

# Middlesbrough Virtual School

Introducing VS and key headlines from the 2024-25 Annual Report

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## Briefing focus

Statutory role  
Cohort picture  
Strengths and challenges  
2025-26 priorities

# What is the Virtual School?

Role and purpose

**The Virtual School exists to improve educational experiences and outcomes for Children Looked After, care leavers and children with a social worker.**

Works with schools, colleges, post-16 providers, Education and Social Care.  
Uses planning, data, PEPs and professional dialogue to identify and remove barriers.  
Champions children's voices, high aspirations, advocacy and targeted intervention.

## Champion

Promotes high aspirations and equity.

## Partner

Works across education, social care and post-16 providers.

## Challenge

Uses data, PEPs and professional dialogue to remove barriers.

## Support

Targets attendance, attainment, transitions and inclusion.

# Cohort snapshot

**439**

Children Looked After

**363**

School-age CLA

**125**

Became looked after during the year

**75%**

In care over 12 months

**28%**

Have an EHCP

**33%**

Have SEN Support

**59%**

Educated in borough

**Y10/Y11**

Largest year groups

School quality context

73% of schools attended by CLA were rated Good by Ofsted and 11% Outstanding.

# Key strengths and headlines

What stands out in the report

## EYFS success

10 highest attainers achieved the expected level in all 17 Early Learning Goals and secured the strongest possible outcome.

## KS2 strength

47.4% achieved the combined Reading, Writing and Maths expected standard; Maths was strongest at 68.4%.

## PEP delivery

1,722 PEPs completed for 587 children and young people; 98% were completed within 4 months and 99% within 6 months.

KS2 outcomes compare positively with both national and North East CLA benchmarks. Writing at expected standard was 57.9%, but no pupils reached greater depth - an identified next step. Strong GCSE outcomes were noted for five young people, including high grades in English, science and mathematics. Holiday enrichment and the Intervention Centre are highlighted as preventative and relational support offers.

# KS4 and post-16 headlines

Outcomes and curriculum access

**16.5**

Attainment 8

**14.3%**

Strong pass in English grade 5+

**12.2%**

Strong pass in Maths grade 5+

**6.1%**

EBacc entry

KS4 attainment is broadly in line with CLA national and North East benchmarks, but remains well below all-schools outcomes. English and maths strong passes remain gateway qualifications and a continuing priority. Low EBacc entry reflects complexity of need, SEND, placement stability and curriculum access issues.

## Post-16 picture

**79**

Total young people

**54**

EET

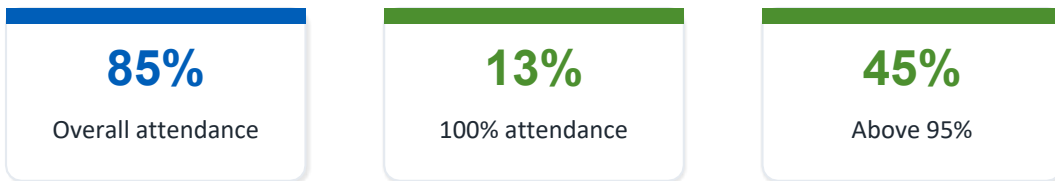
**25**

NEET

# Attendance, inclusion and targeted support

What the VS did to promote outcomes

## Attendance headlines for CLA



**33% recorded attendance below 90%, including 19% below 50%.**

Celebration letters are planned for pupils above 95%.

## Key areas of VS support

- Training**  
 DT training focused on attainment, attendance, PEP quality, PP+, EBSA and transitions.
- Intervention Centre**  
 28 pupils supported through bespoke one-to-one provision; all transitioned or reintegrated.
- Pupil Premium Plus**  
 £11,295 of tuition delivered through Pupil Premium Plus.
- Relational prevention**  
 PROCLAIM, VCAP and summer enrichment highlighted as preventative support.

# Key challenges and priorities for 2025-26

What the report says next

## Persistent challenges

SEND is the strongest predictor of poorer outcomes across EYFS, KS2 and KS4.  
Attendance declines sharply at transition into secondary education for children with a social worker.  
KS4 outcomes remain sensitive to attendance, placement change, SEMH and curriculum access.  
Post-16 is the most complex and vulnerable phase, with a notable NEET group and rising Amber/Red PEPs.

## Priority actions

Strengthen early SEND identification and specialist intervention.  
Target attendance earlier, especially around Year 6-7 transition.  
Reduce reliance on suspension through earlier relational intervention.  
Increase strong passes in English and maths; review curriculum pathways and exam readiness.  
Strengthen post-16 planning, employability pathways and quality impact of PEPs.

# In one sentence

Closing summary

Middlesbrough Virtual School is the local authority's education champion for children with social care involvement — combining advocacy, challenge, partnership and targeted support to improve stability, attendance, attainment and post-16 life chances.

## Strength

KS2 outcomes are a clear area of success.

## Reality

Attendance and SEND remain the biggest barriers.

## Direction

Earlier, sharper intervention is the next step.

Thank you  
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