

Central Bedfordshire Council

22 April 2025

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

School Performance Report

Report of:

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The following sections of this report are exempt: -

Purpose of this report

1. To present a summary of school performance for the age groups from EYFS to post-16 for the academic year 2023.24.
2. To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of actions being taken by council officers to support improvement.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee is asked to consider this report and comment on the findings.

Executive Summary

1. In the context of this report, data at national and CBC level are already in the public domain. Data in respect of locality clusters or type of school and data arising out of CBC-specific initiatives have not previously been in the public domain.
2. This year, there are only attainment measures in primary, no progress measures. This is because the children who were in Year 6 last year would have been assessed at the end of KS1 during 2020, when assessments were cancelled due to Covid.
3. The effects of partial lockdowns during Covid are still being felt. Appendix A shows where the affected children are now in their schooling. The 2024 KS2 results were for

children who were affected during their Year 1 and 2; GCSE results were for children who were affected in Year 7 and 8.

4. Overview data

Ofsted inspection outcomes	August 2023	August 2024
%age of schools judged good or outstanding	86%	88%

Year group	Which assessment(s)	2023 outcomes	2024 outcomes	Comparison with national
EYFS	%age pupils achieving Good Level of Development (GLD)	67.2%	68.9%	CBC overtook the national average of 67.7%
Year 1	Phonics Screening Check (PSC) %age pupils passing	78%	79%	CBC remains 1% below the national average
Year 4	Multiplication Tables Check (MTC) – average score out of 25	19.1	19.7	CBC remains below national average, by 0.9 in 2024
Year 6	%age pupils achieving expected standard (EXS) in Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM)	51%	53%	The small improvement has reduced CBC's gap to the national average. CBC is now 8% behind national.
End of KS2	EXS in Reading	71%	73%	CBC remains 2% behind national
	EXS in Writing	65%	65%	CBC remains 7% behind national
	EXS in Maths	67%	67%	The gap grew from 6% in 2023 to 7% in 2024
Year 11 GCSE	Overall Attainment 8 score per pupil (points)	44.4	42.3	The national average also dropped but CBC's gap to national increased to 3.8 (from 1.9 in 2023)
	%age pupils achieving a 9-5 pass in English and Maths	42.6%	40.3%	National improved so the CBC gap to national widened to 5.9% (from 2.7% in 2023)
	Overall Progress 8	-0.12	-0.24	National was static at -0.03, so the gap widened

Post-16	Average points achieved in A-levels	30.6	31.5	The gap to national reduced from 3.6 in 2023 to 2.9 in 2024
	Average points achieved in technical qualifications	29.0	28.0	CBC is 0.1 behind national, having been 0.5 above in 2023
	Average points achieved in applied general qualifications	29.6	30.0	CBC is 0.9 above national, up from 0.1 in 2023

Overall themes

5. In primary, the picture is one of a widening gap between CBC attainment performance and national as children progress through primary. Our performance in relation to 'Statistical Neighbours' (SN) is also poor. As illustrated later in the paper, this trend is more marked for disadvantaged pupils.
6. At the end of reception CBC's results were ahead of national. In Year 1, 4 and 6 CBC's performance was behind the national picture.
7. This trend persists through secondary until the end of KS4, where on all three measures, the gaps between CBC and national performance widened in 2024.
8. CBC's performance is better than the national average in vocational post-16 applied general qualifications.
9. Free School Meals (FSM) is a significant factor which contributes to CBC's overall low performance, but there are a number of pressures on schools which officers and school leaders have identified as contributing to the relatively poor outcomes for children in CBC.
10. Throughout this report Free School Meals or 'disadvantaged' is used to indicate children who either qualify for Free School Meals now, have done so within the past six years, or who are of an age where Free School Meals are provided universally, but because their family is in receipt of certain income-based benefits, their school receives additional funding (the Pupil Premium grant).

HEADLINES FOR EACH PHASE OF EDUCATION

Early years (EY)

11. A 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) is awarded in Early Years (EY) when teachers assess a child is meeting a specific 12 of the 17 Early Learning Goals. This measure continues to improve (68.9% of children achieved GLD, up from 67.2% in 2023) and overall results are now above the national average of 67.7%.

KS1

13. The only published assessment now in KS1 is the percentage of pupils who pass the Phonics Screening Check at the end of Year 1
14. Overall, the proportion of pupils passing the Y1 phonics test (79%) remains 1% lower than national, because the improvement made in CBC was also gained nationally.

KS2

15. Children are tested in reading and maths, and a teacher-assessed grade is awarded for writing.

16. Combined Reading Writing and Maths (RWM) performance in CBC (53% of children achieved the Expected Standard in all three subjects) is below national (61%) and increased by 2% from 2023.
17. Taking the subjects individually
- Reading: The proportion of pupils achieving the Expected Standard improved by 2% from 71% in 2023, to 73% in 2024 but because national results also improved, CBC remains 2% below national
 - Writing remained the same as 2023 (65% of children achieved the Expected Standard) and this is 7% below national, the same as last year.
 - Maths attainment was unchanged from 2023 (67% achieved the Expected Standard), but because there was an improvement in national results, CBC is now 7% below national (2023 was 6%).

KS4 - GCSE

18. The average Attainment 8 score in 2024 was 42.3, 2.1 points decrease from last year (44.4). Central Bedfordshire is 4.3 points below the statistical neighbour average (46.6) and 3.8 points below the national average (46.1).
19. The average Progress 8 score per Pupil in 2024 is -0.24. This is down from -0.12 in 2023. Central Bedfordshire is statistically significantly below the national average.
20. Percentage of pupils achieving 9-5 grade in English and Maths in 2024 is 40.3%, 2.3 percentage point decrease from last year (42.6%). Central Bedfordshire is 6.8 percentage points below the statistical neighbour average (47.1%) and 5.9 percentage points below the national average (46.2%).
21. Percentage of pupils achieving 9-4 grade in English and Maths in 2024 is 62.2%, 2.2 percentage point decrease from last year (64.4%). Central Bedfordshire is 4.9 percentage points below the statistical neighbour average (67.1%) and 3.2 percentage points below the national average (65.4%).

Post 16 (performance data includes students enrolled at Further Education colleges, as well as school sixth forms)

22. The 2024 Central Bedfordshire average point score per entry for A-Level Students is 31.5 - Grade C, 0.9 pts increase from 2023 (30.6 C). Central Bedfordshire is 3.3 points below the statistical neighbour average (34.8) and 2.9 points below the national average (34.4).
23. The 2024 Central Bedfordshire average point score per entry for technical Level was 28.0 (Merit+), a 1.0 pt decrease from 2023 (29.0 Merit+). Central Bedfordshire is 0.8 point below the statistical neighbour average (28.8) and 0.1 points below the national average (28.1)
24. The 2024 Central Bedfordshire average point score per entry for Applied General Students is 30.0 Distinction, 0.4 pts increase from 2023 (29.6 Merit+). Central Bedfordshire is 1.3 point above the statistical neighbour average (28.7) and 0.9 points above the national average (29.1).

Detailed analysis for each phase of education

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Early Years assessment information explained

25. In a Reception child's EYFS profile, they will be given one of the following gradings for each of 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs):

- **Expected:** the child is working at the level expected for their age
- **Emerging:** the child is not yet reaching the age-expected level yet,

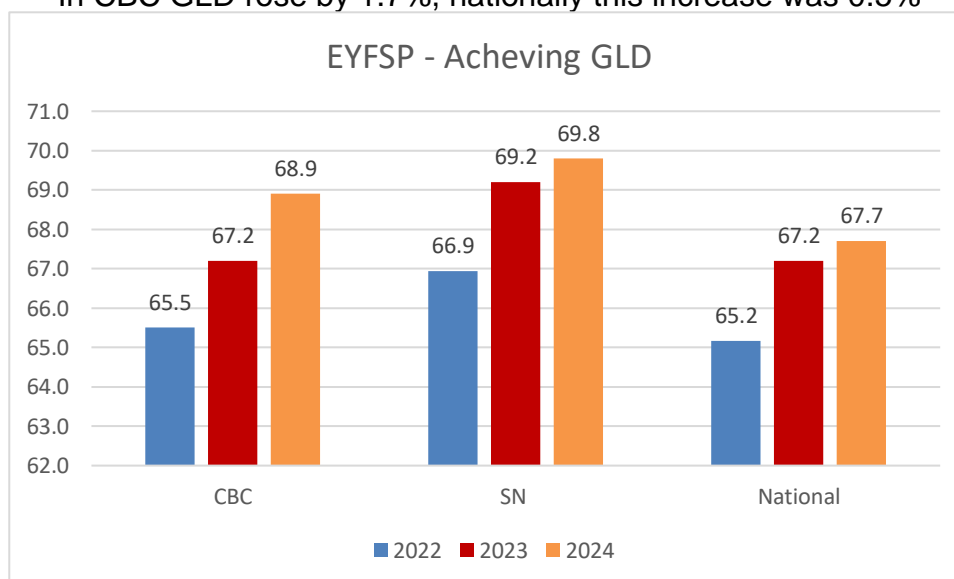
26. On leaving the Foundation Stage at the end of Reception, a child is considered to have a 'good level of development (GLD)' if they have achieved the expected level in the 12 of the ELGs within the prime areas of learning (communication and language; personal social and emotional development; physical development) and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

27. The percentage reported by schools is the number of children who achieve the expected level for each individual early learning goal and those who achieve a GLD.

Early years performance data

28. Early years results are above national with performance having improved from 2023 and the gap with the performance of Statistical Neighbours has closed slightly.

In CBC GLD rose by 1.7%, nationally this increase was 0.5%



Key messages - EYFS

29. Early years (EY) results in terms of GLD are above national having been in line with national in 2023, but they remain slightly behind Statistical Neighbours.

30. CBC improved GLD by 1.7% in 2024 whilst national improved at a slower rate (0.5%).

31. There is no significant change from 2023 in terms of specific areas of learning.

Disadvantage

32. Deprivation continues to impact on overall performance and the gap between FSM and non-FSM is 29 percentage points, the same as in 2023. This compares to a national average gap of 20 points. So, while overall results suggest children in CBC are slightly ahead at the start of school, disadvantaged pupils are much more likely to be behind.

33. 8% of children in the 2024 cohort qualified for FSM and 43% of them achieved GLD (up from 40% in 2023). This compares with 52% of FSM eligible children nationally.

SEND

34. The overall proportion of reception children identified as having SEN remained stable at 11%. Within this though, there was a slight shift towards more children having an EHCP. There was an increase in the proportion of children with an EHCP in the 2024 reception cohort (3.8%, up from 3.3% in 2023) and it is now double the level in 2019 (1.9%). The percentage of CBC pupils with an EHCP who attained GLD declined from 6.3% to 2.8%. This increase in need would be expected to impact on performance in the KS1 phonics results in 2025 and KS2 in 2030.

School type

35. Lower schools reported higher levels of GLD (70.7%) than national (67.7%) while primary schools had an overall lower GLD (66.6%) than national (67.7%). This is likely to be a reflection of location, with primary schools more often located in urban areas and children starting school with lower levels of 'school-readiness'.

36. Maintained schools reported an average GLD score above that of academies. Again, this is likely to be a reflection of location.

Actions already taken to address EYFS specific issues

37. A Professional Study Group has been set up, led by the EY lead of a school where Ofsted judged the EY provision as Outstanding. This group meets to look at developing practitioners' understanding of EY standards and expectation and to share good practice.

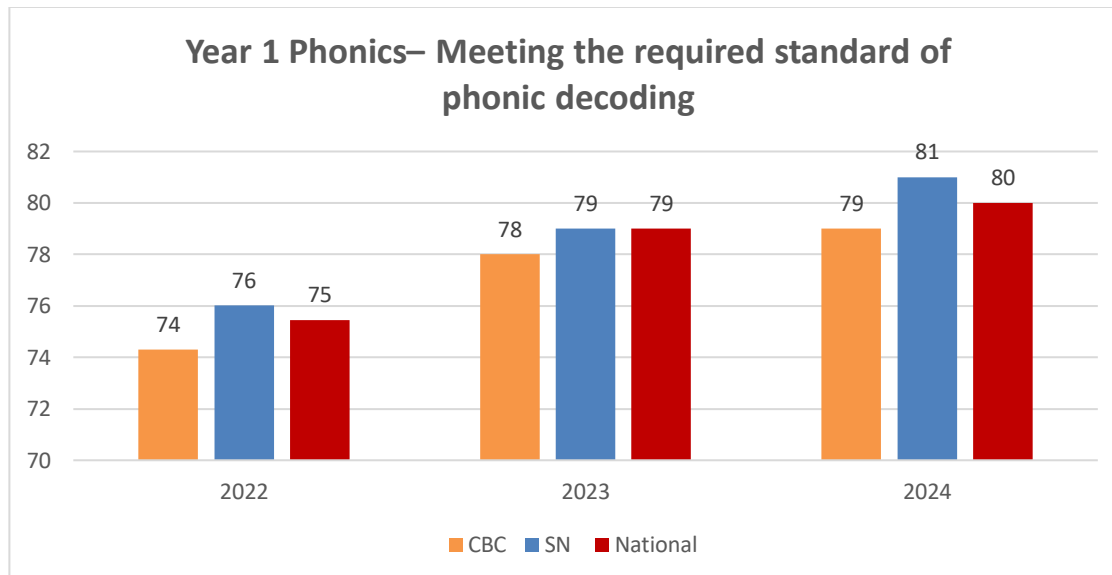
38. A pilot project is underway using a tool (Wellcomm) for screening early language development and providing structured support for children who are not working within the range expected for their age. The tool has been demonstrated in other LAs to significantly reduce the language and vocabulary gap for disadvantaged children. 23 schools, pre-schools and nurseries are taking part and are additionally benefitting from networking and support from a Speech and Language Therapist.

39. Data from child development checks suggests 2-year-olds in CBC are significantly behind their counterparts in almost every other LA in their development. In communication skills, only 60% of children in CBC met the expectation, compared with 85% nationally. Our maintained nursery schools and reception teachers in schools report markedly reduced readiness for school. Improving both expressive and receptive language before children progress to KS1, which is what we hope Wellcomm will achieve, should play a key role in helping children cope with the academic demands of KS1 as well as having a positive impact on behaviour and attendance. This need to focus on children's communication and language skills and acknowledge lower starting points is a key message in Ofsted's October 2024 report *Strong Foundations in the First Years of School*.

KS1 – Phonics

Assessment information explained

40. With some exceptions, all pupils who have reached the age of 6 by the end of the school year must take the phonics check to see if they meet the required standard of phonic decoding during that academic year. For most pupils, this will be in year 1.



41. Overall the proportion of children achieving the required score to pass the phonics screening increased from 2023 to 79% (2024); however this remains 1% below national (80%).

Disadvantage

42. Disadvantage is again a significant factor. Just under 11% of this cohort are eligible for FSM. The percentage of FSM eligible pupils who met the expected standard for phonics in CBC in 2024 was 54%. This well below the national average for FSM pupils of 68%; a gap of 14%.

SEND

43. The percentage of pupils who qualified for SEND support and met the expected standard for phonics in CBC in 2024 was 52%. This is an 8% increase from 2023 and is in line with the national average of 52%.

44. The percentage of pupils who qualified for an EHCP and met the expected standard for phonics in CBC in 2024 was 24%. This is a 1% decrease from 2023 but is still above the national average of 20%.

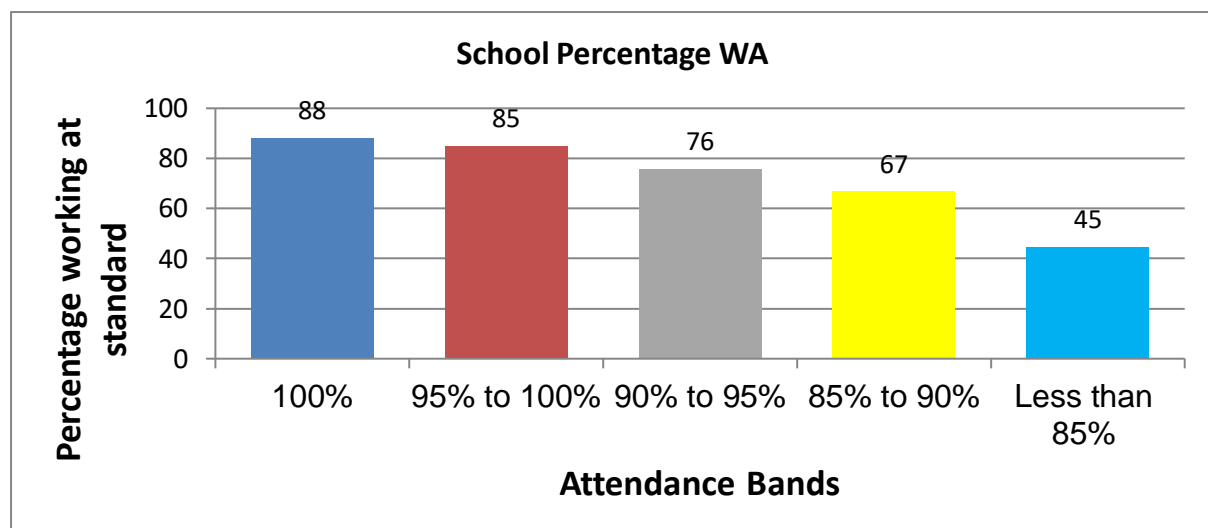
45. The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard and considered non-SEND was 86% a 1% increase from 2023 and is below the national average of 88%.

School type

46. As with the EYFS, lower schools performed better than primaries: lower schools were in line with national and an 81% pass rate, whereas primaries achieved 77%. Again, this is likely to be a reflection of location and linked to disadvantage.

Attendance

47. There is a clear link between school attendance and success in phonics. As the graph below shows, children who miss 15% or more of time in school are only half as likely to pass the phonics test as those who have full attendance.

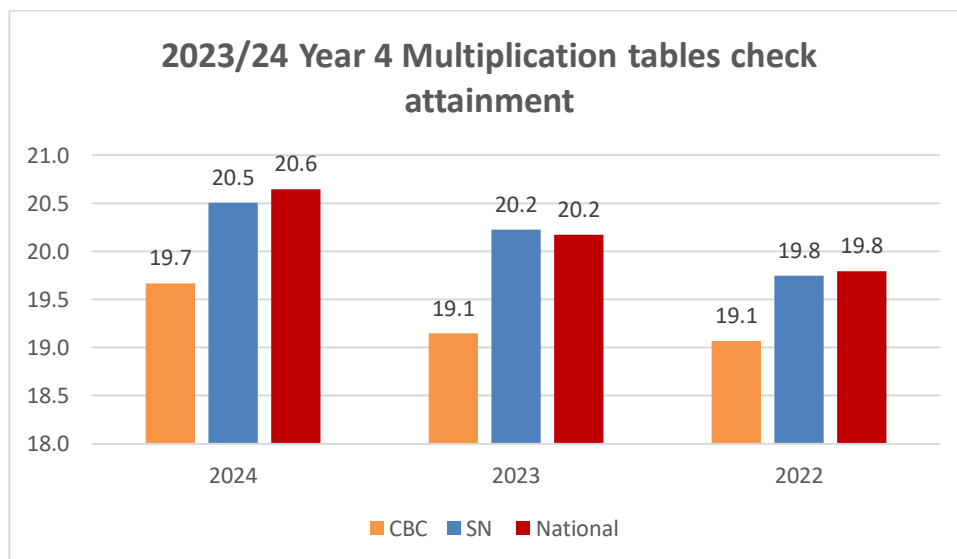


Actions already taken to address KS1 Phonics specific issues

48. The Wellcomm pilot mentioned within the EYFS section is ultimately aimed at ensuring more disadvantaged pupils are KS1 ready in terms of their language skills.
49. CBC officers have actively promoted the support available via the 'English Hub'. As a result, the engagement of CBC schools with fully-funded initiatives to boost early reading increased markedly. Around 20 schools benefited from audit and consultancy support from the hub, and 18 schools are enrolled on year-long programmes this year.

Lower Key Stage 2 – Multiplication Tablescheck (MTC) – Year 4

50. The Multiplication Tables Check (MTC) is a key stage 2 assessment taken by pupils at the end of year 4. The MTC's purpose is to ensure that times tables knowledge is at the expected level. It is an online test where the pupils are asked 25 questions on times tables 2 to 12. For every question, pupils have 6 seconds to answer. Less detailed data is provided the DfE on the outcomes of this test.
51. The mean average score for pupils in CBC was 19.7 in 2024. This is below the national average of 20.6, but an improvement of 0.6 (from 19.1 in 2023), compared with a national improvement of 0.4, so the gap to national has closed slightly/



Disadvantage

52. The mean average score for pupils eligible for FSM in CBC was 16.7. Although this is an increase from 2023 (16.2) the result is still below the national average for FSM pupils of 18.9.

SEND

53. The mean average score for pupils with SEND support in CBC was 14.7. This is a decrease from 2023 (15.3) and the result is below the national average of 16.8.
54. The mean average score for pupils with a EHCP in CBC was 14.6. This is a decrease from 2023 (14.7) and the result is below the national average of 15.2.

Actions already taken to address MTC specific issues

55. No specific actions were taken last year, but in the previous three years, officers have supported the local Maths Hub to engage with schools to ensure that leaders and teachers understood recent guidance on the teaching of maths and that staff were equipped to deliver a 'mastery' approach to teaching.

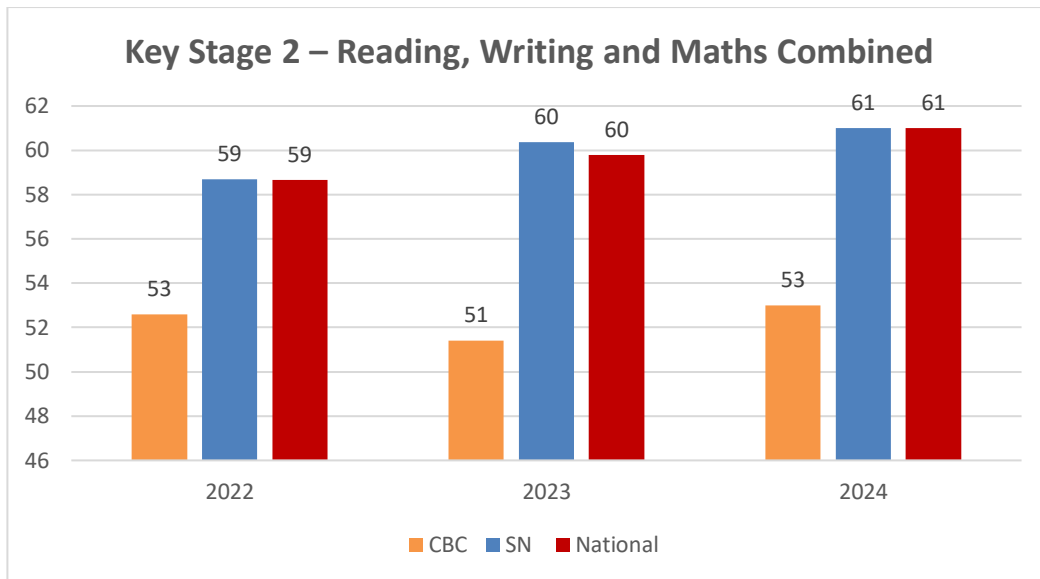
End of Key Stage 2 assessments – Year 6

56. At the end of KS2 pupils are assessed in three areas:
- Reading – by test
 - Writing – teacher assessed, with 25% of schools having assessments externally moderated by the LA, on a cyclical basis
 - Mathematics - tests
57. A fourth data set (RWM) reports on how many children achieve the expected level of attainment in all three areas.
58. For the three assessed areas schools report the percentages of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected attainment level (EXS), and progress measures related to the progress made from KS1 by pupils when compared to other students nationally with a similar prior attainment. For 2024 there are no progress measures because pupils ending KS2 had not had any KS1 assessments due to Covid.

KS2 Performance data

Reading, writing and maths combined (RWM)

59. In 2024 there were 3,746 children in the Year 6 cohort. They were spread across across 36 primary schools (1,412 pupils), 11 middle schools (1,665 pupils), five extended secondary schools (611 pupils) and three special schools (58 pupils).
60. The proportion of children achieving the expected standard against all three subjects in CBC in 2024 improved by 2% to 53%. It remains below national (61%), but the gap closed slightly because national results only improved by 1%.



Disadvantage

61. The RWM gap between FSM pupils (27% achieved RWM) and non-FSM (58%) has widened in CBC to 31% in 2024; nationally this gap is 21%. The CBC gap widened by 6 percentage points from 2023, with the performance of FSM pupils down (it was 30% in 2023) and non-FSM up (55% in 2023). The impact of vital lost learning in Year 1 and 2 lockdowns seems to have hit disadvantaged pupils harder.

SEND

62. Pupils with an EHCP performed above national with 11% achieving RWM (up from 8% in 2023), slightly ahead of the national average of 9%.

63. The proportion of pupils with SEND support achieving RWM also increased to 21% (from 17% in 2023) but remains below national (26%) and statistical neighbours (24%) in 2024.

Reading

64. 73% of children reached the expected standard (EXS) in reading in CBC in 2024. This was an increase of 2 percentage points on 2023, but remains two points behind the national figure of 75%, because national also increased by 2%.

65. The overall improvement in reading was not evenly spread. FSM pupils declined on the 2023 reading performance by 1%, while non-FSM improved by 3%. The gap between FSM and non-FSM therefore widened to 29 points. This compares with a national gap of just 17 points. Nationally, 63% of FSM pupils achieved EXS in reading.

66. Pupils with an EHCP did better in 2024 (28% achieving EXS in reading) than in 2023 (22%) and were ahead of the national average of 19%. 46% of pupils on

SEN support passed the reading test, up from 38% in 2023, but behind the national figure of 48%.

Writing

67. 65% of children reached the expected standard (EXS) in reading in CBC in 2024, unchanged from 2023, and still seven points behind the national figure of 72%, which was also unchanged.

68. Writing tends to lag slightly behind performance in reading, and this is reflected in the results of FSM pupils, whose writing performance fell by 3%, (a bigger drop than reading). Only 41% of FSM children achieved the expected standard while non-FSM results improved by 1% (smaller than their 3% gain in reading) to 70%. The gap between FSM and non-FSM therefore widened to 29 points. This compares with a national gap of 19 points. Nationally, 59% of FSM pupils achieved EXS in writing.

69. Pupils with an EHCP did better in 2024 (16% achieving EXS in writing) than in 2023 (14%) and were ahead of the national average of 12%. 32% of pupils on SEN support were judged as EXS in writing, up from 31% in 2023, but behind the national figure of 36%.

Maths

70. 67% of children reached the expected standard (EXS) in maths in CBC in 2024, unchanged from 2023, but now seven points behind the national figure of 74%, which was up one point on 2023.

71. FSM pupils' performance in maths dropped by 5 points from 46% achieving EXS in 2023, to 41% in 2024. Non-FSM improved by 2% to 73%, meaning the gap between FSM and non-FSM therefore widened to 32 percentage points. This compares with a national gap of 20 points. Nationally, 59% of FSM pupils achieved EXS in maths.

72. Pupils with an EHCP did better in 2024 (19% achieving EXS in maths) than in 2023 (17%) and were ahead of the national average of 17%. 36% of pupils on SEN support EXS in maths, the same as in 2023, but behind the national figure of 44%.

Actions already taken to address KS2 specific issues

73. Schools transitioning to primary from lower have been supported by the School Improvement Team.

74. Writing has had the lowest attainment at KS2 for many years both in absolute terms and relative to national. To address this, we made a significant investment in 2023/24 in writing CPD provided by HertsForLearning (HFL). This funding was agreed by the School Improvement Project Board and covered:

- Subject leader training (still on-going) on the design and delivery of an effective writing curriculum
- Teacher training on teaching sentence structure and punctuation – two courses, one for KS1 and one for KS2
- Training for teachers in Years 4 and 5 on the teaching of writing composition. These year groups were chosen because they enabled teachers from lower, primary and middle schools to attend and the move to more sophisticated and effective composition in upper KS2 appeared to be a stumbling block to raising writing attainment.

73. 48 schools accessed one or more of these courses:

- 19 lowers
- 23 primary
- 6 middle
- 13 academies
- 35 maintained schools.

74. Feedback has been extremely positive with many schools committing to re-designing their approach to the teaching of writing. Further bespoke courses have been commissioned to add depth to a specific area that particularly interested subject leaders, and LA-maintained schools are able to access additional CPD and/or support for curriculum development from HFL through the scheme of credits that has been put in place this year. With schools with the greatest development need receiving the most funding.

75. This integrated approach is intended to provide schools with a broad and deep foundation on which they can plan for the longer term; writing has been subject to short-term fixes in many schools, and we hope this will be more enduring.

76. In addition, the LA moderation manager designed and ran two new courses for Year 5 and 6 teachers to provide more insight into how to secure the expected and higher standard in writing in Year 6. These courses were extremely well received by those who attended, but release for CPD, especially for Year 6 teachers, means attendance was low.

77. Engagement with the English Hub has enabled many schools to purchase resources to support phonics catch up work for pupils in KS2; this is an essential foundation for children to then be able to develop comprehension skills needed by the end of KS2.

78. Schools with above average numbers of FSM pupils and below average KS2 outcomes have been offered support from a School improvement Lead with a

focus on raising FSM pupils' attainment. As part of this, training has been run for the Pupil Premium leads in schools and academies to help them better understand how to collect and interrogate attainment and other data in order to be able to predict children at risk of falling further behind and monitor performance more accurately.

FSM KS2 results by type of school

79. It is worth looking at KS2 results through the particular lens of FSM pupils. CBC is unique in having three different types of mainstream school which have year 6 pupils. The table below shows the average proportion of FSM children in each type of school and the percentage of FSM children achieving the EXS at KS2 (figures in brackets show the % of all children achieving EXS):

Type	% FSM children in 2024 Y6 cohort	No of FSM children in cohort	% of FSM children achieving EXS		
			Reading	Writing	Maths
Primary	22%	316	55 (75)	45 (67)	45 (70)
Middle	15%	275	44 (71)	36 (62)	39 (66)
Extended secondary	11%	54	54 (79)	50 (71)	44 (69)

80. Considering that the primary schools tend to be located in the more deprived areas (hence their higher % of FSM children) and keeping in mind that lower schools achieve higher GLD (EYFS) and phonics (Y1) outcomes than primaries, we would expect primary schools to underperform at KS2 too. In fact, this is not the case. Considering their cohorts and that some of our primary schools were still only in their first or second year of having a year 6 cohort, their performance stands out as above what might have been expected. While the extended secondaries (schools where pupils arrive in Year 5 and stay through to GCSE) have the highest results for English when we look at all pupils, they have only half as many FSM pupils and so the results for primary schools are surprisingly strong.

81. There are a number of reasons why this might be. Firstly, pupils in middles and extended secondaries go through a transition at the end of Year 4. As discussed below when we look at the impact of disadvantage in CBC, turbulence of any kind has a disproportionate effect on disadvantaged learners and the impact of social and emotional difficulties on their progress is likely to be greater. In the two tier (primary) system, pupils remain in the same school from reception to the end of Year 6, so face no such disruption before the end of KS2.

82. Secondly, while there is no reason to suppose that the quality of teaching staff varies across the phases, there are challenges to teaching in non-standard school types, and these are likely to be exacerbated during periods in which large numbers of children are not working at an age-expected level (as is the case post-Covid). Teachers in middles and extended secondaries are less likely to have had experience teaching younger children (ie KS1). They are therefore more likely to be challenged by some of the catch-up/ foundational aspects of helping Year 6 children who are well behind to catch up. These schools are also much less likely to have the lower level books and concrete resources that support younger learners which would be readily available in primary schools. Disadvantaged pupils who need more support, better resources and better teaching to help them catch up, are possibly less likely to be able to access these in a middle or extended secondary school.
83. Finally, we know there are recruitment challenges in middle schools. Not only is it a school type that is very rare anywhere else in the country – which makes some teachers look askance when considering their future career progression – it also often requires teachers to teach across an age range that is no longer routinely covered within teacher training (most courses focus on primary or secondary). Added to that in recent years has been uncertainty about CBC's change programme, with some lack of clarity as to how and when schools might be changing within a two-tier system. All of these mean that jobs in middle schools are likely to be less attractive to someone who enjoys teaching KS2 than a primary school. More supply teachers, more teachers teaching outside of the age for which they were qualified – these will impact disproportionately on disadvantaged learners.

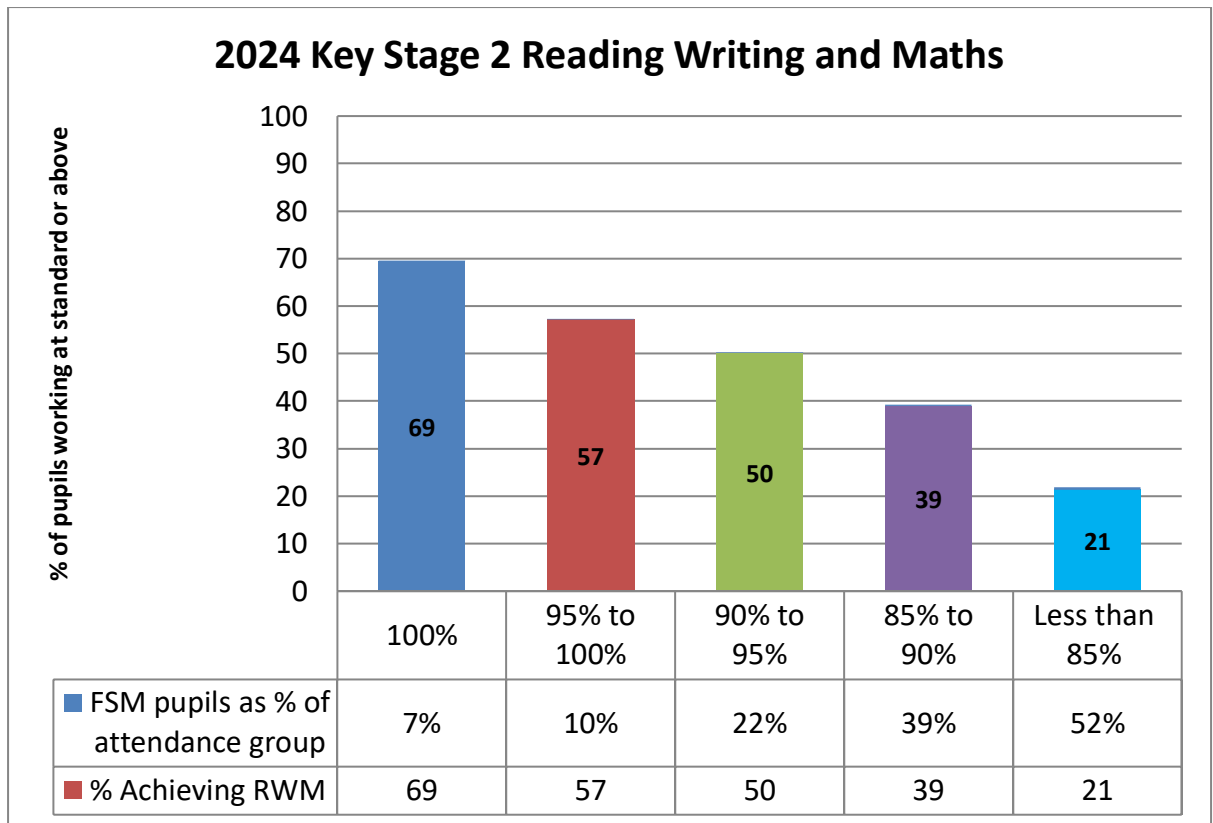
What do the KS2 results tell us about this particular cohort?

84. The consistent relative underperformance of pupils eligible for FSM across all the KS2 subjects is no surprise. This year group and the one to come in 2024/25 were hit by school closures at an absolutely foundational stage in their education. The 2024 KS2 cohort missed March to July in 2020 when they would have been in Year 1, and a significant period of time in Year 2, just when they were beginning to be settled back into school routines. These are the periods in which they would normally be securing their phonic knowledge and embedding an understanding of number and mathematical operations.
85. There is considerable evidence of many factors which are likely to have disproportionately affected learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds during the period disrupted by Covid:
- a. Disruption and turmoil: the uncertainty around school opening, changes to routines, different room layouts, less consistency in which adults were in the classroom – all are likely to have taken more of a toll on disadvantaged learners.
 - b. Home support and resourcing: the resources of parents in terms of time, ability, understanding and interest will have varied hugely during the critical period of 'homeschooling'. Although the DfE made laptops available for vulnerable learners, that alone will not have been enough to provide a decent

substitute for school or enable a child to keep up with peers in a home where strong support was available for home learning.

- c. There is extensive evidence (collated by the Education Endowment Foundation) that weaknesses in teaching hit the most vulnerable pupils the hardest. Coming back to relative normality post-Covid, schools faced an unprecedented spread of attainment and readiness to progress through the curriculum. Teachers had to teach content that should have been covered in prior years, possibly without ever having taught it before. This is particularly true of phonics. The teaching of phonics is highly specialised and skilled, and consistent practice is key to children being able to keep up. Pre-Covid, many KS2 teachers had little or no experience of teaching phonics, but children were arriving in Year 3 with huge gaps in their phonic knowledge, and unable to read. To a lesser extent, teaching the foundational aspects of maths in Year 1 and 2 is quite different from building on those foundations in later years. Where less vulnerable learners appear to have caught up to a large extent and managed to cope with all of the above and with teachers who were tackling unfamiliar areas, the most disadvantaged have made much less progress, widening an already wide gap.

86. This cohort of disadvantaged pupils will need continuing additional support throughout their secondary years because they will have arrived in secondary school much less well equipped to deal with the challenges of the KS3 curriculum. We know that many of our secondary schools have recruited teachers with KS2 expertise to meet the needs of these children, but such is the learning loss already, and so challenged are schools in terms of resourcing, it is likely that their underperformance will continue through to KS4.
87. One challenge that runs through all phases of education which is heightened for disadvantaged pupils is poor attendance. The graph below shows children grouped into bands by attendance, with the proportion of children in each band who achieved the EXS in Reading, Writing and Maths in Y6. The first row beneath the graph shows the proportion of children within each attendance band who are FSM.



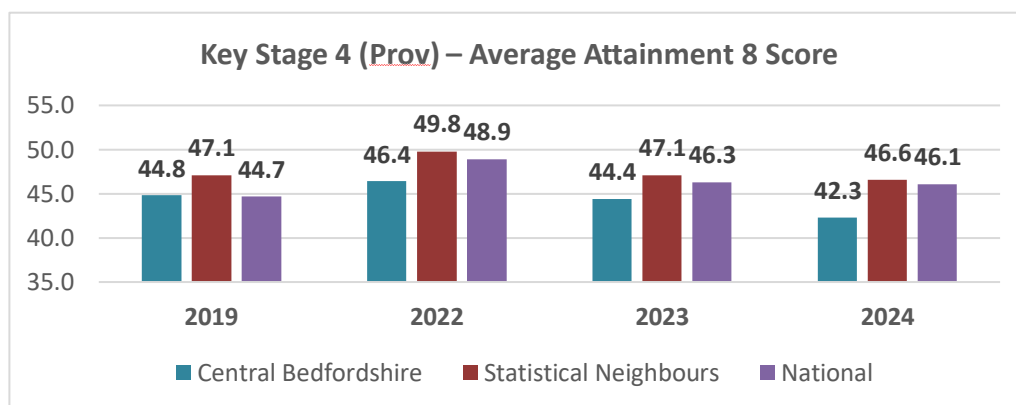
88. The link between attendance and attainment is starkly shown in this graph. FSM children, who overall made up around 17% of this cohort, make up 52% of the lowest attendance band. In contrast, they are under-represented in the two highest attendance bands. Actions to improve attendance are discussed further towards the end of this report.

KS4 Performance data

Attainment 8

89. Attainment 8 is a measure of the combined scores across 8 key GCSE subjects. English and maths carry a heavy weighting within the group of results measured.

90. The CBC attainment 8 score (42.3) and has been below the national average (46.1% 2024) for three years. The gap to national of 3.8 points is the widest it has been since pre-Covid.



91. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment 8 of 27.3 points represented a drop of 2.3 points in comparison to non-FSM pupils' drop of 2.1 points. The disadvantage gap therefore widened slightly. The national figure for disadvantaged pupils was 34.7. While this was down slightly from the 35.1 points achieved in 2023, the national drop for disadvantaged pupils of 0.4 was much smaller than that of CBC's disadvantaged cohort.
92. Attainment declined for all pupils with an EHCP. There was a 1.9-point decrease from 15.4 in 2023 to 13.5 in 2024. The national figure for EHCP children was 14.2 a slight increase from 2023 (14.0), so CBC's performance moved from above national to below national.
93. Attainment for SEND support improved from 28.8 in 2023 to 30.0 in 2024, but remains below national. The national figure for SEND Support children was 33.1, a slight decrease from 2023 (33.3).
94. Attainment for Boys declined by 2.5 from 42.7 in 2023 to 40.2 in 2024. National average also saw a 0.3 decline from 44.2 in 2023 to 43.9 in 2024.
95. Girls declined by -1.4 from 46.0 in 2023 to 44.6 in 2024. National average also saw a 0.3 decline from 48.7 in 2023 to 48.4 in 2024.
96. Attainment 8 in Upper schools (44.6) is better than secondary schools (41.3). This might be a reflection of deprivation and location, with secondary schools having 17% FSM children, compared with just under 12% in upper schools, but the performance of FSM children was slightly better in secondaries, while non-FSM children did better in upper schools.

Progress 8

97. Progress 8 is a measure of average progress from the end of KS2. 0 would represent average progress, so negative scores indicate value lost between Y6 and GCSEs. Average progress 9 in CBC declined from 2023's -0.12 to -0.24 in 2024, and 8 remains below national. Again, upper schools outperform secondaries, this time for both FSM and non-FSM pupils. This suggests that the

impact on transition from middle to upper, is less damaging than the transition from lower to middle.

98. FSM: Progress 8 declined from 2023 (-0.85) to -0.97 in 2024. Nationally this slightly improved, from -0.58 in 2023 to -0.57 in 2024.
99. The progress 8 score for EHCP pupils declined when compared to 2023 -0.99 to -1.27 in 2024. This is lower than the 2024 national progress 8 score of -1.13, a slight decrease -1.12 in 2023.
100. Progress 8 for pupils identified as requiring SEND support also declined from -0.59 in 2023 to -0.71 in 2024. This is lower than the 2024 national progress 8 score of -0.45 which was unchanged from 2023.
101. Girls' progress 8 declined to -0.10 in 2024 from -0.03 in 2023. Nationally the 2024 figure is 0.09, a decrease from 0.12 in 2023.
102. Boys' progress 8 declined by 0.17 from -0.20 in 2023 to -0.37 in 2024. Nationally the 2024 figure is -0.15, an increase from -0.17 in 2023.
103. Non-ever 6 pupils have also declined from 0.00 in 2023 to -0.12 in 2024. Nationally this slightly increased 0.13 in 2023 to 0.14 in 2024.
104. The progress of upper schools (-0.10) is above the CBC (-0.24) average
 - a. Secondary (-0.39) declined from 2023 (-0.21)
 - i. 1 out of the 8 secondary schools achieved a progress score above 0

Pupils achieving a grade 5 or above in GCSE Maths and English

105. Pupils achieving 9-5 declined between 2023 (42.6%) and 2024 (40.3%) a 2.3% decrease. The national average rose from 45.3 to 46.2 meaning that the gap between CBC and national widened to 6%.
106. FSM pupils performed worse than non-FSM. FSM pupils have gradually declined in this measure since 2019 and in 2024 only 14.6% achieved these grades, compared with 44.6% of their non-FSM peers. The gap between the CBC FSM result and the national figure of 26% is 10.4%, while the non-FSM gap was at 8% (national non-FSM is 52.6%).
107. EHCP pupils have declined on this measure from 4.5% last year to 3.9% in 2024. This is below the 2024 national figure of 7.0%
108. The percentage of girls achieving grade 5 or above declined from 44.3% in 2023 to 42.1% in 2024. This is below the national figure of 48.6%.

109. Boys declined from 41.0% in 2023 to 38.6% in 2024. This is below the national figure of 44.0%.

Pupils achieving a grade 4 or above in GCSE Maths and English

110. Pupils achieving 9-4 declined from 2023 by 2.2% from 64.2% to 62.2%. This means that 9-4 performance is now below the national average (65.4%).

111. FSM6 pupils declined in performance from 36.0% in 2023 to 32.1% in 2024. This is below the national of 43.6%. Non- FSM6 pupils also declined in performance from 69.2% in 2023 to 67.2% in 2024. This is below the national of 72.3%, but results in a smaller gap to national (5.1%) than the FSM gap of 11.5%.

112. Pupils with an EHCP declined on this measure from 14.1% in 2023 to 12.1% in 2024. This is below the national figure of 13.0 which remained the same from 2023.

113. Pupils requiring SEND support improved on this measure from 26.6% in 2023 to 35.2% in 2024. This is below the national figure of 37.8%, which also improved from 2023 (36.9%)

114. Boys declined from 62.9% in 2023 to 58.5% in 2024, below the national figure of 62.9%. Girls remained the same in performance on this measure at 66%, but below the national of 67.9%.

KS5 Performance data

A-Level Qualifications (1113 students)

115. The 2024 Central Bedfordshire average point score per entry for A-Level Students is **31.5 - Grade C**, 0.9 pts increase from 2023 (30.6 C)

116. Central Bedfordshire is 3.3 points below the statistical neighbour average (34.8) and 2.9 points below the national average (34.4)

117. Central Bedfordshire is ranked 11/11 against the statistical neighbours; compared to 11/11 in 2023.

118. Central Bedfordshire is ranked 127/150 against the national ranking; compared to a ranking of 133/152 in 2023, Central Bedfordshire remains in the bottom quartile nationally.

Technical level Qualifications (123 students)

119. The 2024 Central Bedfordshire average point score per entry for technical Level **28.0 – Merit+**, 1.0 pt decrease from 2023 (29.0 Merit+)
120. Central Bedfordshire is 0.8 point below the statistical neighbour average (28.8) and 0.1 points below the national average (28.1)
121. Central Bedfordshire is ranked 5/11 against the statistical neighbours, compared to 4/11 in 2023.
122. Central Bedfordshire is ranked 76/146 against the national ranking; compared to a ranking of 65/150 in 2023. Central Bedfordshire moves down one to the 3rd quartile nationally.

Applied General Qualification (642 students)

123. The 2024 Central Bedfordshire average point score per entry for Applied General Students is **30.0 (Distinction-)**, which is 0.4 pts increase from 2023 (29.6 Merit+)
124. Central Bedfordshire is 1.3 point above the statistical neighbour average (28.7) and 0.9 points above the national average (29.1).
125. Central Bedfordshire is ranked 3/11 against the statistical neighbours, compared to being 4/11 in 2023.
126. Central Bedfordshire is ranked 54/150 against the national ranking; compared to a ranking of 72/150 in 2023. Central Bedfordshire remains in the 2nd quartile nationally.

Actions already taken to address KS4 and KS5 specific issues

- 127.** All but two of CBC's secondary and upper schools are academies (and one of the maintained schools is in the process of transition to secondary and will not have students sitting GCSEs until 2026-27). This limits the influence CBC officers can have on performance. Nonetheless, we include all secondary and upper schools in invitations to join professional study groups and some are active in the Pupil Premium lead network.

The disadvantage context in Central Bedfordshire

128. The underperformance of FSM/disadvantaged pupils is a consistent theme running through all of these results – as it has been for many years. The table below shows our underperformance compared to national results, split into FSM and non-FSM.

Measure	CBC non-FSM	National non-FSM	Gap tp national non-FSM	CBC FSM	National FSM	Gap tp national FSM
EYFS GLD %	72	72	0	43	52	-9
Y1 Phonics %	82	84	-2	54	68	-14
Y6 RWM%	58	67	-9	27	46	-19
Y6 Reading %	78	80	-2	49	63	-14
Y6 Writing %	70	78	-8	41	59	-18
Y6 Maths %	73	79	-7	41	59	-18
Attainment 8	44.8	49.7	-4.9	27.5	34.7	-7.3
Progress 8	-0.12	0.14	-0.26	-0.97	-0.57	-0.41

129. While we lag behind national results for non-FSM once children get past EYFS, it is the picture for our FSM pupils that is most worrying. Moreover, the challenges for schools of meeting the needs of these children, who are substantially behind where they should be, is likely to impact on outcomes for non-FSM children too. It is therefore worth exploring the particular CBC context in relation to disadvantage to try to understand why there is such consistent underperformance.

130. CBC is not at first sight anywhere near as deprived as some inner city or coastal areas, but our disadvantaged pupils consistently perform close to the bottom on national tables. There are a number of factors which appear to play a part in this persistent underperformance.

131. The first factor is based in fact that the nature of economic disadvantage varies markedly geographically around the country. There is evidence to suggest that children eligible for FSM in CBC come from families whose economic situation is challenging over a long period of time. Whereas in many parts of the country, there is transient poverty, in CBC it is more likely to be long term/ permanent.

132. Once a pupil becomes eligible for FSM, they attract the PP grant for six years (Ever 6). If a pupil remains eligible throughout their schooling, their school will get the PPG every year, and that pupil will have been in relative poverty every year. If a pupil falls out of the eligibility criteria after one year, there will be five years in which the school receives the PPG, but the pupil is not in relative poverty.

133. Research carried out by Durham University found a clear link between the disadvantage attainment gap and duration of eligibility. The researchers re-cast disadvantage gap data taking account of the rates of long-term FSM eligibility. This study showed CBC performing better than average in terms of the adjusted attainment gap, ie in the top half of the table, rather than near the bottom. Rather than losing value over the course of their education, this study showed that schools slightly added value, considering families' economic circumstances

134. If this explanation of CBC’s consistently poor performance has validity, the implication is not that we should be less concerned. Rather, it points to a need to support schools in intervening earlier and look holistically at how families and EY settings can be supported to ensure children are better able to thrive when they start school. Recent changes at the national level (eg to the Early Years Framework and to recommendations on the teaching of maths) are based on the presumption that ensuring children keep up is more effective than helping them to catch up. Anything that can be done to improve school-readiness is likely to have a bigger impact than interventions throughout a child’s school years.
135. Data referenced earlier in this paper on the development checks carried out on babies and young children points to a second factor which almost certainly impacts on our very poor outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This data paints a stark picture of children’s development before they enter any form of education. The table below summarises the outcomes of child development checks carried out on 2-2½ year-olds in 2022/23:

Area	% of children aged two to two-and-a-half judged as meeting expectations for their age					
	Communication skills	Gross motor skills	Fine motor skills	Problem solving	Personal and social skills	All five areas
England	85.3%	92.8%	92.6%	91.8%	90.3%	79.2%
East of England	89.8%	94.1%	95.8%	93.8%	91.1%	84.7%
Central Bedfordshire	60.3%	73.9%	75.4%	72.9%	71.4%	53.8%
CBC ranking out of 145 LAs	138	142	137	140	140	139

136. It is very early days for the Wellcomm pilot, but initial data is showing a very similar picture to this. Screenings are taking place mainly with children aged 2-5 and our first sample of 1,400 children screened showed only 49% working at the expected level for their age.

137. CBC has an extensive offer of training for EY providers – childminders, pre-schools and nurseries – and much work has been done to ensure sufficient places in EY settings to meet the Government’s pledge on places for 2- and 3-year-olds. However, while there are sufficient places in CBC, take up of provision for two-year olds is lower than in most other parts of the country (CBC ranks 148 out of 153 LAs, and only 59% of two-year-olds access EY education, compared with 75% nationally). While this situation has turned round by the time children are three and four, settings are increasingly having to work on skills that should have been in place much earlier, and so many children enter their next stage of education further behind.
138. While the child development data does not allow analysis of the impact of disadvantage, it is almost certainly the case that the gaps we see in the school years will be reflected in development delays at the earliest points. There is also evidence to suggest that the numbers of our youngest children who are economically disadvantaged is growing. Income checks are straightforward when parents apply for pre-school and nursery places, and EY settings receive Early Years Pupil Premium for qualifying pupils. In CBC the proportion of EYPP children rose by 3%, in contrast with a 6% decline nationally. This suggest that we will have a larger proportion of disadvantaged pupils in school from next year.
139. These pupils may not be immediately evident in the school system because once a child is in school, they automatically get free school meals until the end of Year 2. Because there is no automatic or easy way to check on whether the Pupil Premium criteria are met, and no need for families to apply for FSM until their child enters Year 3, the numbers of disadvantaged children that we know about drop between the end of pre-school/nursery and the start of school. Work is underway to explore auto-enrolment options, where a parent would opt out of FSM rather than having to actually apply, but this will require IT systems changes.
140. Poor start points and growing numbers of disadvantaged pupils all point to a need to improve the quality of teaching for all pupils – those with the greatest disadvantage will suffer the most from weaker teaching. Unfortunately, there is a third factor to CBC’s disadvantage profile which makes it even harder for schools to do all the work that would be needed to overcome the additional challenges created by long-term poverty. The size of the FSM-eligible population overall in CBC may be growing, but it is well below the national average, and numbers of FSM pupils in individual are often very small.
141. Taking the 2024 KS2 cohort, CBC had roughly half as many pupils eligible for pupil premium funding as the national average (18.1% CBC, 30.3% national). This means they attract less funding and therefore have fewer options around spending it. For many of our lower schools, the funding amounts to less than the salary of one TA.
142. With fewer children, cohort variations make data analysis and trend identification harder at the school level. Small cohorts mean that the presence of one PP child with an EHCP makes a huge difference to that school’s disadvantage gap. For CBC, this means it is very difficult to say that a particular school consistently underperforms. This has become even more of an issue now that we have fewer statutory data points.

143. Compared with schools where 50% PP is the norm (as might well be the case in many London boroughs, or towns like Luton), a school that has two or three children per class will typically have less well-established mechanisms for identifying and addressing specific barriers to learning arising from economic disadvantage.
144. The fourth factor is that, with some exceptions in CBC's urban centres, there is less economic disadvantage in many areas across CBC than is typical across the country. This means there are fewer embedded community-based services to support disadvantaged families. Compared with, eg Luton, many of our poorer children will not live within easy walking or public transport access to a library or sports centre. There are not the faith-based additional education or family support centres that would be found in more urban areas. So while there are fewer children in economic disadvantage, there is less around to help them outside school.
145. Finally, attendance in CBC is almost the lowest in the country when we look at disadvantaged pupils in the primary year groups. Whereas CBC's non-FSM absence rates in primary (4.6%) were very close to the national average (4.5%), when we look at FSM pupils, there is a wide gap: CBC's figure is 10.4%, the national is only 7.8%. The DfE classifies pupils with absence of more than 10% as a 'persistent absentee'. In CBC, 36.7% of our persistent absentees are FSM (which, given they make up only around 15% of overall primary pupil numbers means they are more than twice as likely as a non-FSM pupil to be persistently absent), compared with the national proportion of 26.1%. On both of these measures CBC is ranked 152 out of 152 LAs.

What is being done to try to address the disadvantage gap?

146. Improving the quality of teaching overall disadvantages no pupil and disproportionately helps disadvantaged pupils. Much of the School Improvement Team's focus in their work with individual schools or in commissioning or brokering support is therefore focused on improving the quality of education.
147. The LA's legal responsibilities for school improvement are limited to maintained schools. The current make-up of academy and maintained schools is below:

	Nursery	Infant	Junior	Lower	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Upper	Special	Alt Prov
Academy	0	0	0	26	19	10	9	5	2	1
Maintained	2	1	1	38	14	1	2	0	2	0
TOTAL	2	1	1	62	33	11	11	5	4	1

148. While the direct work of School Improvement Advisers (SIAs) to challenge and support school leaders is limited to maintained schools, wider initiatives are offered to academies on a cost recovery basis.
149. The success in Ofsted inspections of schools that have received the most intensive support from SIAs evidences the impact of their work. Quality of Education is a key focus within Ofsted inspections. Targeted support via the SIT has supported 92% (55/60) of maintained schools retaining a Good or Better rating; this compares with the CBC academies figure of 87% (62/71).
150. A large proportion of the funding allocated by Central Government for school improvement is delegated to schools and in CBC the Schools Forum voted for this to be handed over to CBC to manage via a School Improvement Project Board (SIPB). This is a group of maintained school headteachers who consider bids from groups of schools, with the criteria for approval including a need to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
151. Among the projects approved last year by the SIPB were the writing CPD mentioned earlier, EY projects, emotional well-being work and a project to enrich children's wider life experiences (often referred to as 'cultural capital'). This project included Year 7 children from Sandy Secondary and the school monitored pupils' achievement points and attendance to try to assess impact. Comparing data from last year with the previous year, there was a 43% increase on positive behaviour points, and attendance improved from 96.6% to 98.6%.
152. Behavioural problems are a barrier to learning for a greater proportion of disadvantaged children than their non-disadvantaged peers. This is evidenced in schools' behaviour management data as well as, in the worst cases, exclusion data. CBC has invested in training for all schools in Therapeutic Thinking. This is a scheme in which schools develop an explicit curriculum for behaviour and train staff to teach expectations in a positive way and to unpick children's difficulties with meeting those expectations in the same forensic way they would with any other area of the curriculum.
153. The creation of a 0.5 School Improvement Lead (SIL) role with a focus on disadvantaged has enabled the establishment of a support network for Pupil Premium leads in schools and academies. To date around a third of schools and academies have engaged with this group. CPD has been commissioned for them and the group has met regularly to share best practice.
154. From the wider network, a need was identified to support PP leads with their statutory responsibility to produce an annual strategy and evaluation document. The SIL brought together local groups of 3-5 schools across the county and facilitated them as peer support groups to improve the quality of identification of barriers to attainment and impact evaluation. In total, 15 schools produced more focused Pupil Premium strategy documents as a result of this work.
155. The SIL has begun to work with individual schools, targeting those with larger numbers of FSM pupils and poorer results than the CBC average. This work is aimed at sharpening schools' focus on the barriers to attainment for FSM pupils and enhancing their understanding of how best to overcome these barriers. 12 schools are currently engaged with this process and in many cases, the need is for a strengthening of schools' impact evaluation processes so that they can focus their very limited resources on more precisely identifying and then targeting FSM pupils' needs with approaches that are effective.
156. The Wellcomm pilot was initiated by the SIL and uses funding from a public health budget. It is aimed at trying to address the disadvantage gap as early as possible. If it is successful in accelerating disadvantaged children's communication and language development, then the

challenge once children are in school and progressing through the key stages will be to keep up, rather than having to catch up. The public health justification for this expenditure is clear given the links between low educational outcomes, low attendance and the risks of exploitation, substance abuse and poor mental health.

157. Finally, the Access & Inclusion Team work with schools and academies trying to support improved attendance. One recent initiative is a system called Studybugs which allows for live access to all schools/academies register within CBC. This system has been adapted to allow for individual children to be alerted to a School Attendance Officer when their absence levels reach a certain threshold. Once an alert is received, then the circumstances surrounding the child are looked into and the school contacted to give relevant advice and or support, so intervention can take place as swiftly as possible. The Studybugs system allows for the absence levels of specific cohorts of children to be looked at in greater detail to identify where there are trends or concerns. These groups include FSM, EHCP, SEND support etc.
158. Due to the introduction of the DFE Start Guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' the role of the LA in relation to School Attendance has changed and now requires schools to take on more of the practical interventions themselves. To support this, a 'School Attendance Roadmap' has been created and circulated to schools. It contains guidance and resources to address absence within their school up until the point where the LA is required to step in to discharge its statutory responsibilities.
159. As patterns of attendance are habitual, early identification and support is essential for individual pupils in need of help. Where barriers go beyond the classroom, this requires schools, local authorities, and other partners to work together to put joint support in place as quickly as possible. To enable this to happen, the Access and Inclusion Team organises regular Targeting Support Meetings with each school.

Options for consideration

160. This report has touched upon some of the impact of the continuing three-tier element within CBC's educational landscape, and of uncertainty around future change. The three-tier to two-tier programme is obviously dependent on capital availability, but future discussions on the timing of that programme may want to bear in mind the apparently disproportionate impact on our most disadvantaged pupils.
161. Auto-enrolment for Free School Meals could generate significant additional income for schools and would enable earlier identification of disadvantaged pupils for support and targeted assistance from programmes such as the government-funded Holiday Activities Fund. Councillors may wish to consider whether this is something CBC should seek to accelerate.
162. Poor outcomes for children in CBC in early child development checks and the early initial data from our Wellcomm pilot suggest there is more that could be done to reduce the gap that opens long before children enter education. CBC was not awarded national funding for family hubs, but the longer-term costs of educational under-performance might be considered so significant that local funding should be identified to try to support parents to boost their children's chances of being school-ready.

Reason/s for decision

Council priorities

163. The report supports Central Bedfordshire's 2050 Vision, specifically, for Central Bedfordshire to become the best place to live and work and the vision for an education system that is truly inclusive, closes the skills gap, helps our young people into great jobs and supports our older generations in lifelong learning.

Legal Implications

164. Section 13A of the Education Act 1996 imposes a duty on a local authority to ensure that their relevant education functions are exercised with a view to: promoting high standards; ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom the sub-section applies", namely persons under the age of 20, or aged 20 or over and for whom an EHC Plan is maintained.
165. This report provides a summary of school performance for 2023-4 and the actions being taken to support school improvement.

Financial and Risk Implications

166. No financial risks have been identified.

Equalities and Fairness Implications

167. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

168. This statutory duty includes requirements to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

169. The proposal in the report is not envisaged to have an adverse impact on any of the listed groups in Table 2: -

Table 2

Groups	
Sex	None
Gender Reassignment	None
Age	None
Disability	None
Race & Ethnicity	None

Sexual Orientation	None
Religion or Belief (or No Belief)	None
Pregnancy & Maternity	None
Human Rights	None
Other Groups (rural isolation etc.)	None

Biodiversity and Sustainability Implications

170. The broader definition of sustainability as defined by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) which underpin the Council's approach to sustainability, includes quality education, in addition to goals focusing on energy efficiency and carbon reduction.

171. The proposals covered in this paper will support this by helping improve the quality of education.

Other Corporate Implications

172. There are no other corporate implications

Conclusion and next steps

173. It is the intention of officers moving forward to :

- Continue to act in accordance with CBC's attendance strategy, developing suitable actions with schools
- Consult, publish and act upon the newly developed Education and Skills strategy
- Review with Headteachers via the maintained school improvement planning board, project proposals for 2024 which address the needs identified in this report.
- Continue to work with schools transitioning from 3 tier to 2 tier to help reduce the likelihood of poor KS2 results in the school's first assessment year.
- Continue to support schools at KS2 in respect of writing moderation

- Encourage closer links between schools in CBC and the English, Maths, Science and IT hubs serving the local area.
- Develop via a local talent network additional school improvement support
- Secure via local professional study groups greater peer to peer support

Appendices

Appendix A – School Performance Presentation

Background Papers

- None

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