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# PLYMOUTH LOCAL AREA SEND

Self Evaluation



One  Devon

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# Section I: Introduction and Context





# OUR VISION

**We wish for all children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to achieve well in their early years setting, school and college, find employment and go on to live happy and fulfilled lives.**

Plymouth SEND Strategy (2023 – 2026)

**This vision is within the context of Plymouth Children’s and Young Peoples plan – A Bright Future 2023-26, which sets out that:**

“We have a duty to help our children and young people to have a Bright Future. Our vision is that children and young people in Plymouth grow up healthy and happy, safe and able to aspire and achieve; living in resilient families and communities, able to take advantage of a broad range of opportunities. Our aim is that no Plymouth child should find that their life chances are defined or limited by the circumstances of their birth or early childhood experiences. If problems emerge, we will step in and seek to work effectively alongside families to improve outcomes.

We need to do this better and faster, across our local authority, schools, and health providers, community sector and statutory services, to ensure that we shift resource and focus to be able to benefit more of our children, more of the time focusing on prevention and earlier identification of need. Over time we want to be able to reduce the need for intensive crisis management for a minority. We are aspirational about tackling the corrosive root causes and impact of deprivation.”



# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Plymouth Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2023 - 2026 sets out the city's aim to ensure that Plymouth's children with SEND are well supported to be healthy and happy, safe and able to aspire and achieve. This vision is within the context of Plymouth Children's and Young Peoples Plan – A Bright Future 2021-26, which sets out that:

- We want Plymouth to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive and where our families are supported to be the best they can be. Our partnership has a bold and courageous vision to deliver the best education for all our children and young people;
- To prepare our young people for independence (adulthood)
- For our children and young people to experience the best possible health and wellbeing.

Working with Plymouth Parent Carer Voice and Plymouth's SEND Strategic Board we have identified a set of strategic priorities for 2023-2026 for the Local Area partnership including Education, Health and care. We have embedded the major national policy developments including SEND and AP Green Paper and used the new SEND Inspection Framework to embed the emerging national policy imperatives.

The SEND Strategy focuses on the following key areas:



## Our local area SEND partnership and the development of our SEF

Our local area SEND partnership is made up from:

- Plymouth Parent Carer Voice
- Youth Ascends
- Plymouth Young Safeguarders
- Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Plymouth Public Health
- University Hospitals Plymouth
- Livewell
- Plymouth City Council

Our SEF is representative of the local area partnership and a document owned by all. Collectively we hold high ambitions for our children and young people with SEND, and we keep our children and young people at the heart of what we do. We have robust governance in place which has a cycle of review and challenge to ensure this.

Our partnership ensures that children, young people and their families have regular opportunities to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect them. We hold termly (6) forums for parents and carers, and make use of parent carer surveys, and we have a feedback loop for children and young people led by the council's Participation Team.

## TEN WISHES

*What Children and Young People in Plymouth want from you...*



We want professionals to be easier to contact.

We want professionals to be on time, as they expect us to be.

We want professionals to be properly trained and for us to be involved in the training.

We want professionals to ask us what we need and not to assume.

We want professionals to do what they say they are going to do, to listen and stand up for us.

We want professionals to use words we understand.

We want professionals to reassure us something is being done and tell us how long it will take.

We want professionals to understand when we need to talk to them one-to-one.

We want professionals to ask us 'do you feel safe?'

We want professionals to respect us and how we feel.





# Population focus

**19.5%** children and young people as a % of total population (2021 Census)

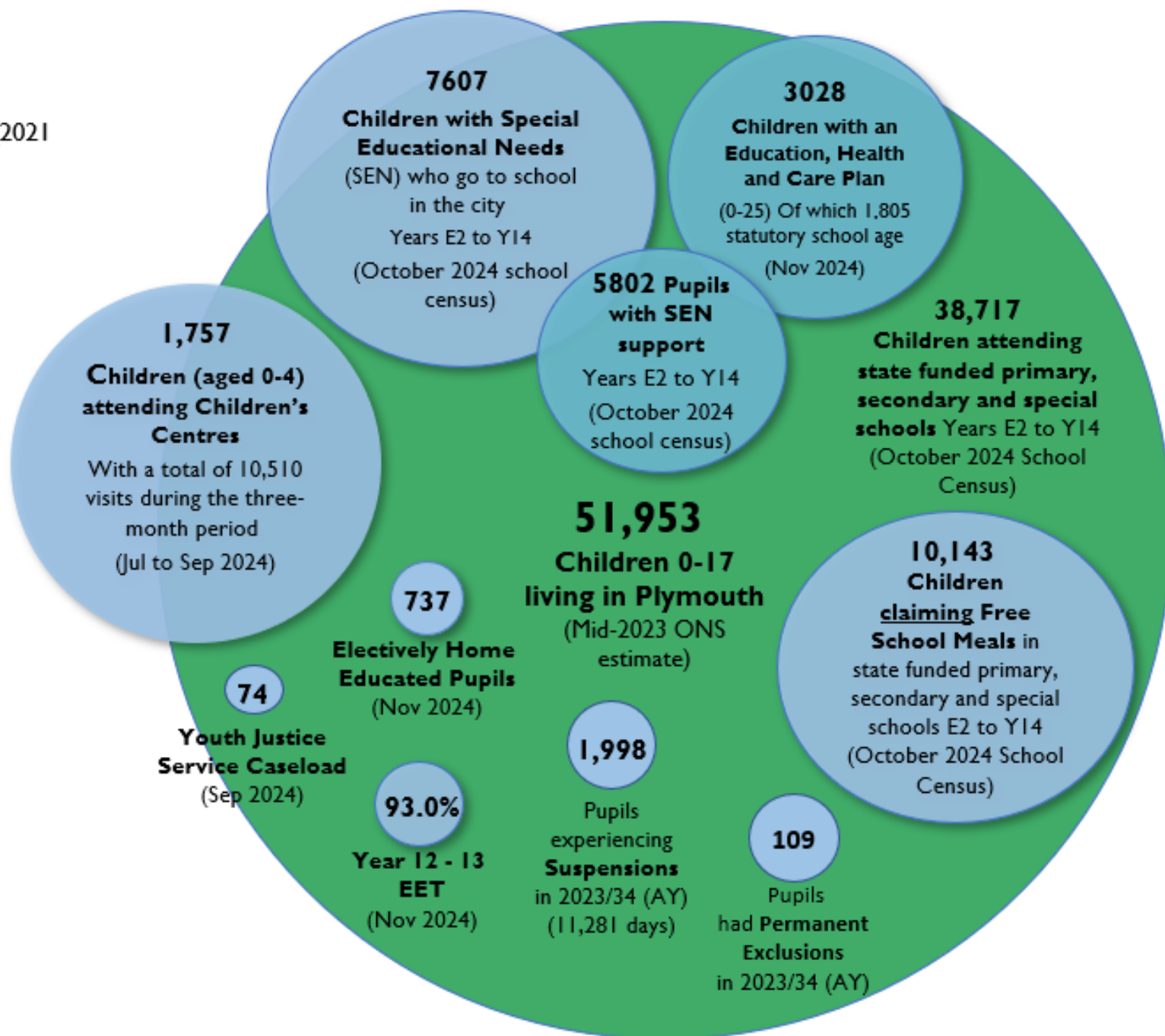
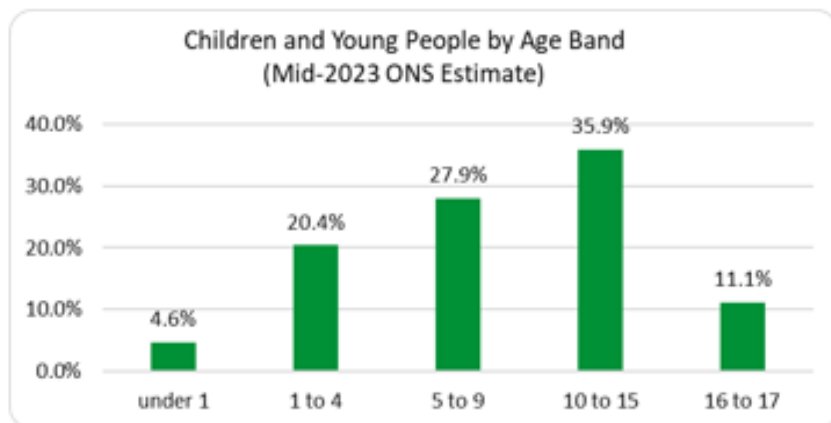


● 0-17 ● 18 and over

**16.1%** children (under 16s) are living in 'absolute' low-income families and 21.5% are living in 'relative' low-income families (DWP 2022)



**23.1%** pupils (state funded primary, secondary and special schools) classed as persistent absentees (2023/24 autumn and spring terms combined)



# Population focus

## 98 Schools in Plymouth

69 Primary schools

18 Secondary schools

7 Special Schools

1 All through school

1 Alternative Provision

1 Post 16 provider

### 3028

Children and young people 0-25 years old supported with an EHCP  
(End of November 2024)

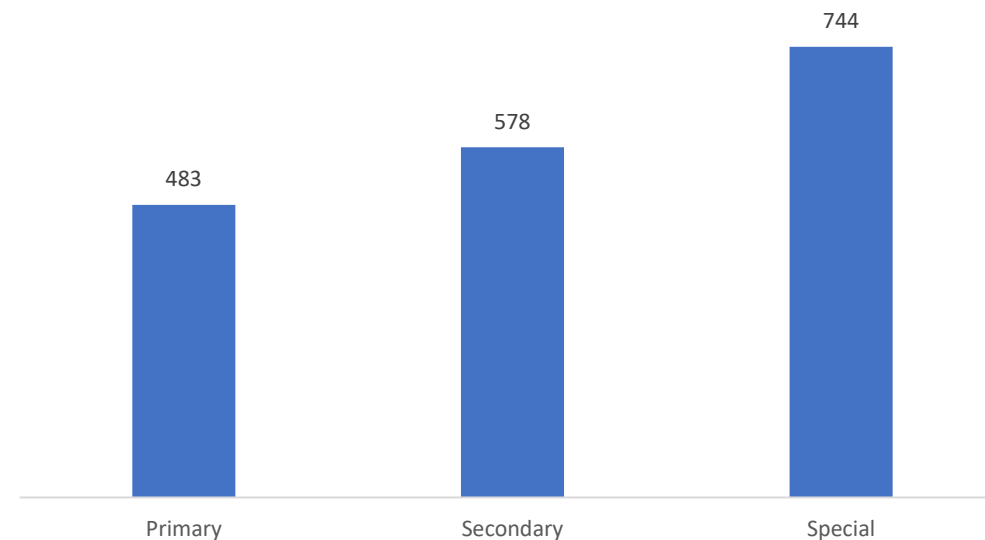
### 5802

Children and young people supported through SEN Support  
(October 2024 school census)

### 7607

Children and young people with SEND who go to school in Plymouth  
(October 2024 school census)

Number of EHCPs by phase  
(October 2024 school census - Plymouth schools)



SEND Primary Needs Prevalence 2023/2024	Plymouth	National
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	2.5	2.8
Hearing Impairment	0.3	0.3
Moderate Learning Difficulty	2.0	2.5
Multi- Sensory Impairment	0.0	0.1
Other Difficulty/Disability	0.7	0.6
Physical Disability	0.6	0.4
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	0.0	0.1
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	0.7	0.6
Severe Learning Difficulty	0.6	0.4
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	5.6	3.7
Specific Learning Difficulty	1.1	2.1
Speech, Language and Communications needs	4.9	4.4
Visual Impairment	0.1	0.2

## EHCP pupils

(At the end of the academic year 2023/24)

84.1% Average attendance rate  
23.7% are persistently absent  
4.8% are severely absent  
0.3% have been excluded  
8.3% have been suspended  
1.1% are Electively Home Educated  
4.7% use a Part Time Timetable  
2.0% attend Alternative Provision  
7.3% are known to Social Care

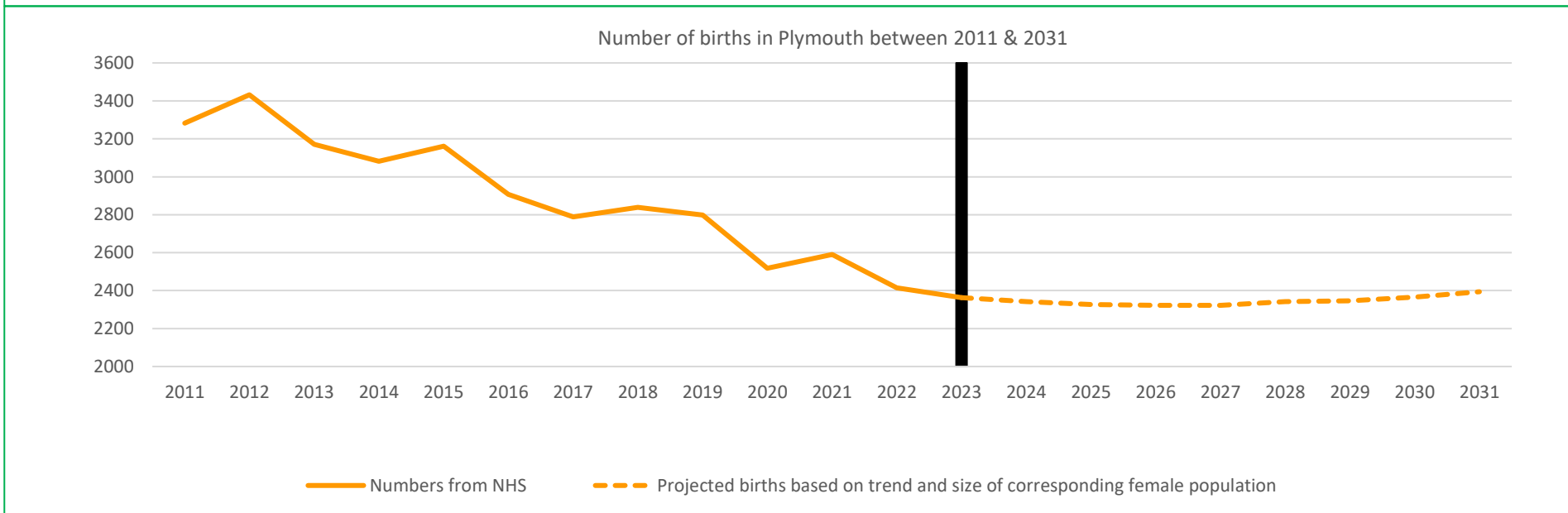
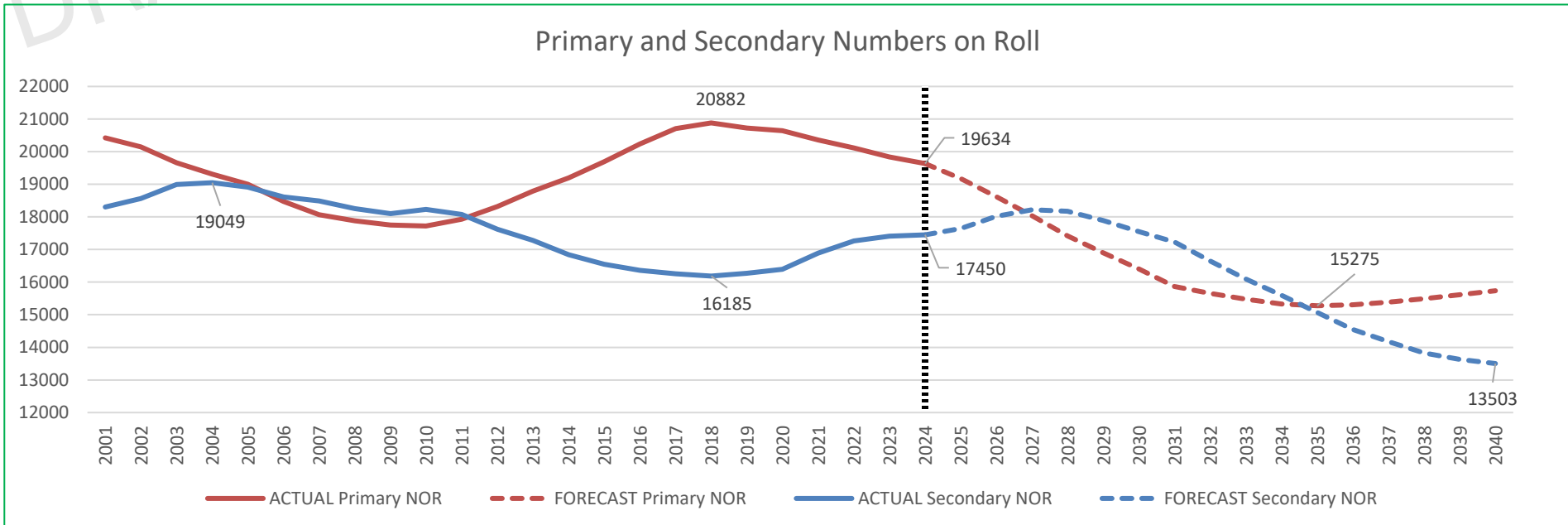
## SEN Support pupils

(At the end of the academic year 2023/24)

87.2% Average attendance rate  
34.2% are persistently absent  
4.9% are severely absent  
0.9% have been excluded  
11.6% have been suspended  
3.4% are Electively Home Educated  
2.5% use a Part Time Timetable  
1.9% attend Alternative Provision  
5.6% are known to Social Care



# Population focus – School population



Declines in the number of primary and secondary pupils are anticipated over the next ten years, with secondary numbers mirroring what will be seen in primary five years prior. Forecasts are based on trends in changes in cohorts already in school and numbers of births in the corresponding years for those due to join school.

It is anticipated that revised projections once 2021 census data is taken into account, will increase the projected female cohort within Plymouth.

However, based on the trend in actual birth numbers it is not expected that this will see a significant increase in the number of children being born in Plymouth.

## Growing Demand For Our Services

- In the last two years, requests for a statutory assessment have almost doubled with an increase from 141 requests for assessment in 2022, to 324 in 2024. The prevalent need remains Social, Emotional, Mental Health and Communication & Interaction.
- Requests for specialist provision have increased with on average 10 new requests through annual reviews each week
- There has been an increasing trend in higher funding requests in mainstream school with the average plus package request now approximately £14,000
- The local offer is not currently able to meet the demand for special school places. Therefore, Plymouth has approved the use of £13m high needs capital allocation grant to deliver a new SEND Sufficiency Plan which aims to increase the number of special school places by 88, and to increase resourced provision across the city to enable more children with an EHCP to be educated in their local mainstream school.
- We are focusing on children's needs being met within our family of schools in Plymouth via our graduated approach and ordinarily available provision offer. Our place-based plan is focused on inclusion and belonging and is system led by our schools, with multi-agency engagement in the plan.
- Plymouth is committed to inclusive education and continues to work with schools to ensure that children with additional needs grow up and learn alongside their peers in a mainstream setting wherever possible.
- The Community Paediatric Service, at University Hospitals Plymouth (UHP) has seen a 76% increase in referrals since 2021-2022.
- There has been an increase in demand for short breaks from 246 in 2022- 23 to 320 in 2024 – 25, and an increase in commissioned residential hours from 3744 in 2022 – 23 to 5616 in 2024 – 25. We are working to review our offer and ensure that it is a clear part of the early help support to families.

## Academic Outcomes – Primary Attainment

<b>EYFSP</b> % of pupils achieving a 'Good Level of Development'	ALL pupils			SEN Support			EHCP		
Year	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>63.5%</b>	<b>64.1%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>28.2%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
National	65.2%	67.2%	67.7%	22.9%	24.3%	24.9%	3.6%	3.8%	3.8%
<b>GAP</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>	<b>-3.1%</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>-0.5%</b>	<b>-3.6%</b>	<b>-2.5%</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>

<b>Year One Phonics</b> % of pupils achieving expected standard	ALL pupils			SEN Support			EHCP		
Year	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>75.7%</b>	<b>79.9%</b>	<b>81.3%</b>	<b>44.9%</b>	<b>49.7%</b>	<b>56.2%</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>
National	75.4%	78.8%	80.2%	43.5%	48.4%	51.5%	18.6%	19.6%	20.1%
<b>GAP</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>	<b>-4.2%</b>	<b>-4.8%</b>

<b>KS2</b> % of pupils achieving expected standards		ALL pupils			SEN Support			EHCP		
Year		2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
RWM	<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>59.0%</b>	<b>59.8%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
	National	59.0%	59.9%	61.1%	21.2%	23.6%	25.7%	7.0%	8.2%	8.7%
	<b>GAP</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>	<b>-3.0%</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>
Reading	<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>74.0%</b>	<b>71.9%</b>	<b>74.0%</b>	<b>43.0%</b>	<b>41.6%</b>	<b>43.4%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>
	National	75.0%	73.3%	75.0%	43.9%	45.0%	48.1%	16.2%	18.2%	19.3%
	<b>GAP</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>	<b>-1.4%</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>-3.4%</b>	<b>-4.7%</b>	<b>-6.7%</b>	<b>-5.2%</b>	<b>-2.9%</b>
Maths	<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>70.9%</b>	<b>72.6%</b>	<b>73.6%</b>	<b>39.6%</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>42.1%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
	National	71.8%	73.3%	73.6%	39.9%	42.5%	44.2%	14.8%	16.5%	17.3%
	<b>GAP</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>	<b>-7.4%</b>	<b>-3.5%</b>	<b>-2.9%</b>
Writing TA	<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>70.3%</b>	<b>71.8%</b>	<b>73.4%</b>	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>31.1%</b>	<b>37.7%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>
	National	69.7%	71.8%	72.2%	30.4%	33.9%	36.2%	10.4%	11.8%	12.2%
	<b>GAP</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>-2.9%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>-3.8%</b>	<b>-2.7%</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>

### EYFSP

- Those with SEN support usually perform better in Plymouth than nationally, however there has been a slight decrease in 2024
- Although the % of EHCP children achieving GLD, has increased over the past three years, it is not yet in line with national averages.

### Year One Phonics

- The % of children with SEN support achieving the phonics pass mark in Plymouth has improved on the previous year for three years. The gap has widened with national results but positively in terms of an improving Plymouth picture.
- The % of children with an EHCP achieving the pass mark has decreased year on year, with the gap between Plymouth and national data widening.

### Key Stage Two

- Overall, the achievement of both pupils with SEN support and those with an EHCP, has increased from 2022-2024, for Reading, Maths and Writing combined, and when split into individual subjects
- With the exception of SEN support pupils achieving RWM combined and Writing, measures remain lower for SEN support and EHCP pupils when compared with national benchmarks

## Academic Outcomes – Secondary Attainment

KS4 - Pupil Attainment		ALL pupils			SEN Support			EHCP		
Year		2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Average Attainment 8 Score	Plymouth	47.6	44.9	46.2	36.6	32.7	35.3	15.6	13.9	15.2
	National	48.9	46.4	46.1	34.9	33.3	33.1	14.3	14.0	14.2
	GAP	-1.3	-1.5	0.1	1.7	-0.6	2.2	1.3	-0.1	1.0
Average Progress 8 Score	Plymouth	-0.20	-0.16	-0.06	-0.53	-0.59	-0.43	-1.25	-1.25	-0.97
	National	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.47	-0.45	-0.45	-1.33	-1.12	-1.13
	GAP	-0.17	-0.13	-0.03	-0.06	-0.14	0.02	0.08	-0.13	0.16
% achieving 9-5 in EM	Plymouth	46.0	41.7	46.2	24.2	18.7	24.5	7.6	8.2	6.7
	National	50.0	45.5	46.2	22.5	20.7	21.6	7.0	6.9	7.0
	GAP	-4.0	-3.8	0.0	1.7	-2.0	2.9	0.6	1.3	-0.3
% achieving 9-4 in EM	Plymouth	66.5	60.9	65.6	42.5	33.7	40.8	15.3	12.9	14.8
	National	69.0	65.4	65.4	39.2	36.9	37.7	13.5	13.0	13.0
	GAP	-2.5	-4.5	0.2	3.3	-3.2	3.1	1.8	-0.1	1.8

KS5 - Pupil Attainment		ALL pupils			SEN Support			EHCP		
Year		2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Average A level grade	Plymouth	B-	C+	C+	C+	C+	C	B	B+	C+
	National	B-	C+	C+	B-	C+	C+	B-	C+	C+
Achieving at least two A levels	Plymouth	83.6	82.0	84.3	94.7	77.8	79.6	62.5	100.0	88.9
	National	87.5	86.0	86.6	80.3	77.4	80.2	78.1	73.5	76.5
	GAP	-3.9	-4.0	-2.3	14.4	0.4	-0.6	-15.6	26.5	12.4

### Key Stage Four

- In the most, achievement for both SEN support and EHCP students has recovered in 2024 to be higher than the national comparators, following a decline in 2023.
- Progress in 2024 is better for students with SEN support and EHCPs than the national benchmarks

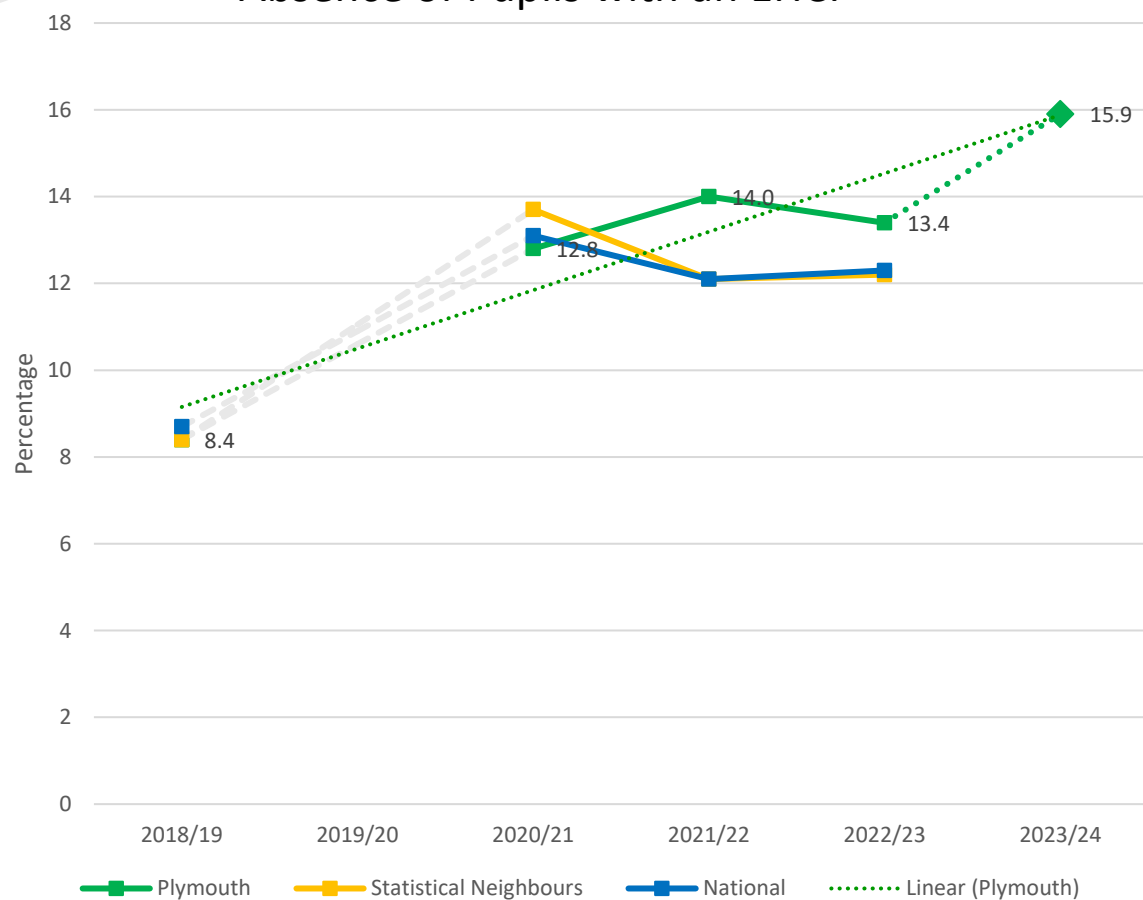
### Key Stage Five

- Across the past three years, SEN support students experienced a reduction in attainment in 2023, followed by improvement in 2024. This was mirrored in the attainment of all students.
- EHCP student achievement improved in 2023 in A levels. A level achievement in 2024 declined but remained higher than the national comparator.

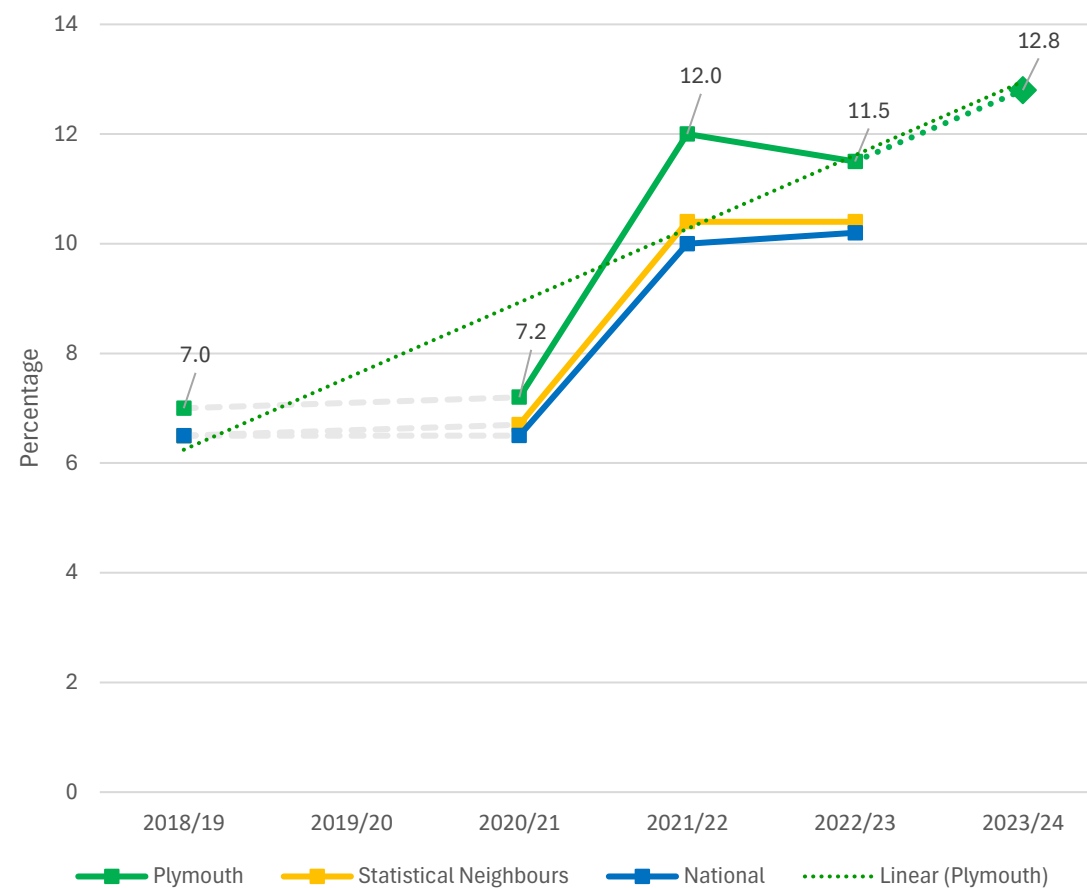


# Attendance Rates

## Absence of Pupils with an EHCP

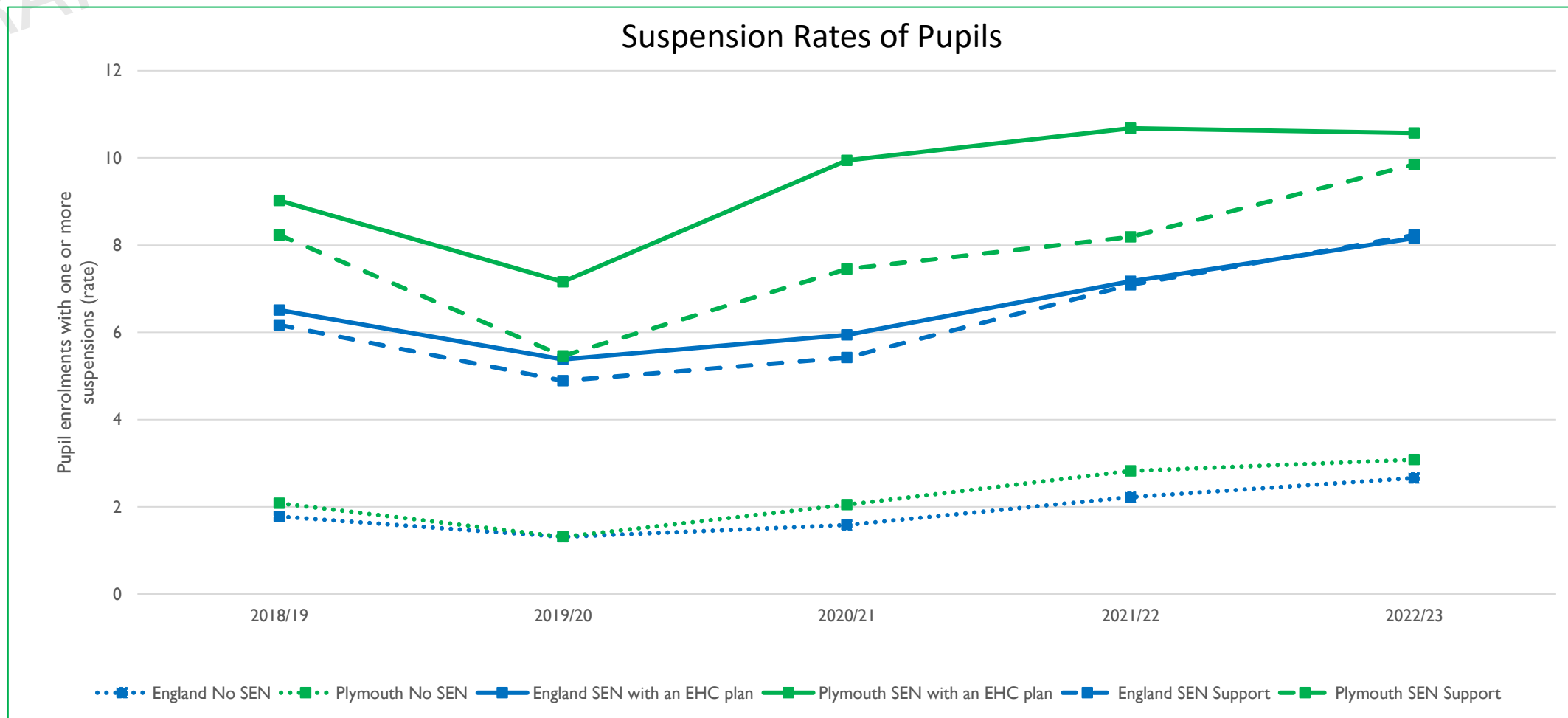


## Absence of Pupils with SEN Support



Absence rates for both pupils with EHCPs and those with SEN support have been increasing.

# Suspension Rates

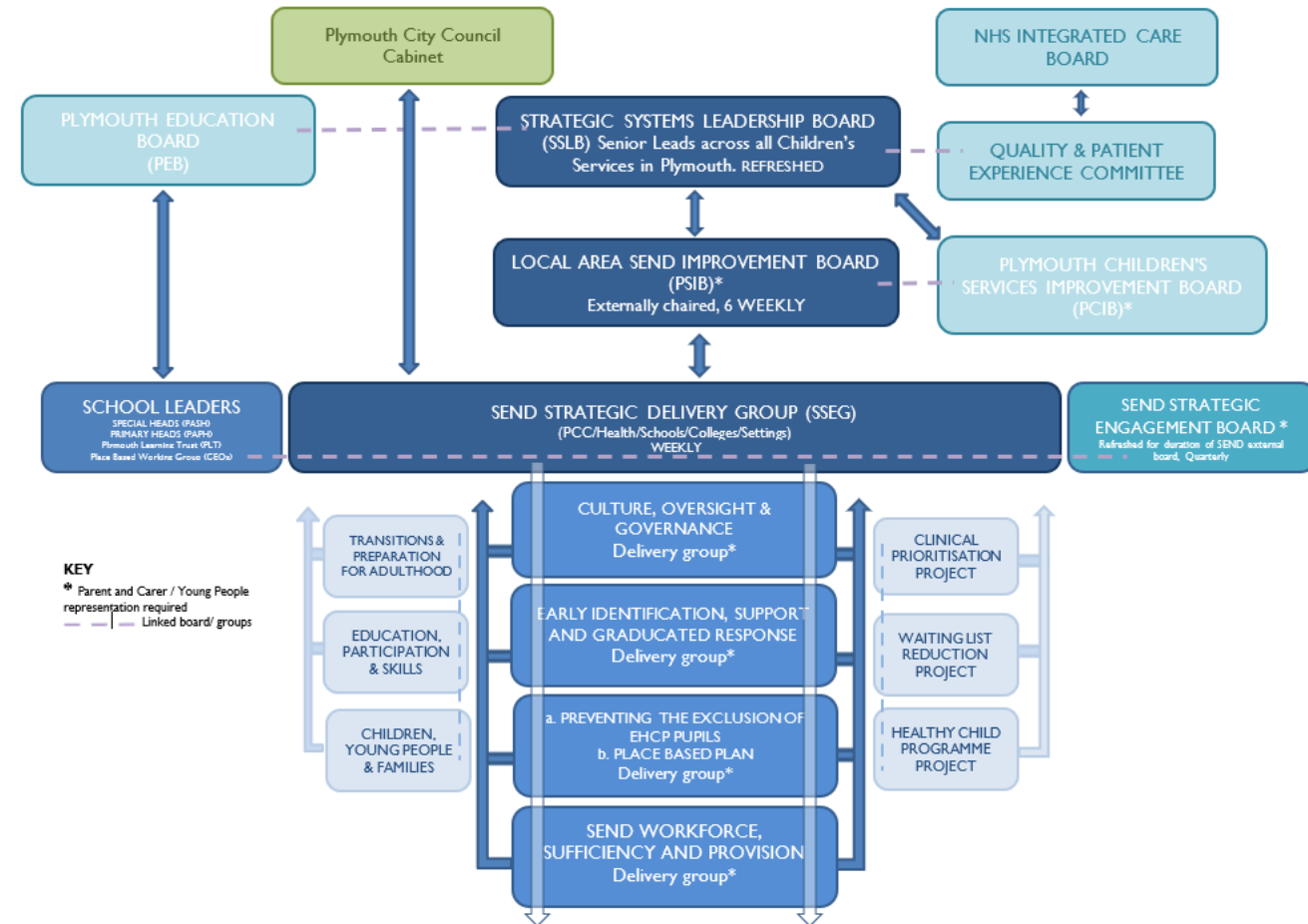


- Since 2019/20 there has been an upward trend in suspensions across all pupil group, with levels in 2022/23 almost double those seen in 2019/20 for all groups
- This upward trend has been seen for both Plymouth and England

# How we have responded to our most recent inspection

To achieve the ambition set out in this Local Area SEND Improvement Plan we knew we needed to strengthen our governance and partnership arrangements. We have reviewed and restructured our governance across Plymouth to strengthen our accountability, oversight and transparency across the whole system. This updated governance structure aims to:

1. Keep co-production at the heart of all we do.
2. Refocus our improvement programme, holding firm to the good work we have started through our SEND Strategic Board, while giving the priority improvement actions the capacity and attention needed to drive improvement forward at pace.
3. Establish robust Partnership accountability for delivery of the plan.
4. Ensure effective monitoring of progress and the impact this has for children and families in Plymouth.
5. Strengthen professional development, learning and training.



## Section 2: the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND





## Headlines

- We have seen a reduction in the number of complaints over the last 6 months in relation to EHCPs and timeliness of assessment.
- We have increased our 6-week assessment decision timeliness from 23% in April 2024 to 88% within 6 weeks, and 100% within 7 days of deadline by October 2024.
- Schools appreciate the co-produced Ordinarily Available Provision guidance, which is clear, simple and relevant.
- We have seen a fall in the number waiting on a neurodiversity school age assessment pathway from 606 in October to 470 in July 2024. The waiting time has reduced by 20 weeks.

- Our local offer pages [Plymouth Online Directory - Plymouth Online Directory](#) provide clear and easy to follow information, advice and guidance for families and practitioners to access.
- **The Ordinarily Available Provision** resource to enhance and embed a consistent universal approach across schools has been co-produced with partners and was launched in June 2024 16 sessions were held with 320 attendees including families, senior school leaders, governors, SENCos, teachers, health and social care colleagues. [Plymouth OAP for schools](#). 83% of attendees at the OAP launch agreed that the resource will have a positive impact on their inclusive approaches. Positive feedback from the November 2024 SENCo briefing *"OAP has enabled us to develop our own version and supporting staff to understand the expectations around universal provision - use of task boards at whole school level in particular."*
- Livewell Southwest deliver services in line with the **iTHRIVE model** supporting the 4 quadrants of delivery: Getting Advice, Getting Help, Getting more Help, Getting Risk Support
- **Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Early Help Pathway** has open access and there is no need for a professional referral. There is an advice line that professionals are able to access for advice, there is also a 24/7 crisis line in place.
- For speech and language, we have continued to deliver the implementation of a new delivery model in line with the iTHRIVE model, including a 12-week pathway.
- Children and Young People's **Neurodiversity Wellbeing Team** have launched a confidential, free advice line to all children, young people and their families who have a neurodiversity diagnosis or are on the neurodiversity pathway within Livewell Southwest and University Hospitals Plymouth.

## Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

- We have increased the number of children receiving the five mandated **universal health visiting checks** for families. From Q1 2023/24 to Q1 2024/25 we have:
  - Increased the ante-natal review within 14 days from 26% (August 2023) to 39.2%. (September 2024)
  - Increased the 6-8 week review from 50.2% (August 2023) to 77.5%. (September 2024).
  - New birth reviews have increased slightly from 82.4% (August 2023) to 83.3%. (June 2024)
  - Increased the health visiting one year review from 78.2% (August 2023) to 85.7% (September 2024).
- We have improved the capacity of the Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (PHN) as part of the 'Grow your own workforce development'. PHN lead the **Healthy Child Programme**, including the five mandated developmental reviews, providing information, advice and guidance to support parenting and healthy choices.
- We have increased our **mental health and behaviour support** to schools via Mental Health Support Teams (MHST), so that we identify and meet the needs of children and young people more quickly and put the right support in place. Supporting 35 schools (26 primary and 9 secondary). Areas targeted were those where local indicators show the greatest need and significant health inequalities. Funding has been agreed for a new wave increasing the coverage of schools across Plymouth; the new recruited posts commenced their training in September 2024.
- The Early Years Team supported 18 Early Years Practitioners (EYPs), from 14 different settings to complete **Level 3 Language and Literacy 2-4s training** through the Early Years Professional Development programme (EYPDP). 11 of these EYPs were then supported by the Early Years Team to complete three credits at Level 4 and ensure that their setting gained Communication Friendly Setting Status.
- We have delivered the **core offer of SEND training** to 627 professionals across the partnership (to date) to equip all professionals with SEND knowledge to support early identification and support. This core level of training will provide a consistent base line level of awareness. This will support all educators to have capacity to intervene early (Universal level) and use the skills needed to provide the targeted and additional specialist help that children and young people may be need.

## Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

### Focus On Practice

To illustrate the impact the Mental Health Support Team has had for one of our children:

Feedback from parents: *"I, honestly cannot thank you enough for the support you have given H, with such compassion and understanding. We feel that you went above and beyond to ensure H was getting the right support, and also your support to us as his parents really was amazing. You have been such a positive/important part of H's recovery throughout all of his struggles, and I know how grateful he has always been to have been able to offload and talk to you. We couldn't have asked for a better person to have been his support."*

### Our next steps...

- Refine the recovery model for the SEND 0-25 team so that our ability to respond to EHCP requests and Annual Reviews are completed within timescale more frequently.
- Support SENCOs to disseminate the graduated approach effectively and share the key message of 'everyone is responsible for SEND'.
- Expand MHST and support more schools in the city to access emotional support.
- Further collaboration and embedding of the speech, language and communication needs balanced system framework.

# Children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support

## Headlines

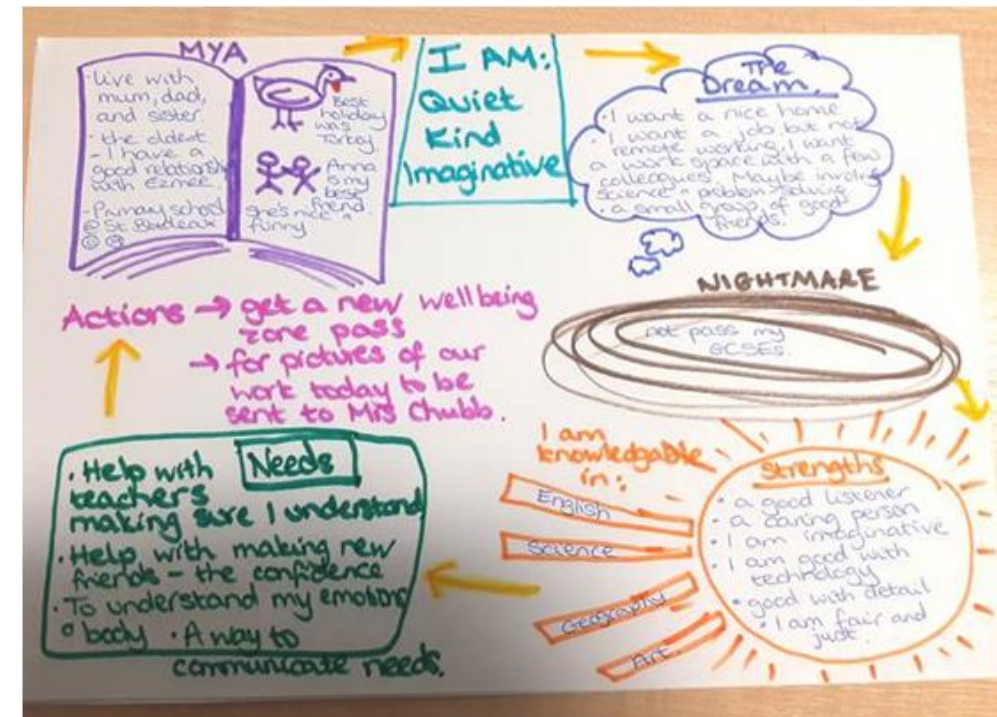
- 18 young people contributed to section B of the ordinarily available provision resource [Plymouth Council - Ordinarily Available Provision for Schools by The Education People - Issuu](#)
  - 9 Primary schools are currently participating in the first wave of the Partnership for Neurodiversity in Schools project led by the NHS and facilitated in Plymouth by the Parent Carer Forum
  - 97% of families who access PIASS report that they are very satisfied with the service that they receive. ([The Difference We Make: Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND \(PIAS\) Impact Report 1st September 2023 - 31st August 2024 \(plymouthias.org.uk](#)
- 
- We have created a **co-production framework** and charter and implemented a co-produced local area **Learning Quality Assurance Framework** which enables all partners to fully integrate the aspirations, views and preferences of children and young people in all of their work.
  - We have ensured that **young person voice** is integrated into all quality assurance and have reviewed section A of our current EHCP document so that it is more young person centred.
  - We have included the voice of the family and young person in all evaluation forms when completing any special school outreach support.
  - We have invited individual families to arrange of learning circle meetings to identify what could be improved about the SEND pathway and their experiences.
  - The Plymouth Learning Partnership delivered 'Autism in Schools' accredited training (Leadership and Culture for Autism) for secondary senior leadership teams was co-delivered with Plymouth Parent Carer Forum who have built a **sustained relationship with schools and families** as part of this project, enabling families to collaborate with schools and understand the support their child receives.



# Children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support

## Focus On Practice

- The Educational Psychology Service use picture mapping when working with young people to visualise their story and support constructive conversations and planning with both the young person and their family.
- At the November 2024 SENCo briefing we received positive feedback around the impact we are making *“The 0-25 team has made significant strides in improving communication with families, schools, and other stakeholders. The proactive sharing of updates, clear advice, and prompt responses to queries have built greater trust and transparency. Families now feel more engaged and supported throughout the SEND process, while professionals report smoother collaboration with the team. Improved Turnaround for EHC Needs Assessments.”*



## Our next steps...

- Embed work with families to understand the impact of the EHCNA process and how to improve communication further.
- Embed the new processes for Annual Reviews, following the overhaul of processes including timely updating and re-issuing of EHC Plans.
- Ensure that young person voice is embedded into all reviews, including strong evidence of preparation for adulthood.
- Expand the family forums further to increase engagement and support for individual families, and feed key themes into the wider local area improvements.
- For speech and language, we have set a trajectory of the 18-week waiting time target to achieve in 24 months.

## Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

### Headlines

- Funding requests are now considered within 2 weeks of application, in comparison with up to 3 months waiting time in Spring 2024
  - Feedback from schools at termly transition events has indicated that the implementation of the Transition Portal has led to increasing numbers of children receiving the right support on entry to secondary school. Suspensions of children in year 7 have fallen by 50% 1<sup>st</sup> Sep – 26<sup>th</sup> Nov '24, when compared to the same period 2023.
  - The initial timeliness plan suggested that 154 plans would have been issued by the end of November 2024; however actual performance has been 189 plans
  - University Hospitals Plymouth (UHP) has increased the capacity to complete 50% more autism assessments.
- 
- The **graduated approach** pathway across the local area has been strengthened to establish consistency in provision at all levels across settings and schools
  - Special school outreach has been expanded with three teams who now offer whole school, targeted group and individual support
  - We have introduced the vulnerable pupils panel so that young people have the support they require in response to their needs
  - The introduction of the **transition portal** has ensured that all learners have the right help at the exact point of phase transfer
  - EHCP processes have improved with more regular and timelier multi agency panels with a needs led assessment process. Funding is supported for all young people when awaiting the finalised plan.
  - 25 SENCos have directly contributed to the development of our **new resource directory**, demonstrating an improvement in collaboration.
  - The SEND 0-25 training plan is underway in partnership with RISE (DfE) and is improving the quality of EHCPs. This directly impacts the quality of support for children in schools.
  - The Family Hubs team have built a **family hubs primary school offer**, connecting families and linking primary schools with their closest family hub to bring together communities of support and practice to share resources.

## Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

- We have ensured that all the schools in Plymouth have access to the Core **Educational Psychology (EP) offer** which includes termly planning, triage, complex case work, support for vulnerable groups and staff development.
- There is now a '**Waiting Well**' offer led by the Livewell Southwest neurodiversity wellbeing team with co-produced additional resources that are child friendly.
- CAMHS have maintained the 18-week referral to treatment.
- We have increased capacity to complete 50% more **neurodiversity assessments** at University Hospitals Plymouth.

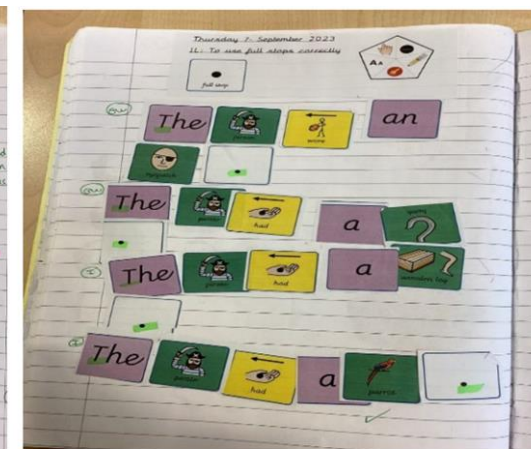
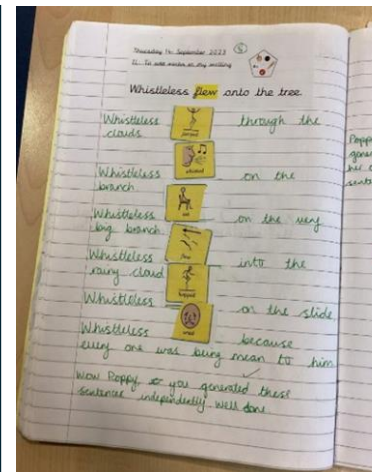
# Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

## Focus On Practice

Inclusion in Action Case study from St Matthew's CofE Primary and Nursery Academy  
From reception to Year 2, colourful semantic has become part of our universal provision for our whole class English teaching sequencing.

It has been helpful to all pupils but has particularly supported our send Pupils to feel successful in their learning across the school from reception to year 6 in all subjects.

*“The idea behind colourful semantics has been powerful in helping pupils to know what goes into a sentence and how to order a sentence, we now want to take this idea further and use colour in other ways to help learning stick for our pupils. Our school uses schemas in foundation subjects to support pupils understanding of how things work, connecting it to previous knowledge and ideas. By using colour within these connections of ideas and themes, it will support the brain in organising new information and pupils understanding of new knowledge. This in turn will support retention of new learning.”*



## Our next steps...

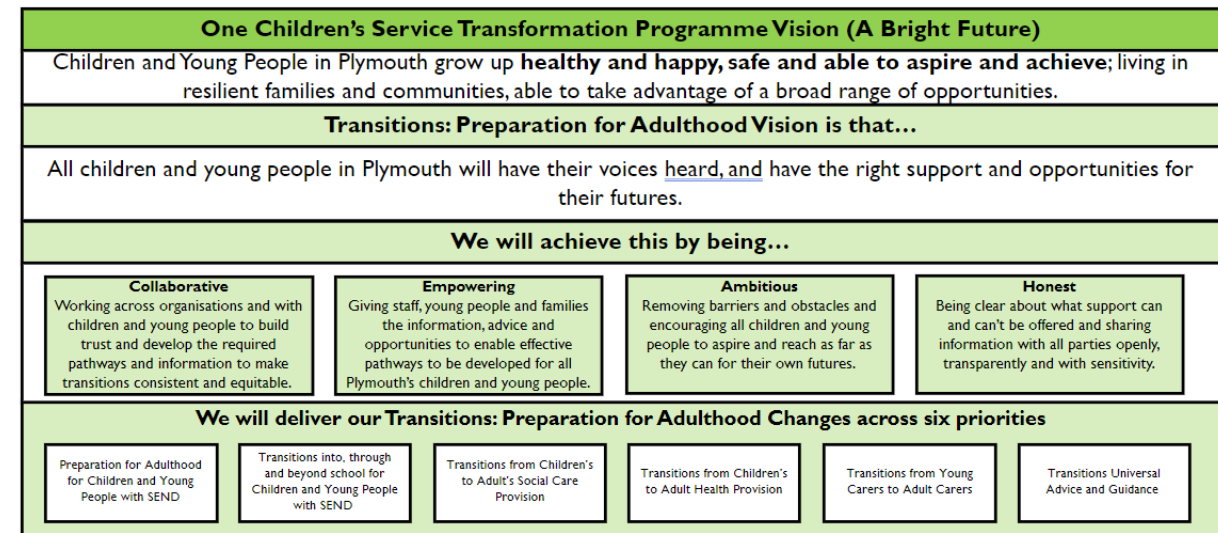
- Launch our targeted support funding model and trial this with early adopter schools.
- Launch and promote our new SEND landing page and resource directory for schools which has been developed in collaboration with local SENCOs and wider partners.
- Deliver the development of resourced provision for mainstream schools.

# Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

## Headlines

- 90.4% of 16- and 17-year-olds with an EHCP are in Education, Training or Employment as of October 2024, target 92% by 31 March 2025
- There are 57 Supported Internship placements in place for academic year 24/25 (target 75 by 31 March 2025), with 48 starters in September 24. The number of young people with an EHCP on a Supported Apprenticeship continues to grow.
- Over 80 young people have completed the Your Futures programme, funded through the Short Breaks Innovation Fund. Over 100% of young people have achieved positive outcomes. Completed first trip to Iceland with future breaks planned throughout the academic year.
- Over 150 young people have been engaged with the overall Short Breaks programme delivering SEND Innovations. Two providers achieved 100% transition from a summer break activity into further post 16 provision.

- We have created a multi-agency **Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood Plan** which spans Health, Social Care and SEND, as well as our universal advice and guidance.
- We have introduced the **transition portal** and feedback from schools has indicated this has led to increasing numbers of children receiving the right support on entry to both primary and secondary school.
- We have collaborated with local schools to support school lead events for transitions to improve the consistency of enhanced transition, and secure better working relationships between primary and secondary phases.
- We have introduced monthly **SEND meetings with all post-16 providers** to secure a wider offer locally for learners, support with resource and ensure providers are evidencing impact.





## Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

### Focus On Practice

City College Plymouth's Supported Internship Programme, in partnership with Plymouth City Council, has shown remarkable results this year with 39 interns, one of the highest numbers across the UK for a college, gaining valuable work experience and skills.

The programme, aimed at young people aged between 16 and 25 with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP), is supported by key local employers such as Plymouth City Council, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, Livewell Southwest and Co-op among others.

Interns have benefitted from a variety of roles, from working in NHS pharmacies and canteens to meeting and greeting visitors at City College's reception. These placements allow students to fully integrate in the workplace, where they are recognised as part of the staff team, and contribute meaningfully while continuing to work towards qualifications in maths, English and employability skills.

We're incredibly proud of the impact this programme is having on their lives.



### Our next steps...

- Develop the Annual Review system and practice within the local area to ensure reviews are timely and robust.
- Support schools to enhance their practice in preparation for adulthood.
- Refine our quality assurance for EHCPs to secure positive experiences for our children and young people with a focus on impact, transition and preparation for adulthood.
- Create a visual map for pathway options in the local area.

## Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

### Headlines

- We have delivered the waiting well (early help) offer within Plymouth, including: neurodiversity wellbeing team, co-produced information for children and young people, help line.
  - Rates of in-year unexplained exits i.e. children moving schools without a change of address have fallen by 33% at the primary phase and 10% at the secondary phase when compared to the same period 2023 (1<sup>st</sup> Sep – 26<sup>th</sup> Nov).
  - Suspensions of children requiring SEN Support have fallen by 18% in 2024/25 1st Sep '24 – 26<sup>th</sup> November '24 when compared to the same period 2023. Suspensions of children with EHCPs has fallen by 26% across the same period.
- 
- A **friendly version** of the SEND improvement plan was created to support children and young people to understand the planned journey
  - The Plymouth Youth Ascends group won the **inclusion award** at the Plymouth Youth Awards [Youth Ascends - Plymouth Information Advice and Support for SEND](#).
  - Young people created a video to share their thoughts and views about inclusion in mainstream school, and how this can be improved. This has been shared with a wide range of partners [Equal, Kind and Safe: Education, Let us change the future \(subtitled\) on Vimeo](#) and was created with 80 young people, collating view through visits to schools
  - Our young people attended the Local Area SEND improvement board to challenge Plymouth leaders about their progress and next steps
  - Young person voice is now a golden thread in all of the quality assurance, reporting to SEND boards and production of support for schools including the OAP and new landing page
  - We have supported the development of a preschool group for deaf children and their families in the local area
  - Young people are now involved in all recruitment panels for senior Local Authority officers

# Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

## Focus On Practice

### Plymouth Youth Awards 2024 Final

Youth Ascends group attended the Crowne Plaza for the final of the Plymouth Youth Awards

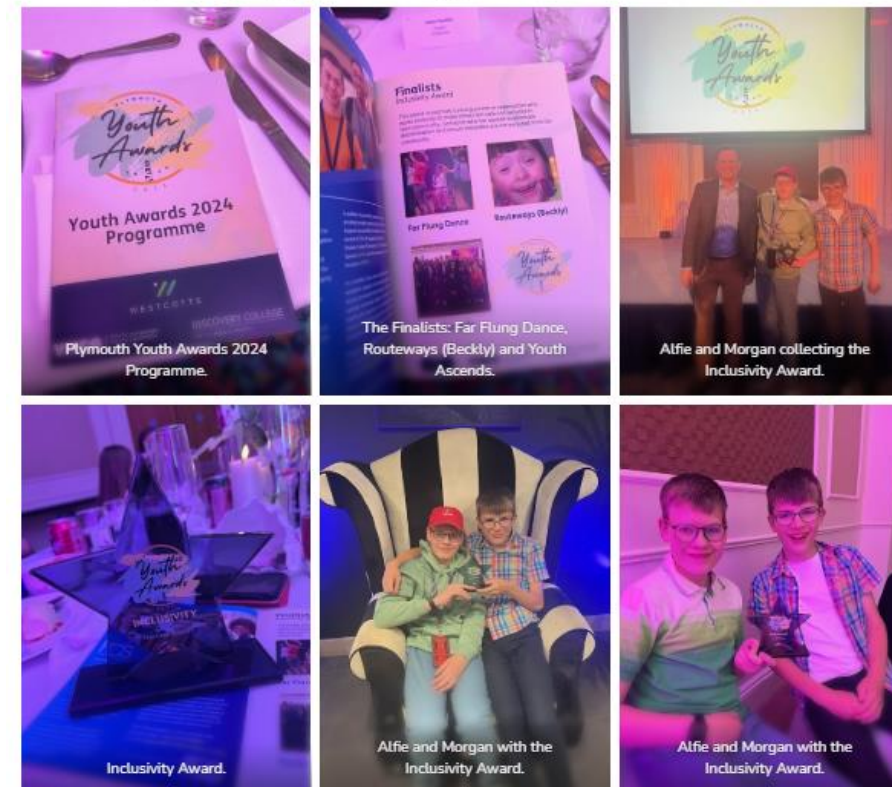
They were nominated under the Inclusivity category sponsored by First Class Support.

Youth Ascends is a forum created by and made up of young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Through regular meetings members come together to share their experiences and provide support and offer insight to professionals through consultations and co-production sessions. Youth Ascends collaborate with city leaders to co-produce an improvement plan which outlines necessary changes to Plymouth to ensure all children and young people with special educational needs receive adequate support.

We want to thank Youth Ascends for all their hard work and professionals who have worked alongside Youth Ascends and listened to their voice and views on how to make Plymouth a city accessible for all. They are an amazing group of young people who want to make a change within the city and to make sure young people have their voice heard

### Youth Ascends Won The Award For Inclusivity!

Alfie and Morgan attended on behalf of the group along with staff Nicolle and Steve. They all had a fantastic evening and the young people were so happy.



## Our next steps...

- Create additional provision and resource locally to support our vision of as many learners as possible being educated within their local communities with their peers
- Enhance and build upon the post 16 offer across the local area to meet the emerging needs of our SEND cohort as they prepare for adulthood and transition.
- Embed young person voice across all aspects of our work and quality assure the impact of this

# Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

## Headlines

- We have created 50 new places at a local special school to enhance support in the local area.
  - We have 57 supported internships enabling ambitious pathways for our young people with SEND.
  - School leaders are ambitious for our children, with increasing evidence in Ofsted inspection outcomes.
  - Inclusion is at the heart of the Place Based Working Plan and strongly represented in all areas of strategic planning.
- 
- Our SEND Engagement Board is co-chaired by a parent carer representative and holds leaders to account with collaboration from a wide range of stakeholders.
  - We have a **SEND Sufficiency Plan** underway with planning to expand the special school estate with satellite opportunities, new resourced provisions and expansion where possible to current provisions.
  - The Local area has a range of multi-agency panels in place to ensure that collectively we are providing the right support, at the right time. These include EHCNA panels, Early Years Panels, funding panels and post 16.
  - We have new terms of reference in place for all EHCP decision-making groups with **clear process maps** to ensure consistency in approaches.
  - **Team around the school meetings** support school leaders with challenging cohorts and signpost appropriate cohort interventions, utilising special school outreach staff and Local Authority Services.
  - **MAT Challenge Meetings** held with each Multi Academy Trust in the city have a focus on inclusion and enable leaders to receive robust support and challenge at a strategic level.



## Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

### Focus On Practice

Learners from a local special school were crowned the overall national winners from 200 entrants of the Tycoon 1k Key Stage 3 and 4 category of the Tycoon Enterprise Competition 2024.

The competition, which challenges learners aged 6 to 18-years-old to launch their own businesses, saw the school's innovative venture *Sensory Explorers* stand out in a remarkable way, surpassing expectations and taking home the top prize in a highly competitive field.

This remarkable achievement highlights the school's commitment to providing its learners with opportunities to develop vital enterprise and life skills.

At the awards ceremony held in London, the learners had the opportunity to showcase their business to an audience of over 250 special guests including entrepreneur Peter Jones.



### Our next steps...

- Embed quality assurance practice across all areas of our work to ensure ambitious targets to high level support for our children and young people.
- Deliver the Place Based Plan which is built around six key strands focused on belonging and inclusion:
  1. Developing a 'belonging' framework.
  2. Further develop school-level Tier 2 expertise and capacity.
  3. Develop an early language acquisition project.
  4. Further develop the enhanced transition offer.
  5. Addressing the vaping issue amongst our young people.
  6. Building a city-wide pre-16 offer.



## Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and their families

### Headlines

- Young people have written various sections of the ordinarily available provision resource: *“I love that we have been able to help and show schools what works for us – we want it to be shared with everyone”* (George–Youth Ascends Group – Plymouth SEND young group)
  - Our young people attended the SEND Improvement Board in October 2024. In advance, they had created a video which presented their thoughts about inclusion, and how they felt experiences could be improved.
  - Our Ofsted ILACS inspection found that ‘Children and young people are helping to shape future practice and hold senior leaders and politicians to account.’
- 
- We have consistent scrutiny and governance with strong support from our Cabinet members who are invested in improvements.
  - We use an **auditing tool for our Children’s Ten Wishes** to check our work against. We also ask our children to contribute to our work and tell us how we are doing. We use the Lundy model of Participation to guide us.
  - We work closely with our Youth Ascends participation group of children and young people with SEND. They, along with our other groups and children and young people in schools, provide their views, concerns and feedback to our SEND Improvement Board and our Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as co-producing our work.
  - We have a **feedback loop** in place with families and children and young people in relation to strategic developments and impact on lived experience.
  - We now have **termly family forums**, both in person and face to face with a range of leaders across the Local Authority and Health Sector keen to listen, support and advise families.
  - We have developed a monthly infographic to ensure that regular updates about the statutory service are shared with young people and their families.

## Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and their families

### Focus On Practice

Our young people prepared a series of questions for Local Authority leaders, schools and cabinet members. There was a high challenge and excellent engagement which shared the young people's passion for improving SEND systems and processes in Plymouth. Following the meeting, the young people met with the Head of SEND and Director of Education to ask for further information about the next steps and impact so far.

### Our next steps...

- Commit to ensuring that all families and young people receive feedback and the opportunity for reflection with all stakeholders.
- Make sure there are easier accessible resources, and a range of platforms used such as sound bites and videos to share information.

## Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area

### Headlines

- 72 local area partners are invested in working groups through the place-based plan, led by school leaders with a focus on inclusion
  - 119 school leaders and SENCOs recently participated in a consultation process for the implementation of a targeted funding model demonstrating their passion for improving inclusive approaches in mainstream school
  - DfE monitoring has indicated strong confidence in our grip and delivery of the SEND Improvement Plan and our readiness for inspection.
- 
- We have developed a clear SEND strategy and SEND Improvement Plan in collaboration with all stakeholders.
  - The '**Inclusion Scorecard**' is circulated to all Headteachers and Trusts termly. This means that all partners have a live understanding of key inclusion metrics including rates of permanent exclusion, attendance, suspension, part-time timetables and elective home education.
  - School and Trust leaders have recognised the need and are invested in a robust '**place-based plan**'.
  - We have initiated a working group to develop clear strategies to support our young people who are electively home educated.
  - We have a new **quality assurance framework** with monthly multi agency auditing for EHCPs and regular dip sampling now embedded in our practice. Regular reports feed into our SEND boards.
  - We are working with school leaders to plan an effective funding model across mainstream schools as we recognise that needs can be met in mainstream with the right support and resource.
  - **Strong governance** has been noted within several areas such as the rigour of the SEND Improvement Board, the multi-agency decision making panels and our frequent collaboration with schools.
  - We have **improved our communication** across our partnership via face-to-face events, online briefings, bulletins and regular updates.

# Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area

## Focus On Practice

Our Place-Based approach is about understanding the issues, interconnections and relationships across the city, and within our localities, and then coordinating action to improve the inclusive educational experience of the young people we serve.

In October 2024, the Place-Based Plan received city-wide agreement to focus on 6 key strands, all focused on inclusion and belonging:

- Develop a belonging framework to support schools to develop an increased sense of connection with their children and families.
- Further develop school-level Tier 2 capacity and expertise.
- Develop and pilot a language acquisition project.
- Improve the enhanced transition offer for all vulnerable pupils.
- Develop a multi-agency strategy to address the vaping challenge.
- Build a city-wide Pre-16 offer.

The strands are underpinned by 6 working groups that are composed of cross-phase, cross-setting and cross-agency representatives. The first collaborative planning day was held on 09 December to discuss the issues, plan strategic actions and agree KPIs.

## Our next steps...

- Launch the place-based plan strategic actions.
- Implement the first wave of the targeted funding model for children and young people without an EHCP.

# Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including alternative provision

## Headlines

- Year one of the Compassionate Approach to Health and Weight has resulted in increased opportunities for activities for children with SEND, improved family health.
  - We have developed an Alternative Provision Framework to ensure that children and young people are well served by their alternative provision when it is needed.
  - Additional resources have been identified and agreed for the NHS Devon ICB Board to significantly reduce waiting times for autism assessments and meet the target of eliminating over 52 week waits in the autism pathway by April 2025.
- 
- The city's alternative provider ACE are commissioned to provide commissioned by the Local Authority to provide 200 places across all phases to support children requiring day 6 provision and 34 places to children with medical needs.
  - Where unregistered provision is commissioned it is done so via our **AP Framework**. 100% of all children and young people accessing unregistered provision in 2023 – 2024 were successfully reintegrated into registered settings by the end of the academic year.
  - We have **integrated commissioning processes** in place across Children's Services and the health sector to collectively use knowledge and resource to support children and young people. One example of this is the joint funded panel that secures positive pathways and outcomes for children and young people.
  - Across NHS Devon, we are addressing the situation of long waits, increasing demand, and understand the complexity of demand, by working with our NHS providers and partners to undertake specific immediate pieces of work to address urgent priorities across our system. This includes our autism waiting list recovery.
  - We have had a full review and business analysis of our statutory SEND Services that has informed our **priority planning**.
  - We have completed a review of the Section 19 panel and strengthened the processes in collaboration with wider partners.



# Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including alternative provision

## Focus On Practice

Plymouth City Council's vision is that every provider delivering alternative education to a child or young person will be a centre for excellence.

The framework provides outcomes through:

- Clear and consistent terms and conditions for providers
- Improved arrangements for safeguarding and welfare
- Clarity on the responsibilities of all parties
- Improved quality assurance and monitoring arrangements
- Improved engagement with the alternative provider market
- Improved strategic and operational partnerships to improve outcomes for young people



## Our next steps...

- Embed a rigorous quality assurance schedule for all children and young people accessing AP and independent providers to monitor quality and return to main placement schools.
- Develop a commissioning quality assurance process for all alternative provision and independent placements.
- Directly fund our mainstream schools to enhance the curriculum offer which will be monitored through carefully planned service level agreements.

## Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

### Headlines

- Quality assurance is now embedded across practice with 62 dip samples of EHCPs across a range of topics dip sampled in the Autumn term. Action plans focus on improvements with health advice, social care input and preparation for adulthood.
  - A seconded secondary SENCo is leading on the finalisation of the resource directory landing page – 25 SENCos have contributed alongside health colleagues, specialist teachers, young people and families. The website is being designed by a Plymouth University graduate.
  - There is now a combined leadership training offer across Children's Services including all Education and Children's Social Care colleagues.
  - Leaders across the local area now take ownership of targeted priorities in the Local Area SEND Improvement Plan.
- 
- We have a **multi-agency Transitions Board** co-chaired by the Director of Education and Director of Adult Services.
  - Our SEND Engagement board is co-chaired by our Parent Carer Voice representation.
  - We have multi-agency ACCESS multi-disciplinary meetings have both health (acute & community), care and education practitioners present in order to address those children with more complex needs and requiring a multi-agency response.
  - We are embedding the use of themed **multi-agency working groups** to enable better and cohesive partnership. For example, multi-agency lunch time training is being hosted by a range of practitioners for children and young people in our **'Practice Weeks'**.
  - Bi-monthly meetings occur between managers of Emotional Health and Wellbeing Teams and Educational Psychology Service, working to develop processes for information sharing and a **joint approach** to supporting children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) concerns.
  - We are continuing to integrate the balanced system in collaboration with our health colleagues.
  - Our parent carer voice lead on the Partnership for Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project to enhance the offer in our mainstream primary provisions.

## Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

### Focus On Practice

Regular communication and collaboration with SENCOs is a crucial part of our approach. We have regular briefings, consultations, monthly infographics and have a range of face-to-face visits in place. We are also updating our SENCO guide [Graduated approach to inclusion - SENCO Guide - Plymouth Online Directory](#) to become a one stop shop for school practitioners at all levels.

Improvements have been noted by our local area school SEND leaders in a recent survey:

*"The planned initiatives to enhance how information is shared—whether through updated infographics, regular forums, or direct engagement—are promising. The focus on communication also strengthens collaboration among agencies, schools, and healthcare providers, enabling more seamless and effective multidisciplinary work."*

*"The visible presence of the SEND leaders through school visits has had a profound impact. These visits demonstrate leadership's commitment to understanding the on-the-ground realities faced by schools, fostering collaboration and providing opportunities for direct feedback. "*

### Our next steps...

- Embed the voice of young people throughout all quality assurance.
- Deliver Plymouth's SEND Sufficiency Plan, including development of new resourced provisions across the City and include all agency in the support networks for schools.
- Refresh the short breaks offer in collaboration with all partners.
- Deliver the One Children's Services Plan.

## How we help and protect children and young people so that are kept safe

### Headlines

- School inspection outcomes have been considerably strengthened.
  - The ILACS inspection in January 2024 found the “Helpful daily multi-agency intelligence meetings take place in the MASH. These meetings provide an opportunity for swift information-sharing and help professionals to map and understand local risks to children and to respond quickly and effectively” and referenced use of early help services: “their needs are assessed and understood well, plans are strong, and subsequent interventions support positive changes.”
  - The Plymouth Children’s Safeguarding Partnership have agreed and implemented a tier 1 information sharing agreement to triangulate information across the partnership.
- 
- Our settings utilise a **robust safeguarding audit tool** to enable excellent understanding of their practice and where to take action to improve.
  - School inspection outcomes have been considerably strengthened.
  - We follow up swiftly on Ofsted complaints and **support best practice in settings**, reviewing and responding to themes identified in termly review.
  - During children in care statutory visits, children are always given the opportunity to be spoken to alone. IROs / social workers will complete additional visits to the child if the child requests this or there is an assessed risk or concern.
  - The appointment of the Child in Care EHCP officer has enabled a **stronger link between the SEND team and social workers** to ensure that every EHCP review is collaborative for those young people known to a social worker and in residential care.
  - IROs have significantly increased their use of the resolution/escalation framework when children are experiencing practice drift and delay, improved outcomes can be evidenced as a result of these escalations.

## How we help and protect children and young people so that are kept safe

### Focus On Practice

The social workers are skilled at being able to communicate with children who have limited speech or communication issues. They use a variety of techniques including use of British Sign Language (BSL); Makaton; Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS); automated electronic system for sentence input; social story boards.

We have one young boy who is profoundly deaf and lives in a residential school specifically for deaf children. He has access to an independent BSL signer which the social worker always uses to ensure he is seen alone and can share his views clearly.

### Our next steps...

- Deliver joint workshops for social workers, supervising social workers, foster carers, residential and 16+ staff to learn together.
- Join the work of PPCV together with the Social Care team to ensure continued building of the One Team approach.
- Use the findings from dip sampling to ensure greater consistency in relation to analysis of vulnerabilities of children with SEND.
- Introduce SEND into the multi-agency front door.
- Respond to findings from quality assurance, in particular to strengthen practice on child sexual abuse and child exploitation.
- Ensure all care experienced children and young people benefit from timely health assessments that effectively identify their health needs when they first come into care.