



NELC Virtual School Annual Report

Outcomes (Sept 2024 – July 2025)

Activity (April 2025 – March 2026)

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Foreword from the Head of the Virtual School

I am delighted to present this year's Virtual School Annual Report, capturing a year of progress and continued ambition for the children and young people of North East Lincolnshire.

This has been an incredibly exciting period for our team. A highly successful peer review and a meaningful contribution to the strong outcomes achieved at the ILACS inspection highlighted both the pace and impact of our work and the strength of our partnerships across education, social care and the wider children's workforce.

As always, our children and young people have remained at the heart of everything we do. Their voices, views, and wishes have guided our priorities, shaped our training, and informed the development of our new frameworks. We are privileged to work alongside them and to celebrate their achievements—not only academically but in their broader personal development, wellbeing, and sense of belonging.

A key area of development has been our collaboration with the Community Educational Psychology Team which enabled a high-quality training package for our education partners to build staff confidence and skills in supporting our most vulnerable learners.

This year we proudly hosted the first NELC Virtual School Love and Belonging Conference, bringing together educators, social workers and wider colleagues from across the borough. The event highlighted the power of collaboration, and our shared commitment to relational, child-centred practice.

We have continued to drive forward our response to the extended Virtual School duties, in readiness for these becoming statutory in September 2026. Our focus has been on how we can influence and improve outcomes for children who are in need or who need our protection by strengthening systems, relationships and professional understanding.

We are also delighted to have been selected as one of only seven local authorities nationally to become a Kinship Zone and will be leading the education element through the Virtual School.

Thank you to all partners for their dedication and unwavering belief in our children.

Together, we can make a genuine and lasting difference.

Michelle McMahon

Introduction

All local authorities in England must appoint a Virtual School Headteacher with statutory responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of the children in the care of that borough, wherever they live or are educated, as set out in the 2018 legislation “Promoting the Education of Looked-after Children and Previously Looked-after Children”.

In North East Lincolnshire, the Virtual School sits within Children’s Services. The Virtual School Head reports to the Service Direction for Education, Inclusion and Integration and is a member of the Education Leadership and Children’s Services Leadership teams.

Our Virtual School ‘register’ comprises of children between the ages of 3 and 18 who are in our care and those who remain in education (for 18+). We monitor these children as if they were in one school. We occasionally provide support, information or guidance for younger children, where the need arises.

There are also many more valuable young people and their families who make up our community.

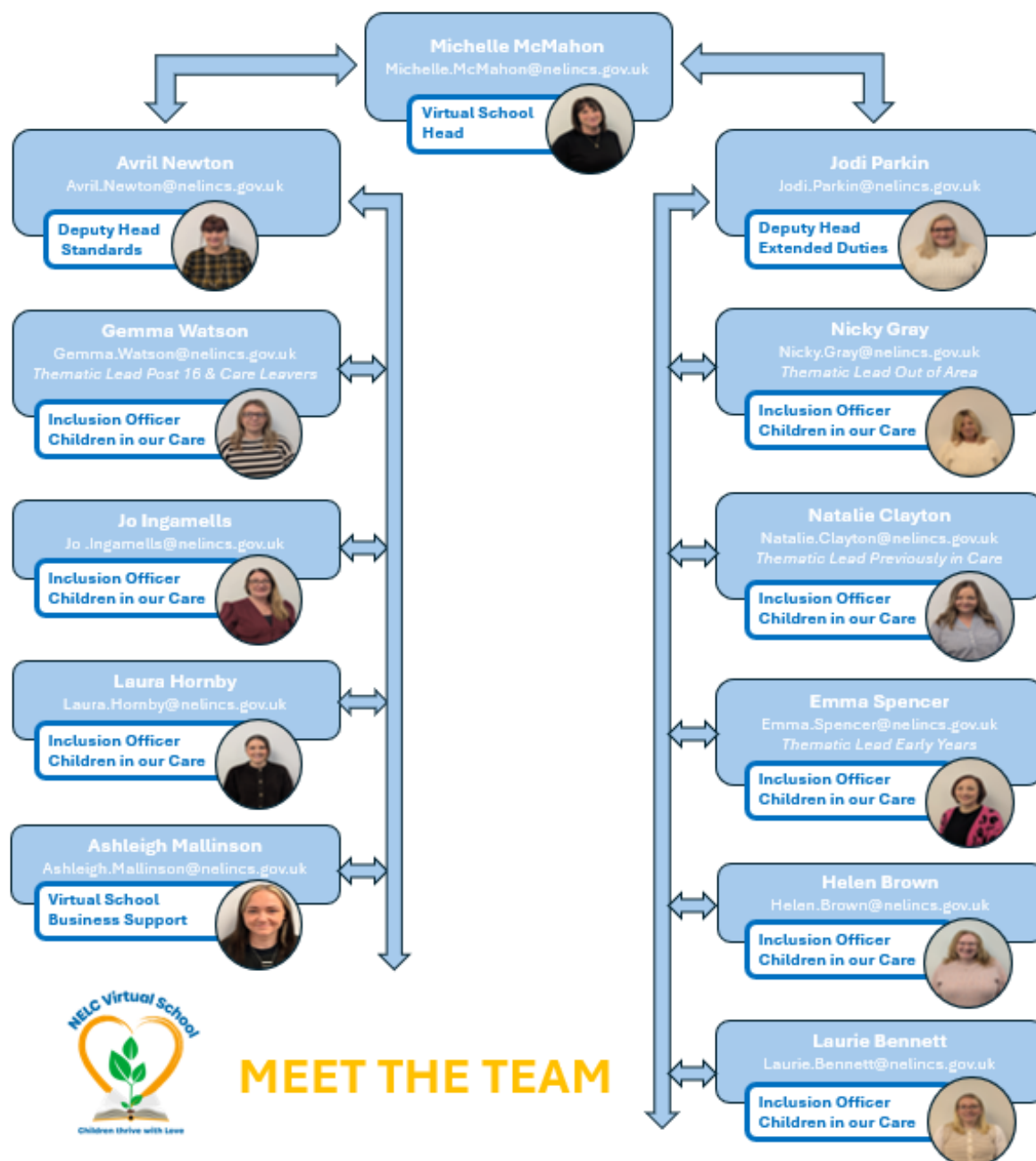
We provide advice, guidance and support to professionals and parents/carers of children who are (or have been) supported by a social worker including children who have previously been in the care of a local authority; or whom are living in Kinship Care arrangements.

You will see within this report page the work that has taken place throughout the last 12 months and indications of positive early impact.

We do not replace the schools which our children physically attend and responsibility for improving the rates of progress and educational outcomes of the children in our care who are on their roll remains with them. Our focus as ambitious, proactive corporate parents is centred on raising educational aspirations and both supporting and challenging our partners to reduce the attainment gap between that of our children in our care and their peers.

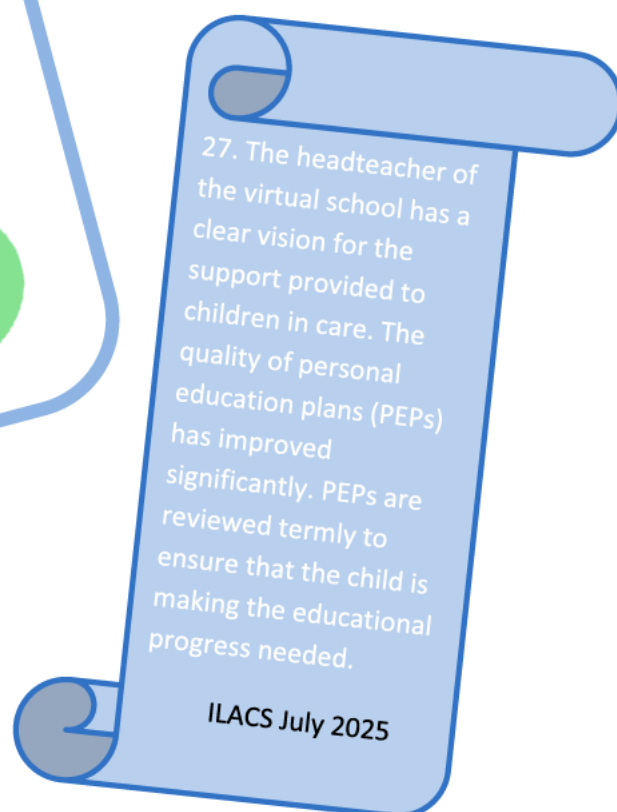


Structure – Roles & Responsibilities



Headline Successes 2024/2025

- The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception Year has **increased** by 9.6% points from 23/24 to 24/25.
- The percentage of children achieving the expected standard in Reading at the end of Key Stage 2 has **increased** by 12% points from 23/24 and is 11 percentage points **higher** than children in care nationally. The gap between children in care and all children nationally has **reduced** from 25% points (23/24) to 14% points (24/25).
- 24/25 – Overall absence rate of 6.9% is **in line** with **ALL** children nationally and **below (better) than** national and regional for children in care
- 24/25 – Persistent absence rate of 15.4% is **lower (better) than ALL** children nationally by 2.7% points and **lower (better) than** national children in care by 4.9% points and regional children in care by 5.2% points.
- 24/25 - Severe Absence Rate of 4.4% which is **lower (better) than** 23/24 of 5.0%. This is 2% points **lower (better) than** children in care nationally and 2.2% points **lower (better) than** CIC regionally. (Severe Absence Rate: children with 50% or more absence)
- 24/25 DfE data indicates a **significant improvement of 21%** for those children achieving the expected standard in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling. (33% in 23/24 to 54% in 24/25).
- 23/24 – Children with one or more suspensions was **0.8% points lower** than all children in care nationally. (data in SFR in April 26 relates to academic year 23/24)



Children's Views

Children and young people are always encouraged to share their thoughts, wishes and feelings about their school and learning experiences.

They are invited to participate in their PEP meeting should they wish to; and when not wanting to attend in person the Virtual School requests that views are collated prior to the meeting and included on the PEP so that child-focused plans can be agreed.

We also ask our children to reflect on how they are feeling about school from term to term.




	Score	We asked you what had changed from your previous score. If it was better what had helped make it better or if it had lowered, what we could do to help improve things?
Previous PEP	9	Art Therapy - this has been calming and nice and we are talking alot. Also I know that I won't have to take so many subjects which I am looking forward to.
Current PEP	7	This is due to not having my Art therapy.

Art therapy was restarted

Current PEP	8	I am enjoying my art therapy, I always want it on a Friday.
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When a child told us this, we arranged for an ELSA to support with developing peer relationships and saw a vast improvement from a 2 to a 7 for friendships.




	Score	We asked you what had changed from your previous score. If it was better what had helped make it better or if it had lowered, what we could do to help improve things?
Previous PEP	10	10 for lessons and a 2 for relationships with peers
Current PEP	7	10 for lessons but just a 7 for getting on with peers, Had a few fallouts.

Inclusion officers have received training on inclusive age and stage appropriate systems for capturing children's voice. and will be sharing insights and suggestions with schools, social workers and carers.

A year 8 child told us they were finding some aspects of maths difficult and wanted extra help.

This led to a SMART target and 1:1 intervention. At the next PEP review the child voiced they no longer felt the intervention was needed – school agreed since they had made good progress and closed skills gaps.

A child had been finding it difficult to settle back into school at the start of the Y10 after learning they would be shortly moving to a home in another county. When they asked if they could instead be enrolled at the school close to their new home professionals expressed some concerns about the longer daily commute although ultimately agreed to follow their wish. The young person has settled well into the new school, attending and achieving.

Y10 attended their PEP review and mentioned it would be helpful if they had a specific tablet to support with their Digital Art course work and other lessons. As the value was above the general £350 Pupil Premium Plus allocated for IT equipment, the child created a compelling options appraisal and business case that was presented to the Virtual School. The exceptional spend was agreed and the young person is now making great progress.

Enrichment and Celebration

- In 2025 / 26 we've enjoyed spending time with our children recognising their achievements

This year's Halloween and Easter disco were a huge success – with over 70 children and their carers joining the Education team for dancing and games.



Building a sense of belonging and connection with our children by celebrating their birthdays.



A Choir that Cares

A weekly singing group for Children In Our Care, Care Leavers, Carers and Children's Services staff!



A new experience is just around the corner.
Starting 25th September!
4.30pm-5.30pm Every Thursday
at Nunthorpe Family Hub

We have introduced 'Shout Out' cards to recognise and celebrate our children's achievements, no matter how small!



THE BRIDGE PROJECT

Are you adopted & 14 to 17 years old?

Living in NE Lines, Hull, East Ridings, York or N Yorks?

Would you like to join
a welcoming and friendly new group?

As part of The Bridge Project you will
make connections, learn skills
& explore your next steps into training & work.

To find out more contact Mark
mark.blundell@adoptionuk.org.uk
07971 759142

AdoptionUK
Together we're family

Fun was had by all at our Creative Lego Workshop, held in partnership with Unseen Arts for our children in care.



We have arranged delivery of 1044 books to our youngest children through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library!

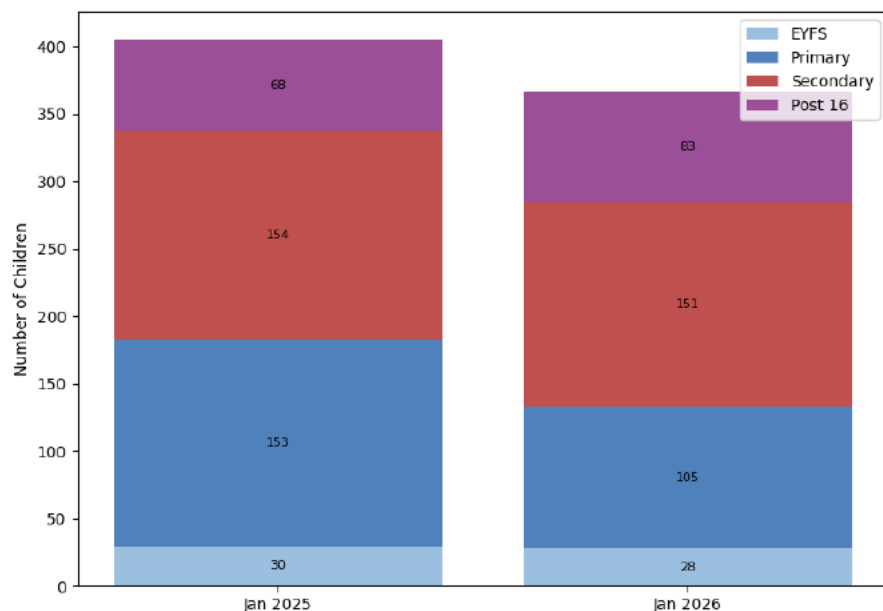


Review of Objectives

Objective	Measure
1 *Improve the academic attainment and progress outcomes of the children in our care	KS4 - the number of Year 11 achieving GCSE's (grade 4 – 9) including English & Maths was lower than the previous year. <i>Almost 2/3's of the children have an EHCP and half of these children attended specialist settings.</i> KS2 In Reading, the attainment gap between children in our care and all pupils in has reduced and the outcomes for children in our care are significantly higher than other children in care nationally and regionally Reception – the % of children in our care achieving a good level of development (GLD) increased by 9.6%
2 *Improve the attendance outcomes for children in our care	Overall absence is better that children in our care nationally and regionally and broadly in line with national ALL children The % of children in our care who are persistently absent is significantly lower (better) than national and regional children in our care and lower than ALL children nationally The % of children in our care who are severely absent (50% or more absence), is significantly lower (better) than national and regional children in care and lower than ALL children. % of children with one or more suspensions is lower than both national and regional children in our care The incidents of children missing school due to term time holidays has reduced significantly
3 *Develop the virtual school effectiveness of provision for our Post 16 & Care leaver young people	The summer work experience programme saw a raise in the numbers of young people that were EET.
4 Improve the quality of Personal Education Plans to enable better outcomes for our children	Ofsted recognised The quality of personal education plans (PEPs) has improved significantly.
5 *Develop the duty to promote educational achievement of children who have previously been in our care	Significant work has resulted in positive impact for children (see report page...)
6 *Develop the extension duties; for children and young people who are or have been supported by a social worker and those in Kinship care	Processes and systems have been developed and implemented and are beginning to deliver positive impact

Profile of the Virtual School

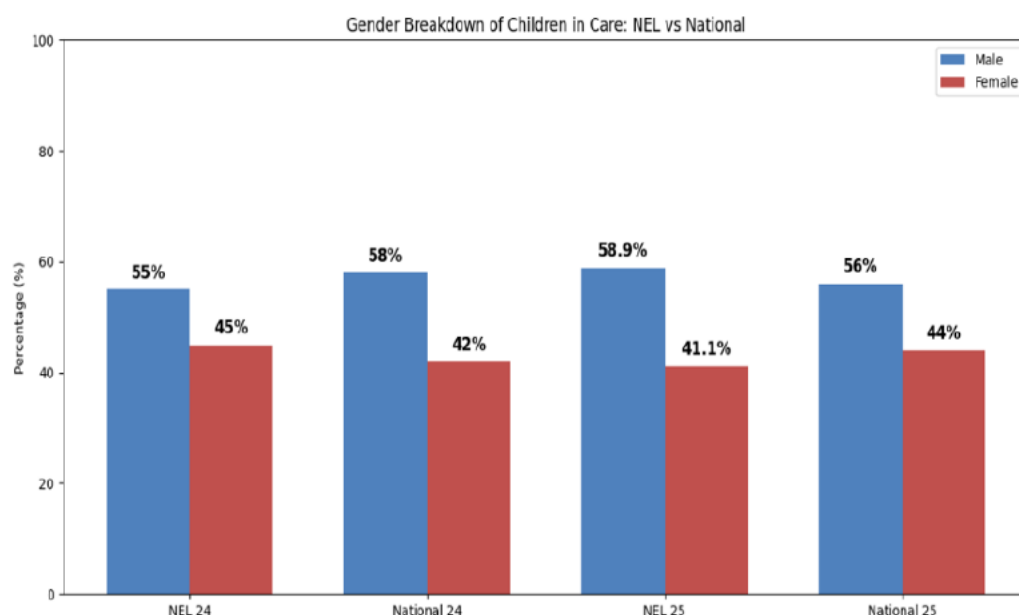
Year on Year Comparison of children in our care as at January by Phase.



This shows a 9.38% overall reduction in the number of children in our care from January 2025 to January 2026 and a significant reduction of primary school age children -31.37% with a 22.1% increase in the number of Post 16 children in our care. Priority objectives 26/27 focus on Post 16 children.

However from January 2026 to March 2026 this has remained stable with no significant changes in particular phases

Totals in each Phase – March 2026						
NCY	Number of Children with VS Involvement	Children with EHCP recorded on the PEP	% children with EHCP	SENK recorded on the PEP (includes request to assess)	% children with SENK (includes request to assess)	Overall % of children with SEND
EYFS	31	2	6.4%	7	22.6%	29.3%
Primary	107	35	32.7%	30	28.0%	60.7%
Secondary	152	71	46.7%	33	21.7%	68.4%
Post 16	82	41	50.0%	8	9.7%	59.7%
Total	372	149	40.0%	78	21.0%	61.0%



Overall, North East Lincolnshire's gender distribution broadly aligns with national patterns but shows a slightly higher proportion of boys than the national 2025 figures. This suggests local variation rather than a deviation from wider national trends

Educated In and Out of Borough

	In Borough	Out of Borough
2026 North East Lincolnshire (manual count March 2026)	58%	42%
2024/25 National CIC (Nexus: matched data from CLA census)	70%	30%

- North East Lincolnshire has a higher proportion of children attending schools outside the borough compared with national levels.
- The vast majority of primary aged children attend mainstream schools
- Our compulsory school age children attend 134 different education settings.
- The Virtual School Inclusion Officers coordinate and administrate the PEP document and chair every meeting. This enables us to build effective relationships with education provisions outside North East Lincolnshire as well as those within. All settings are invited to participate in our training offer and have equal access to resources regardless of their location.

Separated Children - formally known as Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

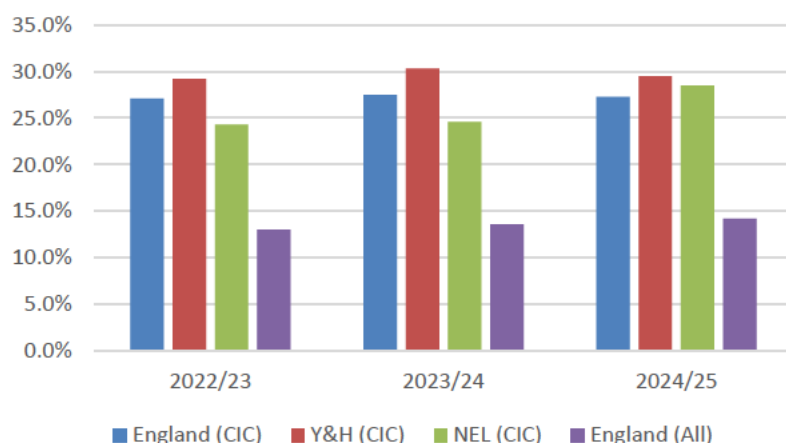
The Virtual School has the same responsibilities for Separated Children as it does for any other North East Lincolnshire children in our care in terms of securing appropriate education provision and monitoring their attainment and progress.

- As of 31 March 2026 we have 12 Separated children in our care
- 2 in year 11 4 in year 12 6 in year 13
- 9 of the young people are residing in NELC and 3 have moved outside of the borough
- 10 of the children (83%) are in education 2 are no longer accessing any education, employment or training – we are working in conjunction with their personal advisors to encourage re-engagement.
- 3 young people have successfully completed their ESOL learning in an alternative provision and will be transitioning into a mainstream college in September.

Children in our Care with Special Educational Needs: EHCPs and SEND Support DfE

SEN Support

% Children with SEND support
CIC for 12 months + at 31 March



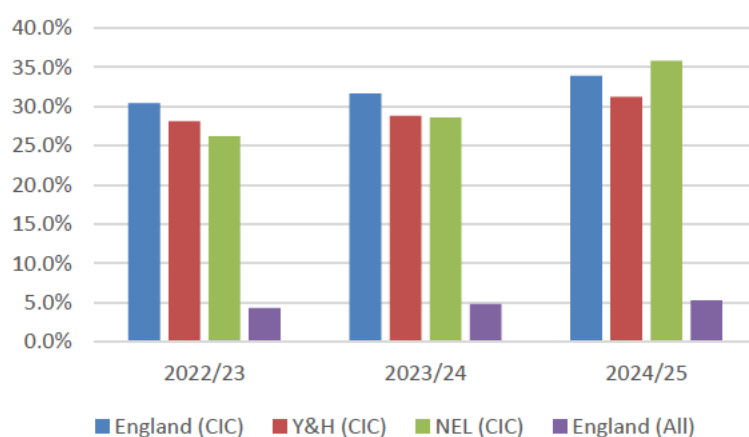
SEND Support 24/25

- 28.5% of children in care continuously for 12 months or more in North East Lincolnshire receive SEND support.
- The proportion of children with SEN support was 1.2 percentage points above the England average and 1 percentage point below regional.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England (CIC)	27.1%	27.5%	27.30%
Y&H (CIC)	29.2%	30.3%	29.50%
NEL (CIC)	24.3%	24.6%	28.50%
England (All)	13.0%	13.6%	14.20%

EHCP

% Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan
CIC for 12 months + at 31 March



EHCP 2024/25

- In 2024/25, the percentage of children in care for 12 months or more with an EHCP in North East Lincolnshire was 35.8%.
- The proportion of children with an EHCP was 1.9 percentage points above the England average and 4.6 percentage points above the Yorkshire and Humber Regional average.

From 23/24 to 24/25 there has been an overall increase in the percentage of children with EHC Plans.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England (CIC)	30.4%	31.6%	33.9%
Y&H (CIC)	28.1%	28.8%	31.2%
NEL (CIC)	26.2%	28.6%	35.8%
England (All)	4.3%	4.8%	5.3%



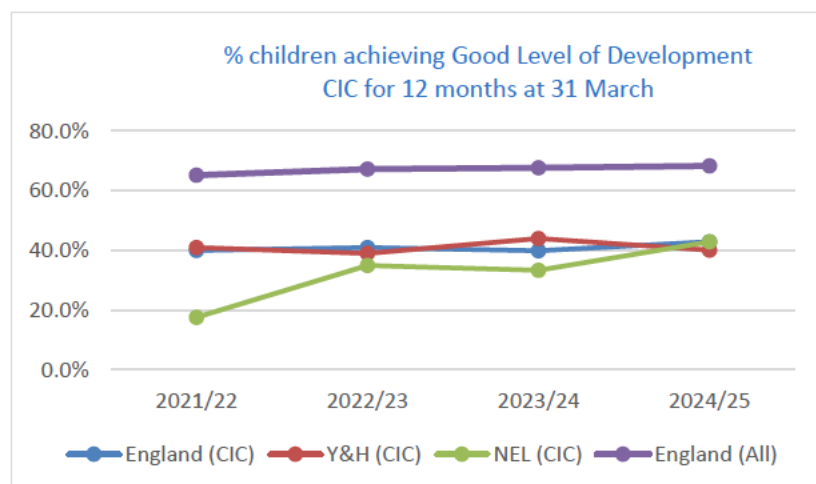
- The Virtual School works closely with schools, social care, and health professionals to support statutory SEND assessments, where appropriate, for individual children in care.
- Inclusion officers support and challenge schools to ensure that PEP targets align with EHCP outcomes, while remaining shorter-term and measurable.
- The PEP has been redeveloped to capture full details of EHCP or SEND support needs.
- PEP reviews are regularly held alongside EHCP reviews, which was deemed as 'exceptional practice' in the April 2026 LGA SEND Review.
- Members of the Virtual School Team are qualified SENDCO's.
- The Virtual School collaborates with regional Virtual School SEND colleagues.
- The Virtual School Head participates in SEND multi agency assurance; auditing provision and practice for children who are supported by a social worker and also have special educational needs.
- A dedicated EHCP Co-ordinator for children provides consistent oversight of all EHCP's for children in care, working collaboratively with Inclusion Officers to support effective transition planning and prevent delays in transfers and statutory consultations when children move back into NEL.
- Virtual School senior leaders attend SEND panels to contribute to decision making and oversight.

Key Objectives – Academic Outcomes

Note: The (SFR) reports national and local authority (LA) level information on the outcomes for children who have been in care continuously for at least 12 months at 31 March, by local authorities in England. LA level data is published for the local authority that cares for the child/young person. All figures are based on data collected annually through the “children looked after” return (also known as SSDA903) which is completed each spring by all local authorities in England. The latest statistical first release as published April 2026. Other data is derived from other sources at a given point in time and is subject to variation as reliant upon accurate and timely submission by partners via the census or direct reporting, statutory assessment outcomes and in house record keeping

Early Years and Phonics Outcomes

A good level of development is achieving at least expected standard in all Prime areas, Literature and Maths at the end of Reception (NCY0)



Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Good Level of Development 2024/25

(Source: DfE 02/04/26)

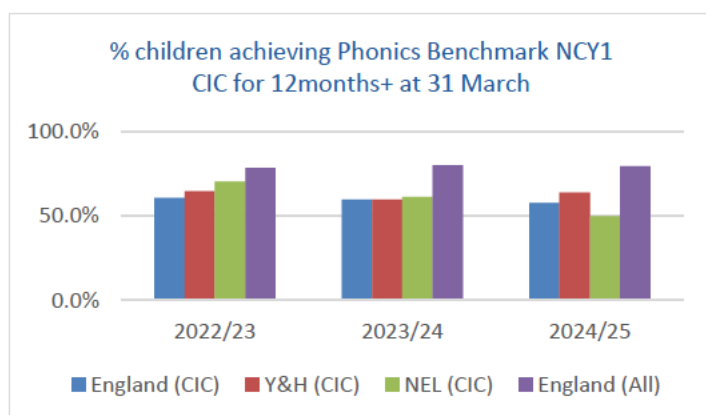
- 42.9% of children in care continuously for 12 months or more in North East Lincolnshire achieved a good level of development.
- North East Lincolnshire's result was equal to England average and 2.8% points higher than Yorkshire and Humber Children in Care.
- An increase of 9.6% points from 23/24

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England (CIC)	40.0%	41.0%	39.0%	42.9%
Y&H (CIC)	41.0%	39.0%	44.0%	40.1%
NEL (CIC)	17.6%	35.0%	33.3%	42.9%
England (All)	65.2%	67.2%	67.7%	68.3%

*All stats updated as per DfE release on 02/4/26

Phonics Screening Attainment – Year 1

The threshold mark to be working at or above the standard in phonics is 32



Phonics Benchmark 2024/25

(Source: Nexus 02/04/26)

- 50% of children in care continuously for 12 months or more in North East Lincolnshire achieved the Phonics Benchmark.
- NEL result was 8% points below England CIC. This is less than one child as each child equates to 10%.

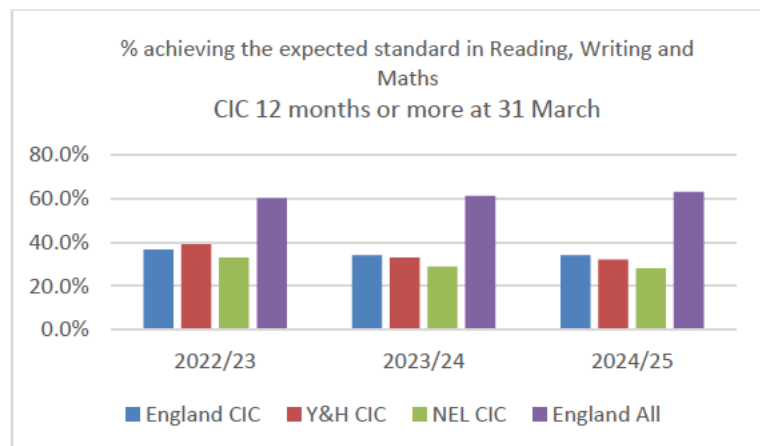
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England (CIC)	61.0%	60.0%	58.0%
Y&H (CIC)	65.0%	60.0%	65.0%
NEL (CIC)	70.6%	61.5%	50.0%
England (All)	78.9%	80.4%	79.9%

Actions to drive improved outcomes and reduce the attainment gap between children in our care and all children

- A virtual school officer with responsibility for Early Years is working closely with the NEL Early years team, Early years area SENDCo and virtual school representatives from across Yorkshire and Humber, sharing knowledge and best practice to meet the needs of our youngest children and their families.
- Children in our care aged 0 – 5 receive monthly reading books from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library scheme. This helps families build strong bonds with their children through shared reading, while also supporting early brain development and developing language and communication skills needed for school readiness.
- This encourages families to bond with their children through books as well as supporting early brain, language and communication development in preparation for school readiness.
- Virtual school inclusion officers have been trained in the Early Years speech and language program (WELCOMM) and BUSS model (to support settings or deliver directly as needed)
- An experienced Early Years teacher has joined the Virtual School team as an inclusion officer. This will enable sharing of current best practice to upskill virtual school colleagues and provide practical advice and guidance to our schools and families.
- Inclusion officers closely monitor predicted phonics outcomes and progress.
- An EYFS tracking sheet is now being completed by Inclusion Officers on a termly basis (taken from the PEP) to allow for earlier identification of those children in Early Years who are not on track in the Prime and Specific areas of learning.
- Plans to extend PEPs to those 2-year-olds attending nursery settings, to enable identification of needs at an earlier stage.

Key Stage 2 Outcomes

The expected standard in reading, maths and grammar, punctuation and spelling tests is a scaled score of 100 or above. The expected standard in writing is a teacher assessment of "working at the expected standard" or "working at greater depth within the expected standard".



	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England CIC	36.7%	34.0%	34.0%
Y&H CIC	39.0%	33.0%	32.0%
NEL CIC	33.0%	29.0%	28.0%
England All	60.0%	61.0%	63.0%

2024/25

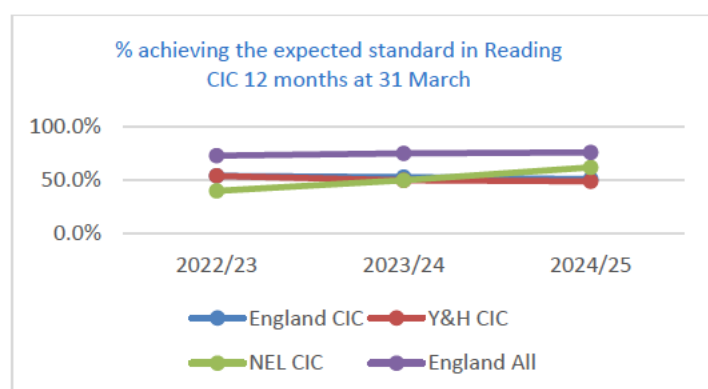
Source: DfE 8/4/26

Reading, Writing and Maths Combined

- 28% of children in care continuously for 12 months or more in North East Lincolnshire achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined
- North East Lincolnshire is 6 percentage points below England
- This data is based on 26 children each equivalent of 3.85% points so is not a significant gap. (equivalent one child)
- Approximately 70% of our children have Special Educational Needs.

While pupils achieved strong outcomes in Reading, lower attainment in Writing and Maths has impacted the overall performance in the combined RWM measure.

Reading



	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England CIC	54.0%	53.0%	51.0%
Y&H CIC	54.0%	50.0%	49.0%
NEL CIC	40.0%	50.0%	62.0%
England All	73.0%	75.0%	76.0%

2024/25 (Reading)

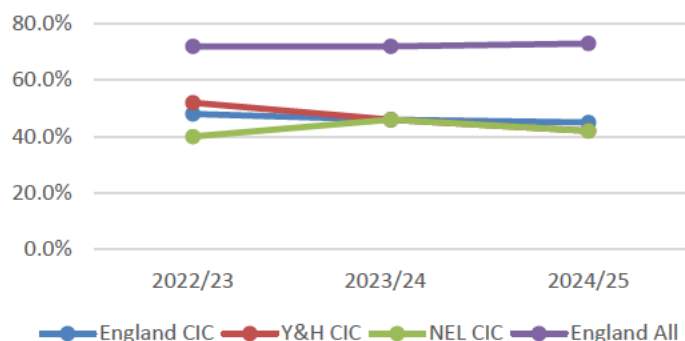
Source: DfE 08/04/26

- 62% of children in care continuously for 12 months or more in North East Lincolnshire achieved the expected standard in Reading.
- North East Lincolnshire's result was 11 percentage points **above** the England average and 13 percentage points above Yorkshire and Humber regional average.
- An increase of 12% from 23/24

A high proportion of girls (76%)

Writing

% achieving the expected standard in Writing
CIC 12 months at 31 March



	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England CIC	48.0%	46.0%	45.0%
Y&H CIC	52.0%	46.0%	42.0%
NEL CIC	40.0%	46.0%	42.0%
England All	72.0%	72.0%	73.0%

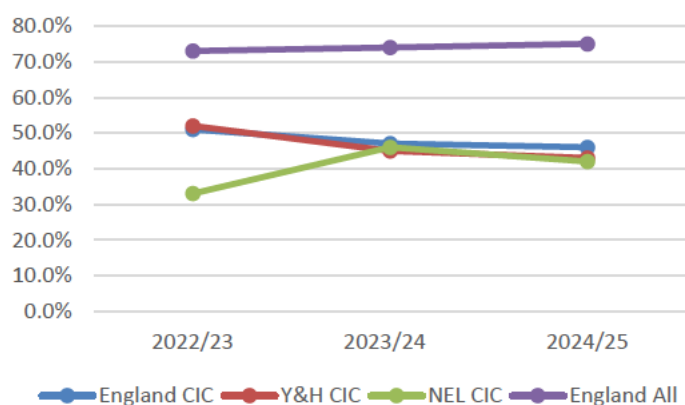
2024/25 (Writing) (Source: DfE 08/04/26)

- 42% of children in care continuously for 12 months or more in North East Lincolnshire achieved the expected standard in Writing.
- North East Lincolnshire's result was 3 percentage point below England average and equal to Yorkshire and Humber.
- This is not a significant gap as equivalent to one child (3.85% per child)

There appears to be an overall decrease in Writing for all children in care nationally between 23/24 to 24/25

Maths

% achieving the expected standard in Maths
CIC 12 months at 31 March



	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England CIC	51.0%	47.0%	46.0%
Y&H CIC	52.0%	45.0%	43.0%
NEL CIC	33.0%	46.0%	42.0%
England All	73.0%	74.0%	75.0%

Key Stage 2 Attainment 2024/25 (Maths)

(Source: DfE 08/04/26)

- 42.0% of children in care continuously for 12 months or more in North East Lincolnshire achieved the expected standard in Maths.
- North East Lincolnshire's result was 4.0 percentage points below the England average and 1 percentage point below Yorkshire and Humber Regional average
- This is not a significant gap as equivalent to one child (3.85% per child)

Approximately 70% of our children have Special Educational Needs which would indicate lower starting points (no progress measures available). 76% of girls – data continues to indicate that boys outperform girls in this Maths which alongside SEN may explain the 2% decline from 23/24

Key Stage 2 – Progress (Due to Covid and the cancellation of exams progress scores will not be resumed until 25/26)

Progress measures aim to capture the progress that pupils make from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of primary school education. Progress scores are calculated for individual pupils separately for reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who do not have Key Stage 1 data for these subjects do not have progress scores. Progress Scores are value-added measure which means that a pupil's results can be compared to the results of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment. (KS1 SATs have now ceased)

As this group of children did not have statutory KS1 assessments because these were cancelled in 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to Covid-19 disruption. Without this valid KS1 data, a reliable KS1 to KS2 progress calculation could not be produced and therefore the DfE confirmed that due to the absence of statistically robust baseline it would not produce or publish primary progress measures for 23/24 and 24/25. These will be resumed in 25/26

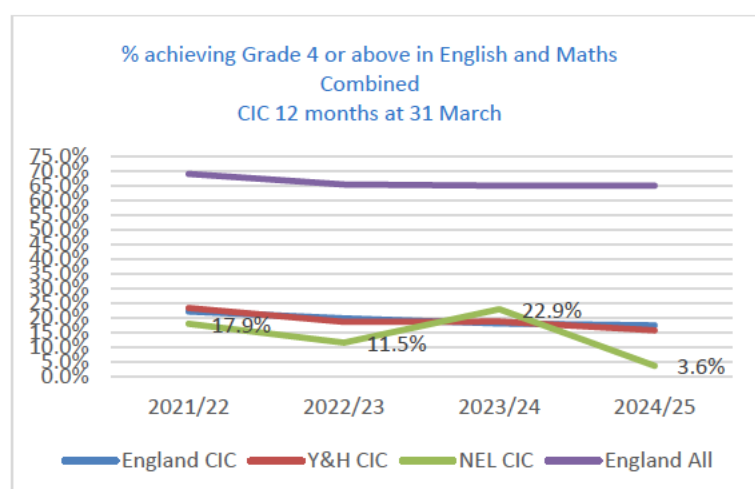
Actions to drive improved outcomes and reduce the attainment gap between children in our care and all children

- Improvements to PEP format with prior attainment and termly progress tracking grid, enables closer monitoring and identification of progress concerns, and assurance that schools are setting aspirational targets for each individual child and focusing provision to accelerate progress where required
- Series of training workshops to ensure clear understanding of aspiration, ambition and acceptable progress

Key Stage 4 Outcomes

Progress 8 scores ceasing for two years as they are based on KS2 data and because of Covid there will be no prior attainment available to measure Progress 8 due to 2019/20 and 2020/21 being cancelled. The progress 8 scores will resume again in 2026/2027.

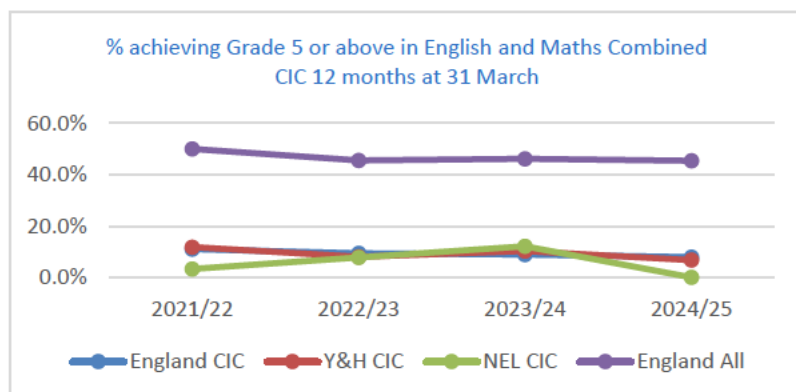
2024/25 – Source: DfE & Nexus 02/4/26



Grade 4+ in both English and Maths

- In 2024/25 3.6% of children in care for 12 months or more in NEL achieved Grade 4+ GCSE in Eng and Maths combined. 13.8% below England CIC and 12.1% below Yorkshire and Humber. (each child is equivalent to 3.6% so approximately 3 children below England CIC).
- 60.7% of NEL children have EHCPs with 32% attending specialist settings.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England CIC	22.1%	19.8%	18.0%	17.4%
Y&H CIC	23.3%	18.6%	18.7%	15.7%
NEL CIC	17.9%	11.5%	22.9%	3.6%
England All	69.0%	65.4%	65.0%	65.0%



	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England CIC	11.0%	9.4%	8.9%	7.9%
Y&H CIC	11.8%	8.0%	10.2%	6.7%
NEL CIC	3.3%	7.7%	12.1%	0.0%
England All	50.0%	45.5%	45.9%	45.4%

Grade 5+ in both English and Maths GCSE's

- In 2024/25, children in care achieved Grade 5+ GCSE in English and Maths combined is lower than all children in care nationally. (each child is equal to approx. 3.6% so equivalent of 2 children below England CIC).
- 60.7% of NEL children have EHCP's with 32% attending specialist settings. Many are working at pre-key stage levels or entry levels

Actions to drive improved outcomes

- Thorough analysis to ensure accurate and aspirational target setting and tight progress monitoring of outcomes from Y7.
- Improved progress tracking grid/function within PEP to ensure termly focus
- Analyse and evaluate impact of PPG+ targeted interventions. Increase support and challenge to designated teachers to accelerate progress where required.
- Series of training workshops to ensure clear understanding of aspiration, ambition and acceptable progress for virtual school inclusion officers, designated teachers, social workers and independent reviewing officers

Year 12 & 13 Children in our care – Education, Employment and Training

Children in our care Year 12 and 13 as at 31 March					
	Number	EET	Education	Employ & training	NEET
2024	50	74%	62%	12%	26%
2025	46	76%	63%	13%	24%
2026	70	77%	71%	6%	23%

The numbers of children in our care in school years 12 and 13 has risen significantly since 2024. It is pleasing to see that the percentage of young people engaging in education, employment and training has also increased year on year - meaning there are less NELC children who are not in education, employment or training. However, there is more work to be done to bring the percentages in line with national standards.

Each young person has a Virtual School Inclusion Officer to advocate for their outcomes and wellbeing

- Alongside the termly PEP reviews that continue to the end of year 13 rather than ceasing on an 18th birthday, additional support is provided to explore barriers and issues that may lead to non- engagement, address attendance concerns or to source suitable education or training places eg. alternative further education, University or apprenticeships such as through The NELC Family Enterprise scheme.

We work closely with other professionals to provide the best possible support;

- Young People's Support Service (YPSS) Careers Advisers attend Year 11 Spring and Summer Term PEP reviews for children in our care to support planning for next steps.
- College staff are invited to the summer Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting for Year 11 pupils whose post-16 destination is known. This ensures that robust plans are in place for a smooth transition into college.
- An Inclusion Officer is based at a local college during the Autumn term to assist with induction and ensure young people settle successfully.
- EET data for Children in Our Care and Care Leavers is presented for scrutiny by the quarterly Corporate and Community Parenting Education Sub group
- Young people aged 16–17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) are allocated an Inclusion Officer who works alongside NEET Practitioners and education or training providers to re-engage them in suitable opportunities.
- The Virtual School head attends monthly Care Leaver NEET panels to understand position, patterns and trends for individuals and groups of young people and support with re-engagement. It has led to improved practice and higher expectations for enhanced career guidance and work experience opportunities for our children throughout secondary school to help avoid children becoming NEET.

CASE STUDY Y12 with an EHCP who had not been accessing school in year 10 and 11 had been accepted onto foundation course for September but not given a start date. The Inclusion Officer challenged the delay, set up and accompanied the YP to meet with tutors and maintained regular check-in's between PEPs, motivating, encouraging and liaising with re attendance concerns. The YP successfully completed the program and is now being supported to applying for a fulltime course for year 13.

To enable a Care Leaver to pursue their dream of attending university, the Virtual School has funded weekly Maths and English lessons. The young person is looking to resit exams in the Autumn term.

Care Leaver work experience programme Summer 2025

The Virtual School collaborated with the Leaving Care and Learning and Development teams to create and deliver a 6-week programme for our children in care and care leavers who were not accessing education, employment or training (NEET).

It offered work experience in a range of NELC teams and weekly Employability Skills sessions.

Of the 12 young people who started the programme, nine completed the full period, with 5 of these continued working beyond the six weeks; three were offered apprenticeships within NELC; another secured a place with a training provider, and another will return to the graduate scheme after completing university.

A fabulous success which led naturally into The Family Enterprise Programme.

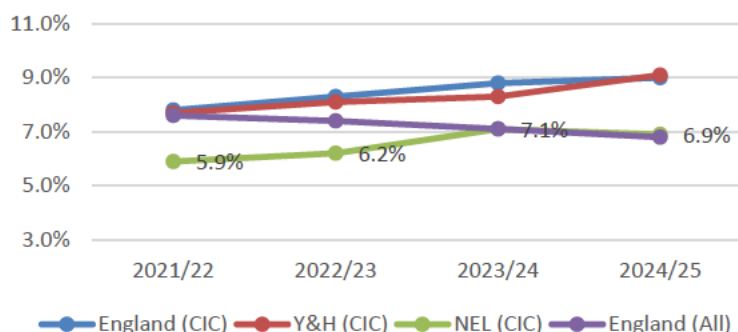
The Family Enterprise_ 12-Week Programme 2025 – 2026 Partially funded by the Virtual School	
For care-experienced young people (16–25) to build confidence, skills, and routes into EET Accredited learning (employability, teamwork, wellbeing, budgeting, horticulture) plus skills training, volunteering, and employer engagement Young-person-led enrichment including team-building activities and a residential Strong wraparound support: mentor, transport, counselling, incentives, gym and meals	Impact Early certification achieved; one young person now volunteering as a Teaching Assistant Improved resilience following group disruption; most participants re-engaged successfully Significant progress in confidence, independence, and social skills (including independent travel) Bespoke one-to-one pathways introduced where needed Life-changing family reconnection facilitated for one participant
Outcomes 2 young people volunteering weekly at CPO 1 progressing into paid CPO employment (DBS + Safeguarding L2) 3 shortlisted for NELC Children's Creative Assistant roles 1 secured employment with NELC Voice & Influence Ongoing support into English, Maths, and Green Futures volunteering	Feedback High attendance and engagement Improved self-esteem and relationships All participants want the programme to continue

10 care experienced young people are currently in Higher Education. Six male and four females aged between 20 and 24, are studying for degrees in disciplines such as Medicine, Nursing, Criminology, Art and Design, Computer Science, Psychology, Mechanical Engineering.

The percentage of our children and young people accessing further and then higher education has historically been significantly lower than seen nationally. Providing greater opportunity for children to enter a pathway onto Higher Education is a priority focus objective for 2026 -27.

Attendance Outcomes

% Overall Absence - CIC 12 months at 31 March



	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England (CIC)	7.8%	8.3%	8.8%	9.0%
Y&H (CIC)	7.7%	8.1%	8.3%	9.1%
NEL (CIC)	5.9%	6.2%	7.1%	6.9%
England (All)	7.6%	7.4%	7.1%	6.8%

Absence 2024/25 Source DfE 8/4/26

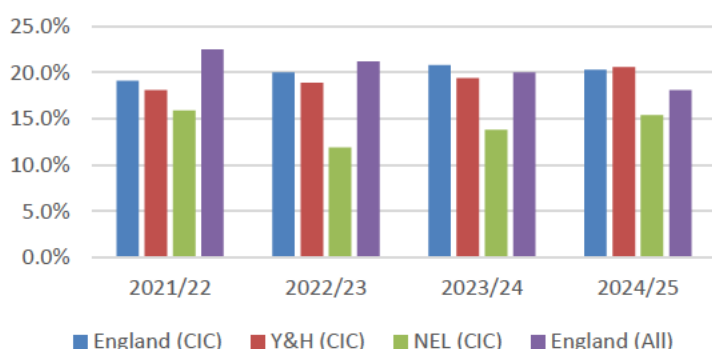
- The overall absence rate of children in care continuously for 12 months or more in North East Lincolnshire was 6.9%
- North East Lincolnshire result was 2.1 percentage points **lower** than the national, and 2.2 percentage points **lower** than Yorkshire and Humber

North East Lincolnshire's result was better than ALL children nationally

Attendance continues to be a key strength

Persistent Absence (Full Year)

% Persistence Absence - CIC 12 months at 31 March



	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
England (CIC)	19.1%	20.0%	20.8%	20.3%
Y&H (CIC)	18.1%	18.9%	19.4%	20.6%
NEL (CIC)	15.9%	11.9%	13.8%	15.4%
England (All)	22.5%	21.2%	20.0%	18.1%

Persistent Absence 2024/25

Source: DfE 8/4/26

Children with 10% or more absence are classified as persistent absentees (due to authorised and unauthorised absence)

- In North East Lincolnshire, the proportion of children in care continuously for 12 months or more who were classed as persistent absentees was 15.4%
- North East Lincolnshire result was 4.9 percentage points lower (better) than the national, and 5.2 percentage points lower than Yorkshire and Humber

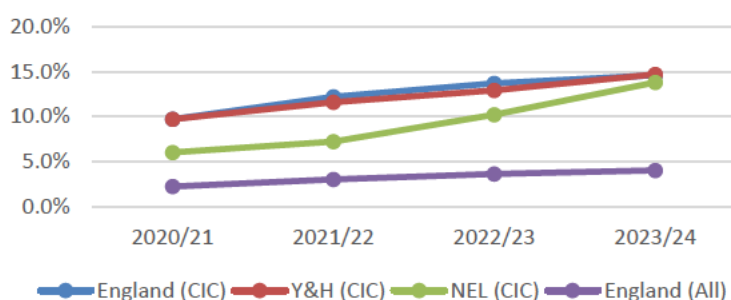
North East Lincolnshire's result was **lower/better** than ALL children locally, regionally and nationally.

Suspensions and Exclusions

Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions data is lagged; which means the latest available data for the full academic year is for the 2023/24.

A suspension refers to a pupil who is suspended from school for a fixed period and who will come back to that school. Pupils with one or more suspensions refer to pupils that had a least one suspension across the full academic year.

% children with 1 or more suspension - CIC 12 months at 31 March



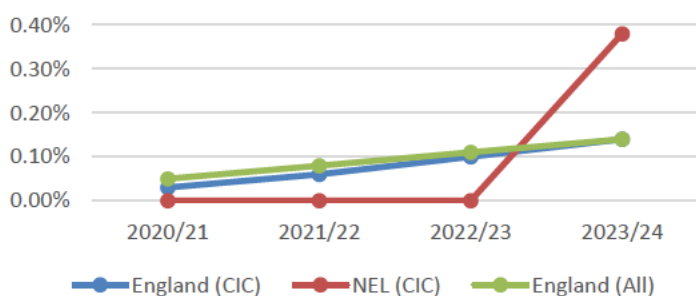
Suspensions 2023/24

- In North East Lincolnshire, the proportion of children in care continuously for 12 months or more with one or more suspension was 13.8%.
- The figure for North East Lincolnshire was 0.8 percentage points **lower** than the national, and 0.9 percentage points **lower** than Yorkshire and Humber

Suspensions have increased nationally and regionally

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
England (CIC)	9.7%	12.2%	13.7%	14.6%
Y&H (CIC)	9.7%	11.6%	12.9%	14.7%
NEL (CIC)	6.0%	7.2%	10.2%	13.8%
England (All)	2.2%	3.0%	3.6%	4.0%

% Permanent Exclusion - CIC 12 months at 31 March



Permanent Exclusion 23/24

There was 1 permanent exclusion recorded for children in care continuously for 12 months or more in North East Lincolnshire.

Data for Yorkshire & Humber is suppressed on the DfE data statistics so unable to provide comparison.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
England (CIC)	0.03%	0.06%	0.10%	0.14%
NEL (CIC)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.38%
England (All)	0.05%	0.08%	0.11%	0.14%

2023/24	1	Took to Independent Review Panel to challenge – decision upheld
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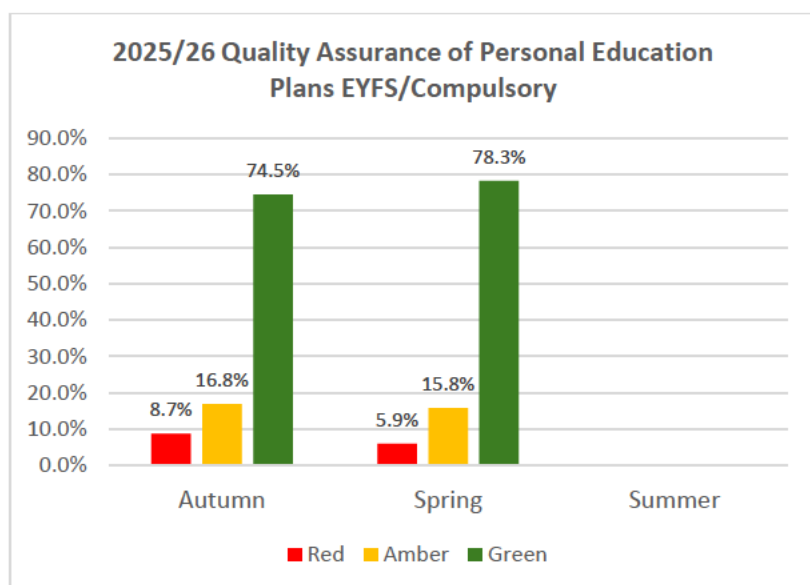
Personal Education Plans

Spring Term 2026	EYFS	Compulsory	Post 16
Review PEPs held	26	257	74

The Virtual School Inclusion Officers coordinate and lead on all Personal Education Plans (PEP) meetings, chairing reviews that bring together the child, foster carer, parents, designated teacher, and all other relevant professionals. The PEP document and process are crucial in driving the best possible outcomes for our children, and we have implemented significant improvements to strengthen both the quality and impact of the PEP:

- The updated Personal Education Plan (PEP) has now been written to the child, with a strong emphasis on what is known, loved and admired. This replaces negative focused language and ensures the plan celebrates strengths as well as placing focus on the support provided to help improve outcomes for our children. This has improved the overall quality of PEP's
- Robust tracking of progress from term to term
- Addition of Careers Section to support future aspirations and understand the exposure to education and career opportunities.
- Quality assurance is now embedded within the PEP process, enabling both positive feedback and developmental learning points to be shared with all relevant parties
- 100% of PEP reviews are completed within timescales.
- Wherever possible one of the termly PEP's is completed in line with the EHCP annual review- which was deemed as exceptional practice in a recent LGA SEND Peer Review.

PEP Quality Assurance



PEP Quality Assurance

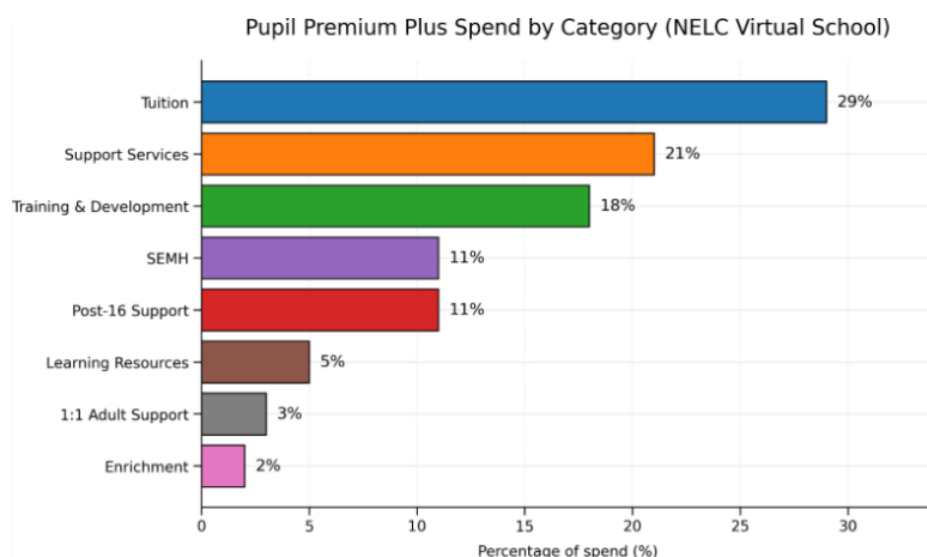
Internal RAG rating analysis demonstrates an overall improvement in the quality of PEPs between the Autumn and Spring terms. Further analysis indicates that EYFS and Primary PEPs are of higher quality, as reflected in the Spring RAG ratings, compared to those PEP's completed for secondary school age children. As a result, there will be some targeted focus on improving the quality of PEPs within secondary schools.

In addition to Personal Education Plan reviews, Inclusion Officers contribute to approximately 1600 additional meetings annually, including Risk Management, Child in Care Reviews, Education Planning, EHC Reviews, Strategy Meetings, Placement Planning, Stability, Care Planning and Matching Meetings.

Pupil Premium Plus

The chart below sets out how funding for the 2025–2026 period has been allocated across both school-led and centrally retained provision, after removal of Virtual school staffing costs. The distribution reflects a balance between personalised support and interventions that deliver wider impact across the cohort, and highlights how we have prioritised investment in areas that evidence shows have the greatest impact on engagement, progress and emotional resilience.

This approach ensures that PP+ is used not simply as a funding stream, but as a strategic tool for securing better outcomes. By aligning spending with need, and need with impact, the Virtual School can provide consistent, timely and effective support to children in our care, helping them to learn well, feel well, and thrive in their education.



The greatest overall investment in the last 12 months has been on tuition, followed closely by specialist support services and training professionals. Significant sums have been allocated to our Post16 and Care leavers and for SEMH provision to improve progress, wellbeing and long-term outcomes for our children.

Smaller but important allocations for learning resources, enrichment, and 1:1 classroom support ensures pupils receive a personalised provision and meaningful opportunities.

A child predicted GCSE grade 2 in maths has been receiving one hour per week 1:1 for 12 months, they are now predicted GCSE grade 4 or 5.

4 separated children have received additional English and Maths to accelerate progress and attain functional skills qualifications to access college courses.

1:1 lessons (including during school holidays) for a child who moved foster home and schools during year 10 has meant they are now back on track to make expected progress.

Having not been emotionally able to access education for the majority of their secondary school time, we funded a small-based alternative provision until an EHCP was issued. This young person is now ready to complete year 11 examinations.

A blended offer of 1:1 tutoring and a local sports provision has avoided the permanent exclusion of a year 8 child.

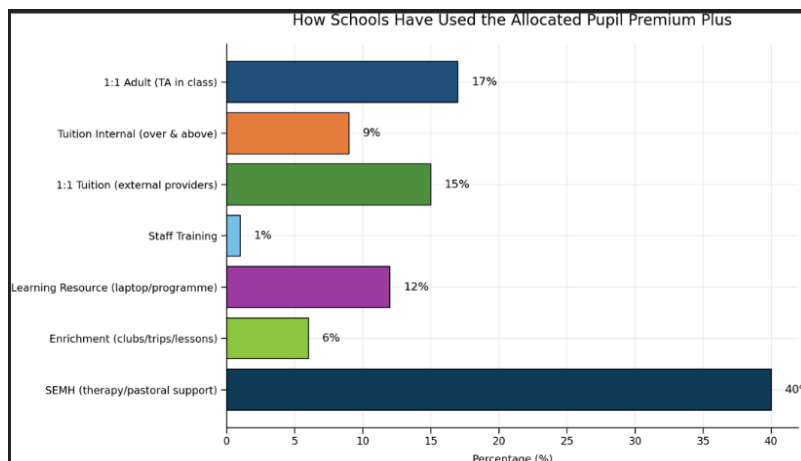
For a child who had not been in education prior to coming into our care, we sourced time on an educational farm and formal lessons from our Learning Outreach Entitlement LEO to build confidence – they are now back in mainstream education

Over 150 professionals and parents have participated in CEPT training and a further 150 attended the Virtual School Conference reporting; *'increased awareness of the value of consistent whole-school approaches'*

And committing to; *'see the child, not just the pupil'* *'to really consider what Love & Belonging means'* *'encourage organisational & institutional change'*

The Pupil Premium Plus transferred to schools to support Personal Education Plan SMART targets, strongly illustrates the needs and difficulties that so many care experienced children face. The prioritisation of SEMH support and academic intervention indicates that schools are actively addressing barriers to learning while supporting emotional wellbeing. This mixed model of support continues to play an essential role in improving outcomes for these children.

- The greatest proportion of funding has been used for supporting Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) with a strong focus on emotional regulation, therapeutic support, and pupil wellbeing.
- Academic intervention remains a substantial priority, accounting for almost a quarter of spending.
- Schools provide personalised, 1:1 support, both from teaching assistants and specialist tutors.
- Investment in enrichment is present but proportionally small
- Minimal spending on Training could suggest that either schools are not aware they can request this through the PEP or that our schools accessing the CEPT training options that are funded from centrally retained PP+



Funding specialists in Play Therapy, Lego Therapy and Bereavement Therapy has enabled children to safely express deep feelings, develop coping strategies to navigate social situations, and thus remain in mainstream classrooms and make academic progress. Other settings have used funding for Educational Psychologist assessment and advice; leading to improved understanding and personalised provision for the child and evidence to expedite EHCP applications. Schools have also been allocated Pupil Premium to enable a key adult to be available for pastoral support.

Pupil Premium Plus Funding Plan 2026–27

Key priorities include:

- **Targeted tutoring** in curriculum areas where pupils are not meeting expected progress, including higher attainment Greater Depth at KS2 through to Grade 5+ at GCSE.
- **Evidence-based interventions**, aligned with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance.
- **Enhanced transition support** at all key points (Reception, Y6→Y7, Y11→Post-16) and for in-year or within-key-stage school moves.
- **Borough of Belonging training** package for professionals and strategic oversight from the Community Educational Psychology team (CEPT)
- **Post-16 and care leavers**, including tuition, essential equipment not covered by other bursaries, and sustained support from a Virtual School Inclusion Officer.
- **Increased investment in enrichment**, broadening experiences and developing confidence beyond the classroom, promoting personal success and greater engagement in learning
- **Contribution to Virtual School and wider service staffing costs**, supporting high-quality PEP coordination, review meetings, and strong multi-agency relationships.



The Extended Duties of the Virtual School - Supporting Children Previously in Care (CPIC)

Our extended responsibilities have reinforced our focus on children who have previously been in our care, including those living under Special Guardianship Orders (SGO), Child Arrangement Orders (CAO), and Adoption Orders, as well as children living in Kinship Care. Through targeted approaches introduced over the past year, we continue working to ensure these children receive the support, stability, and opportunities necessary to achieve positive educational outcomes.

A core element of our expanded role has been to develop the duty to promote the educational achievement of children who are no longer in local authority care but remain vulnerable to educational disadvantage.

We have delivered targeted training to Adoption Social Workers and Special Guardianship Coordinators to deepen their understanding of the importance of educational achievement, attendance, and reducing school moves. By equipping these professionals with the confidence and knowledge to engage in appropriate professional challenge with schools, we have strengthened the advocacy available to these children and ensured they are more consistently offered the support they need.

Promoting the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus (PPG+) for our children previously in care has been a key focus. We have worked closely with schools to encourage the use of this funding for meaningful academic and emotional support - including tutoring, tailored interventions, and wellbeing programmes - leading to more children accessing the support necessary to make progress.

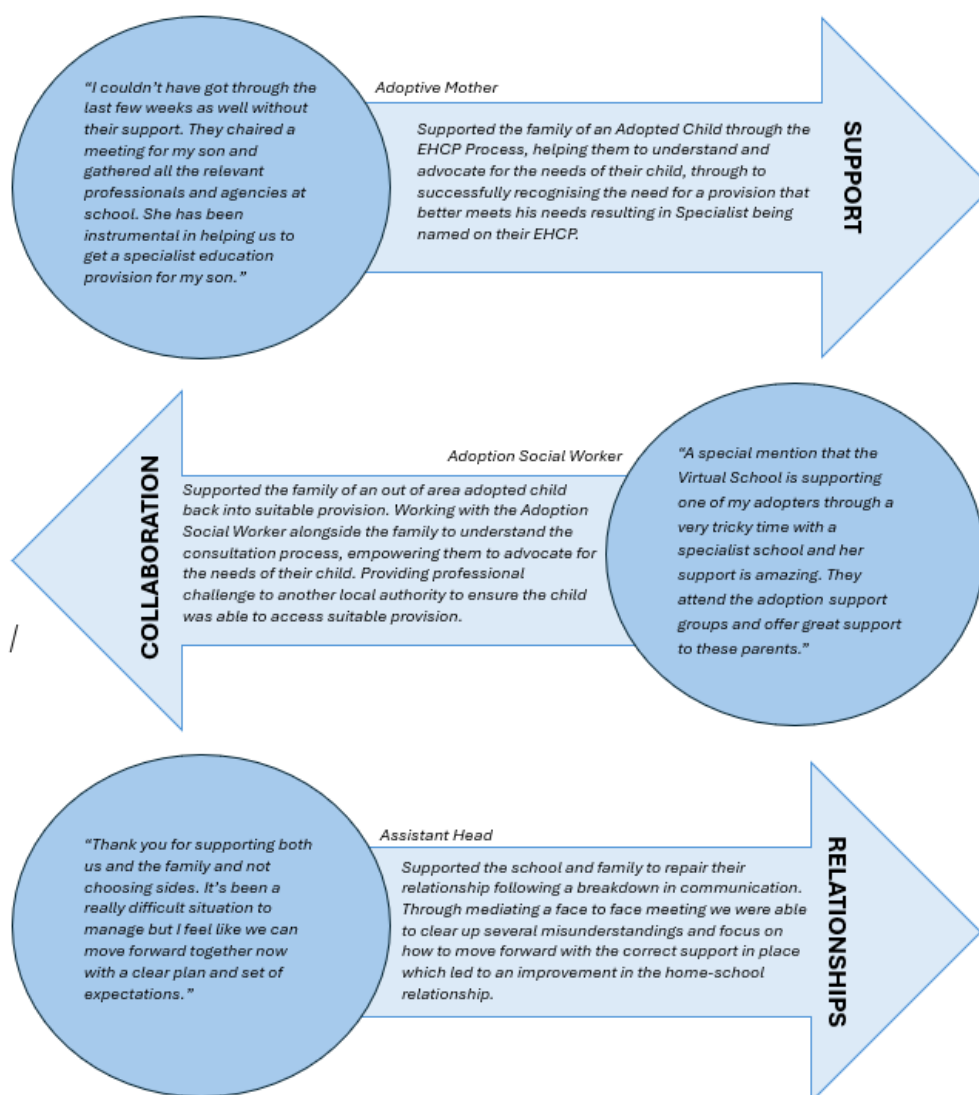
In addition, we have emphasised the critical importance of being correctly identified on school census returns so schools receive the funding they are entitled to.

To support this, we created a template letter for schools to share with carers, encouraging open communication and reducing the barriers to information-sharing that previously prevented some children from being recorded accurately. Unlike many authorities, we have expanded our Information, Advice and Guidance offer by increasing our visibility within the community, including attending adoption support groups to provide in-person support. Prioritising relationship-building has been a powerful catalyst for meaningful engagement; by being present, approachable and consistent, we help families feel safe and confident to share their experiences and challenges. This relational approach encourages open, honest conversations in a relaxed environment—something far more difficult to achieve through email or telephone contact alone. Families have expressed how much they value this personalised, relationship-led support and how it has contributed to positive outcomes for their children.

These conversations can lead to the Virtual School facilitating multi-agency meetings to strengthen collaboration, amplify the family's voice and advocate for the needs of their children. Bringing professionals together ensures that support is cohesive and that agencies work collectively to 'wrap around' the child and family, resulting in a clear and coordinated plan that everyone understands and feels confident in.

Through this work, carers and parents receive targeted information, advice and guidance that empowers them to become strong educational advocates. By helping them identify barriers to learning and navigate complex school systems, we increase their confidence, reduce stress, and ensure that their children's needs are championed effectively.

Impact: More children are beginning to access timely support, stronger home–school relationships are developing, and we are beginning to see improvements with educational stability.



Overall Impact

Through the expansion of our duties and the collective efforts across teams, we have:

- Supported 52 families, 37 schools and 29 professionals with information, advice and guidance regarding children previously in care.
- Increased access to support for children previously in care
- Enabled earlier intervention through better information-sharing
- Raised aspirations for some of our most vulnerable learners
- Improved collaboration across the education and social care system

These developments have started to contribute to measurable improvements in children's educational progress, wellbeing, and engagement in school. The Virtual School remains committed to championing every child's right to an equitable, ambitious education—regardless of their background or circumstances.



The Extended Duties of the Virtual School - Supporting Children with a Social Worker (CWSW))

The extension of the Virtual School's duties has strengthened our commitment to improving educational outcomes for children and young people who currently are, or have been, supported by a social worker within the last six years. Over the last year, we have implemented a range of initiatives designed to promote stability, raise aspirations, and remove barriers to education. These efforts have enabled more children to access equitable learning opportunities and the specialist support they need to thrive.

We have continued to develop our duties for children who are, or have been, supported by a social worker - including children in need, those on child protection plans, and those in kinship care. Recognition of the educational vulnerabilities faced by these groups has informed a programme of targeted activity.

Through the Virtual School Partnership Meetings and CP Coordinator meetings, we have raised awareness of the barriers to learning that children with a social worker may face. This work has encouraged schools to think more creatively and proactively about how to remove those barriers and ensure learning is accessible and equitable.

Impact: Schools are beginning to adopt more inclusive strategies, so more children are able to meaningfully engage in their education.

We have also delivered direct training to CP Coordinators and Social Workers, ensuring attendance, attainment, and progress are given due consideration in CIN and CP meetings. This strengthened practice has encouraged earlier identification of gaps and better collaboration between children's social care and education settings.

Impact: Improved attendance monitoring is beginning to show positive impact, enabling earlier intervention, keeping more children in school for longer, and supporting more sustained progress.

Internally, our year-to-date comparison highlights an upward trend in Attendance for our Children in Need and our Children in Need of Protection.

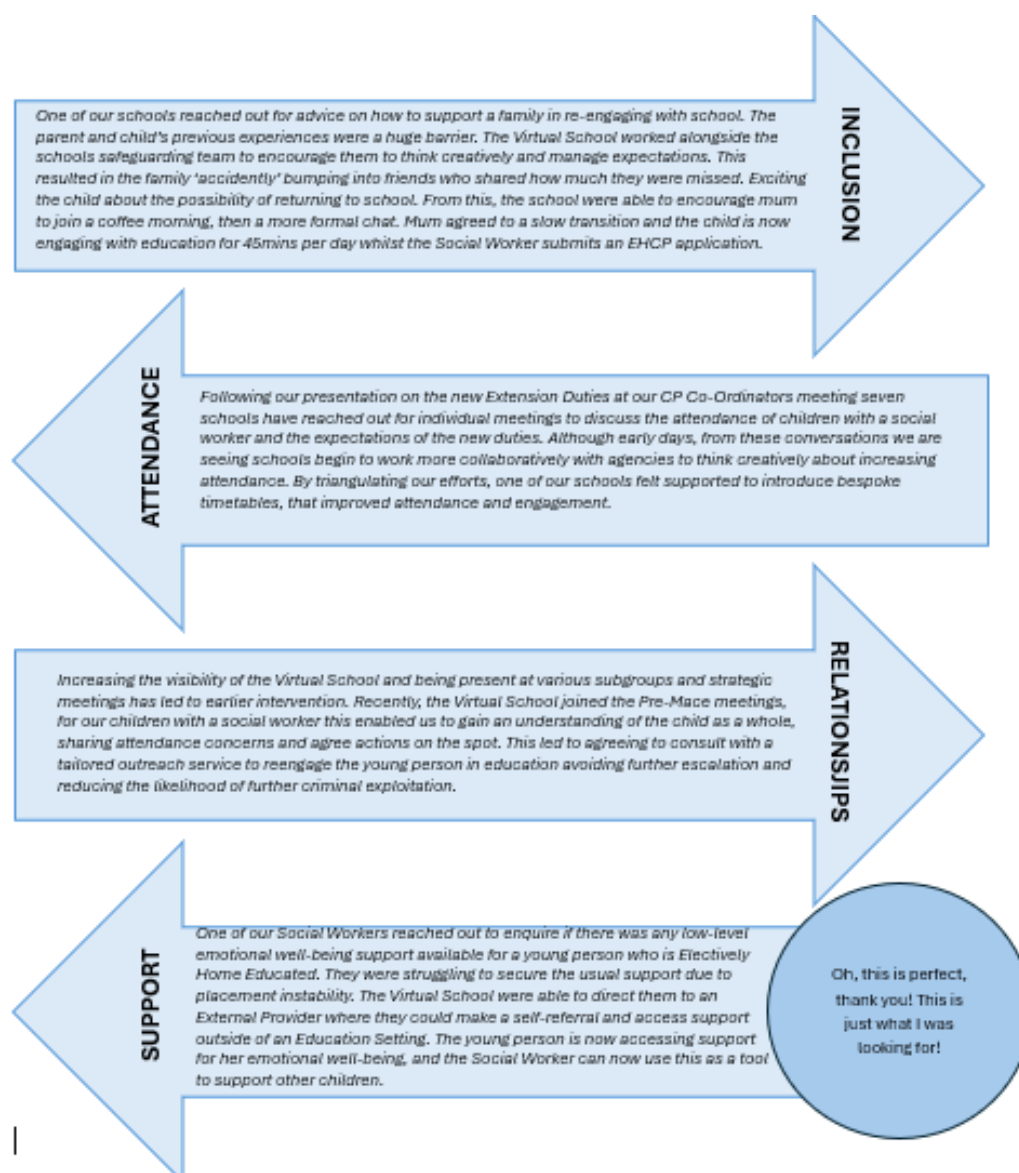
CIN 2024/25	CIN 2025/26	CP 2024/25	CP 2025/26
78.9%	81.4%	73.4%	74.8%
2.5% Increase		1.4% Increase	

Our role in supporting social workers to secure educational support and specialist referrals at an earlier stage has reduced delays and ensured that vulnerable children receive timely help.

Impact: More children are beginning to receive the specialist input they need sooner, preventing escalation and improving outcomes.

Finally, broader representation across strategic meetings and subgroups has improved collaboration between the Virtual School, Educational Settings, social workers, and partner agencies. This has led to clearer communication, shared strategies, and earlier identification of concerns.

Impact: Stronger working relationships are beginning to facilitate earlier intervention, greater consistency, and improved support for children at risk of falling behind.



Overall Impact

Through the expansion of our duties and the collective efforts across teams, we have:

- Supported over 24 schools and 84 professionals with information, advice and guidance regarding our children with, or previously with a social worker
- Improved attendance and stability
- Enabled earlier intervention through better information-sharing
- Raised aspirations for some of our most vulnerable learners
- Improved collaboration across the education and social care system

Recent initiatives are beginning to show measurable gains in children's academic progress, wellbeing, and overall engagement in school, though the full impact of these improvements will become clearer as children continue to progress over time. The Virtual School remains steadfast in its dedication to advocating for every child's entitlement to a fair and aspirational education, irrespective of their background or personal circumstances.



Governance and Accountability

The Virtual School has several layers of governance and reporting expectations.

The monthly Education Assurance Meeting (EAM) chaired by the Director for Education poses challenge on attendance, suspensions, exclusions, Personal Education Plan (PEP) timeliness and quality of PEPs. This data plus academic outcomes are also shared with the Corporate and Community Parenting Education Sub group who provide challenge, quality assurance, feedback and support before submitting to the full Corporate and Community Parenting Board for scrutiny.

Meetings are held quarterly and membership includes representatives from social care, NELC education and inclusion, local school principals and senior leaders, Young Persons Support Service (YPSS), health, educational psychology and the independent reviewing service. The core purpose is to oversee the Virtual School's key priorities – ie. progress, attainment, attendance and school stability of the children in our care and the education, employment and training of our care leavers. Data is scrutinised and actions arising are closely tracked, successes are celebrated.

The joint ambition is to promote best outcomes for all children. The group is focussed on high aspirations and our young people having the support they need to gain qualifications that will enable them into college and university and through to adulthood thus ensuring they have the opportunities for their chosen career paths and to become independent and successful adults.

The PEPs are also subject to 3 levels of quality assurance - firstly rated by Inclusion Officers, then moderated by Virtual School Senior Leaders and finally scrutinised by the Corporate and Community Parenting Board Children in our Care and Care Leavers Education sub-group. Feedback with recommendations for improvement is sent to the relevant contributor (school or social worker) for PEPs that are not rated as Good.

The Virtual School also reports activity and key information to the monthly Corporate Leadership Team; contributes to Childrens Services' quarterly performance reports; and runs joint Attendance Assurance meetings with social care colleagues.

Training (Delivered by our Community Educational Psychology Team)

Each of the approaches in place, enabled through the Virtual School Partnership, are evidence-based both in terms of the content and the delivery method, with implementation of science at the heart. Across 2025–2026, training activity has been intentionally targeted to strengthen the universal and targeted emotional well-being offer by building self-confidence, consistency and shared language across education, families and partner services. Activities are designed to be aligned to LA priorities, support Inclusion and Belonging, and Relational Practice.

ELSA (emotional literacy support assistant) Training

6 days full training facilitated by at least one qualified educational psychologist, covering topics related to emotional literacy development for children through the age ranges, and supporting settings to be able to develop whole school and bespoke intervention packages of support: Two courses facilitated in this academic year. 14 participants per cohort. Further course is planned for September 2026.

ELSA Supervision: Each ELSA requires ongoing half-termly supervision as part of the role. This ensures fidelity, reflective practice, and sustainability of the ELSA role. It provides solution focused clinical supervision and ongoing CPD to people working in the ELSA role.

- Within the first year of ELSA training, this is part of the course.
- Previous cohorts now have their supervision as part of a wider ELSA network group to support ever increasing co-operation and sharing between education settings. 20 ELSAs are part of this.

Quantitative impact overview: Each attendee showed increases on the pre and post questions: *I have a good understanding of emotional literacy; I know how to help children build resilience; I know how to help children build self-esteem; I understand about managing emotions; I can confidently use active listening skills*

Qualitative impact example: *"I have gained a huge amount of knowledge from attending ELSA training. I believe this will not only support me in my ELSA (nurture) role, but it will also aid me to become a better TA and work colleague."*

General Themes in ELSA participant feedback includes: *increased confidence in supporting emotional literacy, resilience, self-esteem and emotional regulation, alongside improved active listening skills and access to a supportive professional network.*

MeLSA (mediated learning support approaches) Training

6 full training days with an emphasis on scaffolding and supported cognition and learning (including Executive Functioning) for all.

- Pilot MeLSA programme facilitated. 6 participants. A further cohort is planned for early 2027.

Qualitative impact example: *"I feel I have learnt a lot about thinking skills and how these link together to form part of the mediating puzzle. I have many useful techniques and tools I have learnt and will be able to apply in my setting".*

Emotion Coaching

- Lunch and Learn: June 2025 focusing on Emotion Coaching and the Power Threat Meaning Framework. 24 participants (internal NELC colleagues).
- Parenting Emotion Coaching Workshops in liaison with the SPACE forum: November 2025. 58 attendees (NEL parent / carers)

Impact measures: *highlight increased understanding of emotion coaching, greater confidence in managing emotions and practical strategies to support children at home.*

- Schools Emotion Coaching Workshops: February 2026. 32 attendees.

Impact measures: *highlight increased awareness of the value of consistent whole-school approaches, use of shared scripts and language, and the importance of empathy and validation in supporting children's emotional needs*

- Higher Education Workshops: March 2026. 36 higher education students (counselling, psychology and related disciplines), supporting future workforce development and skills in those who will go on to work with our children.

Impact measures highlight improved familiarity and confidence with emotion coaching principles, particularly the role of self-regulation and empathy in professional practice.

Virtual School Conference 2026

The Virtual School's Love and Belonging Conference marked a powerful moment of collective purpose for colleagues, partners and education settings across North East Lincolnshire. For a day, love and belonging were not abstract ideas but lived experiences, placed firmly at the centre of our thinking, learning and shared commitment. Through powerful contributions from speakers including Mark Finnis, Suzanne Zeedyk, Fatima Whitbread MBE and Dean Cotton, we were reminded that relationships are shaped in everyday moments, that behaviour is deeply influenced by stress and experience, and that compassion, curiosity and belief can fundamentally change a child's life. The atmosphere in the room reflected this learning — there was laughter, reflection and deep emotion — alongside an overwhelming sense of shared responsibility for ensuring every child feels seen, valued and understood. Our origami hearts and Love & Belonging infographic became tangible reminders that belonging is not an 'add on', but the foundation on which learning and wellbeing are built.

This conference also brought to life the importance of the Virtual School's Love & Belonging Framework, developed in partnership with the Community Educational Psychology Team. Many of the children supported by the Virtual School have experienced significant disruption, loss or instability in their lives and education; for them, feeling safe, included and connected is essential, not optional. The framework provides educators with clear, compassionate and evidence-informed guidance to support connection, particularly when it feels most difficult. In working alongside our schools to embed these principles into everyday practice, we are taking a collective, system-wide approach to Building a Borough of Belonging — a place where strong relationships with people, places and communities create the conditions for children to learn, grow and thrive.





Virtual School Priority Objectives 2026/2027

Objective		Measure
1	Improve the academic attainment and progress outcomes of the children in our care to be more in line with ALL children	• KS4 - Increase the number of Year 11 children achieving GCSE's (grade 4-9 and 5-9) including English & Maths, and improve progress measures • KS2 – Increase the number of children in our care achieving age related expectations and improve progress measures in individual subjects and the combined measure Reading, Writing, Maths
2	Improve the attendance outcomes for children in our care	• Reduce the number of children in our care who are missing out on education (not receiving a fulltime offer) • Reduce the number of children in our care who are persistently absent (below 90%) • Reduce suspensions and exclusions • Minimise school moves
3	Develop the virtual school's effectiveness of provision for our Post 16 & Care leaver young people	Contribute towards; • Increasing the number of Post 16 and care leavers who are in education, employment or training (EET) & (reducing NEET) • Providing greater opportunity for children to enter a pathway to Higher Education
4	Embed the duty for children and young people who are or have been supported by a social worker	• Increase strategic reach across social care, schools, LA agencies, parents, carers • Understand the needs of the cohort and provide information, guidance and training to partners to reduce barriers to learning • Support partners to improve attendance outcomes • Have oversight of academic attainment and achievement outcomes
5	Develop and implement an education strand within the Kinship Zone pilot	