

Resources Department  
Town Hall, Upper Street, London, N1 2UD

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**AGENDA FOR THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee are summoned to a meeting, which will be held in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on, **29 April 2024 at 7.00 pm.**

Enquiries to : Theo McLean  
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Despatched : 19 April 2024

Membership

Substitute Members

**Councillors:**

Councillor Sheila Chapman (Chair)  
Councillor Valerie Bossman-Quarshie  
(Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Fin Craig  
Councillor Ernestas Jegorovas-  
Armstrong  
Councillor Toby North  
Councillor Rosaline Ogunro  
Councillor Saiqa Pandor  
Councillor Claire Zammit

**Substitutes:**

Councillor Jilani Chowdhury  
Councillor Ilkay Cinko-Oner  
Councillor Paul Convery  
Councillor Benali Hamdache  
Councillor Heather Staff

**Co-opted Members:**

Mary Clement, Roman Catholic Diocese  
Susie Graves, Secondary Parent Governor Representative  
Sophie McNeill, Primary Parent Governor Representative  
Nick Turpin, Church of England Diocese

**Quorum is 3 Councillors**

**A. Formal Matters**

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1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declaration of Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interest

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest\*** in an item of business:

- if it is not yet on the council's register, you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent;
- you may **choose** to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is already in the register in the interests of openness and transparency.

In both the above cases, you **must** leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If you have a **personal** interest in an item of business **and** you intend to speak or vote on the item you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent but you **may** participate in the discussion and vote on the item.

**\*(a) Employment, etc** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

**(b) Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of your expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of your election; including from a trade union.

**(c) Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between you or your partner (or a body in which one of you has a beneficial interest) and the council.

**(d) Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.

**(e) Licences**- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.

**(f) Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which you or your partner have a beneficial interest.

**(g) Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

This applies to all members present at the meeting.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
5. Chair's Report
6. External Attendees (if any)

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7. Items for Call In (if any)

8. Public Questions

For members of the public to ask questions relating to any subject on the meeting agenda under Procedure Rule 70.5. Alternatively, the Chair may opt to accept questions from the public during the discussion on each agenda item.

<b>B. Items for Decision/Discussion</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. School Results 2023	13 - 46
2. Scrutiny Review of SEN & Disabilities Transitions - 12 Months Update (including update on Baseline Report for Supported Internships)	47 - 62
3. The Children's Workforce - Draft Recommendations	TO FOLLOW

**C. Urgent non-exempt items (if any)**

Any non-exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

**D. Exclusion of press and public**

To consider whether, in view of the nature of the remaining items on the agenda, it is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt or confidential information within the terms of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Constitution and, if so, whether to exclude the press and public during discussion thereof.

<b>E. Exempt items for Call In (if any)</b>	<b>Page</b>
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<b>F. Confidential/exempt items</b>	<b>Page</b>
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**G. Urgent exempt items (if any)**

Any exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

The next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee will be on Date Not Specified

**Please note that committee agendas, reports and minutes are available from the council's website: [www.democracy.islington.gov.uk](http://www.democracy.islington.gov.uk)**

# Agenda Item 4

London Borough of Islington  
**Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 26 February 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on Monday, 26 February 2024 at 7.00 pm.

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Councillors:</b>	Chapman (Chair), Bossman-Quarshie (Vice-Chair), Craig, Jegorovas-Armstrong, North, Ogunro, Pandor and Zammit
	<b>Co-opted Member</b>	Mary Clement, Roman Catholic Diocese
<b>Also Present:</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	Hamdache, Safi-Ngongo, Khondoker, Nathan, Shaikh, Turan, O'Halloran and Williamson
	<b>Guests</b>	Jeremy Corbyn MP, Member of Parliament for Islington North; Sophie McNeill, Nominated Primary Parent Governor Representative; Nick Turpin, Nominated Church of England Diocese Representative.

## **Councillor Sheila Chapman in the Chair**

**174**     **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (ITEM NO. 1)**

There were no apologies for absence.

**175**     **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (ITEM NO. 2)**

There were no declarations of substitute members.

**176**     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM NO. 3)**

Councillor Jegorovas-Armstrong declared an interest regarding the Item for Call-In: The Executive decision on the Proposal on the future of Duncombe and Montem Primary Schools. The declared interest was as follows:

- Councillor Jegorovas-Armstrong was a signatory of the motion to call-in the Executive's decision.

The Chair confirmed that as a signatory of the call-in, Councillor Jegorovas-Armstrong would not be able to vote on this item, citing the provisions in the committee's Terms of the Reference that "no member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which they have been directly involved", but as a member of the committee, would still be invited to ask questions and make representations during the deliberation of this item.

**177**     **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (ITEM NO. 4)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

178 **CHAIR'S REPORT (ITEM NO. 5)**

The Chair confirmed that there would be three appointments to the Committee, effective from 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024, subject to confirmation at the Budget Council meeting on that date (29<sup>th</sup> February). These appointments would fill the three co-opted member vacancies and the nominees to these positions were:

- Sophie McNeill, a parent governor of Drayton Park Primary School, as the Primary School Parent Governor, who was also in attendance as a member of the public.
- Susie Graves, a parent governor of New River College as the Secondary School Parent Governor.
- Nick Turpin representing the Church of England Diocese, who was also in attendance as a member of the public.

179 **EXTERNAL ATTENDEES (IF ANY) (ITEM NO. 6)**

The following members were present in relation to the call-in:

- Councillor Hamdache, Councillor Russell, Councillor Nathan, and Councillor Shaikh. Councillor Jegorovas-Armstrong, a member of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, was also a signatory of the call-in.
- Councillor Safi-Ngongo

There were four observing members in attendance:

- Councillor Khondoker, Councillor O'Halloran, Councillor Turan and Councillor Williamson.

Three members of the public were in attendance:

- Jeremy Corbyn MP, the Member of Parliament for Islington North.
- Nick Turpin, Church of England Diocese.
- Sophie McNeill, Parent Governor.

Additionally, the Corporate Director of Children's Services, the Director for Learning & Achievement, and the Chief Executive were also in attendance. The Monitoring Officer (the Director of Law & Governance) was in attendance in an advisory capacity.

180 **ITEMS FOR CALL IN (IF ANY) (ITEM NO. 7)**

In accordance with paragraph 42.2 of the Committee Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution, the Chair varied the order of agenda items to allow the committee to consider the call-in at the start of the meeting.

181 **CALL IN OF THE EXECUTIVE DECISION ON THE PROPOSAL ON THE FUTURE OF DUNCOMBE AND MONTEM PRIMARY SCHOOLS (ITEM NO. 7A)**

The Chair outlined that following the meeting of the Executive on Thursday 8 February 2024, the Monitoring Officer had confirmed that a valid notice of call-in was received regarding the decision made on the 'Proposal on the Future of Duncombe and Montem Primary Schools', and that as this decision related to an education function, the Monitoring Officer had, in accordance with paragraph 66.5 (c) of the Council's Constitution, referred the call-in to this committee for consideration. The Chair then highlighted the options available to the committee. These were:

- To not agree with the call-in and to uphold the decision made by the Executive, in which case it can be implemented following this meeting.
- To agree, at least in part, with the call-in and refer the decision back to the Executive with recommendations that they should take into consideration when they review their original decision.

## Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - 26 February 2024

The Chair further outlined the procedure of the call-in and formally moved the motion to consider the item for call-in. Following this, the Chair invited the lead signatory of the call-in, Councillor Hamdache, to address the committee in support of the call-in. The representation was delivered jointly with Councillor Russell and included the following points:

- Councillor Hamdache stated that the Department for Education's intervention to grant Pooles Park Primary School academy status had left the Council in a difficult position, given the plans to close it as part of the school organisation plan. It was also stated in the representation that government policy had compounded the issue, as had an application from a further separate school in the borough, applying for academy status, which would affect school place planning going forward. Further points made to members included that Montem Primary School was a borough-leading ARP (Additionally Resourced Provision), that excelled in supporting disadvantaged children including those whose first language was not English, and that the decision on the future of the school had been questioned by parents and teachers alike. Councillor Hamdache made further points to members, including that Hackney, in dealing with their own plans, had bought in an independent body to assist with engagement; that the Executive's decision on the proposal for Duncombe and Montem would also have the effect of defederating Drayton Park Primary School; that it was the view of parents and teachers that the consultation from the Council had been insufficient and called for a pause to start a participatory process; and that this call-in was an important opportunity for the Council to consider parents' concerns.
- Councillor Russell stated that the number of children in Islington was decreasing, and the Council was at a critical point wherein some schools across the borough would need to close, but that a conversation should be had with every school in the borough about how best to protect the education of its children. Councillor Russell closed with further statements that the community of Drayton Park Primary School had not been properly consulted in the process and that members should refer the decision back to the Executive for further consideration and to engage with the community about what the next steps were.

The Chair then invited the, the Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families, Councillor Safi-Ngongo, to address the committee and outline the case for the Executive's decision. During this, the following points were made:

- The Executive Member stated that the issue underpinning the decision was a London-wide problem, with factors including falling rolls and population changes and that the Council's approach has been to safeguard education provision for the borough's children and young people by engaging in full collaboration with headteachers and governors, culminating in a borough wide strategy agreed by the Executive in October 2022. It was also stated to members that the Education Plan was presented to this community three times, citing this as an example of how seriously the Council took the education of its children and young people, that every decision was taken with the benefit of the borough's children in mind. The Council had recognised the significant numbers of children with special educational needs (SEND) across its schools and developed the SEND strategy to address this. Councillor Safi-Ngongo also made further points to members, including that 96% of Islington's were rated "Good", that the plans were being delivered in two phases for which the borough had been divided into six different planning areas, and that 60% of the Council's schools were projecting deficits which would equate to a £15 million deficit by 2026. Councillor Safi-Ngongo made further statements to members, including that doing nothing was not an option as schools would be

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left unable to pay staff or provide services; that the schools themselves were asking the Council to act faster to safeguard a good education provision across the borough. Drayton Park Primary School had financial difficulties which were projected to increase by 2025, and the Council would work with the school to support them. Councillor Safi-Ngongo closed by urging members to consider the matter seriously, stressing that the decision was taken for the benefit of the children in the borough.

The committee were invited to ask questions of either Leader of the Opposition or the Executive Member for Children Young People & Families, with the Chair highlighting that some questions could be referred to the Corporate Director of Children's Services where required:

- Members questioned as to whether a lift would be installed to the Duncombe Primary School site, to which it was confirmed that if the decision were to go ahead, then this would be added.
- Members questioned the call-in signatories' proposal to bring in the use of an independent body, specifically querying as to what type of organisation that might be and what intervention would they deliver that hadn't already been done so within the plan. In response, Councillor Hamdache stated that Hackney Council had bought in an independent consultancy to add depth and capacity to the engagement of similarly affected schools in their borough. Councillor Hamdache referred to Drayton Park Primary School's financial deficit, stating that the proposals would worsen their finances and that the school had not been consulted adequately in the proposals, which would necessitate the need for further engagement to take place on the entire borough-wide process.
- Members expressed the view that from the official documents, Hackney's use of consultants appeared to be more process-based than strategic.
- Members stated that they had been reassured that the buildings were protected for educational use by statute but sought clarification as to why the Duncombe site had been chosen over Montem. In response, members were advised by both the Corporate Director for Children's Services and Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families, that the decision had been reached based on feasibility studies of both sites, factors in this evidence base including pollution, location and population in the vicinity, as well as the financial feasibility. Statistically, in terms of achievement there was little difference between the two schools and that this was not a significant factor of the decision, and that the decision had been reached in consultation with headteachers.
- Members asked what the consequences would be on delaying the proposals. In response, members were advised by the Corporate Director of Children's Services that pausing the borough-wide process for these two schools (Duncombe and Montem) would double the deficit for both of them and that doing nothing would result in a £15 million deficit across the school estate. There were currently 27 forms of entry surplus, which was the equivalent to 810 spare places, which in-turn equated to annual financial loss of £5.3 million. It was also stated to members that headteachers had urged the Council to address the matter faster; that the reason the plans had been phased was so that it could delivered in an organised manner, and that the consultancies used by other councils had been done so to help meet compliance rather than assist with the process.
- Members noted the remarks attributed to the Mayor of London that there was concern that councils were making long term decisions on what could be short term trends and urged councils not to make permanent decisions regarding falling birth rates. The Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families was asked if they were in agreement with this position. In response,



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members were told that it was a London-wide issue; that neighbouring boroughs such as Camden were following a similar approach, and that further afield, other local authorities were consulting Islington for best practice. The Executive Member went on to state that the problem needed to be addressed now and had been compounded by government policy.

- Members noted that there were also plans for Samuel Rhodes School to relocate to a different premises, to which the Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families advised that this was separate to organisational planning and was to do with the suitability of the lift and facilities at the site which were deemed not fit for purpose for the school's needs.
- Members sought clarity on the governing arrangements should the proposal go ahead, to which the Director for Learning & Achievement advised that as an amalgamation rather than a closure, which was stated to be the Department for Education's (DfE) preferred approach in circumstances such as these, the current governors would remain; but Drayton Park Primary School, which was not within the remit of this proposal, would be defederated and have its own governing arrangements.
- Members sought clarification on how the Council would help Drayton Park Primary School become more financially sustainable. In response, the Director for Learning & Achievement informed members that Drayton Park had one of the most significant deficits in the borough and officers were already working with them to help achieve a balanced budget.
- Members noted that there had been concern among constituents about the potential spread of amalgamations and sought assurances that could be given to them. In response, the Director for Learning & Achievement advised that the situation was being looked at strategically, that schools were being included in the journey and where action was required, this would be done in conjunction with them.
- Members sought clarification on the risk that families would jump from school to school due to perceived instability. In response, the Director for Learning & Achievement stated that the Admissions team will be supporting parents; that students of Duncombe and Montem will have a place at the merged school; and that the merger of, rather than the closure of the two good schools would enable the Council to draw from expertise among the staff already delivering high levels of education.
- Members noted that they had received considerable public feedback regarding this call-in of the Executive's decision and that much of it expressed goodwill to the two schools affected by the proposal and concern about the provision for SEND children, to which members then asked for assurances that these children would be served well at the merged school. In response, the Executive Member stated that this was also raised during the consultation as a matter of concern by families, that meetings had taken place with families of SEND children, that detailed plans were in place to help the Council ensure their needs were met and that the teachers of both schools would also help maintain the provision at the merged school.

Members of the public were invited to ask questions of either Councillor Hamdache or Councillor Safi-Ngongo, with the Chair again stating that some questions could be referred to the Corporate Director of Children's Services where required:

- The Member of Parliament for Islington North, Jeremy Corbyn MP, noted that both schools were successful and asked whether the special needs provision can be sufficiently catered to at the Duncombe site, and also questioned the long-term use for the buildings that were surplus to requirements in conjunction with the wider school estate, and what was being done to support families from the Andover estate who were some of the borough's most disadvantaged residents. In response, the Corporate Director of Children's

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Services stated that there would be a transition plan for SEND students and their families; that there would be safeguarding of the staff delivering SEND provision at the amalgamated school; and that families had real choice in terms of education, rather than just preference as had been in previous times and therefore it was an expectation that not all students would elect to transfer to the amalgamated site. The Corporate Director also stated that in terms of the building estate, the Council was mindful of future population changes; that officers would be attending a workshop with the Department for Education to look at policy, resources, system change and housing; and that one of the uses the Councils was considering for the Montem site was the expansion of family hubs.

- Sophie McNeill, a Parent Governor of Drayton Park Primary School, asked for clarity on the future governing arrangements should the proposals go ahead, particularly the number of positions available, given that it would result in the defederation of the Edventure Collaborative that currently governs the schools; on the timeframe for the changes outlined in the proposal for the implementation of the proposals, given that it would need to be in place for the new school year and on the financial position of Montem Primary School. In response, the Director for Learning & Achievement stated that adopting the current timeline would put the amalgamated school in a much better financial position, as although the deficit at Montem had seen a slight improvement, the long-term cumulative deficit would make it difficult for the school to continue to offer a diverse curriculum; it was also stated that projections had been based on information that the schools had provided to officers, and that in terms of the governing arrangements, the Council would work to ensure vacancies were filled and current governors were supported.

The committee were invited to make comments in support of either the call-in or of the Executive's original decision. This included the following statements:

- That among the members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee there was a wealth of experience in education and the public sector, and that should they agree with any part of the call-in, the committee should vote to refer the decision back to the Executive.
- That after listening to all of the representations about merging two high performing schools and an excellent special needs provision, there should be more focus on the opportunity this presented, to shape an even more successful combined school.
- That there was a clear strength of feeling in the community about this proposal and that retaining the Duncombe name didn't give the impression of a combined community as it erased the longstanding Montem identity.
- That there were valued communities across the borough with whom the Council had consulted and school leaders whom conversations had been held with, which had helped ensure a sustainable solution and that it would be financially irresponsible to delay the proposal further.

Councillor Hamdache and the Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families were invited to make their final statements to the committee:

- Councillor Hamdache stated that they recognised that the Council was in a difficult position and thanked officers for providing clarity, but also stated that Drayton Park Primary School was facing financial difficulties and had not been consulted or considered in the scope of decision and that the concern was in only looking at Montem and Duncombe alone, the impact to Drayton Park had not been considered, which was material for a rethink of the Executive's decision. In closing, it was further stated that given the ambitious timeline, should the members consider the transition of SEND children or the planned

implementation of the proposals to be of concern, to refer the decision back to the Executive.

- The Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families stated that closing schools was always a last resort and that the decision to merge these two schools had not been rushed, that meetings had taken place with headteachers about projected deficits in their schools and means of addressing it; that transitions in the amalgamation of Vittoria and Copenhagen schools had been handled effectively, that ultimately doing nothing was not an option, with every decision made being done so with children and young people in mind.

The Chair moved recommendation 2.1 a) to a vote; that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee does not object to the decision in question, in which case the decision shall take effect on the date of this meeting.

The motion was put to a vote and **CARRIED**.

**RESOLVED**

That the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee does not object to the Executive's decision on the Proposal on the Future of Duncombe and Montem Primary Schools and that the decision is upheld with immediate effect.

**182 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM NO. 8)**

None.

**183 THE CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE - WITNESS EVIDENCE (ITEM NO. B1)**

The Director of Safeguarding and the Assistant Director of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance introduced this item to the committee. In the discussion, the following points were raised:

- The most senior social worker in in any local authority was the Director of Safeguarding or named equivalent.
- Islington's social care workforce was comprised of suitable qualified practitioners, that were registered and regulated by Social Work England.
- A Social Work qualification was a mandatory requirement as the postholder would be expected to carry out statutory safeguarding duties on behalf of the Local Authority.
- The Workforce required qualified practitioners and managers to supervise and oversee key decisions e.g. case allocation, prioritisation, care planning, statutory decision making e.g. agency decision maker for adoption, permanency and fostering.
- Islington employed 250 Child and Family Social Workers
- Islington's social early help service had been rated outstanding by Ofsted.
- Nationally, research showed that no authority was confident that they will be able to recruit enough permanent Child and Family Social Workers to meet their needs in the next 12 months, and recruitment and retention was the top priority for service delivery for most local authorities.
- Experienced Children & Family Social Workers were the hardest to recruit / retain, followed by team leaders and senior managers. Newly qualified CFSW were easier to recruit, but it was getting harder.
- There had been a reduction in social work posts in the last three to four years, an increase in vacancies, agency positions and social workers leaving the profession. This had resulted in increased caseloads because there were fewer social workers. The sickness rate had also increased.

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- Islington's position still remained stronger than the national average, with caseloads considerably less than the national average and sickness levels better also, at 1.8% compared to 2% nationally.
- The Council met its needs through several workforce initiatives, but it was becoming harder to recruit and retain experienced talent, which would only increase going forward. One of the initiatives in place to tackle the measure regionally, was the London Pledge, which aimed to standardise agency costs across London.
- Islington had a programme of benefits and allowances for harder to recruit posts including a retention bonus, Zones 1 and 2 Travelcard, and qualification increments for extra training.
- The Council would no longer be able to offer Key Worker housing for newly qualified social workers, from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, which had proved to be a popular draw for talent. There were six social workers at present that were still able to bid for properties before April 2024, the deadline for which had just been extended to May 2024, giving a month's grace. Since 2022 the Council had housed nine social workers (five in Council stock and four in Housing Association stock), but not every social worker was eligible for this scheme. This was a decision taken by Islington Council in line with the housing allocation scheme amid concerns there was not enough to stock to adequately cater to both key workers and care leavers, with both groups often in competition for these properties and the Council's duties as a corporate parent meant that care leavers took precedence in this instance.
- The Council had also worked with The Frontline and was engaged in the Step Up to Social Work programme.
- Officers were looking at how the Council trained its social workers as practice educators, ensuring that there was a pool of staff with an experience and knowledge of Islington that could also train up and coming, new talent.
- Agency pay caps may curb the outflow of social workers from local authorities, but it wouldn't stop them leaving the profession, and may further reduce supply.
- The workforce was currently representative of the Islington population, but not of the population children known to social care, which was different, and officers were working to address this.
- There was a controversial piece of research being undertaken by central government into the use of artificial intelligence in writing assessments, plans and research that would serve to cut down on bureaucracy.
- In response to questions from members about whether the Council was regularly benchmarking its benefits and allowances against neighbouring boroughs or comparative employers, and as to whether the Council also had a good understanding of pull factors that draw social workers to Islington over elsewhere, officers advised that the data showed that Islington had a stable workforce and much more stable caseloads than other boroughs. Combined with Islington's practice model, good supervision, and opportunities for growth, this helped sustain Islington's reputation as a rewarding and attractive employer. Regular benchmarking against local authorities was done as standard and Islington was in line with other authorities on retention. The Step Up to Social Work programme and higher education provision were also pull factors, as was how well staff were looked after.
- In response to members questions about whether there was anything unique in other boroughs' models of practice unique that Islington could adopt, officers advised that most local authorities now had a practice model that was relationship based. Islington's model was referred to as the motivational practice model whereas other authorities had different names for their models.

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- The further point was made by officers that trauma-informed practice was a model that had been shared across the council, in schools, housing, any interface that has contact with children and young people.
- Officers also advised that they were working with the Department for Education on authoring a career framework that seeks to establish how much more effectively social workers can be supported in the first two years of practice and pushing organisations to have one model of practice, which had a demonstrable impact on children's lives.
- The committee praised the work of the social workers, praised the leadership that facilitated such an environment and sought to see the good work being highlighted more widely.
- In response to members questions about what else can be done to convince agency workers to join the Council permanently, officers stated that some of Islington's most experienced, longtime social workers had been recruited through agency/temporary positions. There had been work done on making the transition from agency/temporary working to permanent staff as seamless as possible, but this had been challenging because of the competitive job market. Officers also engaged with staff on an individual basis, but noted the cost of living was a significant factor and welcomed any suggestions from members on addressing the issue.

### **ACTION:**

Officers to provide a breakdown of the social care workforce by age, ethnicity and gender.

### **ACTION:**

The Committee to work with Democratic Services to facilitate a discussion with the relevant officers and/or the Executive Member for Homes & Communities to establish what else can be done regarding the allocation of key worker housing.

### **ACTION:**

Officers to provide a breakdown of the social care workforce by age, ethnicity and gender.

### **ACTION:**

The Committee to work with Democratic Services to facilitate a discussion with the relevant officers and/or the Executive Member for Homes & Communities to establish what else can be done regarding the allocation of key worker housing.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

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### **EXECUTIVE MEMBER'S REPORT (ITEM NO. B2)**

The Executive Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Safi-Ngongo, introduced this item to the committee: In the discussion, the following points were raised:

- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were still being felt not just by the borough's children and young people, but residents more broadly. There had been many pandemic-related mental health issues arising in the borough's children and young people and the Executive Member had attended a conference addressing this issue.
- The Executive Member also stated that there was still a significant crisis in housing the borough's care leavers. Officers in Housing Services were said to be doing their best but a corporate strategy was needed to resolve the issue, even if it meant the cost being met through Children's Services, as some of

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these young people were being forced out of the borough or housed in private accommodation at high cost to the Council.

- The cost-of-living crisis and housing crisis was fuelling multiple interconnected crises in the borough. This included not just the lack of supply of accommodation for care leavers, but also falling rolls, with many families being rehomed outside of the borough.
- There had been significant interest not just nationally but internationally in the work Islington was doing in relation to Family Hubs.
- Early intervention was helping to prevent the number of looked after children and supporting the families where they were.
- In terms of education, the next plan was to tackle persistent absence, which was said to be significant at even the primary school level and was another COVID-19 related issue. Officers were working hard to find a different approach to getting children back into education.
- The Executive Member stated they were working with all members of the Executive to ensure Islington was a child friendly borough and that it was the responsibility of the entire organisation, not just Children's Services. The Executive Member cited an instance wherein at a meeting with children from global majority groups, children of black heritage in particular voiced their fears that riding bicycles would increase their risk of criminalisation/perceived as threats, which highlighted that there was still more work to be done with police and colleagues to empower all young people to feel part of the borough.
- The next step would be to review current policies to meet the changing need of young people and also to act upon the recommendations made by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in its 2022-23 scrutiny review.
- In terms of the support offered to children missing in education, this was something that both officers and the Executive Member were reviewing to see whether it could be improved.
- In terms of the Council's 2030 Child Friendly Ambition for "We will equip and empower every child and young person who attends our education settings with the learning and skills for life and the future world of work", and whether home-educated children and/or children missing from education had been taken into account, the Executive Member confirmed to members that it had been and work was being undertaken on that element of the recommendations that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee had made in its 2022-23 review.
- Officers confirmed that the programme allocating laptops to students transitioning into year seven would again continue into the new academic year in September.
- In terms of tackling the increasing number of mental health issues among young people, it was said that early intervention mattered and as soon as it was known that a young person was in crisis, officers would act immediately, providing the support in whatever space that young person felt most comfortable with.
- The take up of the National Tutoring offer had been good on paper but not enough schools were taking up enough of the offer. While all schools were working on disproportionality and providing support to students with special educational needs and/or disability in compassionate way, the Council was still encouraging schools to take up this offer.

### **ACTION:**

Officers to provide a briefing to the committee on the pilot of the Additionally Resourced Provision hubs.

### **ACTION:**

## Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - 26 February 2024

Officers to provide data to the committee on the impact its measures are having on reducing the number of children missing from education.

### **ACTION:**

Officers to provide additional data to the Committee on the take up of the National Tutoring Offer.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

## 185 **SCHOOL RESULTS 2023 (ITEM NO. B3)**

The Chair moved a motion to adjourn this item to the next meeting of the committee to the next meeting of the Committee, to allow sufficient time for members to effectively consider this item of business.

The motion was put to a vote and **CARRIED**.

### **RESOLVED:**

That consideration of Item B3 School Results, be adjourned to the meeting of 29th April 2024.

## 186 **SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SEN & DISABILITIES TRANSITIONS - 12-MONTH UPDATE (INCLUDING UPDATE ON BASELINE REPORT FOR SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS) (ITEM NO. B4)**

The Chair moved a motion to adjourn this item to the next meeting of the Committee, to allow sufficient time for members to effectively consider this item of business.

The motion was put to a vote and **CARRIED**.

### **RESOLVED:**

That consideration of Item B4 Scrutiny Review of SEN & Disabilities Transitions – 12-month update (including update on Baseline Report for Supported Internships), be adjourned to the meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

## 187 **WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 (ITEM NO. B5)**

The Chair informed members that following the motion to adjourn Items B3 School Results 2023 & B4 Scrutiny Review of SEN & Disabilities Transitions – 12-month update (including update on Baseline Report for Supported Internships) to the meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024, the consideration of two items at that meeting will also be moved. The SACRE Annual Report and the Quarter 3 Performance Report will no longer be considered at the meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024, but will instead be put forward to the committee's first meeting of the new municipal year in June 2024.

The Chair thanked members of the committee for their diligence in the call-in and also the members that triggered the call-in of the Executive's decision, as it allowed the committee the opportunity to interrogate that decision with an additional level of scrutiny.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the work programme be noted.

MEETING CLOSED AT 9.32 pm

Chair



# Educational Attainment and other Outcomes in 2023

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

April 2024

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**ISLINGTON**



For a more equal future

Agenda Item B1

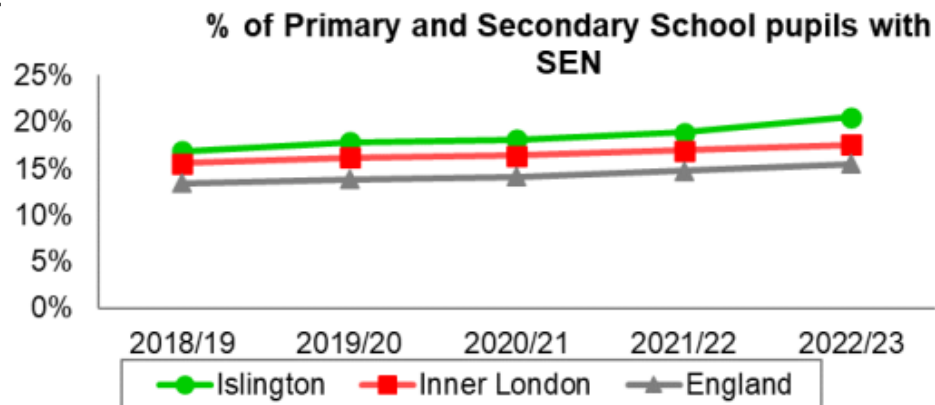
# The Islington Context

Islington is a relatively small Inner London borough with the second highest population density in the country. Just under 25,000 attend schools in the borough, and just under 24,000 of these are attending state-funded schools. School rolls are now falling for both the primary and secondary phases. Pupils are from a relatively diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, with 74% of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, although the largest single ethnic group is White-British.

In 2022/23, Islington had the highest proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs attending mainstream schools and Islington also had the highest proportion of pupils who were eligible for Free School Meals attending mainstream schools in the England. Nationally, these characteristics are associated with lower levels of attainment. Islington pupils from these groups have good levels of attainment compared to national averages. The aim, however, is for Islington pupils overall to achieve in line with or above the Inner London average.

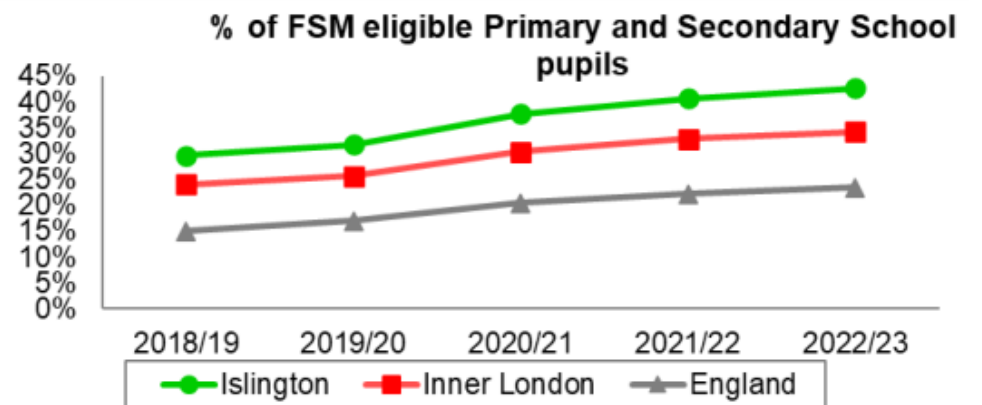
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## Special Educational Needs



The proportion of pupils with SEN (i.e. with an Education, Health and Care Plan or at SEN Support) has been increasing in Islington and across England. In January 2023, Islington had the highest proportion of pupils in mainstream schools with SEN in the country, apart from City of London.

## Free School Meal eligibility



The proportion of primary and secondary school pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) has been increasing in Islington and across England. In January 2023, Islington had the highest proportion of FSM eligible pupils in mainstream schools in the country.

# Key Findings 2023

- Educational attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has **improved** on 2022 outcomes but remains just below National and Inner London figures.
- Key Stage 1 Expected Standard and Greater Depth outcomes were **better than national** for reading, writing, and maths. Greater Depth outcomes also **exceeded** Inner London. Expected Standard for maths was in-line with Inner London, whilst Reading and Writing were just below.
- Key Stage 2 outcomes **exceeded** National across most indicators with only Expected Standard for writing just below. When compared with Inner London, reading, writing, maths and combined outcomes were broadly in-line whilst Greater Depth across all measures were below Inner London.
- Rates of absence and persistent absence have increased across the Primary sector despite a decrease in both measures, nationally when compared with 2022.

# Key Findings 2023

- Pupils achieving a *standard* pass (Grade 4 – 9) was in-line with National figures and **above** National for those pupils attaining a *strong* pass (Grade 5 – 9) in English and Maths. Both indicators were lower when compared with Inner London figures.
- The number of Electively Home Educated (EHE) pupils has increased to over 300 for the first time in 2023.
- At KS5, students across Islington performed **better** across vocational qualifications when compared with National and Inner London figures. The % of students achieving 3 A\*-A grades at A-level was below Inner London and National.
- The % of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) **fell** to 4.5% from 4.7% in 2022 and 4.8% in 2021. This was **lower** than the National figure but higher than Inner London.
- 96% of all school settings in Islington are rated as either Good or Outstanding. This compares with a National figure of 88% and is an improvement on pre-pandemic outcomes.

# Key Findings 2023

- Primary school permanent exclusions and suspensions **decreased** slightly from 2022, although both indicators are **higher** than National and Inner London.
- Secondary school absence and persistent absence have **increased** on 2022 and are **above** Inner London and National.
- Permanent exclusions across Islington secondary schools have increased slightly on 2022 but remain **below** provisional National figures. The suspension rate has **reduced** from 2022 and for the first time since 2015, is **lower** than the provisional National figure for 2023.
- The Islington Key Stage 4 Attainment 8 score was **above** National but below Inner London. The Progress 8 score for all pupils was in-line with National but lower than Inner London.
- Black-Caribbean and Mixed-White & Black-Caribbean pupils have lower levels of attainment than the Islington average at Key Stages 2 & 4. We know these pupils also have relatively low levels of attendance, and low attendance has an impact on attainment.

# Educational Attainment in 2023 – Headlines and Priorities

This report provides an overview of educational attainment and outcomes in Islington. We aim to ensure our schools are places where all young people can learn and thrive. We have set out an ambitious Education Plan for 2023 to 2030 and achieving our ambitions requires great teachers and leaders, outstanding schools, and a seamless, high-quality experience for young people from early years to adulthood. and other vulnerabilities. Results at Key Stage 4 represent a return to pre-pandemic times and with the grading of examinations returning to 2019 levels, the environment for schools remains challenging. The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in pupil outcomes and its effects are still being felt, with the disadvantage gap at its widest in a decade nationally and pupil absences remaining stubbornly high. Narrowing disadvantage gaps will be a firm focus for the years ahead, with greater targeted support needed to counter persistent inequalities. There is still much to celebrate in this report as school leaders continue to champion young people across Islington, many coming from some of the most disadvantaged environments across London.

## Early Years and Primary (Under 4–11)

Page 18

- There are wide variations in outcomes between the ethnic groups at the Early Years Foundation Stage. At Key Stage 1 writing has been most adversely affected since 2019 levels. Performance both nationally and in Islington dropped by 9% points
- At KS2, Islington **outperformed** their national peers across all subjects in 2023
  - Pupils with SEN achieved well at KS2.

## Secondary and Post 16 (aged 12-16+)

- Attainment 8 (A8) was **above** National and 0.8% **higher** than 2019 outcomes.
- Variations between schools and disadvantaged A8 outcomes remain a focus in tackling inequality.
- The Progress 8 achievement gap between FSM and Non-FSM is below national but at 0.5 represents a half-grade lower than expected progress from KS2 and is an area of focus.
- The NEET figure at 4.5% shows a **third year falling** trend.

## Strategic Priorities

- To improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- To reduce the number of suspensions across the secondary sector.
- To reduce the achievement gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils and targeted groups
- Increase take-up of Islington's Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) for two, three and four-year-olds.

## Areas for further development

- To reduce the variation of achievement outcomes across our primary and secondary schools.
- Through the Islington Professional Partner model, better understand the targeted support our schools require.
- At KS5 increase the proportion of students achieving the higher grades at A\* to B.

# Educational Attainment in 2023 compared to previous years

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on schools in 2019/20 and 2020/21. In 2020 and 2021, the main summer series of exams for GCSEs, AS and A Levels (and their equivalents in Scotland) were cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic. Instead, students received grades based on teacher or lecturer assessment.

Phonics, Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments were not completed in either year.

In 2020 and 2021 grades awarded via teacher and lecturer assessment were significantly higher, overall, than they had been in 2019. Therefore, the results for these years are not included in this report.

In 2022, a full series of exams took place. Exam boards set the grading for Key Stages 4 and 5 to reflect the mid-point between 2019 and 2021, so results in 2022 were higher than in 2021.

In 2023, grading largely returned to 'normal', so results were lower in 2023 than 2022 across the country.

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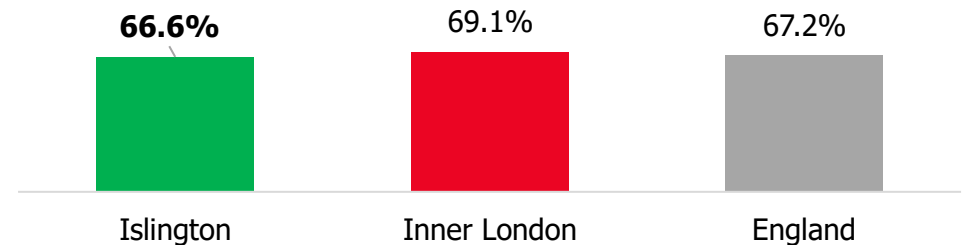
- The Early Years Foundation Stage was reformed in September 2021. As such, only 2022 and 2023 results are directly comparable. Results across the country in the Phonics screening check and at Key Stage 1 fell in 2022 compared to pre-pandemic levels. It is understood that this reflects the impact of the disruption to children's learning as a result of the pandemic. The same is true for Key Stage 2, although there was an increase in attainment in Reading both in Islington and across the country as a whole.
- Throughout this release, comparisons are made with 2022 and with 2019. The more meaningful comparison for GCSEs and A-levels is with 2019, the last year that summer exams were taken before the pandemic, as 2023 saw a return to pre-pandemic grading, with some protections.

	2019	2022	2023
<b>EYFSP</b>			
Good Level of Development	71	64.7	66.6
<b>Phonics</b>			
Year 1	84	77	79
By the end of Year 2	92	89	89
<b>Key Stage 1</b>			
Reading	76	72	70
Writing	72	65	63
Maths	78	71	73
<b>Key Stage 2</b>			
RWM	70	63	65
Reading	76	77	75
Writing	82	72	76
Maths	80	72	77
<b>Key Stage 4</b>			
Attainment 8 (average score)	45.8	49.9	46.7
Progress 8 (average score)	0.03	0.07	-0.03
Basics (English & Maths) 5+	42.3	52.7	46.8
<b>Key Stage 5</b>			
Average A level result	C	B-	C+
APS per entry (A level)	31.15	37.15	34.35

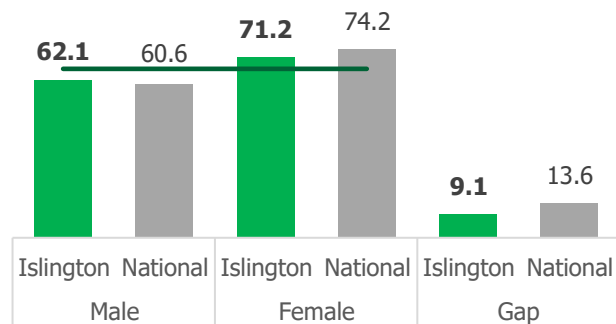
## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children who achieve a Good Level of Development at the EYFS are regarded by the DfE as being 'school ready'. In 2023 in Islington 66.6% were school ready, which is slightly below the national figure and 2.5% points below Inner London. While the 2023 outturns are not directly comparable with the most recent 2019 outturns from before the Covid-19 pandemic, performance is lower than it was then across England. The pandemic has had an adverse impact on the education of many young people and overall outcomes have been lower in 2023 across all points of assessment in the primary phase.

% Achieving a Good Level of Development at the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2023



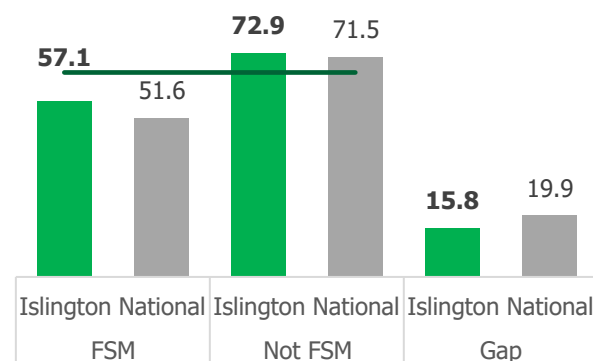
## Gender



In Islington and nationally there is a gender gap at the EYFS. Locally it is 9.1% points, not as large as national (13.6%).

The gender gap is **smaller** in Islington in 2023 compared to 2022, while nationally there has been a 0.4% points increase. Closing the gender gap at the EYFS in future years will be a challenge as will closing the gap for these children as they reach the end of KS1.

## Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility



In Islington and nationally there is a FSM gap at the EYFS. Locally it is 15.8% points, not as large as national (19.9%) but bigger than the gender gap.

The FSM gap in 2023 is **smaller** than it was in 2022, which is a positive shift, however, there were still fewer children from poorer households who were school ready when starting KS1.



**Early Years Foundation Stage**

**45 Schools**

**Range**

**30.0% - 88.9%**

**Above National (67.2%)**

**19**

**Islington**

**Above Inner London (69.1%)**

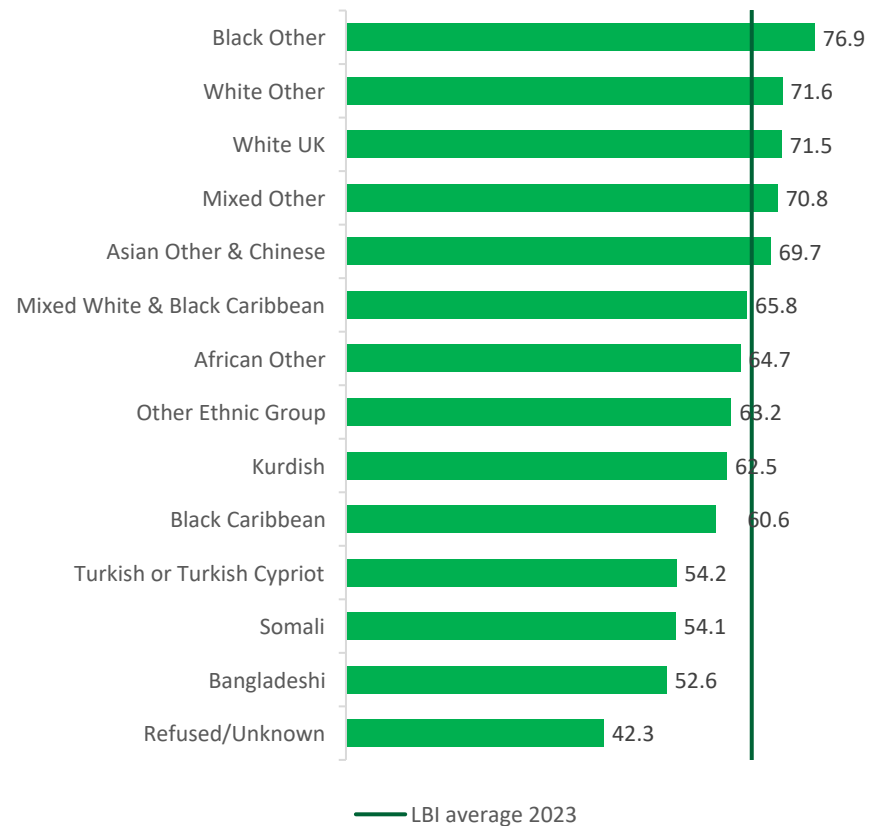
**66.6%**

**18**

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Islington wants to make sure that all young children get the best possible start to their education, yet there are wide variations in outcomes between the ethnic groups at the Early Years Foundation Stage. The highest performing ethnic groups at the Early Years Foundation Stage, in terms of achieving a Good Level of Development in 2023, were Black Other (76.9%), White Other (71.6%) and White UK (71.5%). Mixed Other (70.8%) and Asian Other & Chinese pupils (69.7%) also performed above the borough average of 66.6%. The lowest performing ethnic groups were Bangladeshi (52.6%), Somali (54.1%) and Turkish or Turkish Cypriot (54.2%).

## Ethnic Groups Performance



## SEN Performance

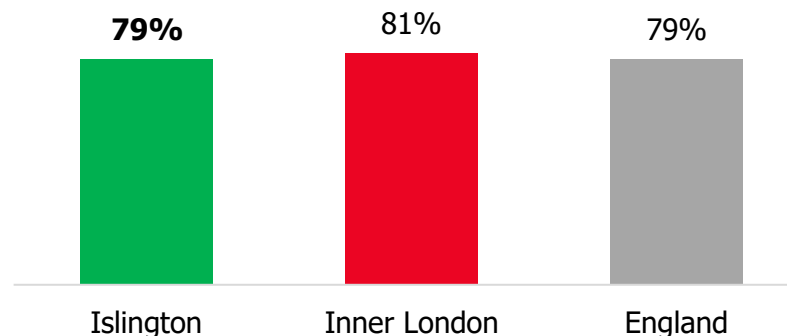
SEN Status	% achieving GLD		Gap in % Points
	Islington	National	
EHCP	5.2	3.8	1.4
SEN Support	32.9	24.3	8.6
All SEN	24.2	19.8	4.4
No SEN	76.1	74	2.1
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>66.6</b>	<b>67.2</b>	<b>-0.6</b>

A **higher** proportion of pupils with SEN, both with an EHCP and with SEN Support, achieved a Good Level of Development in Islington compared to similar pupils nationally.

# Phonics Screening Check (Year 1)

Children take the Phonics Screening Check in Year 1 and in 2023 in Islington 79% of children achieved the expected standard, the same as national and 2% points below Inner London. This cohort of children will have missed significant amounts of schooling due to the Covid-19 pandemic, when they were in nursery and Reception, and this is reflected in their overall performance which in Islington is 5% points lower compared to the outturns from 2019 but **higher** than last year by 2% points.

% Meeting the Expected Standard in Phonics in Year 1

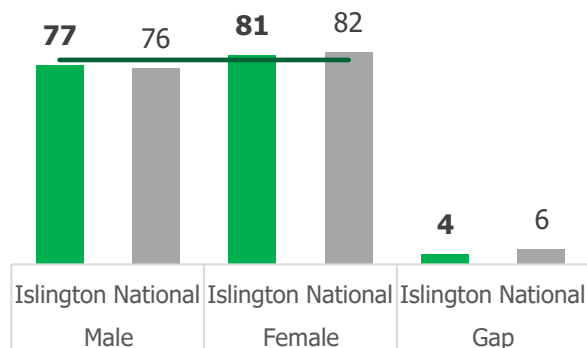


Phonics (Working At Expected)

	2019	2022	2023
Year 1	84	77	79
By the end of Year 2	92	89	89

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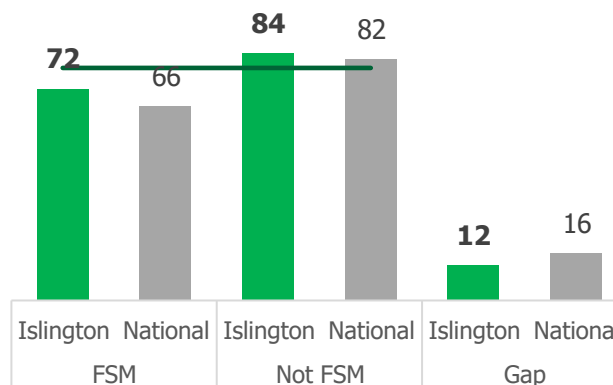
## Gender



There is a gender gap in Phonics in Year 1 of 4% points in Islington and 6% points nationally with more girls achieving the standard.

A slightly **higher** proportion of boys passed Phonics in Year 1 in Islington, but a slightly lower proportion of girls did when compared to national.

## Free School Meal eligibility



In Islington and nationally there is a FSM gap in Phonics. Locally it is 12% points, not as large as national (16%) but much bigger than the gender gap.

A **higher** proportion of FSM eligible pupils passed Phonics in Islington (72%) than did so nationally (66%).

**Phonics Y1 Screen Check**

**45 Schools**

**Range**

**38.9% - 96.6%**

**Above National (79%)**

**28**

Page 24

**Islington**

**Above Inner London (81%)**

**79%**

**25**

# Phonics Screening Check (Year 1)

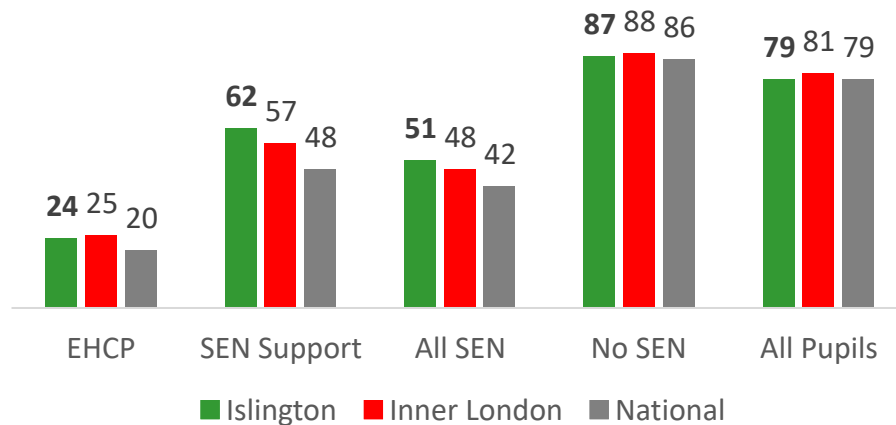
## SEN Performance

A **higher proportion** of pupils with SEN, both with an EHCP and with SEN Support, met the expected standard in Islington compared to similar pupils nationally.

Islington SEN Support pupils in particular **outperformed** their peers, achieving 14 percentage points above England and 5 above Inner London.

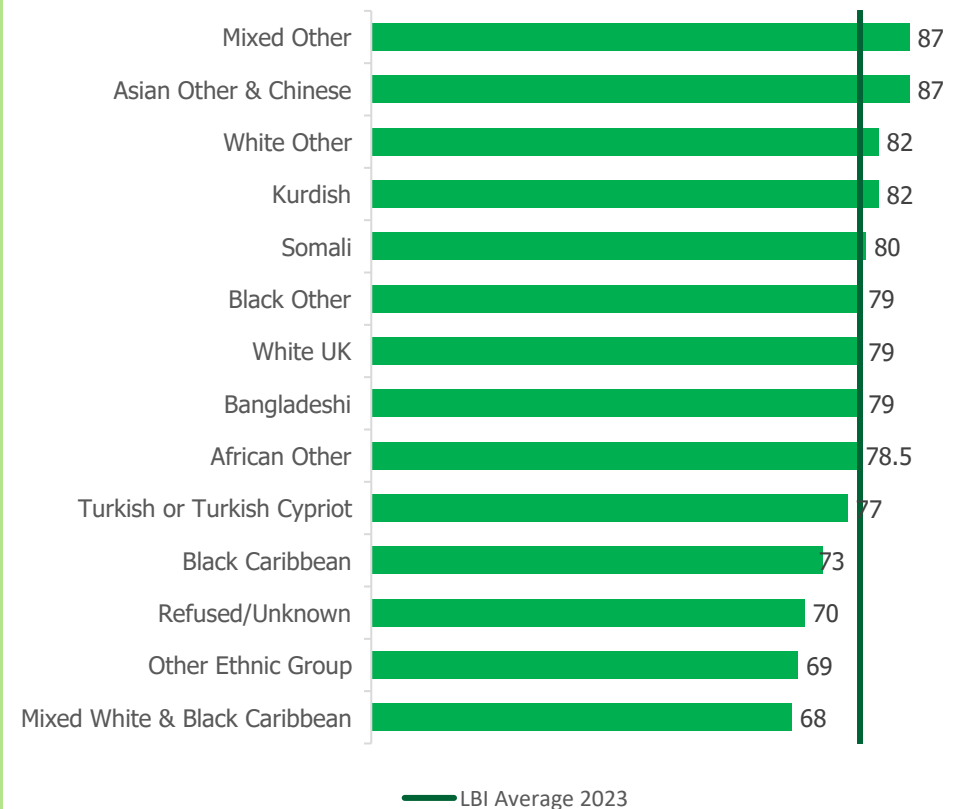
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Percentage Achieving Expected Standard in Phonics: Year 1



## Ethnic Groups Performance

In 2023, Mixed Other and Asian Other and Chinese were the highest achieving groups in terms of meeting the expected standard in Phonics in Year 1 in Islington (both 87%). The lowest performing ethnic groups were Mixed White and Black Caribbean (68%), Other Ethnic Group (69%) and Black Caribbean (73%).

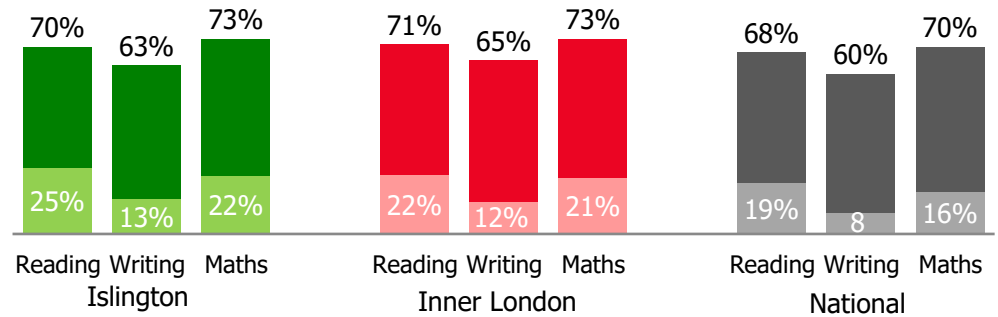


# Key Stage 1

Children in Islington performed **better** than national at Key Stage 1 in 2023 and in line with Inner London in maths. This cohort of children will have experienced disruption to their education because of the Covid-19 pandemic during their first year in Key Stage 1.

The subject most adversely affected by the pandemic was writing. Performance both nationally and in Islington dropped by 9% points compared with 2019. Islington pupils did **better** than last year in maths (+2% points) but fewer pupils achieved the expected standard in reading and writing (both -2% points).

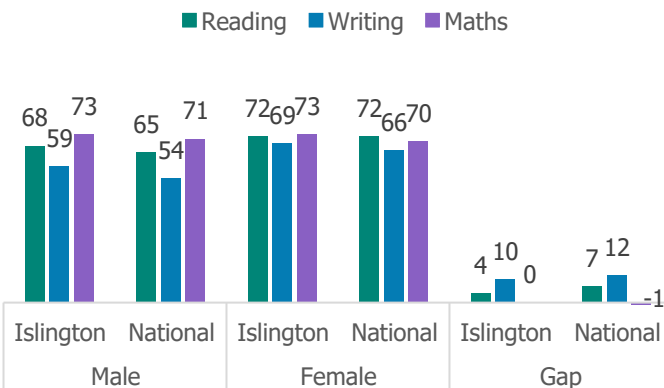
% Achieving the Expected Standard and Greater Depth at Key Stage 1 in 2023



## Key Stage 1 EXS

	2019	2022	2023
Reading	76	72	70
Writing	72	65	63
Maths	78	71	73

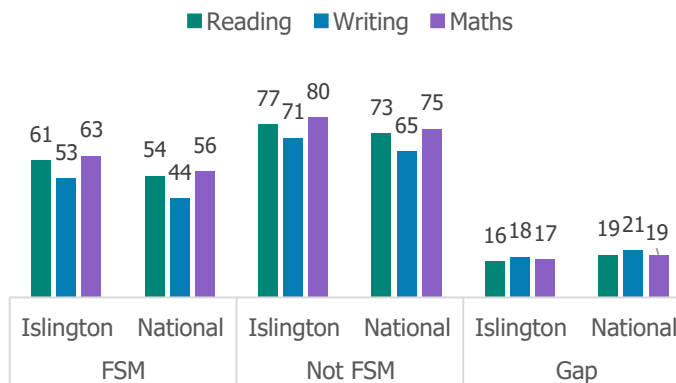
# Gender



At KS1 there were gender gaps in favour of girls in reading and writing but no gap in maths in Islington. Nationally, boys did slightly better than girls in maths.

Boys and girls in Islington **outperformed** boys and girls nationally in all KS1 subjects except for in reading where the same proportion of girls achieved the expected standard. The gender performance gaps in Islington were **smaller** than national.

# Free School Meal eligibility



Islington had FSM attainment gaps in all three KS1 subjects, but the gaps were not as large as national.

FSM eligible and non-eligible pupils in Islington **outperformed** similar pupils nationally in all three KS1 subjects in 2023.

**Key Stage 1 (Reading Writing Maths)**

**45 Schools**

**Above National (68% 60% 70%)**

**29**

**35**

**33**

Page

**Islington Range**

**Above Inner London**

**(71% 65% 73%)**

**69.9%**

**63.3%**

**72.7%**

**27**

**22**

**25**

**25.0% -  
88.3%**

**12.5% -  
85.7%**

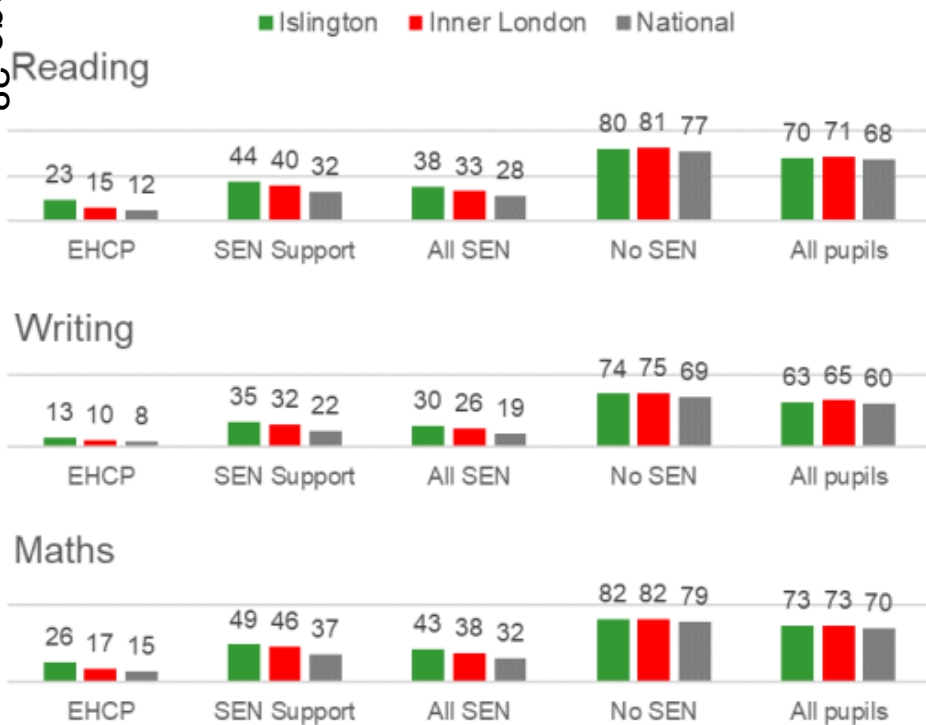
**33.3% -  
92.3%**

# KS1 Contextual Analysis

## SEN Performance

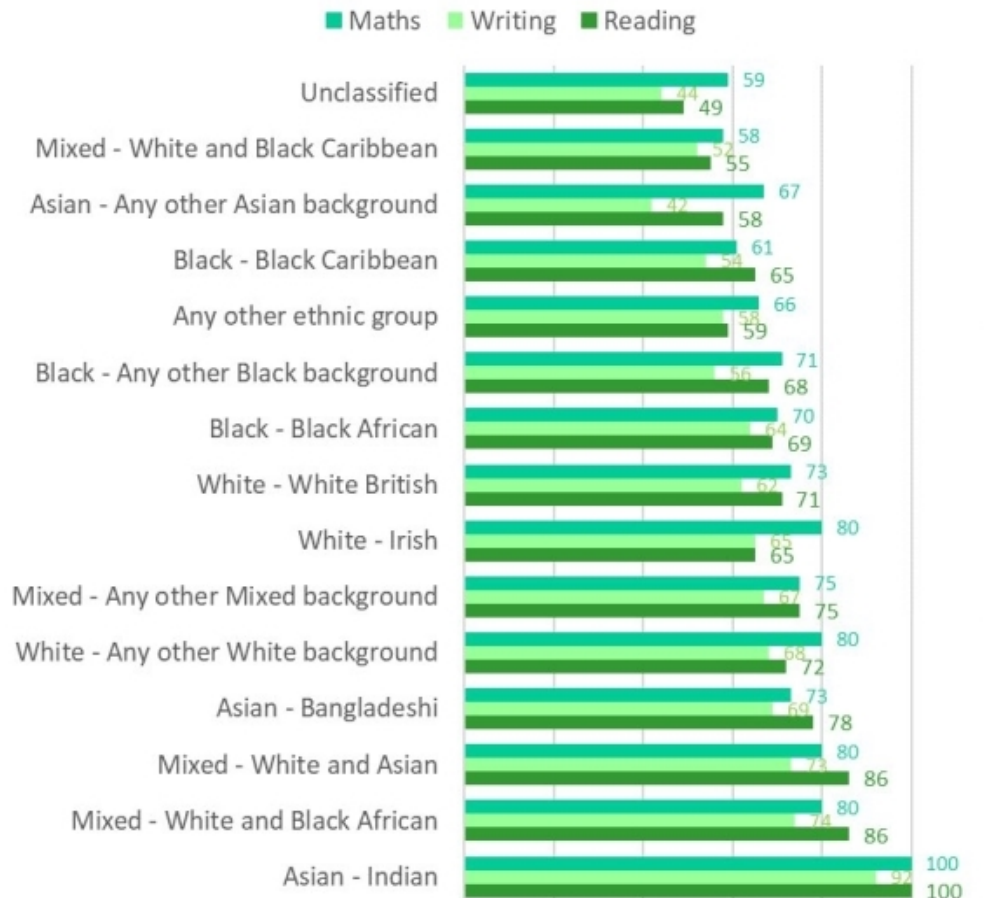
Islington KS1 pupils with EHCPs and SEN Support **outperformed** their peers in Reading, Writing and Maths. Islington pupils with No SEN were **above** national for all subjects, on par with Inner London in Maths, and slightly below Inner London in Reading and Writing. Islington had the **highest proportion of SEN pupils** of any LA in the country at KS1 (23.5%).

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# KS1 Performance by Ethnicity

While pupils from some ethnic groups performed very well at KS1 in 2023, some groups achieved less well. The lowest performing groups were Mixed White & Black Caribbean, Asian Other and Black Caribbean. Ethnicity groups with fewer than 10 pupils have been removed from the chart below.



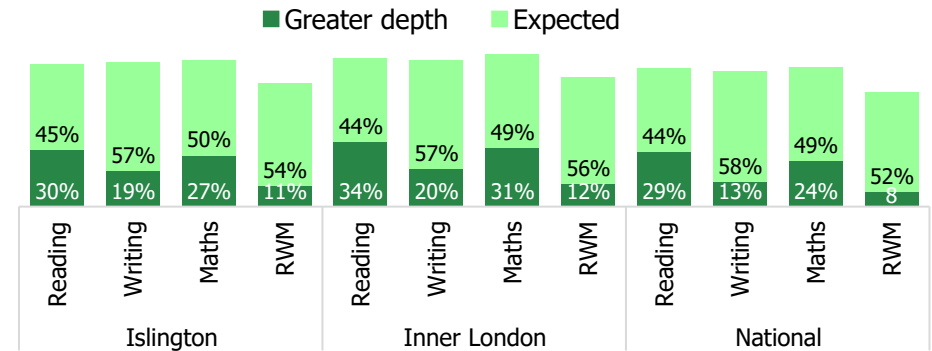


# Key Stage 2

Children in Islington **outperformed** their national peers across all subjects at Key Stage 2 in 2023, although performance was below Inner London in all subjects.

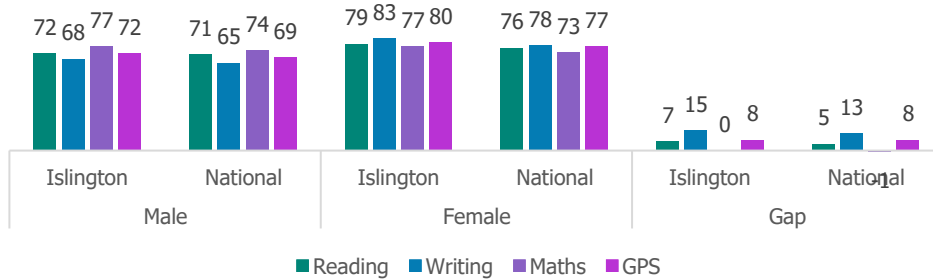
Performance in reading dropped by 2% points both nationally and in Islington. All other subjects have seen an **improvement** compared with 2022 results including a 2% points **increase** in the combined measure for reading, writing and maths.

% Achieving the Expected Standard and Greater Depth



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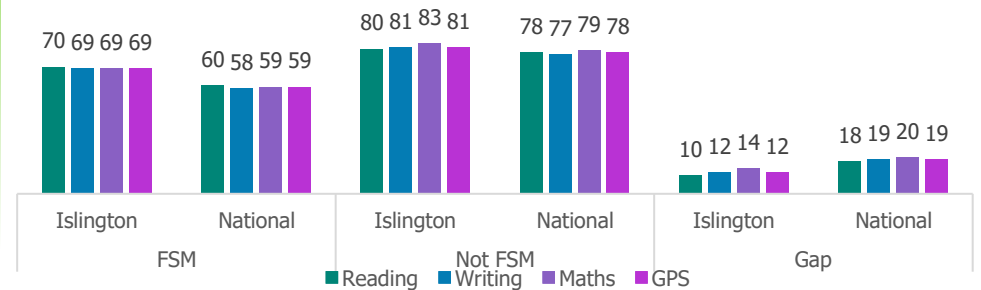
# Gender



## Key Stage 2

	2019	2022	2023
RWM	70	63	65
Reading	76	77	75
Writing	82	72	76
Maths	80	72	77

# Free School Meal eligibility



At KS2 in 2023 Islington had gender gaps in favour of girls in reading, writing and Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling (GPS). In maths an equal proportion of boys and girls achieved the expected standard. In 2023 Islington boys and girls **outperformed** their respective counterparts nationally in all subjects.

Islington had FSM attainment gaps in all four KS2 subjects, but the gaps were not as large as national. FSM eligible and non-eligible pupils in Islington **outperformed** similar pupils nationally in all four KS2 subjects in 2023.

**Key Stage 2 (Reading Writing Maths RWM)**

**45 Schools**

**Above National (73% 71% 73% 60%)**

**30**

**36**

**28**

**28**

Page

**Islington Range**

**Above Inner London  
(78% 77% 80% 68%)**

**75.5%**

**50.0% -  
96.6%**

**75.7%**

**50.0% -  
96.7%**

**76.8%**

**52.4% -  
96.6%**

**65.0%**

**38.5% -  
96.6%**

**22**

**22**

**23**

**23**

# Key Stage 2 – Contextual Analysis

## White UK FSM Eligible

### Reading, Writing and Maths Combined

	Islington	National
White UK not eligible for FSM	75.2	65.5
White UK eligible for FSM	50.5	39.8
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>
Gap (% points)	24.7	25.7

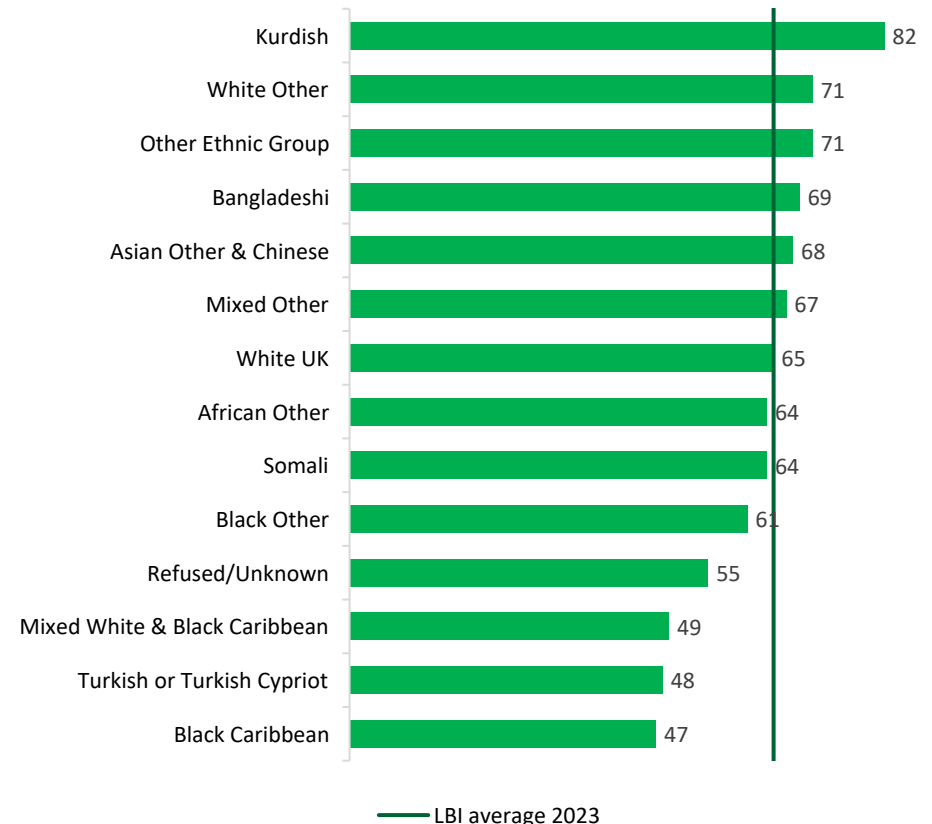
At KS2 a **higher proportion** of Islington White UK pupils eligible for FSM achieved at least the expected standard in RWM compared with national.

The gap between Islington White UK eligible and not eligible for FSM (24.7% points) has narrowed this year compared to last year (37.9% points).

## Ethnic Groups Performance

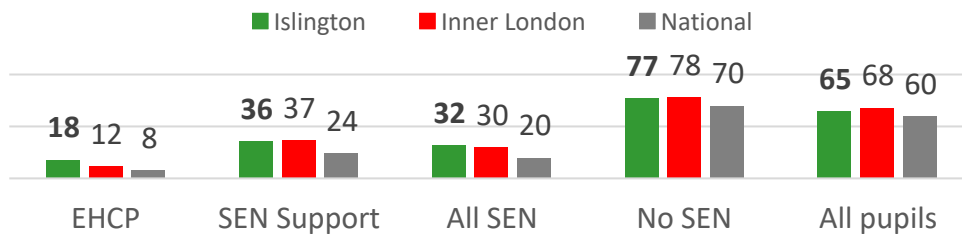
While pupils from some ethnic groups performed very well at KS2 in 2023, some groups had lower outcomes. The lowest performing groups were, Black Caribbean (47%), Turkish or Turkish Cypriot (48%) and Mixed White & Black Caribbean (49%).

### % Achieving Reading, Writing and Maths Combined



## SEN Performance

### Percentage Achieving Expected Standard (EXS) in Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2



EHCP and All SEN Islington pupils **outperformed** their national and Inner London peers in Reading, Writing and Maths in 2023. EHCP pupils were 10 percentage points **above** national, while All SEN pupils were 12 points **above** national. SEN Support pupils were 12 percentage points **above** national and slightly below Inner London.

Islington had a higher proportion of All SEN pupils at KS2 (27%) than England (20%) and Inner London (22%).

# Primary School Absence

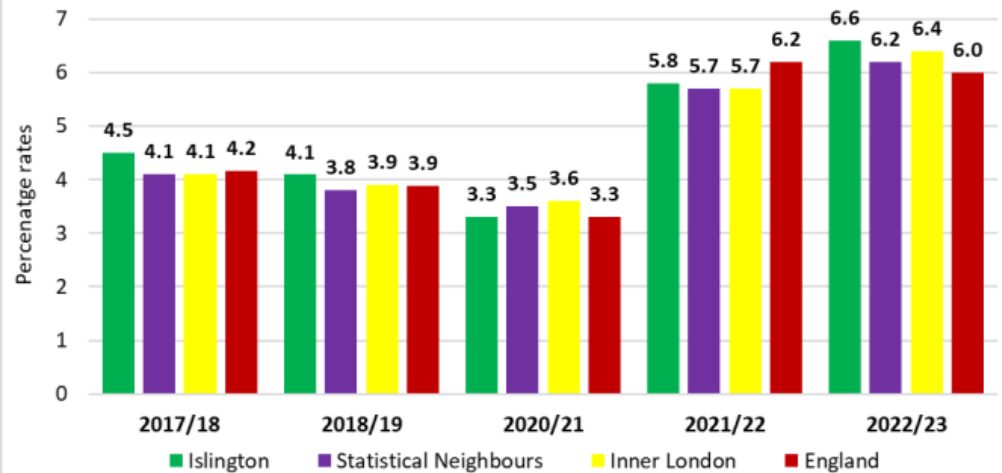
Absence related to Covid has been included as absence due to illness since April 2022. 2022/23 is the first full academic year when Covid-related absence was included in the absence statistics. Despite this, the England absence rate for primary schools fell, whilst Islington and our comparators increased. Islington primary schools had a higher absence rate than the comparator averages in 2022/23.

# Persistent Absence

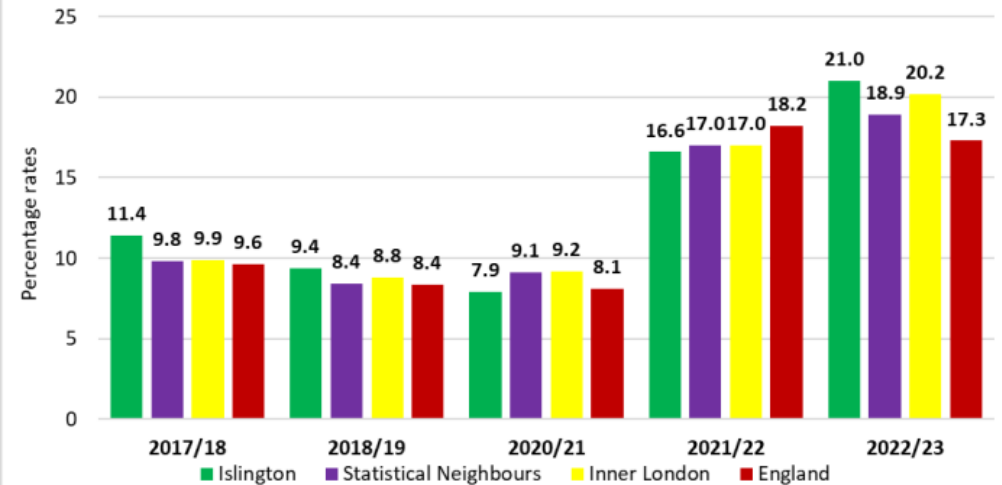
The proportion of primary pupils in Islington who were persistent absentees had been improving between 2017/18 and 2020/21. However, rates of persistent absenteeism more than doubled in Islington and nationally in 2021/22 when Covid-related absence started to be included in the statistics. Islington was in the **top quartile** in 2021/22.

In 2022/23, Islington primary schools had a higher rate of persistent absence than any of the comparator averages. Islington moved from the top quartile to bottom quartile on this measure.

Primary School Absence Rates (2 Terms) in Islington Compared with Benchmarks 2017/18 to 2022/23



Primary School Persistent Absence Rates (2 Terms) in Islington Compared with Benchmarks 2017/18 to 2022/23

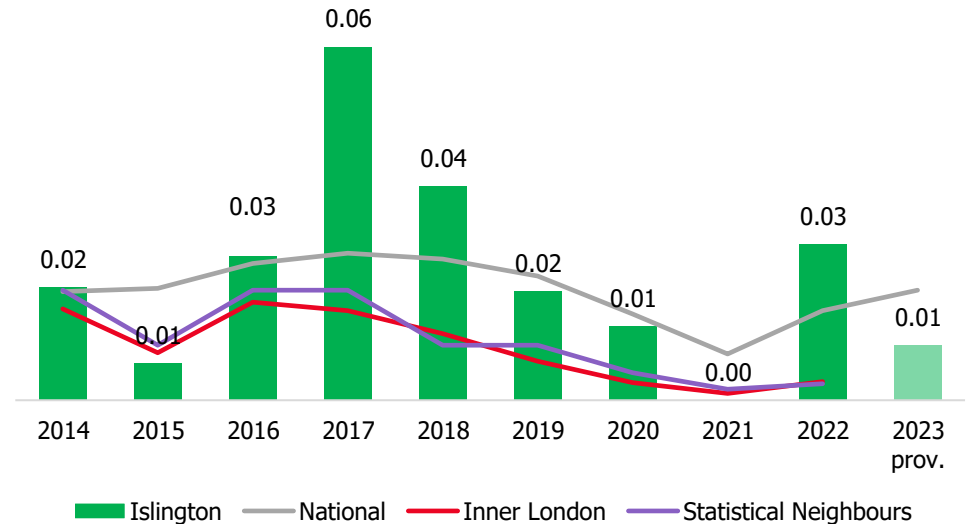


# Primary School Exclusions and Suspensions

## Permanent exclusions

The permanent exclusion rate in Islington primary schools had been higher than regional and national benchmarks in the two years preceding the pandemic. The rate then dropped to zero during the pandemic in 2021. The following year saw an increase in permanent exclusions, but the provisional 2023 figures show a **decline** in numbers again. The actual numbers of permanent exclusions are very small and in Islington a rate of 0.01 equates to one or two permanent exclusions.

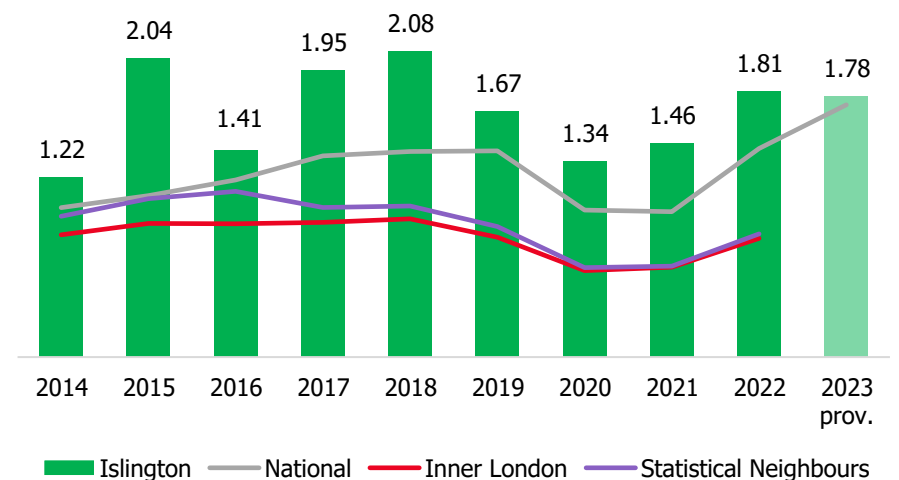
Primary **Permanent Exclusion** Rate from 2014 to 2023



## Suspensions

Primary school suspension rates have tended to be higher in Islington compared to regional and national benchmarks. In recent years, the rate was lowest in 2020 (1.34). Having gone up for the following two years, the provisional 2023 figures indicate a slight **reduction** on the previous year.

Primary **Suspension** Rate from 2014 to 2023



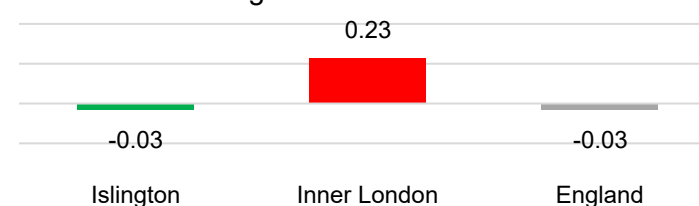
## Key Stage 4 – Attainment 8 and Progress 8

Pupils in Islington achieved a **higher** Attainment 8 Score than national, although their performance was below the Inner London score. Their score of 46.7 was 0.9 points **higher** than their pre-pandemic score in 2019.

Attainment 8 Average Score 2023



Progress 8 Score in 2023



### Key Stage 4

Attainment 8 (average score)  
Progress 8 (average score)  
Basics (English & Maths) 5+

	2019	2022	2023
Attainment 8 (average score)	45.8	49.9	46.7
Progress 8 (average score)	0.03	0.07	-0.03
Basics (English & Maths) 5+	42.3	52.7	46.8

Pupils in Islington had a negative Progress 8 score which means they made less progress from Key Stage 2 than similar pupils nationally. Performance was not as high as the Inner London Progress 8 score.

## Gender and Attainment 8

Attainment 8 Score by Gender in 2023



## Gender Gap

The gender gap in Islington is slightly in favour of girls, but the gap is only 2.4 points, **better** than the national gap of 4.5 points. Boys in Islington achieved an Attainment 8 score of 45.6 points, 1.4 points **above** the national score for boys. Islington girls had a score of 48.0, 0.7 points below all girls nationally. The small gap at GCSE suggests that the gender gaps that emerge at earlier points of assessment, from as far back as the Early Years Foundation Stage, have been addressed by the time pupils get to Year 11.

# Attainment 8 & Progress 8 (10 Schools)

Above National (46.4 -0.03)

6

5

## Islington Range

## Above Inner London

( 49.7 +0.23)

46.7

-0.03

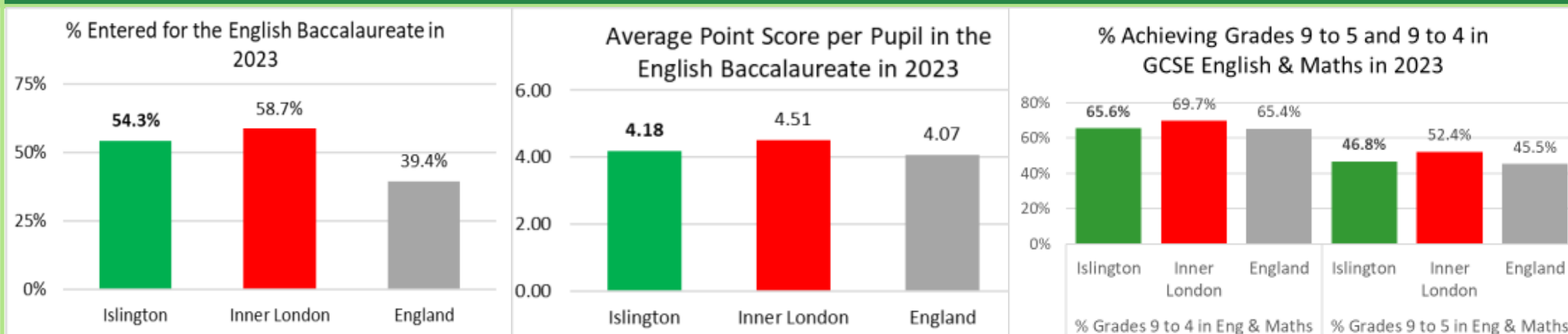
5

2

34.8 to 57.1

-0.78 to +0.82

# Key Stage 4 – English Baccalaureate and English & Maths Performance



## English Baccalaureate

Islington's schools entered a **higher** proportion of pupils for the English Baccalaureate\* (Ebacc) than national, 54.3%, compared to 39.4%, although Islington's entry rate was lower than that for Inner London, at 58.7%. Islington's pupils achieved a **higher** average point score in the English Baccalaureate than the national average but it was below Inner London. Performance in the EBacc was **better** than the pre-pandemic performance in 2019.

## English & Maths

The percentage of students from Islington who achieved a *standard* pass in English and Maths, with grades ranging from 9 to 4, was slightly **above** the national average. However, this pass rate was lower than that of Inner London. A **higher** proportion of Islington students secured a *strong* pass, with grades between 9 to 5, in English and Maths compared to the national average. The Inner London *strong* pass rate was also above Islington's.

\*The Ebacc is based on GCSE results in English language & literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history and a language.

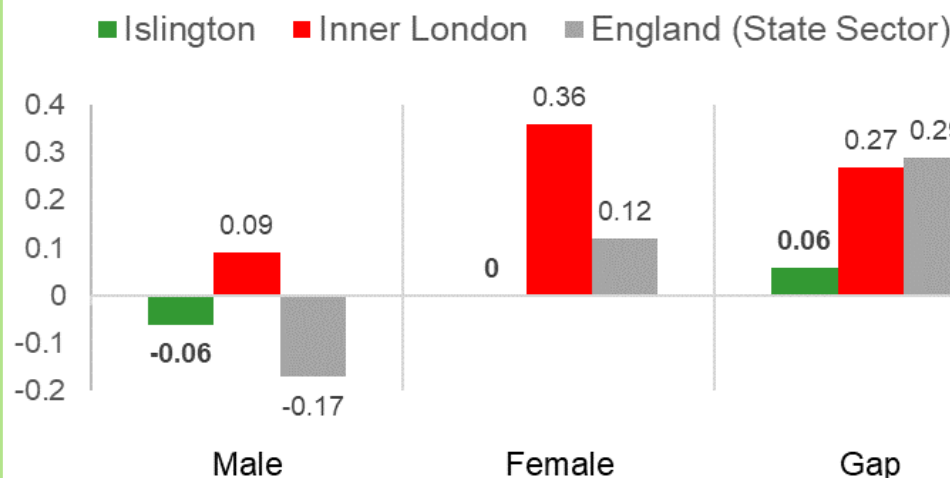


## Key Stage 4 – Contextual Analysis of Progress by Gender

Boys in Islington achieved a negative Progress 8 score of -0.06, which was **above** the negative score of -0.17 for boys nationally. Girls in Islington achieved a score of 0, which was below the national score for girls of 0.12.

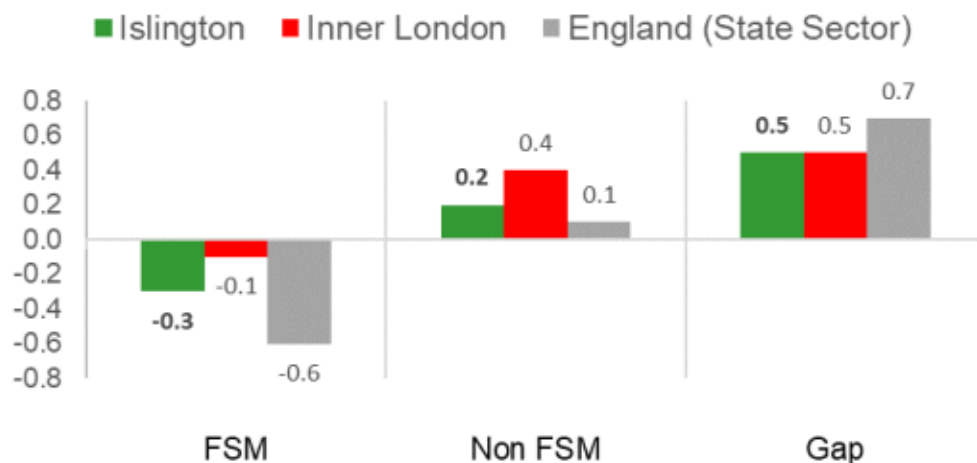
There is no significant gender progress gap in Islington, whereas the gender progress gap nationally is 0.29 in favour of girls. Boys and girls in Islington have, on average, made less progress between Key Stage 2 and 4 than pupils with similar starting points in Inner London.

Progress 8 Score by Gender in 2023



## Progress and FSM

Progress 8 Score by FSM in 2023



## Free School Meals Progress Gap

Pupils who are eligible for FSM have a negative Progress 8 score in Islington of -0.3 which is **better** than the negative national score of -0.6. Non-FSM eligible pupils in Islington achieved a positive score of 0.2, **better** than the national score of 0.1 for similar pupils. The Progress FSM attainment gap in Islington, at 0.5, is **smaller** than the national gap of 0.7, which indicates that FSM pupils in Islington perform **better** than their peers nationally, while there is still some scope to reduce the gap further in future years. Islington had the highest % of FSM eligible pupils in the 2023 Key Stage 4 cohort in the country.

## Contextual Analysis

### SEN Performance

SEN Status	Attainment 8 Score			Gap in Points	
	Islington	England	Inner London	England	Inner London
EHCP	11.8	14	16.8	-2.2	-5
SEN Support	36.2	33.3	39.4	2.9	-3.2
All SEN Pupils	29.9	28.1	32.8	1.8	-2.9
No SEN	51.6	50.2	53.9	1.4	-2.3
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>-3.1</b>

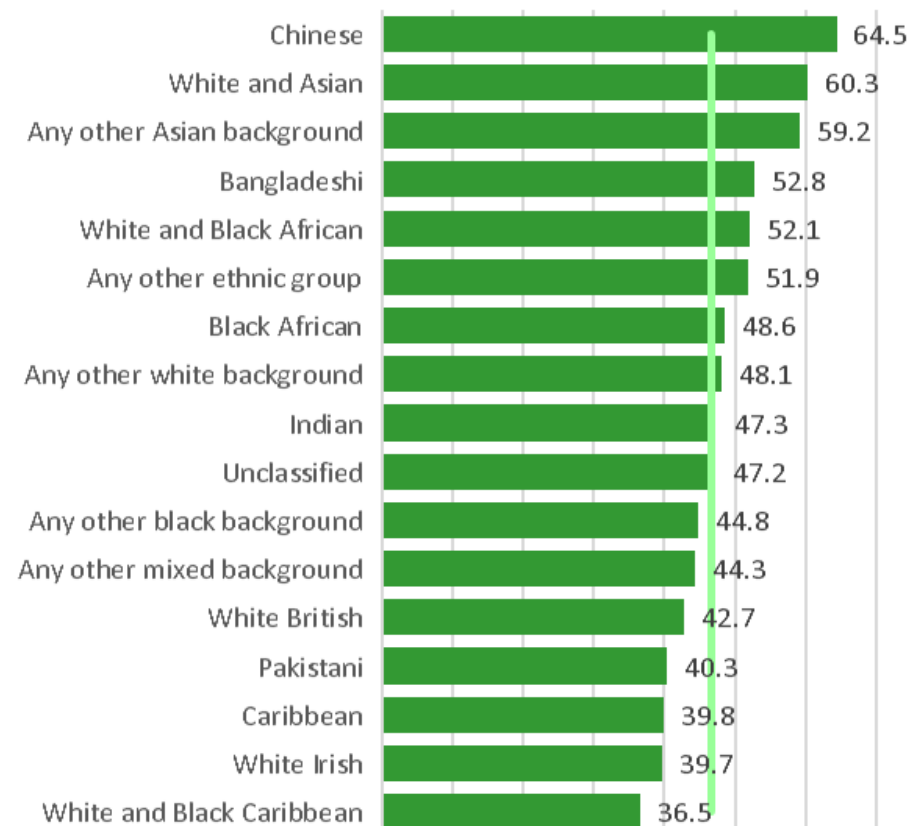
In Islington SEN Support pupils **outperformed** their national peers in their Attainment 8 scores in 2023, whereas pupils with an EHCP did not. However, all Islington's groups of pupils by SEN **outperformed** the national average progress score for their group. Islington's overall Progress 8 score is equal to the England score as Islington has higher proportions of SEN pupils. Despite the strong performance by Islington SEN pupils at Key Stage 4, Islington remains below the Inner London average scores for each SEN group.

SEN Status	Progress 8 Score			Gap in Points	
	Islington	England	Inner London	England	Inner London
EHCP	-1.07	-1.12	-0.83	0.05	-0.24
SEN Support	-0.42	-0.45	-0.17	0.03	-0.25
All SEN Pupils	-0.58	-0.62	-0.35	0.04	-0.23
No SEN	0.13	0.1	0.37	0.03	-0.24
All Pupils	-0.03	-0.03	0.23	0	-0.26

## Ethnic Performance

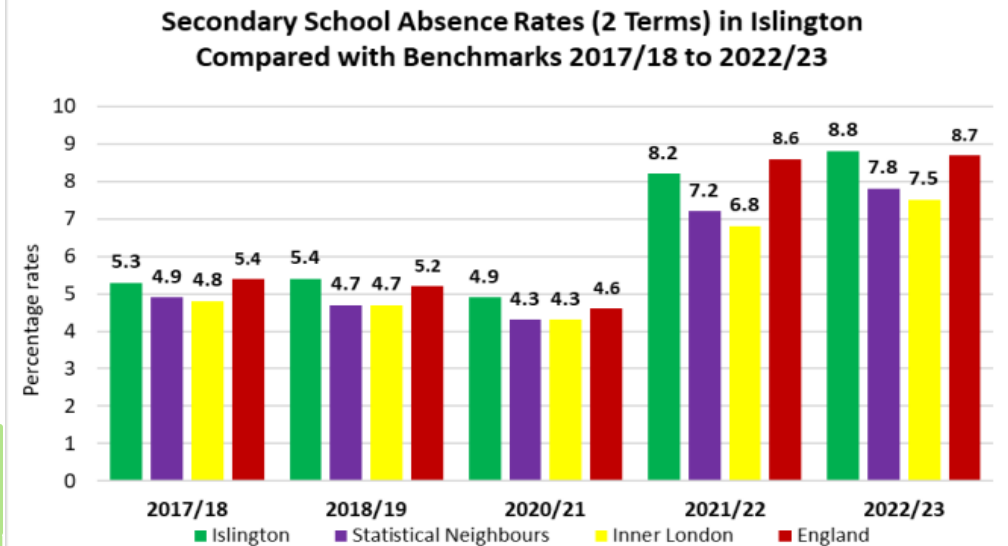
While pupils from some ethnic groups performed very well at KS4 in 2023, some groups achieved less well. The lowest performing groups were Mixed White & Black Caribbean (36.5), White Irish (39.7), Black Caribbean (39.8), Pakistani (40.3) and White British (42.7)

Average Attainment 8 Score by Ethnicity - 2023



## Secondary School Absence

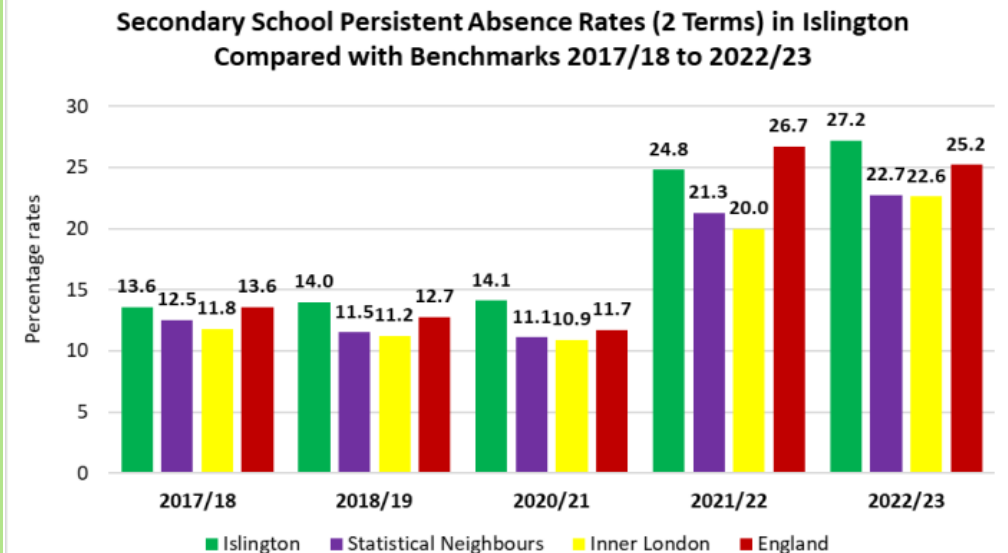
Absence rates increased quite dramatically in the Autumn and Spring terms of the 2021/22 school year. In 2022/23, Covid-related absence was included in the absence statistics for the first time, as absence due to illness. Despite this, absence in secondary schools only increased slightly. Islington was above each of the comparator averages in terms of secondary school absence levels.



## Persistent Absence

The secondary persistent absence rate was higher than benchmarks in the years before the Covid-19 pandemic, at around 13% to 14%. Persistent absence rates increased dramatically in Islington to 24.8% in 2021/22, although this was **better** than national at 26.7%. Persistent absence in Islington's secondary schools increased again in 2022/23, to 27.2%, whilst the national average fell to 25.2%. Islington's rate was the highest in Inner London and Islington fell to just inside the bottom quartile, nationally.

## Persistent Absence Data



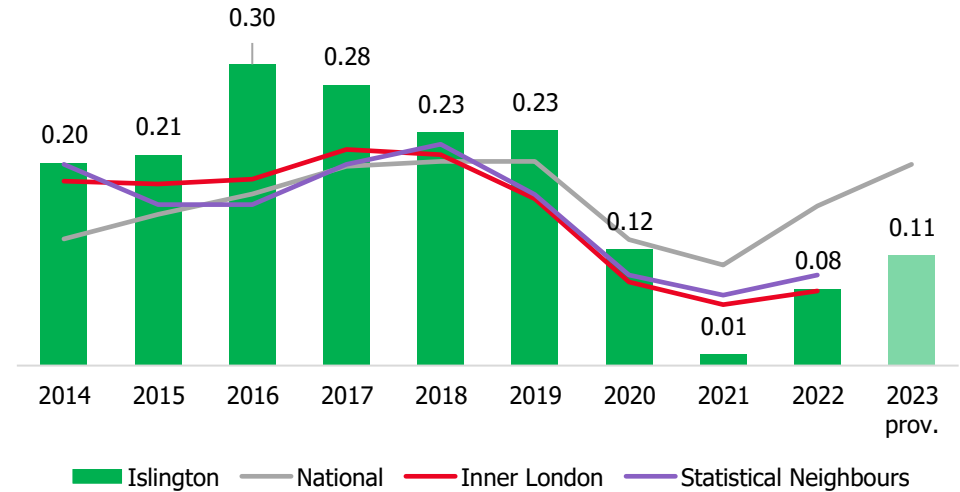
# Secondary School Exclusions and Suspensions

## Permanent exclusions

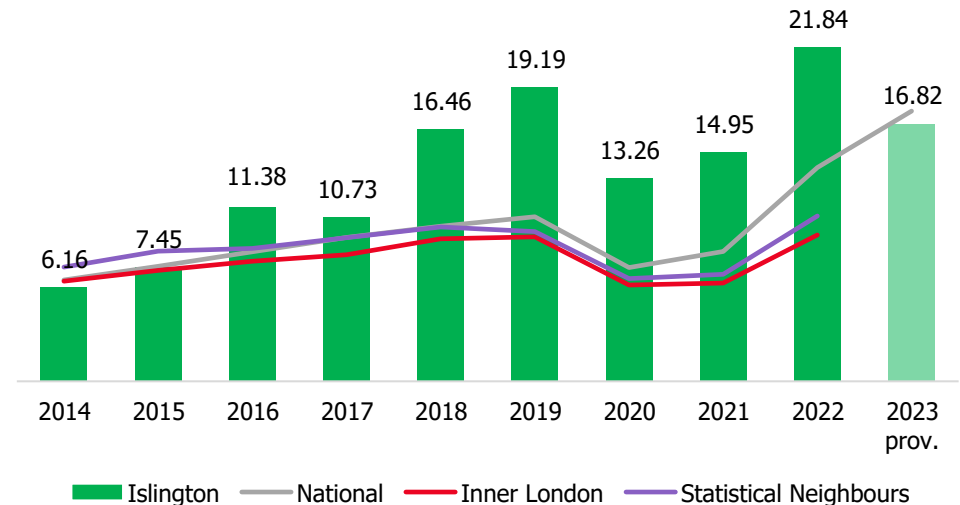
Historically, permanent exclusion rates have been variable in Islington secondary schools with rates higher locally than regional and national. Since 2020, the permanent exclusion rate in Islington secondary schools has been very low and better than regional and national benchmarks. While the provisional 2023 results show an upward trend, the rate is still **below** the provisional national average.

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Secondary **Permanent Exclusion** Rate from 2014 to 2023



Secondary **Suspension** Rate from 2014 to 2023



# Elective Home Education (EHE)

## Numbers in EHE

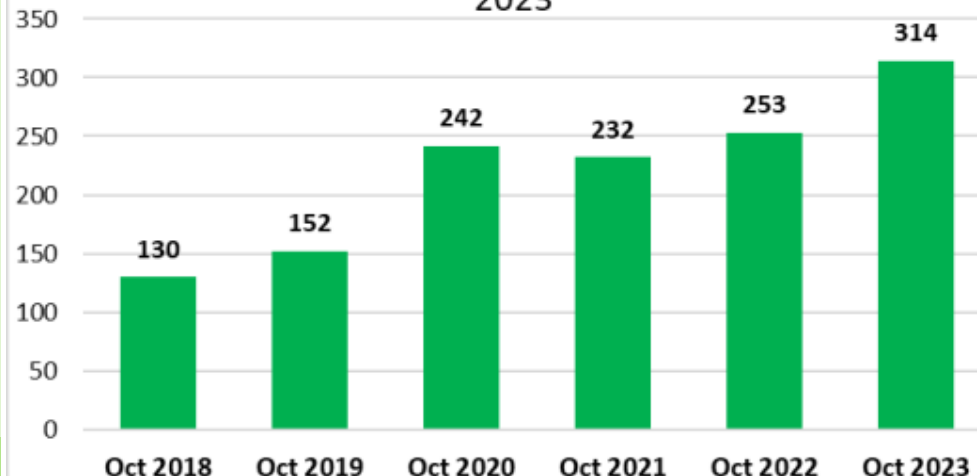
One of the early features of the Covid-19 pandemic was a rapid increase in the number of children being electively home educated. The numbers rose by 90 (+59%) from 152 in October 2019 to 242 in October 2020. After this initial spike, the total numbers settled down at a similar level over the next two years. However, the numbers have increased again in 2023 to a new peak of over 300.

LA level data is now published on EHE numbers. Compared to the resident population, Islington had 126 EHE pupils per 10,000 residents in Summer 2023, the 50<sup>th</sup> highest rate in the country.

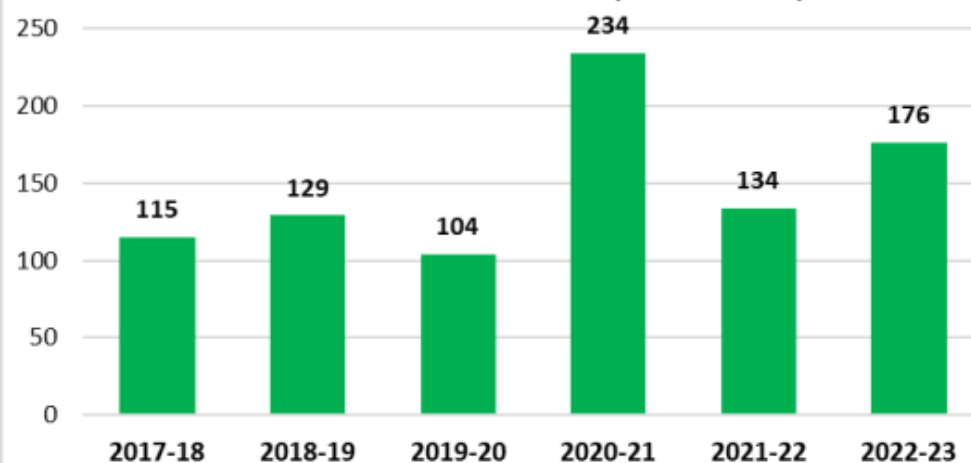
## Formal Notifications made for EHE

The number of formal notifications for EHE had been broadly consistent from 2017/18 to 2019/20 but they rose significantly between 2019/20 and 2020/21. There was a drop in the number of notifications in 2021/22, but the number rose again in 2022/23 to the highest annual total outside of the main pandemic year of 2020/21.

Number of Children & Young People Being Electively Home Educated in Islington 2018 to 2023



Number of Formal Notifications made for Elective Home Education from 2017/18 to 2022/23



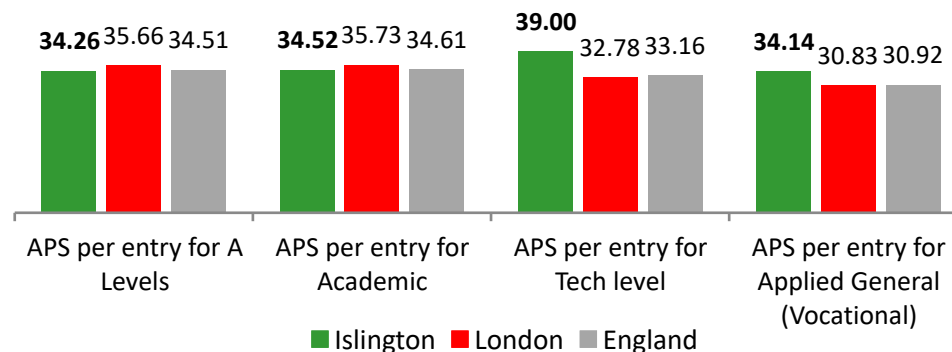
## Key Stage 5

On the range of KS5 Average Points Score (APS) measures, students in Islington performed **better** than London and national on the more vocational qualification areas, including the Tech Level and Applied General measures.

Performance in Islington was lower than London and national on the overall A Level measure and the Academic A Level measure.

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### Key Stage 5 Performance in 2023



Key Stage 5	2019	2022	2023
Average A level result	C	B-	C+
APS per entry (A level)	31.15	37.15	34.35

## % Achieving Higher A Level Grades

A Level Higher Grade Measures	2023	
	% achieving 3 A* to A Grades at A Level	% achieving ≥ AAB Grades at A Level
Islington	9.2%	15.0%
London	15.8%	25.3%
England	14.3%	23.3%

**NB** Islington has 6 secondary schools with sixth forms and a 7th opened its sixth form in Sep 2022. There is also one 16-18 free school.

## Higher Grade Performance

On the more challenging A Level measure, the % achieving 3 A\* - A Grades, only 9.2% of Islington students achieved this measure, compared to over 15% in London and 14% nationally. On the % achieving ≥ AAB Grades at A Level, 15% of Islington students achieved this measure but again this level of performance was also noticeably below the London (25.3%) and national (23.3%) benchmarks. This will be likely to have impacted on the ability of many Islington students to access high tariff universities.

**Key Stage 5 APS (A-level) APS (Vocational\*) % AAB**  
 (6 schools & 2 colleges)

**Above National (34.51 30.92 23.3%)**

**3**

**6**

**1**

Page

**Islington Range**

**Above Inner London**  
 (35.66 30.83 25.3%)

**34.26**

**34.14**

**15.0%**

**29.25 -  
37.46**

**25.0- 39.6**

**5.5% -  
27.6%**

**2**

**5**

**1**

## Post-16 – Year 11 Destinations and NEET/Unknown Scorecard

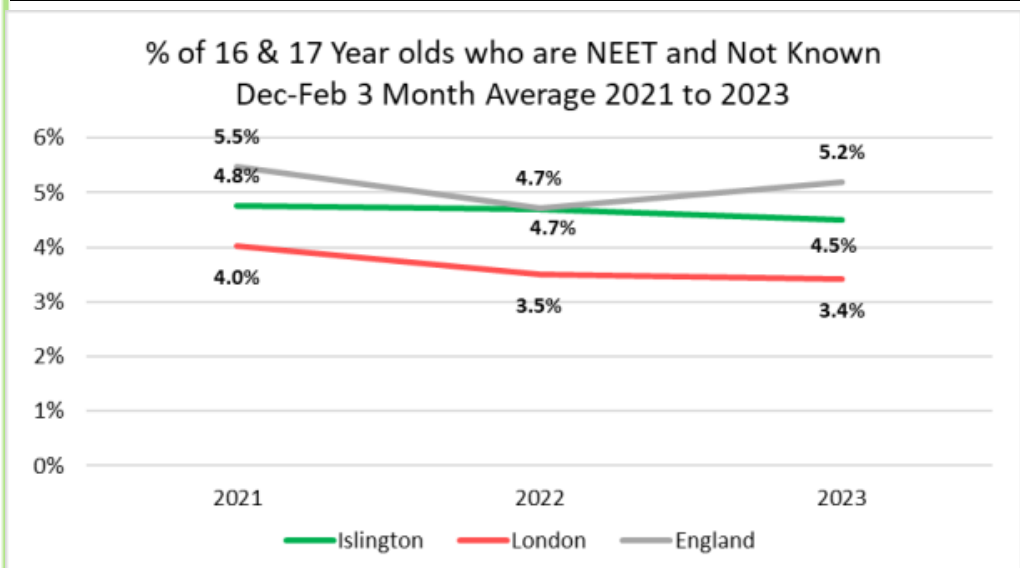
Under Raising Participation Age (RPA) Islington has a responsibility to ensure its residents continue to participate in education or training from when they finish Key Stage 4 at Year 11 until at least their 18th birthday, and to reduce the proportion of young people aged 16 and 17 not in education, employment or training after they leave the compulsory education phase.

2022 Year 11 School LEA	Year 11 total	In Learning	Employment w/o training	Other	NEET	Unknown
Islington	1569	97.3%	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%	1.0%
Camden	1651	97.9%	0.2%	0.1%	1.2%	0.6%
Hackney	2500	98.6%	0.2%	0.0%	1.0%	0.3%
Kensington & Chelsea	928	97.6%	0.2%	0.0%	1.6%	0.5%
Islington	2412	96.0%	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%	2.3%
Southwark	3045	97.5%	0.1%	0.0%	0.8%	1.5%
Wandsworth	2039	96.4%	0.3%	0.0%	2.3%	1.0%
Westminster	1832	98.0%	0.2%	0.0%	1.4%	0.4%
Central London	15976	97.4%	0.3%	0.0%	1.3%	1.1%

Destinations of Year 11 leavers are collected on 1 November in the year pupils left an Islington school. In 2022, 97.3% of young people from Islington schools and settings remained or continued 'In Learning' after completing Year 11. This was just below the Central London figure of 97.4%. The NEET rate, at 1.3% was in line with the Central London average, but the Unknown rate, at 1.0%, was slightly **better** than the rate of 1.1% across Central London.

The percentage of 16 and 17 year old residents who were NEET or in a 'not known' activity (Dec-Feb snapshot) was 4.5% in 2023, compared to 4.7% in 2022 and 4.8% in 2021.

The 2023 performance, at 4.5%, was **better** than national, at 5.2%, but not as good as the London average of 3.4%.





## Quality of Provision

All young people in Islington should have access to a high quality school place whatever the phase or type of education. This section considers the schools and early years settings in Islington in terms of educational quality.

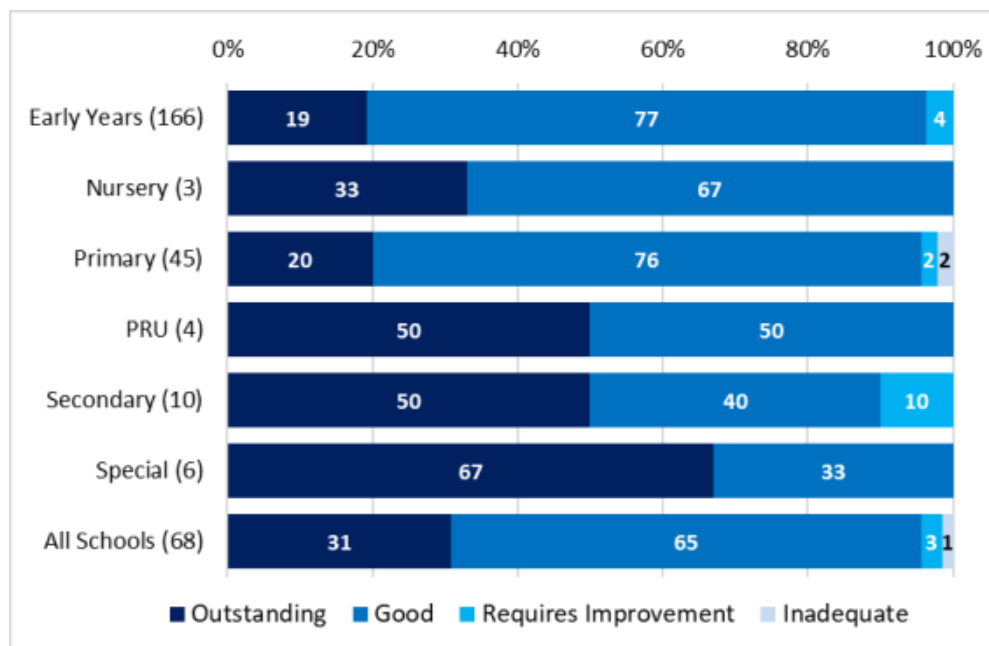
The vast majority of schools in Islington (96%) were rated as good or outstanding, as at the end of August 2023), an **improvement** of 5% points since 2019.

This includes:

- 100% of nursery schools were good or outstanding
- 96% of primary schools were good or outstanding
- 90% of secondary schools were good or outstanding
- 100% of special schools were good or outstanding
- 100% of pupil referral units (PRU) were good or outstanding

Further, 96% of early years settings were good or outstanding as at August 2023, which is in line with 96% across London but slightly below 97% nationally.

Nationally 89% of all schools were rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, as at August 2023. London region leads the way in terms of both pupil's educational outcomes and high quality school places, with 95% of schools rated as good or outstanding. Islington, at 96%, is ranked **19<sup>th</sup>** in England.



In Islington 90% of secondary schools are rated good or outstanding, compared to 92% in London and 82% nationally.

Since August 2019, Islington has **improved** its Ofsted profile, from 91% of all schools judged as good or outstanding then to 96% in August 2023.

# Further Information

All of our profiles, as well as other data and outputs can be accessed on the Evidence Hub at: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/islington-evidence-and-statistics>

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# About this Data Pack

This data pack/profile was produced by Rachel Ivens, Performance Manager, Lina Castles, Data Analyst and Adam White, Head of Data & Performance, reviewed and approved for publication by Sarah Callaghan, Director of Learning & Achievement.

Contact: Adam White, [adam.white@islington.gov.uk](mailto:adam.white@islington.gov.uk)

We would also very much welcome your comments on these profiles and how they could better suit your individual or practice requirements, so please contact us with your ideas.

© Camden and Islington Public Health KIP team [PHASS@islington.gov.uk](mailto:PHASS@islington.gov.uk)

Children's Services

222 Upper Street N1 1XR

Report of: Corporate Director of Children's Service

Meeting of: Children's Service Scrutiny Committee

Date: 26 February 2024

Ward(s):

## Subject: SEND Transitions update

### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1. In 2020-21, the Committee decided to focus on the ways in which the council supports children and young people with SEND and their families were supported through key changes in their lives (transitions).
- 1.2. In June 2022, the committee made 34 recommendations for ways that the experience of children and young people with SEND and their families could be improved. Some were general and other pertained to specific areas such as Communication and Education Health and Care Plans. Some recommendations were also specific to key transition points (Early Years to primary school, primary to secondary school and secondary school to the world of work or further education). The committee also made specific recommendations relating to children with SEND who are in the care of the local authority.
- 1.3. This report provides an update on progress against those recommendations.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To note progress against the recommendations.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families is a key priority across all agencies in the local area. This includes a commitment to improving outcomes and ensuring value for money.

- 3.2 Islington is one of the very few Local Authorities across the country to receive a positive SEND inspection in November 2021. Islington is recognised as having significant expertise within this area and, as such, receives funding from the DFE to support several other Local Authorities through the national SLIP programme.
- 3.3 As a partnership, services have worked tirelessly against a backdrop of significant increased demand to ensure the best recovery possible following the challenges of the global COVID pandemic in 2020/21. Our SEND Strategy 2022-27 was co-produced and published in October 2022, setting out the Council's vision and key priorities over the next five years for ensuring impact and improved outcomes and lived experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families. The SEND Strategy was agreed at Exec alongside the Education Plan, 'Putting Children First' and the School Organisation Plan recognising that to create welcoming inclusive schools, we must also work alongside our ambitions to drive educational excellence for all through. To achieve this, we need to build resilience into your school estate through the phased implementation of the School Organisation Plan.
- 3.4 Our ambition is for all children with SEND to have the right support at the right time in the right place. Delivery is supported by detailed implementation plans that focus on action to promote an inclusive and sustainable system.
- 3.5 Officers across all services, including our early years settings, schools and Post 16 establishments are working within a difficult financial climate and there are constraints across the whole system. We have a statutory duty not to exceed our financial allocation while at the same time committed to delivering our statutory duty to identify and meet SEND. As the number of children with complex needs continues to rise, and demand for services exceeds resources currently available in some areas, commissioners and leaders are faced with difficult challenges around how to work differently while maintaining high quality, ambitious and responsive services that are impactful and support improved outcomes.
- 3.6 Despite this challenging context, we remain confident that the energy and enthusiasm of leaders to improve early identification and provision, observed in our inspection of Nov 2021, will continue to result in positive change for children and young people with SEND and their families.
- 3.7 Work to improve transitions for children and young people with SEND has been an important contributor to improving their experience of the system, following the recommendations made by Children's Services Scrutiny Committee made in July 2022. Progress against those recommendations is detailed in the remainder of this report.
- 3.8 Our Local Offer website (co-produced with parents) is the go-to place for current information, advice and services for children with Special Educational Needs and / or disabilities: [www.islington.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.islington.gov.uk/localoffer) (as required by statute). The information / detail referred to in many of the recommendations is contained here. We are constantly considering how we can better publicise the Local Offer as the go-to place for SEND information, and welcome support from members of the committee in using and promoting the site.

## 4. Progress against recommendations

### **Communication**

- 1) **Navigating the EHCP process can be difficult for parents. To make things easier, Islington Council should:**

**a) Provide a central point of contact (preferably a named individual) for the families of children with SEND to help co-ordinate interactions with the council and its partners and advocate for parents.**

The school or nursery SENCO is the first point of contact for parents of children with SEND. A SEND Keyworker is now allocated to each family of a child who is receiving a statutory Education, Health, and Care assessment. Because of the rapid increase in the numbers of assessments and EHCP's, we have needed to review our structures and expand the Council's SEND team. There were unfortunately some gaps in service during this period of change, but the team is now fully staffed and functional.

The recently established Family Hubs bring together lots of different services for children and families to make a single 'front door,' making it easier for families to get the help they need at the right time. Family Hubs offer help and support to families from pregnancy up until age 25 for those with SEND.

The Council also commission [Islington SENDIAS](#) (Family Action) to provide impartial information, advice and support on SEND for parents/carers and children and young people aged up to 25, who live in Islington. They offer:

- Advice, information and support on education, health, and social care issues.
- Support for parents/carers and children/young people to express their views and wishes.
- Support at meetings with schools and the Local Authority.
- Help to complete Special Educational Needs and Disability related paperwork.
- Support around the Education Health Care plan process.
- Support with applying for disability related benefits.
- Signposting to other services.

Islington SENDIAS link with a range of organisations including the Islington SEND Parents Carers Forum to hold regular meetings, coffee morning and workshops helping to link families with advocates, and others who can help them to navigate and understand the systems.

**b) work with families to develop a short guide on the local SEND system and the support that is available. The guide should include a summary of the EHCP process and timeline and should be available in different languages. It should be readily accessible online and in hard copy (at schools, libraries, GPs surgeries etc.)**

The SEND Team worked with parent representatives to develop [leaflets](#) and a web-page - [Education, Health and Care Assessment – Parent Carers Guide](#) for the Local Offer Website, which carries the 'parent approved' badge.

The leaflets are also made available through schools, health and social care colleagues and SEND Keyworkers in hard copy and translated versions.

- 2) **Parents/carers struggle to find out what inclusive events are going on across the borough. The council should establish a digital events calendar of all related performances, SEND leisure activities, and SEND events in Islington.**

The Council's approach to listing events is to coordinate them through the Directories. The Family Information Service plays a key role in helping to ensure the information is accurate and inclusive. The directory includes the SEND Local Offer. See the online [Things to do Calendar](#), SEND category.

People can also sign up to get the latest news and updates from the council direct to their email inbox. ([Islington Council \(govdelivery.com\)](#))

We also have the [SEND Parent Parliament](#) which regularly sends information to over 2000 families of children with SEND. This can include significant events and activities.

- 3) **Each year there is a SENCO network day when primary and secondary SENCOs come together to share information. This is currently limited to Islington schools. Islington Council to consider inviting SENCOs in neighbouring boroughs.**

The Transition Conference is no longer limited to Islington schools; neighbouring secondary school expecting Islington children to join them in Year 7 are now also invited. Acland Burghley School – as our main out-borough receiving school – have attended for the last two years.

- 4) **An up-to-date list of contact details for all primary and secondary SENCOs should be maintained by Islington Council and shared with Islington SENCOs to encourage collaborative working.**

The Islington SENCO Network meets termly after school; coordinated by schools for schools, as well as sub-groups (e.g., secondary); it supports:

- Sharing good practice
- Keeping informed
- Sharing information and resources
- Developing materials and approaches

SENCO contact list is updated and circulated to SENCOs termly by the School Area SENCO, employed centrally.

In the last 6 months we have also piloted a South Locality Inclusion Hub to bring SENCOs, inclusion leads, attendance leads and safeguarding leads together to exchange

practice, ideas and challenges. This has been so successful, that we are now rolling out to the Central and North Locality Areas.

### **Education Health and Care Plans**

- 5) **Islington Council do not require an Educational Psychologist report to be submitted with a request for an EHCP assessment. This is not widely known. The council should communicate this to families and schools thinking about submitting requests.**

See [Education information required by the LA to consider an EHC needs assessment request](#) on the Local Offer website.

The form for parents to use to request a EHC assessment does not require an EP report but does ask that the most recent report from an Educational Psychologist employed or commissioned by the Local Authority (if available) is submitted with the request for assessment.

The form for schools does expect that an Educational Psychologist employed or commissioned by the Local Authority will have seen the child within the last 6 months however, as part of 'ordinarily available provision', and asks for any relevant reports to be attached.

- 6) **Some parents/carers found EHCPs overly long and unwieldy with many strategies and interventions recommended. Every effort should be made to make sure EHCPs are concise and bespoke to individuals.**

The SEND Change Programme is a national programme to test and refine some of the changes the Government wants to make to the system for supporting children and young people with SEND. It is being delivered by twenty Change Partners across England and were pleased that Islington was invited to be one of twenty Change Partners in September of this year.

One of the things we have been asked to test is a new template for Education Health and Care Plans, designed to improve readability and focus. We are therefore currently working closely with families willing to be part of the test. We are due to report back to the DfE on this part of the programme in April.

- 7) **Some parents/carers found EHCPs difficult to understand. This is even more difficult for parents for whom English is not a first language. Islington Council should (i) make every effort to use simple, non-technical language and provide explanations of words/phrases not in common use and (ii) offer workshops to parents of children with EHCPs to explain the process and answer questions.**

The approach set out within our SEND Strategy is one of inclusive practice and so accessibility to support is central to this. We are aware that some communities need more support to ensure they get the right support at the right time and we are constantly refining the way we work with our parents and carers to ensure that we do

this appropriately. The chair of the Parent/Carer forum is a member of our SEND Partnership Board and champions parents and carers views to ensure we are routinely considering how we effectively engage with all families in an appropriate way.

See 6. above. See also '[Jargon Busting](#)' on the Local Offer.

### **Transition: from Early Years to Primary School**

- 8) **To help identify children with SEND as early as possible Islington Council should establish a system to ensure any concerns raised by professionals before a child enters an early year's setting are shared with the Early Years SEND team/local authority so they could inform the relevant early years setting.**

A multi-disciplinary Early Identification Working Group meet regularly to prioritise children known to education, health and care services who may require additional support at transition – either through full statutory assessment or a support plan. The main challenge is with children not previously known to services and we are currently working with a group of Head teachers on a protocol to cover these circumstances.

- 9) **Primary schools sometimes receive no prior notice that a child with SEND is about to join. Sometimes information is provided but it is incomplete or provided very late. This makes it difficult for the receiving school to plan appropriately. The council should create a "transitions toolkit" to provide guidance to early years settings of what information about a child with SEND should be provided to the primary school the child is moving to. The toolkit should set out best practice in terms of what information should be provided, when and in what format.**

Children with SEND are supported across our Early Years provision by well trained staff, with advice and guidance from Area SENCOs, Educational Psychologists, CAHMS, Therapists and other support services.

There are also 36 specialist (additionally resourced) places across Early Years; early years providers can also apply for additional funding to put in place additional support for identified children.

Early years, the SEND Team and Health colleagues work closely together to identify those children who may have special educational needs that will require support over and above what is normally available, and therefore may need an Education Health and Care Plan to support them when they transfer to school through well-established multi-agency systems.

Transition is carefully planned and managed between the Early Years provider and destination school, with support from the Area SENCO Team. The team have published an Early Years Transition Toolkit which is shared annually with schools and Early Years settings. This toolkit includes guidance on exchange of information, visits and joint planning that fully involves parents and carers.



For those children who may require an Education Health and Care Plan, every effort is made to ensure this is in place before they transition to school so that the school has a clear understanding of needs, outcomes, and provision for that child as well as any Top-up funding assessed as necessary to support the delivery of the plan.

The school will always be consulted before they are named in a plan, but as for all cases, the local authority must comply with parental preference unless there is concrete evidence that this would not be compatible with the efficient use of resource or the education of others.

The rapid increase in the number and complexity of children with SEND in Early Years has led to more demand for specialist places at transition however, placing both immediate and longer-term implications for the local offer and available funding.

### **Transition: from Primary School to Secondary School**

- 10) Similar to recommendation [7] above, there should be a “transitions toolkit” for children with SEND moving from primary to secondary school.

To support the transition process, we have also shared with primary schools in Islington the '[Transition Tool Box](#)' (Nurture UK) - designed to support children through the process by helping them to build the confidence and skills they need to ensure a smooth, successful transition to secondary school. It also provides parents and professionals working with young people with a range of resources for supporting children during this transition.

- 11) **Where parents and professionals had differing views on the type of secondary setting that would be best to meet the needs of a child with SEND, Islington Council and Islington primary schools should have a discussion with parents to manage expectations and minimise the risk of an unsuccessful transition.**

We have a dedicated SEND Keyworker who deals only with primary to secondary transfer and has direct communication with every family of a child in the transfer cohort each year. She is very experienced and presents information in an honest and open way. There is more work to do with some professional groups however to ensure that they understand the EHCP statutory framework and their role in providing advice on **need** rather than provision.

See also [Secondary Transfer for Children with SEND](#) on the Local Offer Website:

- 12) **Islington Council should ensure there is a consistent transition offer from secondary schools which should include: a) holding a meeting with the primary school SENCO, parents and the child, where appropriate; b) sending a member of staff to visit the child in their primary school; c) inviting the child to tour the secondary school and meet key staff; and d) providing age appropriate booklets including timetables and photographs of the school in advance of the child attending.**

Our Transition Good Practice guidance sets out expectations of schools. We have added the above process as a flow chart.

## **Transition: Secondary School to Education, Employment, Training Opportunities and Adult Services**

- 13) Islington Council and Islington secondary schools should ensure that all partners work together to consistently begin joint planning of this important transition for children with SEND when the child is 14 years old.**

A Progression to Adulthood plan is in place, setting out a long-term vision for progression or adulthood for children and young people with SEND with needs defined in line with the four broad areas of need referenced in the SEND Code of Practice (Communication and interaction; Cognition and Learning; Social, emotional mental health; and Sensory and / or physical needs, which locally includes young people receiving continuing care services).

The purpose of the plan is to ensure all young people with SEND and their carers have sufficient information to make informed choices and understand their rights in relation to the Care Act; and Parents have access to a wide range of information in one place, to avoid them getting passed around the system and minimise the risk of delay.

Our Multi-Agency Preparation for Adulthood Protocol has been refreshed, and there are effective information sharing processes in place to support young people's transition to adulthood.

Processes are now in place to identify and track children at risk of NEET from year 11 onwards, leading to targeted interventions. We are now moving to 'Risk of NEET' screening at an earlier stage so that we can be more effective in managing down that risk. We will evaluate the impact of this work, particularly on those with SEND, during 2023/24.

A Project Officer has recently been appointed to manage an in-depth review of our Transition to Adulthood arrangements, informed by of the changing profile of need. Adult Services are also undertaking a Peer Review, which will also be considering ways of working with younger adults, including alternative life-long learning opportunities.

A social worker from the Transitions team should attend the annual review for any child with SEND who has a social worker, each young person from Year 9 remains an aspiration.

Since January 2024 Childrens Social Care have rolled out the SEND Transition Progression to Adulthood (PTA) Outcomes Framework across all assessments, plans and reviews to ensure that all Young People who have SEND and an EHCP aged 14+ years open to CSC are supported to identify their own PTA needs and outcomes and are supported to meet these and are reviewed regularly.

- 14) A social worker from the Transitions team should attend the annual review for any child with SEND who has a social worker, each young person from Year 9.**

See 13 above.

Social Workers and Family Support and Reviewing Practitioners supporting Children with SEND who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are attending annual EHCP/Education Review meetings. There is a Children's Social Care SEND and EHCP practice guidance in place which sets out the practice standards for practitioners in Children's Social Care, including referring children with disabilities to Transition teams on their 17th birthday.

**15) Islington Council should ensure there is an early screening process in place to identify those young people who do not meet the threshold for adult social services and begin working with families to devise a plan for how their needs will be met once they transition out of children's services.**

An annual screening meeting with relevant services takes place in September of each year to consider the new Year 9 cohort along with any Year 11+ young people in their last year of education to ensure appropriate plans are in place.

The Disabled Children's Team are also developing a screening tool (pre-assessment) tool to indicate a young person's likelihood of eligibility for support from adult social care and where this suggests this is 'unlikely', sign post the young person and the family to universal services including Islington's Bright Lives.

Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care have created a Transition PTA Tracker and meet monthly to ensure that Care Act Eligible Young People are added to the tracker at 14 years and their progress to adulthood journey and referral and assessment is tracked.

We are also currently exploring the opportunity to create a Transitions Drop-in Service for Young People and their families to be delivered by partners across the SEND partnership.

**16) The council should develop a specific strategy to support children transitioning from Pupil Referral Units and alternate provision into Education, Employment or Training opportunities.**

New River College (NRC) is Islington's main Alternative Provision provider. The college operates from four sites as three separate Pupil Referral Units (Primary, Secondary, Medical, and the Whittington Hospital Class).

NRC are high performing compared to other AP providers and the positive trends in most areas are well established over several years. This covers attainment, attendance and progression, with some of the lowest NEETs across London. NRC are one of only two schools in Islington to receive a national Quality in Careers Standards Award.

Pupils are taught in small form groups of generally no more than six pupils, with a high ratio of support from specialist teachers, learning assistants and pastoral mentors. They access a broad and balanced personalised curriculum that includes a strong emphasis on literacy skills, personal development, academic subjects, and vocational courses.

The College aim to provide pupils with the tools and resources they need to make a positive transition, reintegrating into mainstream schools, or moving on to a specialist

education establishment that will meet their needs, or into post-16 education, employment, or training.

**17) Islington Council should work with local colleges and with young people and their families to ensure that colleges are meeting the needs of young people with SEND and providing what is required by their EHCPs.**

Ofsted told us when they visited in 2021 that: 'Leaders work effectively with colleges and post-16 providers. They ensure these settings have the information they need when pupils transfer from one phase to the next. Colleges praise the work of Islington SEND Team. This is because case officers know young people and their families very well...'

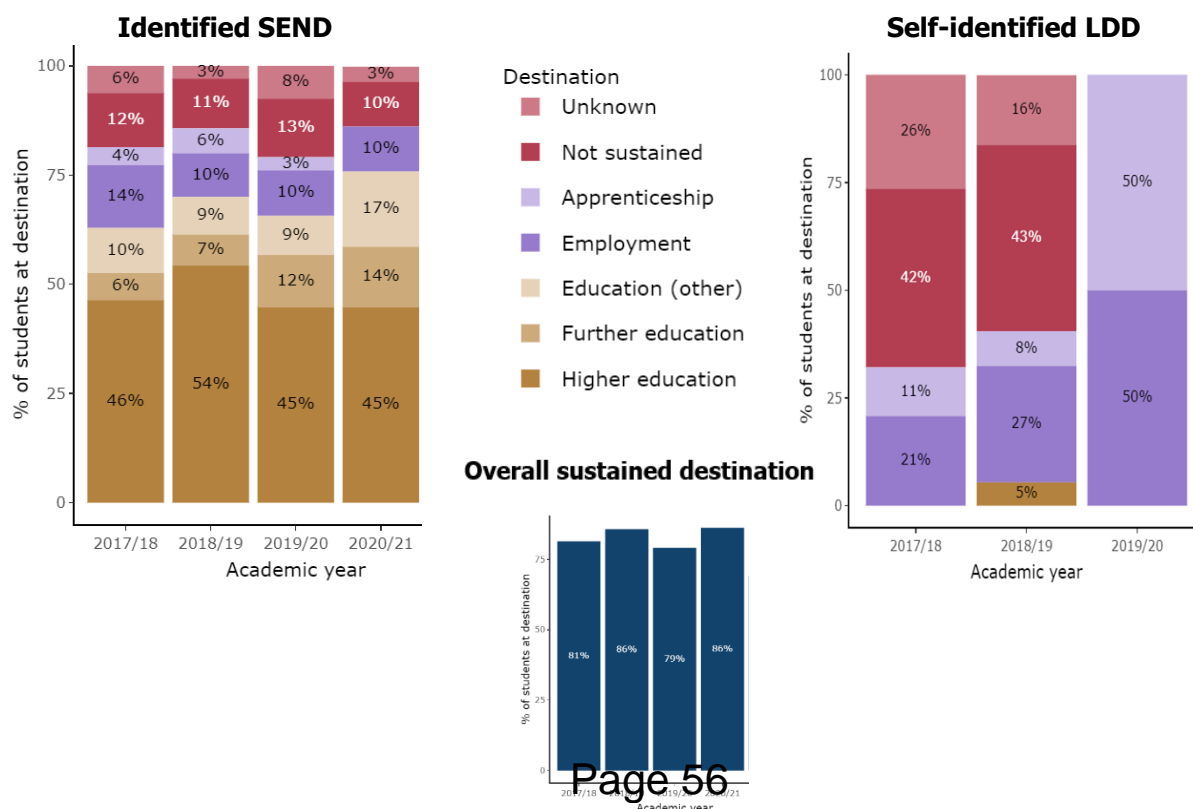
Our students attend over 20 different colleges, but we work collaboratively with the Capital City College group, who are setting up a Steering Group later this year, to which Islington is invited, to share best practice around SEND and especially pathways to employment.

**18) Islington Council should undertake a longitudinal study at 1 year, 2 year and 5 years after a young person has been through the Progression to Adulthood programme to measure the long-term success of the programme.**

We are doing this for a sample of ten cases. At the end of 1 year, all of the sample remained in education, employment or training.

The latest overall published shows the following:

**% post 16-18 in employment, training or higher education for pupils identified with SEN or self-identified with learning difficulty or disability (LLDD)**



**19) Islington Council should consider becoming a Business Partner in Project SEARCH.**

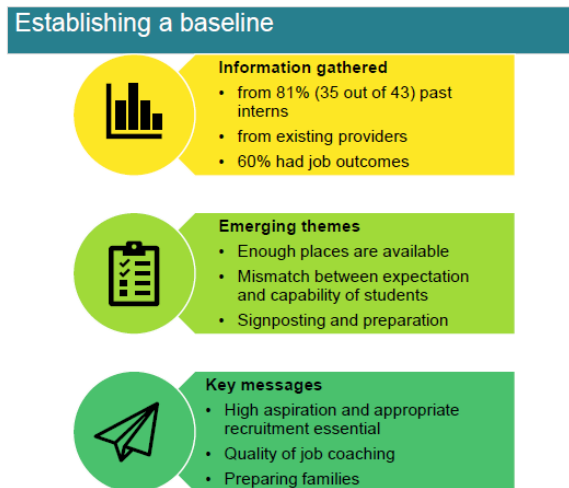
The Council has been involved with DFN Project Search since 2018 and was a key partner in establishing a Supported Internship programme at Moorfields Eye Hospital.

We work with a range of supported internships across the area and can refer people to 13 Supported Internships. Of these five are based on the DFN Project Search model.

This includes work to establish a Supported Internship across the Council and other Anchor Institutions. Different models / brands of Supported Internships including DFN Project Search are being evaluated and considered.

We worked with the National Development Team for Inclusion and other partners in 2022/23 to establish a baseline of our Supported Internship offer and work collaboratively to create an action plan. This included presenting to the Council as the largest employer in the Borough.

We continue to work with partners through the LD and Autism Employment Subgroup to develop our Supported Internship offer. and has worked collaboratively to create an action plan to increase the number of people accessing them.



12 young people have benefitted from Islington’s Independent Travel Training offer, and 27 from Supported Internships over the last 12 months. Since we began the Supported Internship programmes in 2018, 79 young people have been placed.

**20) Members heard the council had a supported employment programme and as part of this disability-friendly jobs were created or found and a disability-friendly recruitment process was used to fill the roles. This had stalled during**

**lockdown as it was not possible to operate the programme virtually. The council should restart the programme post-covid.**

The programme has restarted.

### **Transition: General**

- 21) Islington Council should support schools to establish electronic databases to store reports prepared in respect of children with SEND. There should be a specified day each year when all such reports are transferred electronically to the receiving school.**

Safe electronic exchange a logistical challenge as schools use different systems and keep info in different forms etc. The established deadline for exchange is the last week of June, which is also the date of the Primary/Secondary Transition Conference. SENCO Network meetings are used to remind and support all schools to comply with this.

- 22) School admissions forms should ask parents/carers (i) whether a child has received additional support in their existing setting (ii) if so, what kind of support; and (iii) if an application for an EHCP has been made. This will help a receiving school to be better prepared to support incoming children with SEND.**

We are not allowed to do this by law ([School Admissions Code of Practice 2021](#)), Applying for places in the normal admissions round: para 2.4)

Admission authorities must not ask, or use supplementary forms that ask, for any of the following:

- a) any personal details about parents and families, such as maiden names, criminal convictions, marital, or financial status (including marriage certificates);
- b) the first language of parents or the child;
- c) details about parents' or a child's disabilities, special educational needs, or medical conditions;
- d) parents to agree to support the ethos of the school in a practical way;
- e) both parents to sign the form, or for the child to complete the form.

This is to avoid disability discrimination in any school admission.

### **Other**

- 23) Islington Council should undertake an audit of school buildings, so that improvements to create a more SEND-supportive schools' estate in the borough can be planned and prioritised, as and when funding becomes available.**

This is currently underway as part of the current School Organisation programme of work. We have SEND capital funding available and will be targeting adaptation of physical space in mainstream schools – see 24) below.

- 24) **When any physical space intended for use by children and young people is being designed, commissioned, or refurbished, Islington Council should ensure that the space is as inclusive as possible.**

Our current SEND work programme includes adaptations to the physical environment; a Task Group of headteachers are working with advice from the Head of Education Asset Management and making use of available SEND Capital funding to ensure our schools can meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century SEND need.

- 25) **To embed inclusion, Islington Council should work with schools to ensure all teachers and not just SENCOs, understand attachment theory and trauma informed approaches.**

To date 35 schools have completed whole-school **iTIPS (Islington trauma-informed practices in schools)** training with a further 10 currently being supported.

- 26) **During the covid pandemic some services stopped visiting schools. All services should return to in-person delivery as soon as feasible.**

This has happened.

- 27) **On a visit to The Bridge it was noted that the swimming pool at Beacon High next door were not available to be used by students at The Bridge. The possibility of offering sessions to students the Bridge should be explored by Islington Council.**

The Bridge have access at agreed times to ensure suitable staffing.

### **Looked After Children**

- 28) **Islington Council should produce local guidance outlining guiding principles it will use and that it will encourage other local authorities to subscribe to in respect of looked after children with EHCPs. Such local guidance should set out the circumstances in which Islington Council will retain responsibility for an EHCP in respect of a child who is moving to another authority.**

This is prescribed in law through the Belonging Regulations ([The Education \(Areas to which students and pupils belong\) Regulations 1996](#)). Difficulties can arise when professionals try to reinterpret or ignore these rules.

- 29) **Islington Council should consider whether EHCP screening should be undertaken for all young people entering care.**

The Virtual School become involved with young people when they become looked after and will straight away hold meeting and draw up a Personal Education Plan (PEP). PEP meetings are held 3 times a year and PEP is also updated 3 times a year. SEND is included in the PEP. The Virtual School maintain very close oversight of the educational needs of these young people.

- 30) **In relation to a child not in a stable placement, Islington Council should allocate an Islington mental health professional if appropriate, who will stay allocated until the child is in a stable placement.**

We have taken this up with Health colleagues who assure that continuity of staff is always a priority, including for those who may be looked after or have moved to a different address / school.

Islington Children Looked After Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Clinicians support our children who are looked after in the Islington area, and if they are placed outside of Islington, ensure they refer on to CAMHS in their local area.

- 31) **Islington Council should roll out the Progression to Adulthood framework in Adult Services.**

This is now in discussion with adult social care and will be taken forward as part of the PTA programme task and finish groups as there would need to be complex system changes on the adult social care recording platform.

See 13 above.

### **Support for Families**

- 32) **Members heard that there is currently one disability swim session per week at one swimming pool in Islington for children with SEND and their families. Islington Council should extend this model across all Islington swimming pools and leisure facilities such as trampoline parks, adventure playgrounds and encourage cinemas to provide viewings for SEND children and their families.**

See Local Offer. Disability Swim sessions are currently available at [Cally](#), [Archway](#) and Ironmonger Row pools. These are specifically timed sessions so that children who need hoist and other equipment / support with changing facilities can be supported by trained staff and access managed. All other pool staff are trained in disability awareness.

- 33) **Activities such as a disco or Christmas party for SEND children and parents should be arranged by Islington Council. There should also be events for adolescents and those to 25 years old with SEND, not just young children as EHCPs were in place until the age of 25.**

Centre 404 hold Friday Night Disco, which is well attended. See video link [here](#).

The Disabled Children's Service are currently reviewing the way we deliver and manage personal budgets for children with disabilities to introduce a new 'choice and control' model for families, so they have more flexibility over how they spend their budgets. This will promote more creativity encourage children and young people to access more personalised activities in the community.

The Disabled Childrens Service and Adult Social Care Service has set up a joint commissioning group to enable them to work together to begin joint commissioning new



services that can support children with disabilities who are transitioning through the use of their Personal Budgets.

34) **Consideration should be given by Islington Council to how to help families connect with each other especially fathers and siblings.**

SEND Parent and Carers Forum is very well attended, including by fathers. 'SEND Friends' at the Parent House are another well-attended group. Centre 404 have a sibling group every Monday for children aged 8-12 and on Wednesdays, the 'Aiming High' Club for young people aged 16-25. Information is available through the local offer. Officer attend parent group and school SEND group meetings and promote the Local Offer as the place to find more information about the services available.

The Disabled Childrens Consultation and Advice Team are now delivering a monthly drop service for global majority families where their child has SEND, which has been very successful in terms of improving accessibility for Asian and Black African families. Going forward we are planning to set up a drop-in group for fathers who have a child with a Disability. As part of the work of these groups we will be exploring how families can be supported to be more strength based and build relationships across families and friendship support networks.

35) **Members heard that in general, parents welcomed social care assessments to look at the needs of the whole family. However, consideration should be given to the wording of the form to ensure the form used was not the same as for child protection.**

The Disabled Childrens Team have their own bespoke needs assessment proforma, which also has a Supported Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) embedded into it as well as a carers assessment. Embedding the SAQ and carers assessments into this assessment ensures that they are proportionate and focused on the needs of the child, as well as the impact on the parent / carer and the family.

The Disabled Childrens Service have also recently rolled out a new proportionate Children with Disabilities Personal Budget Annual Review for families who access a Personal Budget. This new proforma has brought together the annual review and assessment process to reduce the amount information we need to gather from families to continue to access a personal budget. This new form is more proportionate to the needs of families and less invasive for families as a process to engage with.

36) **Members were advised that the wording of the short breaks form currently referred to "severe and complex needs" which could prevent some entitled families from completing the form. Islington Council should therefore review the wording of the form.**

['Short breaks for carers of disabled children'](#), is the relevant guidance around short break entitlement, and members may be aware that 'The Islington Ruling' is specifically cited in this guidance in terms of eligibility criteria, ('Section 4 - Eligibility (and the Islington judgment)') following a High Court judgement in 2009. We must therefore be explicit in

the wording of all eligibility statements. We have raised your comments with legal services, but they confirm that the current wording is advisable.

The website information published about the Islington short breaks offer does mention severe and complex needs in relation to the targeted level of short breaks and remains appropriate. The Universal and Universal Plus levels do not however.

The assessment and referral form does not use that wording, and in practice families of children with lower level SEND needs do apply for short breaks using the referral and assessment tool available [here](#).

- 37) **Some Islington Council and Islington School SEND support groups had stopped meeting due to the Covid pandemic and where possible these groups should be restarted post-Covid.**

All pre-Covid groups are now fully operational.

- 38) **Members heard that there was a Camden transition pack and pathway Islington might be able to learn from. The Council should work with the Family Carers Action Group to produce transition packs including case studies of families of children with SEND who were willing to share their stories with other families of children with SEND. This would enable parents and carers to imagine future options for their child and help them gain knowledge from others who had been in similar situations. Work should also take place to distribute packs more widely.**

Regular termly meetings are held between the Camden Lead SEND link in schools and our SEND Support Team. This is creating opportunities for sharing good practice, training and resources including those supporting transition.

#### **Background papers:**

- None.

#### **Final report clearance:**

Signed by:

**Corporate Director of Children's Services**

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024

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