day to cover staffing and administrative costs, and the one off set-up grant will increase from £500 to £1,000. Government estimates indicate that, for an average sized school with 50 per cent take up, this represents a 28 per cent increase in the total funding package. These changes directly reflect feedback from local authorities and schools during the test and learn phase, which highlighted the inadequacy of previous funding levels.

A further five schools have been invited to join the adopter scheme from April 2026. The Wraparound Childcare Officer will visit and work closely with all ten schools, engaging in discussions regarding both the benefits and the challenges of the scheme, and reporting these findings back to the department.

7. CATERED, WHAT IS THE PLAN?

In May 2025, a discussion took place between the Wraparound Childcare Officer and the Managing Director of CATERed regarding the potential for partnership working in the delivery of the food provision for breakfast clubs. CATERed advised that, due to the funding rate, they were unable to participate, as they considered the level of funding to be insufficient.

Following the announcement of an increased funding rate in November 2025, the Wraparound Childcare Officer made further contact. However, at that time, CaterED was in the process of making decisions concerning the future of the company, and therefore could not progress the partnership discussions.

The Board of Directors for CATERed has made the decision to cease operating both its school meals service and its community meals service due to financial pressures. Rising food, energy and staffing costs, combined with challenging levels of funding for free school meals, has led to the company becoming unsustainable. The Council has provided support to allow the school meals service to continue until July 2026, and the community meals service will end in February 2026 when the Council's subsidy for this element comes to an end.

Schools now have time to identify alternative providers or make in house arrangements for meals from the 2026/27 academic year. CATERed staff working in schools are expected to transfer to new providers or remain with their schools. Around 150 adults currently receiving community meals will be supported to find alternative provision.

Both Cabinet Members and CATERed's leadership have expressed regret, recognising the high-quality service CATERed has provided over the past decade and the difficult financial context that has forced this decision. The full announcement about CATERed can be found by following the embedded link below.

[CATERed to cease services | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#)

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	18 February 2026
Title of Report:	School Assessments and Standards Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Graham Roser
Contact Email:	Graham.rosier@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	2025 Attainment Report
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of educational outcomes in academic year 2024/25.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the key challenges and current work programmes are noted and the priorities endorsed. This is just to ensure that Scrutiny are happy with the progress and plans for the next steps.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The report is for information only

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

It aligns with the Corporate Plan priorities of “A Caring Council” and “A Growing City” by supporting our work to ensure that every child receives a suitable education and appropriate support, regardless of setting. Additionally, it contributes to the Plymouth Plan’s strategic objectives with regards to educational attainment, reducing inequalities, and strengthening community resilience through collaborative approaches to education and welfare.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Improving attainment has direct and indirect implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and future resource allocation. Higher attainment is typically associated with stronger school performance, improved attendance, and reduced demand for costly interventions such as alternative provision, statutory assessments, high-needs support, and social care involvement, helping to mitigate long-term budget pressures. Conversely, persistent low attainment can increase financial risks across the system, driving up expenditure on early help, SEND provision, and targeted education support, as well as creating pressures within the High Needs Block. Investment in early intervention, teaching quality, inclusion, and targeted programmes for disadvantaged pupils can therefore create cost avoidance over time by reducing the need for more intensive and expensive services. As a result, attainment trends must be considered a core component of medium-term financial planning, with resource decisions aligned to evidence-based strategies that both improve outcomes and strengthen financial sustainability.

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Sign off:

Fin	N/A	Leg	N/A	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Asset s	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Amanda Davis (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills)

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes
Date agreed: 10/02/2026

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Cresswell approved via email.
Date approved: 09/02/2026

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES EDUCATION PARTICIPATION & SKILLS

2025 SCHOOL ASSESSMENT STANDARDS REPORT

Early Years, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 validated data

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Education, Participation and Skills Service has the key responsibility within the Council for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on annual standards of attainment and achievement in all Plymouth schools. This report is shared within the Council and with key stakeholders in education so that trends and priorities can be used to effectively support school improvement work and positively impact future outcomes for children.

In Plymouth, many children achieve excellent outcomes, and there are examples of great successes in our schools. However, this is not consistent across all schools or within individual schools for all pupil groups, and so there is always need for improvement. Many factors impact children's attainment and school contexts vary. In some cases children start at lower baselines than others and need to make accelerated progress to overcome barriers and reach expected standards by key points in their learning journeys.

In Key Stage 2 (KS2), the end of the primary phase, the DfE have not yet resumed publication of national progress measures following the pandemic, (primary phase progress from 2026 will be measured from the Reception Baseline Assessment to end of year 6) meaning that for 2025 we still need to consider school contexts (and school level data) which may highlight children who, starting from low baselines, have made good progress, whilst perhaps not reaching end of KS2 national standards; these pupils will be pivotal for continued boosting in key stage 3. Similarly in Key Stage 4 (KS4), when pupils at the age of 16 take qualifications such as GCSEs, there has been no publication of progress measures. This is due to this cohort of pupils being in year 6 at the time of the first national lockdown in 2020. As such there were no SATs taken to provide benchmarking. Further detail is included within this report.

The key driver in all our schools remains focused on enabling every child to achieve their full potential. We have high aspirations for all Plymouth children, with a particular focus where disadvantage and barriers to achievement exists. Across the city, we work in strong, productive partnerships to ensure consistent high quality learning opportunities for all pupils, deploying creative solutions and flexible approaches that ensure belonging and inclusion. Within Children's services, whilst we prioritise strengthening support for children with SEN and social care needs, we must also maintain a broad focus on school improvement that recognises all barriers, and successfully increases rates of progress for every child, raising aspiration and breaking cycles of poverty and disadvantage.

This report follows a previous summary of the collective performance of schools in the city for academic year 2024-5 based final validated Ks2, KS4 and post 16 data. Section 3 relates to Children in care across these areas.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**Early Years Summary and Next Steps**

While there have been improvements across the board it remains of vital importance for every part of the system to have a focus on securing the strongest possible outcomes for these children as it is essential that they form views of themselves as capable learners, within strong nurturing conditions.

Within the PCC Education, participation and Skills team there is a renewed focus on Early years and specifically the identification of SEN and where appropriate early implementation of EHCPs along with associated support and training for staff and parents. This will be delivered in partnership with all areas within Children's services and respond to the 'Best Start in Life' initiative launched during 2025.

Across the city the strongest ELGs against national averages are:

- Numerical patterns.
- Number
- Comprehension

The strongest performing child characteristic groups against national averages are:

- Children eligible for free school meals:
- Children who have special educational needs support
- Female children

The areas within the ELG that have been identified to focus on are:

- Managing self
- Self-regulation
- Building relationships

To help with the delivery of the ambitious targets within the Best Start in Life plans, high-performing schools and settings will be identified, exploring what's driving their success. These insights will be used to support others in the area and scale good practice. In addition, peer learning/ joint CPD sessions between settings will be facilitated to share effective practice and build capacity.

KS2 Summary and Next Steps

Outcomes at the end of KS2 continue to improve year on year across all key benchmarks across the city, whilst there continues to be distinct variance across schools. In the highest attaining schools as many as 91% of children achieve the expected standard across reading, writing and maths combined, in the lowest attaining as few as 27% meet this national standard. Disparity amongst schools is not always aligned with context, mobility or low cohort numbers, and therefore, working towards securing consistency in teaching standards across the city must be a key driver in the future citywide education improvement agenda.

English writing continues to be the subject area most in need to strengthening, however there are strong foundations to be built upon as city outcomes in early phonics continue to be above national average and most schools include oracy across the curriculum. Developing deeper learning so that more girls achieve the higher standard in maths is also an area for development. These subject specific improvements can easily be addressed through schools sharing models of best practice in terms of what works well.

Most notably, economically disadvantaged children make up a significant percentage of the cohort in most of our mainstream schools, and pupil achievement gaps are greatest amongst children eligible for FSM. Without further improvements for disadvantaged children across key measures it is unlikely that as a city we can excel in standards that are noticeably above national averages. Strengthening school-based practice so that these children are consistently pivotal in teaching and progress monitoring, within curriculum that engage learners in meaningful ways, and engaging parents so that aspirations are raised is key to reducing citywide disadvantage, and this can be achieved by creating opportunities for all schools to learn from those who excel in this area.

KS4 Summary and Next steps

With no progress measure available this year there is no accounting for context in terms of outcomes against pupils' ability. In comparison to 2024 the performance of schools has fallen slightly in terms of overall attainment, where nationally it remained consistent, while there was also a drop in the Basics 5+ (English and maths) measure in the city, this matches a drop nationally, but Plymouth had a stronger figure than national. In comparison to statistical neighbours, Plymouth has performed better in the majority of the key benchmarks. Only being lower in the soon to be scrapped EBacc measure. Nationally the overall attainment 8 figure has fallen since 2019 (pre pandemic) by 0.8pp where as in Plymouth this figure has increased by 1.9pp.

When context such as ethnicity is considered, with the proportion of white pupils in the 2025 cohort being 89% this group is in line with their peers nationally in attainment 8 and better in both Basics measures. For the pupils that were non-white, this cohort exceeded the performance of their peers nationally.

In terms of the other key groups of children that are disadvantaged or those with SEN, they also performed in line with or better than these cohorts nationally. While the disadvantaged cohort had a lower attainment 8 average they performed better than national figures in the Basics measure (4+ & 5+). They also outperformed the same cohort within statistical neighbours in all 3 measures. Children with SEN also performed better than their peers both nationally and within statistical neighbours in all measures.

However, it should be noted that children with an EHCP did not match the performance of their peers either nationally or statistical neighbours. While it is a small cohort and so subject to significant fluctuation this is an area to be explored in more detail with further improvements still need to be made.

KS5 Summary and Next Steps

While we await the publication of final validated outcomes which will include value added data comment can only be made on attainment, which with reduced cohort size is susceptible to variation year on year as cohorts vary. The largest Level 3 qualification type in the city is A levels with 943 pupils with 586 pupils taking Applied General Qualifications. The smallest cohort with 124 pupils is Tech Levels. This pattern mirrors the national picture but in Plymouth a larger proportion undertake Applied General qualifications. This greater focus on vocational reflects the developing needs within the city.

The overall performance of pupils in both A-level qualifications and Applied General qualifications has improved compared to the previous year but is below national performance, however the performance of this cohort in terms of attainment at GCSE (2023) was also below national performance. When Value Added (contextualised for prior performance) data is available this will give an indication of the progress made by this cohort.

While the performance within Tech Level qualifications has dropped slightly this is within a small cohort and variability is expected and definitive outcomes cannot be drawn.

The performance of groups within the cohort (Disadvantaged and SEN) are variable, with increases in some areas but decreases in others. Generally, in comparison with national the attainment is lower within the city, but as noted above this is to be expected with lower starting points. However, it should be noted that as is the case at KS4 (GCSE) children with an EHCP did not match the performance of their peers. Again, while it is a small cohort and so subject to significant fluctuation this is an area to be explored in more detail with further improvements still need to be made.

Children in Care

EYFS

In total this cohort consists of 15 children, 9 of whom are boys (60%) and six (40%) are girls

Next Steps

- Improve the rigour around tracking progress from nursery onwards, identifying children at risk of not achieving GLD early.
- In discussions with schools, advocate for evidence-based early years interventions (e.g. NELI, Early Talk Boost) in settings with children in care.
- Through PEP meeting discussions ensure smooth transitions into Reception with enhanced support for children in care, including summer visits, social stories, and key person continuity where possible.
- Education Advocates to attend all PEP meetings ensuring targets and pupil premium funding focuses on priority needs

Primary CiC - KS2 SATS

This cohort consists of 32 children in care. The gender distribution is significantly girl dominant with 22 girls and 10 boys. The 2024–25 Key Stage 2 SATs results for Children in Care (CiC) in Plymouth show that outcomes are broadly in line with national averages for looked-after children.

Next Steps

- Education Advocates to attend all PEP meetings and especially monitor the progress of children living out of area and boys ensuring targets and pupil premium funding closely focus on priority needs.
- Improve the rigour around tracking progress across KS2, identifying children at risk of not achieving expected standards as early as possible.

Key Stage Four Year 11 CIC Results

Summary

The cohort for the academic year 2024/2025 was 64 Y11 pupils. This included 5 Separated (Unaccompanied) Asylum-Seeking children (UASC).

- There is a continuing trend towards pupils being entered for GCSE English Language only when the student is finding English challenging.
- The percentage of boys achieving a Grade 4 or above in Literature was the same as last year, however improved performance by girls (11% last year and 19% this year) contributed to an overall improvement in total achieving a Grade 4 or above.
- In English Language there was an increase in the performance of boys, girls and those without an EHCP from last year.
- The outcomes in English literature for those attending Plymouth mainstream rose to 38%, a full 30% increase from last year.
- These improvements are attributed to additional Pupil Premium Plus funding for each student in Year 11 to for additional tuition

SECTION I: EARLY YEARS & PRIMARY PHASE

EARLY YEARS OUTCOMES 2024-25

A quick guide to Early Years statutory assessment measures

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is a statutory data collection. Each child's records are combined at local authority and national level to produce a National Statistics publication. The EYFSP measures the achievement of children (at emerging or expected standards) across 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) within 7 overarching areas of development: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; physical development; literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive arts and design. Attainment of children in the EYFSP provides us useful information showing the starting point of children in different schools and localities.

Year 1 phonics screening check is a statutory assessment designed to confirm whether pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard (represented by a score of 32). It identifies pupils who need extra help to improve their decoding skills and is a useful measure in identifying early progress in both reading and writing. Outcomes are published annually showing the average achievement of each primary school.

EARLY YEARS DATA HEADLINES:

- There were 2545 children in the city, included in the data analysis for Good Level of Development GLD in 2025.
- 67.4% (1685) of children achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of their Reception year, an **improvement** of 0.7% from last year's average 66.7% and moving closer to national average 68.3%.
- Year 1 Phonics Screening Check (PSC) outcomes remain strong with 82.6% (2102) achieving the expected standard, an **increase** on 2024 city average 81.2%, and national average 80%.
- Children achieved **better** in both literacy and maths ELGs with 70.1% (1784) at expected standard in literacy (previous year 69.1%) and 78.9% (2008) in maths (previous year 77.6%)
- Children eligible for Free School Meals with a GLD was 52.3% which is 1.0pp **above** the national average of 51.3%.
- Children with SEN performed **less well** than nationally with 3.4% of children with an EHCP having a GLD compared to 4.0% nationally and 26.1% of children with SEN Support having GLD compared to 26.4% nationally.

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check (PSC)

- 82.6% of Year 1 pupils achieved the required standard (score 32) in the PSC (an improvement on previous year city 81.2%)
- 51.8% of children achieved a higher score (between 37- 40 marks) signifying strength in phonics across the city
- Positive outcomes in this area reflect the continued legacy of the Plymouth Oracy Project rolled out across the city by PTSA and generally strong practice in the teaching of early phonics, leading to an expectation of continued progress impacting on end of KS2 English writing outcomes.

Early Years Summary and Next Steps

While there have been improvements across the board it remains of vital importance for every part of the system to have a focus on securing the strongest possible outcomes for these children as it is essential that they form views of themselves as capable learners, within strong nurturing conditions.

Within the PCC Education, participation and Skills team there is a renewed focus on Early years and specifically the identification of SEN and where appropriate early implementation of EHCPs along with associated support and training for staff and parents. This will be delivered in partnership with all areas within Children's services and respond to the 'Best Start in Life' initiative launched during 2025.

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Key Stage 2

END OF KS2 OUTCOMES 2024-25:

A quick guide to Key Stage 2 statutory assessment measures

Progress measures - progress from Reception to end of KS2 is measured using the **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)**, a short online test children take during their first term in the Reception class – results of this test are not published but are used only as the primary phase progress measure starting point. DfE will resume publication of progress measures using this method in 2026.

End of Key Stage 2 national curriculum assessments are statutory measures of primary pupils' progress and attainment in English, maths and science. Formal tests (SATs) measure attainment at working towards standard, at expected standard, or working at greater depth within the standard in English reading and maths, and teacher assessment judgements made against the DfE KS2 Teacher Assessment Frameworks, measure achievement of pupils working

in English writing and Science. The following codes are used to describe attainment: WTS - working towards the standard; EXS – working at expected standard; GDS – working at greater depth within the standard. Teacher assessment in English writing is externally moderated each year.

School results are published by DfE to enable comparison between schools and across localities. The national average used to identify schools giving cause for concern is based on schools with a percentage of pupils failing to reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined below the national average for that year. DfE use end of KS2 data results to calculate baselines for future Progress 8 scores and may use aggregated data to inform future policy and direct support and resources where it is needed.

KS2 DATA HEADLINES (measured using all Plymouth state-funded school)

Overall attainment for all pupils

- There were 2973 eligible pupils at the end of KS2 in the city in 2025
- 65% (1932) of pupils achieved EXS in reading, writing and maths combined, a local increase of 0.5% on the previous year and 2pp above the national figure of national 63%. 8% (238) at GDS, in line with national and a city increase of 0.7% on the previous year
- 75% (2230) (nat. 76%) achieved EXS in English reading, with 32%(951) achieving GDS (nat. 34%)
- 63%(1873) (nat. 73%) achieved EXS in English writing, with 12% (357) achieving GDS (nat. 13%)
- 74%(2200) (nat. 75%) achieved EXS in maths, with 26% (773) achieving GDS (nat. 27%)

Key points – overall attainment highlights English writing as a focus for subject level improvement

Gender – 52% (1546) boys 48% (1427) girls amongst all pupils

- In combined R, W, M 63% (974) of boys achieved EXS (nat. 59%) compared to 67% of girls (nat. 66%). Gap city 4%, nat. 7%.
- In reading 73% of boys achieved EXS (nat. 73%) compared to 78% (nat.79%) of girls, with 31% (nat. 32%) of boys and 33% (nat. 36%) of girls at GDS.
- In writing 60% (nat. 67%) of boys achieved EXS compared to 65% (nat. 79%) of girls, with 11% (nat.10%) of boys and 13% (nat. 16%) of girls at GDS.
- In maths 75% (nat. 75%) of boys achieved EXS compared to 74% (nat. 74%) of girls, with 30% (nat. 31%) of boys and 21% (nat. 22%) of girls at GDS.

Key points - In terms of gender overall, outcomes compare favourably with national averages. Boys achieve slightly less well in reading and writing with attainment gaps of -5% at EXS and -2% at GDS. In maths girls achieve slightly less by -1% at EXS but there is a greater gap of -10% at GDS.

Strengthening opportunities for deeper learning amongst girls in maths is recommended.

FSM - 32% (951) of all pupils

- In combined R, W, M 52%(494) of FSM pupils achieved EXS (nat. 48%) compared to 71% (nat. 69%) non-FSM, with 4% (nat. 4%) of FSM and 10% (nat. 11%) on non-FSM at GDS.
- In reading 64% (nat. 64%) FSM achieved EXS compared to 80% (nat. 81%) non-FSM, with 21% (nat. 21%) FSM and 38% (nat. 39%) non-FSM at GDS.
- In writing 63% (nat. 60%) FSM achieved EXS compared to 79% (nat. 78%) non-FSM, with 6% (nat. 7%) FSM and 14% (nat. 16%) non-FSM at GDS.
- In maths 62% (nat. 61%) FSM achieved EXS compared to 81% (nat. 81%) non-FSM, with 13% (nat. 15%) FSM and 32% (nat. 32%) non-FSM at GDS.

Key points - Across all areas of learning, FSM children present as being most disadvantaged locally (and nationally) with significant gaps in attainment. In combined R, W, M at EXS the gap for FSM achievement is -19% (nat. -21%) and -6% (nat. -7%) at GDS. Locally, in reading at EXS the FSM gap is -17%, in writing -16% and in maths -19.

Identifying FSM children as pivotal pupils with regard to progress monitoring and intervention is recommended as a key priority.

PUPIL PREMIUM – 38% (1130) of all pupils (national comparators not available)

- In combined R, W, M 56% (633) of PP pupils achieved EXS compared to 71% non-PP, with 4% PP and 10% non-PP at GDS.
- In reading 67% PP achieved EXS compared to 80% non-PP, with 24% PP and 38% non-PP at GDS.
- In writing 66% PP achieved EXS compared to 79% non-PP, with 7% PP and 15% non-PP at GDS.
- In maths 64% PP achieved EXS compared to 81% non-PP, with 16% PP and 32% non-PP at GDS.

Key points - The Pupil Premium gaps we see here in city data reflect those noted above for FSM children: in combined R, W, M at EXS the gap for PP achievement is -15% (and -6% at GDS; in reading at EXS the PP gap is -14%, in writing -13% and in maths -16.

This data again highlights economic disadvantage as a key priority in education.

SEN – 24% (714) of all pupils

- In combined R, W, M 26% (186) (nat. 24%) children with special educational needs (SEN) achieved EXS, compared to 77% non-SEN (nat. 74%) and 6% (nat. 9%) children with EHCPs.
- 1% (nat. 2%) SEN achieved GDS in combined R, W, M compared to 10% (nat. 10%) non-SEN and 1% (nat. 1%) of children with an EHCP
- In reading 43% (nat. 43%) SEN achieved EXS, 85% (nat. 88%) non-SEN (gap -42%) and 12% (nat. 16%) of children with an EHCP. 15% (nat. 13%) SEN, 38% (nat. 40%) non-SEN, and 4% (nat. 6%) (EHCP achieved GDS.

- In writing 35% (nat. 32%) SEN achieved EXS, 87% (nat. 85%) non-SEN (gap -52%) and 7% (nat. 11%) of children with an EHCP. 2% (nat. 3%) SEN, 15% (nat. 16%) non-SEN, and 1% (nat. 1%) EHCP achieved GDS
- In maths 40% (nat. 40%) SEN achieved EXS, 85% (nat. 85%) non-SEN (gap - 45%) and 11% of children with an EHCP. 9% (nat. 9%) SEN, 31% (32%) non-SEN, 3% (nat. 4%) EHCP achieved GDS

Key points - In all categories local and national outcomes for children with SEN are closely aligned with no areas showing significant difference despite gaps in attainment (many of which will be impacted by individual need/characteristics).

EAL (English as an Additional Language) - 11% (327) of all pupils

- 71%(232) (nat. 66%) of children with EAL achieved EXS in R, W, M combined, compared to 64% (nat. 62%) non-EAL, with 11% (nat. 10%) EAL and 8% (nat. 8%) non-EAL at GDS
- In reading 76% (nat. 76%) EAL achieved EXS compared to 75% (nat.76%) non-EAL with 30% (nat. 31%) EAL and 33% (nat. 34%) non-EAL at GDS
- In writing 82% (nat. 75%) EAL achieved EXS compared to 73% (nat. 72%) non-EAL with 30% (nat. 34%) EAL and 33% (nat. 34%) non-EAL at GDS
- In maths 82% (nat. 79%) EAL achieved EXS compared to 74% (nat. 73%) non-EAL with 31% (nat. 33%) EAL and 25% (nat. 25%) at GDS

Key points - Overall, EAL attainment at EXS is either in line with or above national averages in all areas reflecting accelerated progress amongst children who are largely new arrivals to the UK during the primary phase.

KS2 Summary and Next Steps

Outcomes at the end of KS2 continue to improve year on year across all key benchmarks across the city, whilst there continues to be distinct variance across schools. In the highest attaining schools as many as 91% of children achieve the expected standard across reading, writing and maths combined, in the lowest attaining as few as 27% meet this national standard. Disparity amongst schools is not always aligned with context, mobility or low cohort numbers, and therefore, working towards securing consistency in teaching standards across the city must be a key driver in the future citywide education improvement agenda.

English writing continues to be the subject area most in need to strengthening, however there are strong foundations to be built upon as city outcomes in early phonics continue to be above national average and most schools include oracy across the curriculum. Developing deeper learning so that more girls achieve the higher standard in maths is also an area for development. These subject specific improvements can easily be addressed through schools sharing models of best practice in terms of what works well.

Most notably, economically disadvantaged children make up a significant percentage of the cohort in most of our mainstream schools, and pupil achievement gaps are greatest amongst children eligible for FSM. Without further improvements for disadvantaged children across key measures it is unlikely that as a city we can excel in standards that are noticeably above national averages. Strengthening school-based practice so that these children are consistently pivotal in

teaching and progress monitoring, within curriculum that engage learners in meaningful ways, and engaging parents so that aspirations are raised is key to reducing citywide disadvantage, and this can be achieved by creating opportunities for all schools to learn from those who excel in this area.

SECTION 2: SECONDARY PHASE

KEY STAGE 4

Specific 2025 Context

The GCSE results in 2025 should be seen in the context of a highly unusual educational journey for this year group.

These pupils were in Year 6 at the time of the first national lockdown in March 2020, which meant their final months of primary education and the transition into secondary school were both severely disrupted.

- No Key Stage 2 SATs were taken in 2020, so this cohort entered secondary school without the usual baseline data.
- Their Year 7 experience was also heavily affected by continued lockdowns and restrictions, with significant periods of remote learning and limited access to in-person teaching and wider school life.
- As a result, this is the first GCSE cohort without progress measures such as Progress 8. The Department for Education will not publish these figures because there is no Key Stage 2 baseline against which to measure progress from age 11 to 16.

This means that the 2025 results will be reported on attainment only (for example, the percentage achieving grade 4 and 5 or above in both English and Maths). Attainment provides an important snapshot, but on its own it does not capture the progress pupils have made, nor the challenges many of them faced in their disrupted early secondary years.

It is particularly important to recognise that Plymouth is a city of contrasts. Outcomes are strongly shaped by the community context in which schools operate. Schools serving communities with high levels of deprivation, poverty and additional barriers to learning may show lower raw attainment compared with those in more affluent areas. Normally, progress measures help to balance this picture, demonstrating the gains schools achieve for pupils irrespective of their starting points. With no progress data available this year, the risk is that comparisons will unfairly favour schools in more advantaged areas.

In short, these results provide a useful picture of attainment, but they must be interpreted with caution. They should not be seen as a straightforward reflection of school performance. What is not clearly visible in the national statistics is the hard work of pupils and staff, the resilience shown by this cohort, and the progress many young people have made despite the disruption and challenges of their educational journey.

A quick guide to Key Stage 4 assessment measures

Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across 8 qualifications including mathematics (double weighted) and English (double weighted), 3 further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure and 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list. Each individual grade a pupil achieves is assigned a point score, which is then used to calculate a pupil's Attainment 8 score

The **Basics measure (EM 4+ & 5+)** provides the percentage of children achieving either grades 4 – 9 or grades 5 – 9 in both English and maths. A pass at grade 4 is considered a standard pass, a pass at grade 5 is considered a strong pass.

Note: There is no **Progress 8** measure this year as there were no Key Stage 2 SATs were taken in 2020 to provide a baseline.

END OF KS4 OUTCOMES 2024-25:

Total number of pupils at the end of Key stage 4: 2873

Throughout this summary for KS4 outcomes, National data has been based on outcomes for *all* state-funded maintained schools (NCER*). Plymouth schools' data has been based only on maintained schools.

*NCER – National Consortium for Examination Results

Plymouth maintained overall outcomes 2025

	Plymouth 2024	Plymouth 2025	National 2025	Difference +/-	Statistical neighbour 2025	Difference +/-
Attainment 8 (All)	46.2	45.6	46.2	-0.6	44.8	+0.8
Attainment 8 (Disadvantaged)	34.2	34.2	35.1	-0.9	33.4	+0.8
Attainment 8 (All SEN)	30.3	29.0	28.2	+0.8	26.6	+2.4
English and Maths 5+ (All)	46.2%	45.9%	45.6%	+0.3pp	43.2%	+2.7pp
English and Maths 5+ (Disadvantaged)	23.6%	26.1%	25.9%	+0.2pp	23.0%	+3.1pp
English and Maths 5+ (All SEN)	20%	19.3%	18.0%	+1.3pp	15.3%	+4.0pp
EBacc 5+ (All)	14.5%	14.9%	18.8%	-3.9pp	15.8%	-0.9pp
EBacc 5+ (Disadvantaged)	4.9%	6.1%	8.7%	-2.6pp	6.3%	-0.2pp
EBacc 5+ (All SEN)	3.2%	4.6%	4.6%	0.0pp	3.4%	+1.3pp

pp – percentage points

Key Stage 4 headline outcomes

The overall headline measures the city-wide average performance has **declined** slightly in comparison to 2024. The figure for Attainment 8 is **below** the national figure but is **above** the corresponding figure for statistical neighbours. While the Basics 5+ measure is **higher** in Plymouth than national and our statistical neighbours. The headline measure of EBacc (to be removed in future following the government curriculum review) is below in Plymouth in comparison to both national and statistical neighbours - this is a reflection of the curriculum set by the schools within the city.

For disadvantaged pupils the Attainment 8 score remained consistent but the Basics 5+ **improved** in comparison to 2024. As with the overall figures Plymouth disadvantaged pupils had a slightly **lower** attainment in comparison to national but **higher** than statistical neighbours.

For SEN (All – this includes pupils with SEN support and those with an Education and Health care Plan - EHCP) Plymouth pupils' outcomes were **higher** than both national and statistical neighbours in both attainment 8 and Basics 5+. They were also equal to national and **higher** than statistical neighbours in EBacc 5+ despite the curriculum models.

As noted above Attainment and Basics measures are cohort dependant and as such comparison to previous years should be taken with this in mind, although within the whole city cohort, variation in underlying ability is unlikely to be significant.

Plymouth maintained outcomes for 'groups' 2025

	Cohort size	Attainment 8			English and Maths 5+			English and Maths 4+		
		Plymouth	National	Statistical neighbour	Plymouth	National	Statistical neighbour	Plymouth	National	Statistical neighbour
	2873									
Disadvantaged	798	45.6	46.2	44.8	26.1%	25.9%	23.0%	45.0%	43.7%	40.3%
Boys	1483	44.0	44.3	42.9	45.0%	44.1%	41.6%	65.0%	63.2%	61.1%
Girls	1390	47.4	48.3	46.8	47.0%	47.1%	45.0%	66.1%	67.0%	64.8%
All SEN	606	29.0	28.2	26.6	19.3%	18.0%	15.3%	34.3%	31.4%	27.0%
SEN Support	446	35.5	33.8	31.4	24.9%	22.4%	18.6%	43.7%	38.6%	32.6%
SEN EHCP	160	10.9	14.9	14.1	3.8%	7.5%	6.9%	8.1%	14.0%	12.5%
English as an Additional Language	243	53.7	49.5	48.0	59.3%	49.7%	46.9%	74.1%	68.3%	66.4%
Ethnicity - White	2551	44.8	44.8	43.8	44.4%	43.4%	41.9%	64.4%	63.3%	61.7%
Ethnicity – Non White*	322	52.5	49.5	48.2	58.1%	50.5%	47.9%	74.2%	69.0%	67.2%

*DfE characteristics subdivide ethnicity into Asian, Black, Mixed, Other, Unclassified and White. As the Plymouth cohort was 89% White separating the other ethnic groups (11%) would create statistically very small cohorts and so these groups have been combined for this analysis.

- The **improvements** we have seen since 2022 have continued to grow in 2025.
- Disadvantaged pupils have slightly **lower** Attainment 8 outcomes but **stronger** Basics (both 5+ and 4+) in comparison to national figures.
- Disadvantaged pupils have **stronger** outcomes in **all** measures in comparison to statistical neighbours figures.
- Boys follow the same pattern as disadvantaged with slightly **lower** Attainment 8 outcomes but **stronger** Basics (both 5+ and 4+) in comparison to national figures and **better** outcomes than in statistical neighbours.
- Girls as with last year, have performed **below** national averages in all 3 metrics but **better** than statistical neighbours. Girls perform more strongly than boys in Attainment and Basics which mirrors the national trend.
- Pupils with SEN (all – includes SEN support and those with an EHCP) perform **better** in comparison to national averages in all the measures and again are **higher** than statistical neighbours in all areas.
- The pattern is repeated for SEN support pupils, with an even greater **positive** difference. However, pupils with an EHCP perform **less** well than national figures and statistical neighbours in **all** areas.

- The performance of pupils who have English as an Additional Language is **strong** compared to all other pupils in the cohort which mirrors the national trend and is **better** than both national figures and statistical neighbours in all areas.
- In relation to ethnicity, 89% of the Plymouth cohort were White, Plymouth pupils performed as well as pupils nationally in terms of attainment 8 and **better** in the two basics measures. This cohort also performed **better** in **all** measures in comparison to statistical neighbours.
- Non- white pupils performed **better** than both national and statistical neighbours in **all** areas
- School leaders and their teams have had real impact and should be commended.

Plymouth mainstream secondary outcome comparison 2019 (pre Covid) vs 2025

Plymouth Overall

Measure	2019	2025	Difference +/-
A8 (All)	43.7	45.6	+1.9
A8 (DS)	31.4	34.2	+2.8
A8 (Any SEN)	24.9	29.0	+4.1pp
Basics 5+ (All)	37.6%	45.9%	+8.3pp
Basics 5+ (Disadvantaged)	17.2%	26.1%	+8.9pp
Basics 5+ (Any SEN)	12.2%	19.3%	+7.1pp

Basics = English and Maths

In comparison to pre-pandemic performance Plymouth has **improved** in the key headline metrics of Attainment and Basics 5+ for all pupils, disadvantaged pupils and SEN pupils.

West (Highest deprivation) *The following locality data excludes the Grammar School data as these schools are populated from across the city*

Measure	City (all schools*) average 2025	Locality 2025	Difference +/-
A8 (All)	45.6	39.5	-6.1
A8 (DS)	34.2	34.3	+0.1
A8 (Any SEN)	29.0	31.4	+2.4
Basics 5+ (All)	45.9%	31.1%	-14.8pp
Basics 5+ (Disadvantaged)	26.1%	22.2%	-3.9pp
Basics 5+ (Any SEN)	19.3%	17.5%	-1.8pp

North

Measure	City (all schools*) average 2025	Locality 2025	Difference +/-
A8 (All)	45.6	40.9	-4.7
A8 (DS)	34.2	35.6	+1.4
A8 (Any SEN)	29.0	30.4	+1.4

Basics 5+ (All)	45.9%	33.5%	-12.4pp
Basics 5+ (Disadvantaged)	26.1%	23.4%	-2.7pp
Basics 5+ (Any SEN)	19.3%	15.9%	-3.4pp

South

Measure	City (all schools*) average 2025	Locality 2025	Difference +/-
P8 (All)	45.6	41.8	-3.8
P8 (DS)	34.2	39.4	-5.2
A8 (Any SEN)	29.0	28.5	-0.5
Basics 5+ (All)	45.9%	41.8%	-4.1pp
Basics 5+ (Disadvantaged)	26.1%	34.7%	+8.6pp
Basics 5+ (Any SEN)	19.3%	9.4%	-9.9pp

East (Lowest deprivation)

Measure	City (all schools*) average 2025	Locality 2025	Difference +/-
P8 (All)	45.6	47.5	+1.9
P8 (DS)	34.2	38.7	+3.9
A8 (Any SEN)	29.0	33.7	+4.7
Basics 5+ (All)	45.9%	48.9%	+3.0pp
Basics 5+ (Disadvantaged)	26.1%	35.1%	+9.0pp
Basics 5+ (Any SEN)	19.3%	27.0%	+7.7

*all school figure includes special schools and grammar schools as per previous data

It must be noted that in dividing 16 city secondary schools (the grammar schools are excluded as they take pupils from across the city) into the 4 areas the numbers in each locality are small and due to the precise locations they are not evenly distributed. As such the statistics are open to considerable variation. In addition when comparison is made to the city average, this does include grammar school attainment and as such is skewed to be higher in the city average. However, the data is included as a guide.

The pattern of performance follows the levels of deprivation. With the absence of progress data this is as expected and is not a strong indicator of the impact schools are actually having in each locality. Attainment is highest where there is least deprivation with the well-established knowledge that pupils from more deprived areas have lower starting points and this follows to have lower attainment at the end of Key Stage 4. However it is notable that within both the West and North localities there are **positive** differences for Disadvantaged pupils indicating particularly strong practice for this cohort of pupils in the schools in these areas.

Plymouth school level data (does not include special schools)

Overall – All pupils

- 9 (47%) schools increased their Basics 5+ score year on year.
- 7 (37%) schools increased their Basics 4+ score year on year.
- 12 (63%) increased their Attainment 8 score year on year.
- Notable improvements (improvement in all 3 areas) were made at Marine Academy Plymouth (MAP), UTC, Millbay, Eggbuckland CC, Hele's, Plymstock and Plympton Academy.
- There was a notable reduction in performance at Scott Medical & Health Care College (SMHCC) however they have a relatively small cohort and as such a few pupils of lower ability can have a significant statistical impact, which was the case in 2025.
- Ofsted inspection data for Plymouth mainstream secondaries has substantially improved, over time, with most (16/19) schools now being graded 'Good', with no schools judged as 'Inadequate'.

Disadvantaged Pupils

Children are 'disadvantaged' if they have been eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any time in the last six years or are/have been looked after by the local authority

	2024	2025	Difference +/-	National 2025	Statistical neighbour 2025
English and Maths 5+ (Dis)	23.6%	26.1%	+2.5pp	25.9%	23.0%
English and Maths 4+ (Dis)	41.3%	45.0%	+3.7pp	43.9%	40.3%
Attainment 8 (Dis)	34.2	34.2	0.0	35.1	33.4

- The city percentage of disadvantaged children gaining the Basics at both 5+ and 4+ has **improved** in comparison to 2024
- Overall the percentage of disadvantaged pupils gaining the Basics at both 5+ and 4+ is **better** than national and the average for statistical neighbours
- 14 (74%) schools have **improved** the percentage of disadvantaged children gaining the Basics 5+
- 12 (63%) schools have **improved** the percentage of disadvantaged children gaining the Basics 4+
- 11 (58%) schools have **improved** the average attainment 8 score of disadvantaged children.
- The attainment 8 average for disadvantaged pupils in Plymouth is the same as in 2024. This is **lower** than national but **higher** than the average of disadvantaged pupils in statistical neighbours.
- 11 (58%) of schools have improved in the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in all 3 areas in comparison to 2024. Notable improvements have happened in Plympton Academy, St Boniface's, Notre Dame, Coombe Dean, Eggbuckland, Millbay, UTC and All Saints.

SEN (Any) Pupils

There are 2 levels of SEN – children who receive ‘SEN Support’ as they have a learning difficulty or a disability that requires extra or different help to that normally provided as part of the school's usual curriculum offer and children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Any SEN is a combination of these 2 categories.

	2024	2025(provisional)	Difference +/-	National 2025	Statistical neighbour 2025
English and Maths 5+ (SEN Any)	20.1%	19.3%	-0.8pp	18.0%	15.3%
English and Maths 4+ (SEN Any)	34.2%	34.3%	+0.1pp	31.4%	27.0%
Attainment 8 (SEN Any)	30.3	29.0	-0.7	28.2	26.6

- The city percentage of SEN (any) children gaining the Basics 5+ has **reduced** compared to 2024, however at 4+ it has slightly **improved** in comparison to 2024.
- Overall, the percentage of SEN (any) pupils gaining the Basics at both 5+ and 4+ is **better** than national and the average for statistical neighbours.
- The attainment 8 average for SEN (any) pupils is the **less** than in 2024. However, this is **higher** than the average for both national and statistical neighbours.
- 10 (53%) schools have **improved** the percentage of SEN (any) children gaining the Basics 5+
- 10 (53%) schools have **improved** the percentage of SEN (any) children gaining the Basics 4+
- 8 (42%) schools have **improved** the average attainment 8 score of SEN (any) children.
- 6 (32%) of schools have improved in the outcomes of SEN (any) pupils in all 3 areas in comparison to 2024. Notable improvements have happened in St Boniface's, Notre Dame, Coombe Dean, Plymstock, Millbay and All Saints.

KS4 Summary

With no progress measure available this year there is no accounting for context in terms of outcomes against pupils' ability. In comparison to 2024 the performance of schools has fallen slightly in terms of overall attainment, where nationally it remained consistent, while there was also a drop in the Basics 5+ (English and maths) measure in the city, this matches a drop nationally, but Plymouth had a stronger figure than national. In comparison to statistical neighbours, Plymouth has performed better in the majority of the key benchmarks. Only being lower in the soon to be scrapped EBacc measure. Nationally the overall attainment 8 figure has fallen since 2019 (pre pandemic) by 0.8pp where as in Plymouth this figure has increased by 1.9pp.

When context such as ethnicity is considered, with the proportion of white pupils in the 2025 cohort being 89% this group is in line with their peers nationally in attainment 8 and better in both Basics measures. For the pupils that were non-white, this cohort exceeded the performance of their peers nationally.

In terms of the other key groups of children that are disadvantaged or those with SEN, they also performed in line with or better than these cohorts nationally. While the disadvantaged cohort had a lower attainment 8 average they performed better than national figures in the Basics measure (4+ & 5+).

They also outperformed the same cohort within statistical neighbours in all 3 measures. Children with SEN also performed better than their peers both nationally and within statistical neighbours in all measures.

However, it should be noted that children with an EHCP did not match the performance of their peers either nationally or statistical neighbours. While it is a small cohort and so subject to significant fluctuation this is an area to be explored in more detail with further improvements still need to be made.

Next Steps

In relation to the key area where Plymouth Pupils with and EHCP underperformed in comparison to their peers both nationally and within statistical neighbours:

- Follow up the analysis of attainment and progress data for pupils with EHCPs across all schools and settings, identifying trends, strengths, and areas of concern.
- Integrate EHCP outcomes monitoring within the LA's school effectiveness framework, ensuring that where standards for pupils with EHCPs are declining, schools receive both challenge and targeted support.
- Implement regular moderation and quality assurance processes to review: the quality of EHCP outcomes (noting that these are wider in scope than just attainment); curriculum adaptations; the impact of interventions and the quality of annual reviews to ensure that progress against outcomes is evaluated consistently and that changes to provision are evidence-based.
- Strengthen collaboration between SEND services, Plymouth City Council School Improvement Teams and MAT Schools Improvement Teams to ensure a shared focus on improving academic outcomes for children with EHCPs.

KEY STAGE 5

A quick guide to Key Stage 5 assessment measures and qualifications

Average point score (APS)

This is the average point score (APS) that pupils achieved per entry, Where an A level grade A* is 60 points, A is 50 points, B is 40 points, C is 30 points, D is 20 points and an E is 10 points.

A Level academic

A-Level qualifications such English language, mathematics, geography, French, physics etc.

Applied general

Level 3 qualifications with a vocational focus, including, Applied science, business, and health and social care, to accountancy and horticulture.

Tech Level

Tech levels are rigorous advanced (level 3) technical qualifications on a par with A Levels

The national picture

- Nationally there were 628,859 pupils at the end of 16-18 study in England in 2025 this is an increase from 2024 when there were 610,830 pupils. with grades determined by their performance in their exams and assessments. Overall, the 16-18 results across England were similar to 2024.

For state funded pupils:

- The A-level average point score per entry (APS) is slightly higher than 2024, from 34.38 points increasing to 34.85 points with the average grade of C+ remaining the same. (NB, for all level 3 qualifications a change in 1pt corresponds to a change of 1/10th of a grade; meaning this slight annual increase in A-level attainment of 0.3 pts translates into an increase of just 3/100ths of a grade).
- The Applied general average point score per entry (APS) is slightly higher than 2024, from 29.09 points increasing to 29.87 points with the average grade of Merit + remaining the same.
- The Tech level average point score per entry (APS) is slightly higher than 2024, from 28.11 points increasing to 28.81 points with the average grade of Merit + remaining the same.
- Gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils remained broadly unchanged in comparison to last year for the level 3 cohorts.
- This year, the percentage of the A level cohort with an EHC plan is 0.6%, and the percentage with SEN support is 4.6%. The number of A level pupils with an EHC plan has increased by 9.2% compared to last year, and the number of pupils with SEN support has increased by 6.3%. The number of pupils with no identified SEN has fallen by 0.7%.
- In 2024/25, the A level average points score (APS) has risen by 1.3pts for pupils with an EHC plan compared with 2023/24, while the A-level APS has risen by 0.9pts for pupils with SEN support. Pupils with no identified SEN have also seen an increase in APS by 0.5pts.

The Plymouth picture

Overall

	Cohort 2025	2024	2025	Difference +/-	National 2025*
A level APS per entry	943 pupils	33.3	34.3	+1.0	34.8
Applied General APS per entry	586 pupils	28.3	28.5	+0.2	29.9
Tech Level APS per entry	124 pupils	27.7	27.4	-0.3	28.8

*National data is for state funded pupils

APS - Average Point Score Where an A level grade A* is 60 points, A is 50 points, B is 40 points, C is 30 points, D is 20 points and an E is 10 points.

- Across the city the Average Point Score (APS) for A level grades has **improved** year on year, with an increase of 1.0 points.
- The Applied General APS has **increased** slightly by 0.2 points, however the Tech Level APS has **decreased** by 0.3points, although this is a smaller cohort and thus variability and swings in outcomes in overall averages is more likely year on year.
- Plymouth is slightly **below** the national in all qualification types. The national A level APS is 34.8 (an improvement of 0.4 from 2024) but while Plymouth remains **below** the national figure, with the **gap has reduced**. In comparison to national the gap for Applied General APS has remained the same and increased for Tech Level but as noted this is a small cohort and subject to greater variation.
- The majority of young people in Plymouth studying Applied or Vocational courses, do so at City College Plymouth (included in these figures).

Disadvantaged

	Cohort 2025	2024	2025	Difference +/-	National 2025
A level APS per entry	103 pupils	30.1	30.9	+0.8	30.9
Applied General APS per entry	108 pupils	26.8	24.7	-2.1	28.2
Tech Level APS per entry	31 pupils	25.1	23.2	-1.9	26.5

- There is an **increase** in the performance of disadvantaged pupils within A-levels in comparison to the previous year, with performance now matching the national average.
- The gap between the A level APS for disadvantaged pupils and the overall average is **less than the national gap**.
- In both Applied General and Tech level APS there has been a **drop** in performance of disadvantaged pupils compared to 2024. The **gap has also increased** and is larger than the gap nationally for these two sets of qualifications.
- In all of the data for disadvantaged pupils the cohort size is small and individual performance can make a significant impact.

SEN Provision - Pupils with an EHCP

	Cohort 2025	2024	2025	Difference +/-	National 2025
A level APS per entry	12 pupils	32.8	31.9	-0.9	33.4
Applied General APS per entry	11 pupils	29.3	26.9	-2.4	27.2
Tech Level APS per entry	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

- While the cohorts are very small it is commended that pupils with an EHCP have had the opportunity to take Level 3 qualifications.
- There were **decreases** in the performance of pupils with an EHCP in comparison to the previous year, with performance **below** the national average.
- The gap between A level performance has increased compared to the overall average and is **larger than the national gap**, however for Applied General the **gap smaller than the national gap**.
- This mirrors the pattern at Key Stage 4, but with such small numbers caution is needed in use of this data

SEN Provision - Pupils with SEN Support

	Cohort 2025	2024	2025	Difference +/-	National 2025
A level APS per entry	47 pupils	30.9	31.7	+0.8	33.6
Applied General APS per entry	108 pupils	29.2	27.9	-1.3	27.9
Tech Level APS per entry	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

- There is an **increase** in the performance of SEN Support pupils within A-levels in comparison to the previous year, however performance is **below** the national average.
- The performance of SEN support pupils in Applied General qualifications has **dropped** compared to 2024 but is **in line with national**.
- The gap between the A level APS for SEN support pupils is similar to last year and **larger than the national gap**
- The gap between the Applied General APS for SEN support is **less than the national gap**

At the time of writing the final validated school level data and value added data is not available and is scheduled to be published by the DfE during February

KS5 Summary

While we await the publication of final validated outcomes which will include value added data comment can only be made on attainment, which with reduced cohort size is susceptible to variation year on year as cohorts vary. The largest Level 3 qualification type in the city is A levels with 943 pupils with 586 pupils taking Applied General Qualifications. The smallest cohort with 124 pupils is Tech Levels. This pattern mirrors the national picture but in Plymouth a larger proportion undertake Applied General qualifications. This greater focus on vocational reflects the developing needs within the city.

The overall performance of pupils in both A-level qualifications and Applied General qualifications has improved compared to the previous year but is below national performance, however the performance of this cohort in terms of attainment at GCSE (2023) was also below national performance. When Value Added (contextualised for prior performance) data is available this will give an indication of the progress made by this cohort.

While the performance within Tech Level qualifications has dropped slightly this is within a small cohort and variability is expected and definitive outcomes cannot be drawn.

The performance of groups within the cohort (Disadvantaged and SEN) are variable, with increases in some areas but decreases in others. Generally, in comparison with national the attainment is lower within the city, but as noted above this is to be expected with lower starting points. However, it should be noted that as is the case at KS4 (GCSE) children with an EHCP did not match the performance of their peers. Again, while it is a small cohort and so subject to significant fluctuation this is an area to be explored in more detail with further improvements still need to be made.

Next Steps

In relation to the key area where Plymouth Pupils with and EHCP underperformed in comparison to their peers both nationally and within statistical neighbours:

- Follow up the analysis of attainment and progress data for pupils with EHCPs at level 3 across all relevant schools and settings, identifying trends, strengths, and areas of concern.
- Implement regular moderation and quality assurance processes to review: the quality of EHCP outcomes (noting that these are wider in scope than just attainment); curriculum adaptations; the impact of interventions and the quality of annual reviews to ensure that progress against outcomes is evaluated consistently and that changes to provision are evidence-based.
- Strengthen collaboration between SEND services, Plymouth City Council School Improvement Teams and MAT Schools Improvement Teams to ensure a shared focus on improving academic outcomes for children with EHCPs.

SECTION 3: Children in Care**Primary – Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception)**

In total this cohort consists of 15 children, 9 of whom are boys (60%) and six (40%) are girls. Six children (40%) attend schools out of area (OOA) whilst nine (60%) attend Plymouth schools. Four pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (27%).

Early Learning Goals (ELG)

Schools assess children across 17 areas of learning in total. The following table shows the number and percentage of children achieving the early learning goals in the 12 areas of learning assessed for the pupil to attain a 'Good level of Development' (GLD) at the end of reception. National comparisons are not obtainable for CiC.

	All	Boys	Girls	In area	Out of area
Communication and language: Listening, attention and understanding	5/15 33%	3/9 33%	2/6 33%	3/9 33%	2/6 33%
Communication and language: Speaking	6/15 40%	3/9 33%	3/6 50%	4/9 44%	2/6 33%
Personal, social and emotional development: Self-regulation	6/15 40%	3/9 33%	3/6 50%	4/9 44%	2/6 33%
Personal, social and emotional development: Managing self	5/15 33%	3/9 33%	2/6 33%	3/9 33%	2/6 33%
Personal, social and emotional development: Building relationships	6/15 40%	3/9 33%	3/6 50%	4/9 44%	2/6 33%
Physical development: Gross motor skills	8/15 53%	5/9 56%	3/6 50%	5/9 56%	3/6 50%

Physical development: Fine motor skills	8/15 53%	5/9 56%	3/6 50%	5/9 56%	3/6 50%
Literacy: Word reading	5/15 33%	4/9 44%	1/6 17%	2/9 22%	3/6 50%
Literacy: Comprehension	5/15 33%	4/9 44%	1/6 17%	2/9 22%	3/6 50%
Literacy: Writing	5/15 33%	4/9 44%	1/6 17%	2/9 22%	3/6 50%
Maths: Number	5/15 33%	4/9 44%	1/6 17%	2/9 22%	3/6 50%
Maths: Numerical patterns	5/15 33%	4/9	1/6 17%	2/9 22%	3/6 50%

ELG key findings:

- Physical development (gross and fine motor skills) had the highest achievement rates, with over half the cohort meeting the ELGs (8/15).
- Communication and language skills showed moderate achievement, with 5–6 children meeting ELGs in listening, speaking, and self-regulation.
- Literacy and numeracy areas had lower achievement, with only 5 children meeting ELGs in word reading, writing, and number.
- Gender disparity is evident: boys consistently outperformed girls in literacy and numeracy, with 4 boys achieving ELGs in these areas compared to just 1 girl.
- Out-of-area pupils performed slightly better in literacy and numeracy than in-area pupils.

Good Level of Development (GLD)

The following table shows the number of children achieving GLD by the end of reception. This means they have achieved the early learning goals in all the areas learning listed above. National comparisons are not available for CiC. The national GLD average for ALL pupils was 67.7% in 2023-24.

Number of children achieving GLDs 2024-25					
	All CiC 23-24 7/18 39%	Boys	Girls	In area	Out of area
GLD	4/15 27%	3/9	1/6	2/9	2/6

GLD key findings

- Four of 15 children (27%) achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD), significantly below the national average for ALL of EYFS.
- Boys (33%) were more likely to achieve GLD than girls (17%), continuing the trend seen in individual ELG areas.
- Out-of-area pupils had a slightly higher GLD rate (33%) compared to in-area pupils (22%).
- There was a drop from the previous year’s GLD rate (39% in 2023–24) although we must note the cohort size is very small.

EYFS next steps

- Improve the rigour around tracking progress from nursery onwards, identifying children at risk of not achieving GLD early.
- In discussions with schools, advocate for evidence-based early years interventions (e.g. NELI, Early Talk Boost) in settings with children in care.
- Through PEP meeting discussions ensure smooth transitions into Reception with enhanced support for children in care, including summer visits, social stories, and key person continuity where possible.
- Education Advocates to attend all PEP meetings ensuring targets and pupil premium funding focuses on priority needs.

Primary- Year One phonics screening check 2024-25

In total this cohort consists of 20 children, 11 of whom are boys (55%) and 9 (45%) are girls. Three children (15%) attend schools out of area (OOA) whilst 17 (85%) attend Plymouth schools. No pupils currently have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) however there are four who are currently undergoing the initial Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment process.

There is no national comparison data available for CiC and phonics screening. 81% of **all** children passed the Year One phonics screening in 2024 (2025 data not yet available).

	All (2023-24 43%)	Boys	Girls	In Area	Out of area
Number and % of children passing the phonic screening	8/20 40%	4/11 36%	4/9 44%	8/17 47%	0/3 0%

Headlines

- A higher percentage of girls passed phonics screening than boys (8%).
- There is a notable difference in the achievement with those pupils in area doing better than those out of area (Note two datasets cannot be reliably compared due to substantial differences in the pool sizes being measured).
- There is a marginal decrease from last year in the % of children passing the screening (-3%) which is equivalent to one child.

Actions

- Virtual School to target non passers with Lexia licenses (online literacy platform).
- The Virtual School Education Advocates to closely monitor phonics support and those children in Year Two needing to retake.
- Ensure phonics progress is closely monitored from Reception.

Primary CiC - KS2 SATS

This cohort consists of 32 children in care. The gender distribution is significantly girl dominant with 22 girls and 10 boys. In terms of placement, 18 children are placed within Plymouth, while 14 are placed out of area. Regarding special educational needs, 11 children (34%) have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with 6 of these currently attending a special school. A further 2 pupils are starting their secondary phase of education at special school in September indicating a significant proportion (25%) of the cohort with significant additional learning needs. None of these 8 pupils were entered by the schools for the SATs.

Table to show key stage 2 SATs results for Children in care to Plymouth 2024-25

	Reading	Writing (Teacher assessment)	Maths	Grammar Punctuation and Spelling	Combined Reading, Writing and Maths
EXS & GDS (working at expected standard + greater depth standard)	17(53%)	16/ (50%)	13 (41%)	15 (47%)	12/32 (38%)
GDS- Greater depth standard	4 (12%)	2 (6%)	3/32 (9%)	5 (16%)	-
EXS- Expected standard	13 (41%)	14 (44%)	10 (31%)	10 (31%)	-
National CiC EXS (more than 12 months 2023-24)	53%	46%	47%	47%	34%

The 2024–25 Key Stage 2 SATs results for Children in Care (CiC) in Plymouth show that outcomes are broadly in line with national averages for looked-after children. In reading, 53% of pupils achieved the expected or greater depth standard, matching the national figure. Writing results were slightly higher than the national average, with 50% reaching the expected or greater depth standard compared to 46% nationally. In math and in grammar, punctuation, and spelling, 41% and 47% respectively achieved the expected or greater depth standard, both just below national outcomes (47%). Overall, 38% of Plymouth CiC

achieved the combined expected standard in reading, writing and math's, which is slightly above the national figure of 34%. These results indicate steady performance across core subjects against national expectations for this cohort group.

The following chart compares the outcomes for children in care to Plymouth in 2024-25 against the outcomes for the previous year 6 cohort 2023-24 and the national figures for children in care for more than 12 months.

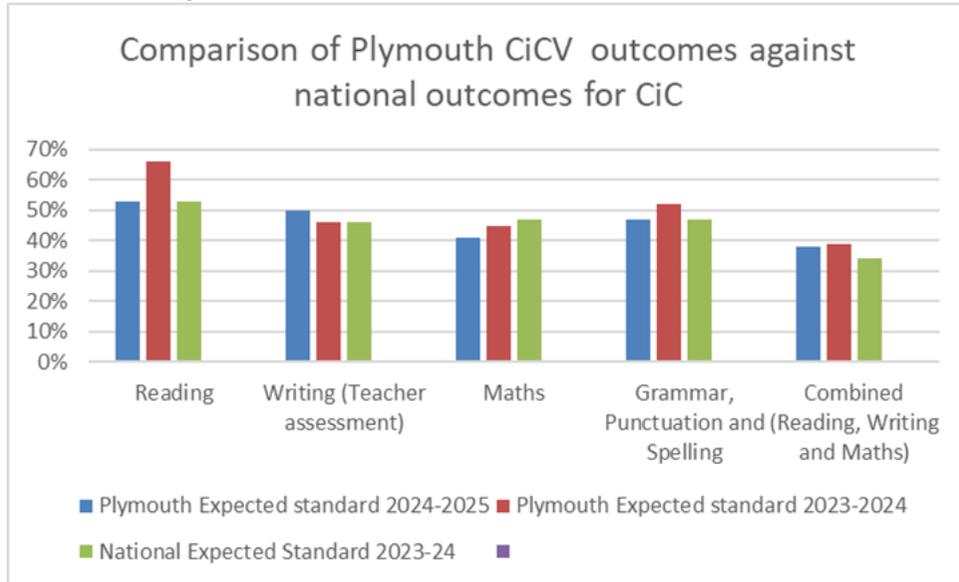


Table to further breakdown into pupil groups

Key Stage 2 SATs results 2024-25						
Subject	Girls (22)	Boys (10)	EHCP (11)	No EHCP (22)	In-area (18)	Out-of-area (14)
Maths	9 (40.9%)	4 (40%)	1 (9%)	12 (57%)	8 (44%)	5 (36%)
Reading	13 (59%)	4 (40%)	1 (9%)	16 (76%)	10 (56%)	7 (50%)
Grammar	11 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (9%)	14 (67%)	9 (50%)	6 (43%)
Writing	13 (59%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	16 (76%)	10 (56%)	6 (43%)

Although the cohort has a higher proportion of girls, there is an equal distribution of boys and girls achieving the expected standard in reading. However, in all other subject areas, girls significantly outperform boys. As anticipated, pupils without an EHCP performed considerably better than those with an EHCP.

When comparing pupils living within the local area to those from outside the area, the in-area cohort outperformed their peers across all subject areas, with differences ranging from 6% to 13%.

Actions

- Education Advocates to attend all PEP meetings and especially monitor the progress of children living out of area and boys ensuring targets and pupil premium funding closely focus on priority needs.
- Improve the rigour around tracking progress across KS2, identifying children at risk of not achieving expected standards as early as possible.

Key Stage Four Year 11 CIC Results

The cohort for the academic year 2024/2025 was 64 Y11 pupils. This included 5 Separated (Unaccompanied) Asylum-Seeking children (UASC) who have been excluded from this data summary as they have focussed on developing their language skills through a different pathway. It should be noted however that all of the UASC young people have a confirmed place on an appropriate English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course for 2025-2026.

To breakdown this cohort further it comprises 27 Boys and 32 Girls, 21 pupils have an EHCP. 12 pupils attend a Plymouth based specialist provision or ACE; 17 pupils are educated out of area 11 of whom attend specialist provisions.

Overview of Year 11 CIC Results

	Number 24/25	% of those who sat the exam (24/25)	% of whole 24/25 Cohort	2023/24 (whole cohort)
Maths standard pass (GCSE 4)	7	19%	11%	13%
Maths strong pass (GCSE 5)	6	17%	9%	7%
GCSE 1-3 or Other Maths qualification (EL, FS)	31	69%	48%	39%
English standard pass (GCSE 4)	8	23%	13%	7%
English strong pass (GCSE 5)	6	17%	9%	9%
GCSE 1-3 or Other English qualification (EL, FS)	28	65%	44%	39%
Maths and English standard pass (GCSE 4 in both)	(<5)	14%	8%	9%
Maths and English strong pass (GCSE 5 in both)	(<5)	14%	8%	4%

- Post 16 destinations- 82% of the cohort have an Education or Training place secured. This includes all UASC pupils and all Plymouth based pupils with an EHCP requiring specialist provision. An increase of 14% on last year.
- A 21% reduction in those achieving no qualifications has been achieved through a focus on ensuring all Y11 who were predicted not to achieve at GCSE being provided with an alternative pathway and tuition from the Virtual School. The figure has reduced to 14% of the 24/25 cohort.
- 5% Increase in both boys and girls achieving a Grade 4 or above in GCSE English Language.
- The number of pupils achieving a standard or strong pass in English and Maths increased slightly to 8 pupils from 6 pupils last year.
- There is a slight uptick in those achieving a strong Maths pass and a standard English pass this year.
- The increase in those achieving “other” qualifications in English and Maths this year can be attributed to the increased number of this cohort who attended a specialist provision where Entry Level and Functional Skills pathways are more appropriate.

English:

English Lit	Grade 4 or Higher	Grade 1-3 or FS Level 1	EL1-3
Total	12%	29%	10%
Boys	4%	26%	11%
Girls	19%	31%	3%
EHCP	0%	5%	19%
No EHCP	6%	42%	5%
Plymouth mainstream	28%	40%	0%
Plymouth Specialist or ACE	0%	0%	42%
OOA mainstream	0%	67%	0%
OOA Specialist	0%	23%	8%

English Lang	Grade 4 or Higher	Grade 1-3 or FS Level 1	EL1-3
Total	22%	36%	10%
Boys	11%	37%	11%
Girls	31%	34%	9%
EHCP	0%	24%	19%
No EHCP	34%	45%	5%

Plymouth mainstream	38%	54%	0%
Plymouth Specialist or ACE	0%	42%	42%
OOA mainstream	50%	17%	0%
OOA Specialist	0%	15%	8%

- There is a continuing trend towards pupils being entered for GCSE English Language only when the student is finding English challenging.
- The percentage of boys achieving a Grade 4 or above in Literature was the same as last year, however improved performance by girls (11% last year and 19% this year) contributed to an overall improvement in total achieving a Grade 4 or above.
- In English Language there was an increase in the performance of boys, girls and those without an EHCP from last year.
- The outcomes in English literature for those attending Plymouth mainstream rose to 38%, a full 30% increase from last year.
- These improvements are attributed to additional Pupil Premium Plus funding for each student in Year 11 to for additional tuition.

Year 13 CIC cohort 24/25

The pie chart below shows the outcomes for the Year Thirteen cohort. 13% of the cohort were on an ESOL pathway either at City College Plymouth or Exeter College. 10% achieved a Level Three qualification, whilst 35% achieved a Level Two qualification, a further 25% achieved a level One qualification. 16% of the cohort did not achieve any qualification. This is an improving picture across the board with an increase in the percentages achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualification and a significant reduction of those not achieving any qualification- this has reduced to 16% from 35% in the previous academic year.

Year 13 CIC Outcomes 24/25



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Key:	
	Complete
	In Progress
	Not Started
	On Hold

Minute No.	Resolution	Target Date, Officer Responsible and Progress
2024/2025 Municipal Year	A whole Council Councillor briefing would be arranged on early help in Plymouth.	Date: 06 February 2025 Progress: Date arranged for 18 March 2026. Officer: Jake Metcalfe/Martine Aquilina/Sarah Hood
2024/2025 Municipal Year	Councillors of the Panel would be invited to be introduced to the detached youth service team before receiving a briefing and then having the opportunity to go out with them and be part of some of the work undertaken.	Date: 06 February 2025 Progress: Two members of the Panel were identified as to wanting to take part. This action has been put on hold until this has been completed. Officer: Jake Metcalfe
2024/2025 Municipal Year	The service would review the holiday and food programme to ensure it was inclusive off all children in the city.	Date: February 2026 Officer: Amanda Davis Progress: On hold due to CATERed decisions being made.
16 July 2025 Minute 6: Children’s Services	A briefing report would be written to show how the service has improved the quality assurance processes to be more explicit about the difference the service was making for children and young people by discussing The 10 Wishes in social work supervision.	Target Date: January 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Fran Giblin

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Agenda Item 11

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<p>Achieving Excellence Improvement and Transformation Plan</p>		<p>Progress: This action is in progress and has a target end date of January 2026, in which a further report would be provided to the Scrutiny Panel in the next municipal year.</p>
<p>16 July 2025 Minute 6: Children’s Services Achieving Excellence Improvement and Transformation Plan</p>	<p>Social worker appraisals in the summer would discuss how they were learning about the views and aspirations of children and young people.</p>	<p>Target Date: August 2025</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: David Haley</p> <p>Progress:</p>
<p>16 July 2025 Minute 8: Performance Scorecard</p>	<p>A briefing for members of the Panel would be arranged on attendance which would include a Q&A session and more in-depth data around attendance.</p>	<p>Target Date: September 2025</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis/Isabelle Kolinsky</p> <p>Progress: Dates to be identified.</p>
<p>16 July 2025 Minute 9: Local Area SEND Improvement Plan</p>	<p>The service would provide a report on the government’s plans for the future of SEND and EHCPs and how those changes are communicated to families in the city. This would also be added to the work programme for a future Panel meeting.</p>	<p>Target Date: November 2025</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: David Haley/Amanda Davis</p> <p>Progress: This action is tied to the white paper release for SEND and would be on hold until this is released.</p>

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<p>16 July 2025</p> <p>Minute 9: Local Area SEND Improvement Plan</p>	<p>A briefing for Members of the Panel would be undertaken on the Dedicated Schools Grant.</p>	<p>Target Date: 24 November 2025</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis</p> <p>Progress: 13th October 2025: Workshop took place and slides sent to all members with invitation for questions. Action Complete.</p>
<p>16 July 2025</p> <p>Minute 9: Local Area SEND Improvement Plan</p>	<p>A letter to the relevant Minister would be drafted from the Panel advising that Plymouth had exhausted its school estate and needed more funding for physical spaces for children in the city. The letter would highlight the numbers of children that needed to attend specialist provision out of the city and the requirement of more capacity in the city through capital funding.</p>	<p>Target Date: ASAP</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: David Haley/Amanda Davis</p> <p>Progress: 13th October 2025: Letter drafted and shared with Cllr Cresswell on Friday 10th October.</p>
<p>08 October 2025</p> <p>Plymouth Attainment Report</p>	<p>To produce a young person-friendly version of the attainment report, including breakdowns by gender and SEND.</p>	<p>Target Date: February 2026</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis/Isabelle Kolinsky</p> <p>Progress: Report included within the agenda for 18 February 2026.</p>
<p>08 October 2025</p> <p>Plymouth Attainment Report</p>	<p>Ensure the “top tips” from care-experienced young people are promoted and embedded across all schools and MATs.</p>	<p>Target Date: 24 November 2025</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis/Isabelle Kolinsky/Stuart Hogg</p>

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		Progress: Work is underway with Lee Earnshaw and Stuart Hogg to complete the action (10 February 2026).
08 October 2025 Plymouth Attainment Report	To design and conduct a survey of schools to collect information on support provided to students affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Young people to assist in designing the survey and participate in the next Headteachers’ Conference to present their campaigns.	Target Date: February 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis/ Isabelle Kolinsky / Stuart Hogg Progress: Action completed.
08 October 2025 Plymouth Attainment Report	To provide a briefing note to Committee members with granular data on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children placed outside of Plymouth.	Target Date: 24 November 2025 Officer(s) Responsible: Lisa Davies/Karen Blake Progress:
08 October 2025 Plymouth Attainment Report	To append a glossary to future reports to improve accessibility.	Target Date: 24 November 2025 Officer(s) Responsible: David Haley/Amanda Davis/Lisa Davies Progress: Action recommended for closure.
08 October 2025 Plymouth Attainment Report	To include actual numbers alongside percentages in future reporting, particularly where small cohorts are involved.	Target Date: 24 November 2025 Officer(s) Responsible: David Haley/Amanda Davis/Lisa Davies

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		<p>Progress: Report authors would be advised of this requirement for all future reports. Action complete.</p>
<p>08 October 2025</p> <p>Belonging Framework</p>	<p>Education officers to provide statistics on the percentage of children receiving their first-choice school placement.</p>	<p>Target Date: 24 November 2025</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis</p> <p>Progress: Action in progress by Sharone Stowe.</p>
<p>08 October 2025</p> <p>Belonging Framework</p>	<p>Metrics for measuring progress in the Belonging framework to be included, along with contextual information on how belonging is defined and assessed.</p>	<p>Target Date: First meeting of the new municipal year.</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis/Rob Williams/Isabelle Kolinsky</p> <p>Progress: The Engagement platform has been match funded between Plymouth City Council and Impact Ed. The Engagement platform measures engagement across the whole school community. The platform would be rolled out to all schools in the city by June 2026. This will measure belonging and engagement and the impact of the Place Based Work.</p>
<p>08 October 2025</p> <p>Belonging Framework</p>	<p>That poverty-related barriers to school attendance to be explicitly addressed in the framework.</p>	<p>Target Date: First meeting of the new municipal year.</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis / Isabelle Kolinsky</p> <p>Progress: The Engagement platform has been match funded between Plymouth City Council and Impact Ed. The Engagement platform measures engagement across the whole school community. The platform would be rolled out to all schools in the city by June 2026. This will measure belonging</p>

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		and engagement and the impact of the Place Based Work. The learning will form part of the review of the Belonging Framework.
09 December 2025 Q2 2025/26 Performance Report	Officers to provide the EHCP timeliness trajectory plan to the Panel.	Target Date: February 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis/ Claire Williamson Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 2025/26 Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny – Q2 Finance	Officers to ensure fostering information is included in Council Tax mailings.	Target Date: March 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Lisa Davies/Karen Blake Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 2025/26 Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny – Q2 Finance	Officers to arrange DSG training for Panel members.	Target Date: March 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis/ Isabelle Kolinsky Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 2025/26 Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny – Q2 Finance	Write to government regarding concerns over placement costs and market conditions;	Target Date: February 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Lisa Davies/ Karen Blake Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 PSCP Annual Report 24/25	Siobhan Logue to review and resolve access issues for conference materials on the PSCP website.	Target Date: February 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Siobhan Logue Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.

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09 December 2025 PSCP Annual Report 24/25	Officers to explore options for free or low cost venues for future conferences.	Target Date: November 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Siobhan Logue Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 PSCP Annual Report 24/25	Consideration to be given to expanding the safeguarding training programme to increase participation.	Target Date: March 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Siobhan Logue Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 Families First Partnership Programme of Reforms	Officers to provide details of the satellite family hub rollout plan;	Target Date: February 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Lisa Davies/ Martine Aquilina Progress: Action in progress and will be submitted to the Panel on 25 February 2026.
09 December 2025 Families First Partnership Programme of Reforms	Officers to develop and implement a communications strategy to promote the reforms, including information for parents of older children;	Target Date: March 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Lisa Davies/ Vivien Lines/ Comms team Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025	Officers to provide a briefing for Members on the complexity of needs for children who would be placed in Project C;	Target Date: March 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Victoria Whitman / Jake Metcalfe

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Children's Homes for Plymouth		Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 Children's Homes for Plymouth	Officers to explore a workforce development programme for registered managers in partnership with HR and Organisational Development;	Target Date: March 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Victoria Whitman / Chris Squire Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 Children's Homes for Plymouth	Officers to continue engagement with other local authorities to share learning and best practice.	Target Date: July 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Victoria Whitman Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 Children's Homes for Plymouth	Write to Ofsted to express concern about registration delays and request consideration of process improvements;	Target Date: February 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Lisa Davies/ Karen Blake Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025 Achieving Excellence – Children's services three year strategic plan, review of progress in year 2 quarter 1 and 2	Officers to continue monitoring progress against the ten strategic priorities. An update would be added to the work programme for a further update.	Target Date: July 2026 Officer(s) Responsible: Lisa Davies/Vivien Lines Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.
09 December 2025	Officers to maintain focus on attendance improvement and care leaver engagement as priority areas.	Target Date: July 2026

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<p>Achieving Excellence – Children’s services three year strategic plan, review of progress in year 2 quarter 1 and 2</p>		<p>Officer(s) Responsible: Lisa Davies/ Vivien Lines/ Amanda Davis/ Isabelle Kolinsky</p> <p>Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.</p>
<p>09 December 2025</p> <p>Elective Home Education Deep Dive</p>	<p>Officers to continue proactive engagement with MATs and schools to address patterns of de-registration;</p>	<p>Target Date: July 2026</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: Amanda Davis / Isabelle Kolinsky</p> <p>Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.</p>
<p>09 December 2025</p> <p>Elective Home Education Deep Dive</p>	<p>Officers to maintain and expand community-based opportunities for EHE families to support socialisation;</p>	<p>Target Date: April 2026</p> <p>Officer(s) Responsible: Isabelle Kolinsky</p> <p>Progress: Action sent to officers for progress.</p>

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Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Work Programme 2025/26



Please note that the work programme is a 'live' document and subject to change at short notice. The information in this work programme is intended to be of strategic relevance.

For general enquiries relating to the Council's Scrutiny function, including this Committee's work programme, please contact Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Advisor) on 01752 305155.

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Prioritisation Score	Reason for Consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member/Lead Officer
16 July 2025	Children's Services Achieving Excellence	4	For the Panel to scrutinise the improvement and transformation plan of Children's services to ensure the service was delivering the Achieving Excellence Plan.	Cllr Laing/ Vivien Lines
	Youth Justice Annual Report	3	For the Panel to understand the work undertaken by the Youth Justice Team and understand challenges celebrating strengths.	Cllr Laing/ Martine Aquilina/ Sarah Wilson
	Performance Scorecard	3	STANDING ITEM on the performance of the directorate.	Paul Stephens/ Susan London
	SEND Capital Programme		Expanding SEND places and alternative provision	Amanda Davis
	Local Area SEND Improvement Plan	4	For the Panel to scrutinise the delivery and impact of the Local Area SEND Improvement Plan	Cllr Cresswell/ Amanda Davis/ Tracy Clasby/ Rob Williams
	School Readiness	3	To examine the state of play for children beginning school and how ready they were to start primary school.	Cllr Cresswell/ Amanda Davis/ Heidi Price
08 October 2025	Child Exploitation Annual Report	4	Continued focus on Child Exploitation and a commitment to have at least one report heard at the Panel meeting during the municipal year.	Martine Aquilina / Cllr Laing

			<i>(Agreed to add to the work programme at all Scrutiny Panel meetings in 2024/25. Agreed to have an annual report for all future municipal years)</i>	
	Annual Education Outcomes Report (Provisional)	4	Standing item to the Committee to understand children's progress in achieving their outcomes. YP involvement Comparative data	Amanda Davis/ Stuart Hogg
	Place Based Working Group	4	Referred to this Scrutiny Panel from the Chair following a meeting of the Local Area Partnership SEND Improvement Board. City wide challenge for attendance National attendance campaign	Amanda Davis / Rob Williams
	Children's services budget Q1 outturn position		For the Panel to have oversight of the budget position of the service. <i>Request from DH to add to the work programme.</i>	Matt Fulton
	Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) update including SEND Capital Programme	4	AI inclusion	Amanda Davis /YP involvement /Finance rep/ Stuart Hogg/ Lisa McDonald / Health rep
	Performance Scorecard		Standing Item	Paul Stephens/Susan London
11 December 2025	Families First reform programme	4	Children's Social Care workforce	Lisa Davies
	Plymouth Childrens Safeguarding Assurance – Annual Report	3	Statutory duty to produce an annual report. Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Board. Invite partners, Police/Health/Education	David Haley/ Siobhan Logue
	Finance Monitoring Q2	4	Standing item	Matt Fulton
	Capital Programme – Scrutiny of	4	To link in with Finance Monitoring report.	Lisa Davies/Karen Blake/Vivien Lines

	residential children's home capital programmes		Amend title – important council programmes Delivery to reduce costs	
	Achieving Excellence Programme Q2 Report	4	Halfway report of the programme	Lisa Davies/ Vivien Lines
	Elective Home Education and metrics	4		Isabelle Kolinsky
	Performance Scorecard	4	Standing item EHCP timescales	Paul Stephens/Susan London
18 February 2026	Annual Education Outcomes Report (Final Report)		Comparative data – over a number of years Attendance comparative data. To provide a young person friendly version. To also include a breakdown by gender and SEND.	Cllr Cresswell/ Amanda Davis/ Isabelle Kolinsky
	Children's Services Finance Monitoring		Financial Monitoring Q3	Cllr Cresswell/ Cllr Laing/ Matt Fulton
	Performance Scorecard		Standing item. To ensure EHCP timeliness data is included.	Cllr Cresswell/ Cllr Laing/ Paul Stephens
	Local Area SEND Inspection update		Inspection update following the SEND inspection in November. Strengths and challenges.	Cllr Cresswell / David Haley/ Amanda Davis
	30 hours Free Childcare		How is this going? Are there any issues/concerns? Are schools having to fill funding gaps? Catered, what is the plan, how will it affect schools and children in the city?	Cllr Cresswell/ Amanda Davis
	Children's Services use of AI		Report to provide an understanding on what was being done in the AI space to aid Children's services workforce and ensure workers spent more time with the families they were working with.	Lisa Davis
Items to be scheduled for 2025/26				
2025/26	Childrens Social Media use and impact on education	3	To understand the impacts of children's social media use in school and what the issues were being faced in school. (Agreed to add at the 06 February 2025 Scrutiny Panel meeting)	Cllr Cresswell / Cllr Aspinall / EPS / School Reps / Young people`

	Female Empowerment Programmes	3	For the Panel to receive a report on the empowerment programmes and to have young people involvement. <i>(Agreed to add at the 06 February 2025 Scrutiny Panel meeting)</i>	Cllr Laing / Martine Aquilina
	Children's Social Care workforce		On-going concerns being raised of 25% of the workforce being agency and responsible to the service not being able to provide a stable workforce to the families they work with. Issues around churn of workers affecting the numbers of social worker changes for children.	Chris Squire
	Young Carers: Implementation of Carers Strategy for CYP.			
Items to be scheduled for 2026/27				
2026/27				
2026/27				
Items Identified for Select Committee Reviews				
	Children's Emotional Health and Wellbeing	5	Agreed by Scrutiny Management Board in February 2025.	Health, CYPFS, EPS, Voluntary Sector, young people, Cllr Aspinall, Cllr Laing, Cllr Cresswell.

Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool

		Yes (=1)	Evidence
Public Interest	Is it an issue of concern to partners, stakeholders and/or the community?		
Ability	Could Scrutiny have an influence?		
Performance	Is this an area of underperformance?		

E xtent	Does the topic affect people living, working, or studying in more than one electoral ward of Plymouth?		
R eplication	Will this be the only opportunity for public scrutiny?		
	Is the topic due planned to be the subject of an Executive Decision?		
Total:			High/Medium/Low

Priority	Score
High	5-6
Medium	3-4
Low	1-2

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