

## **Attainment Gap**

### **Summary**

1. This report provides Members with information about outcomes for the academic year 2023-24 of disadvantaged pupils and the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers using eligibility for Pupil Premium Grant as a proxy for economic disadvantage.

### **Background**

2. Our ambition is for children and young people to have access to learning throughout their lives to equip them with the skills to succeed and to support our schools to allow all young people to achieve to the best of their abilities. The 2023-24 outcomes for all pupils continue to demonstrate York's strong education system. York has some of the best-performing schools in the country and enables most of our children and young people to reach levels of attainment above the national average. However, the same cannot be said for disadvantaged children and young people.
3. Historically, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged children and young people in York have been below national averages. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and young people and their peers was narrowing; however, since the pandemic, the attainment gap has widened. This underscores the urgent need for targeted strategies, such as Early Talk for York (ETfY), which takes an evidenced-based approach to improve speech, language, and communication. York School Academies Board (YSAB) and other education system leaders are working collaboratively to address the underperformance of our disadvantaged children and young people in York.

4. **Disadvantaged characteristics of children of school age in York.** 4,518 out of 22,950 school age children, 19.7%, are eligible for Pupil Premium, 9.5% lower than the national average of 29.2%. The number and percentage of disadvantaged children and young people have increased by 512 (2.7%) pupils, from 4,006 (17.3%) in 2022-23 to 4,518 in 2023-24.
5. In York, 27.4% (1,121) of disadvantaged pupils have special educational needs, 2.1% lower than the national average of 29.5%. Furthermore, 14.9% (609) of disadvantaged pupils are of minority ethnicity, 22.5% lower than the national average of 37.4%. Similarly, 8.1% (330) of disadvantaged pupils have a first language other than English, 12.2% lower than the national average of 20.3%.
6. **Absence and persistent absence** of York's disadvantaged cohort have an Overall Absence of 12.9%, 2.8% higher than the national average for disadvantaged cohort and 7.4% higher than York LA's non-disadvantaged peers. York's disadvantaged cohort's Overall Absence has increased by 0.3% from 12.6% in 2022/23, to 12.9% in 2023/24. The disadvantaged pupils in York are in percentile 100 for Overall Absence when compared to other LAs. 36.1% of York LA's disadvantaged cohort are persistently absent, 4.4% higher than the national average for disadvantaged cohort and 21.6% higher than York LA's non-disadvantaged peers.
7. The higher-than-average absence and persistent absence of the disadvantaged cohort in York compared to their non-disadvantaged peers nationally and in York have a detrimental impact on their educational outcomes. Therefore, the Attendance and Inclusion team have strengthened their offer to schools through a graduated response creating a strong universal response for schools and targeted support, including working with support agencies, as an important route to improving attendance of disadvantaged pupils in a solution focussed way.
8. The universal offer includes a) identifying students causing concern, b) direct support from appropriate pastoral staff, with clear escalation to Head of House/Year and Pastoral Leader for long term cases, c) evidence of support with regard to any bullying concerns.
9. As part of targeted support we will working with parents to seek support and engagement with outside agencies include Early Help, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Changing Lives, York Minds, The Island and the School Wellbeing Service.

## **Action to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people**

10. **The York Schools and Academies Board (YSAB)** will take the lead on the delivery of task and finish workstreams (progress to be reported to Schools Forum) focused on whole city priorities that include improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. The outcomes YSAB wants to achieve are developing a focus on understanding the barriers to achievement for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This will include gathering children's and young people's voices, focusing on belonging and improving participation. The working groups will help produce a whole-city plan to try and address the disadvantaged attainment gap by building on good practices. They will consider methods of systematically sharing best practices.
11. YSAB has set up three working groups within the disadvantaged work stream, which are:
  - i. EEF Evidence Exploration Partnership – This working group, Huntington Research School, will lead the partnership in collaboration with YSAB. The overarching purpose of the partnership is to work together to investigate the causes of the disadvantaged attainment gap in York and to use evidence and local expertise to co-develop solutions to contribute to closing the attainment gap for these pupils.
  - ii. Poverty Proofing – This working group will look at funding opportunities to deliver poverty-proofing work in schools. Children North East (CNE), a large North East regional children's charity, have developed a bespoke proposal for the City of York Council to look at poverty-proofing schools. Poverty Proofing the School Day is a groundbreaking national programme that aims to ensure that 'no activity or planned activity in school should identify, exclude, treat differently or make assumptions about those with less financial resource' CNE. The heart of this work is speaking to every single child within a school to understand the barriers faced by those living in poverty.
  - iii. The Traveller Education Trust - This working group will review the Traveller Education Trust report and further information, data, and voice from York's Traveller community, including its children and young people. It will consider and explore appropriate city action to the findings within the report and additional voice collected to

champion children and young people from the community and further develop ways of achieving inclusive education.

12. **SEND** outcomes shows that many of York LA's disadvantaged children and young people face additional barriers; for example, in York, 27.4% (1,121) of disadvantaged pupils have an SEN provision. Therefore, improving provision for children and young people with educational needs is a significant priority for the city.
13. The EYFS showed a good level of development, with a measurable increase of +7.4% compared to the previous year for children receiving SEN Support. York's SEND EHCP attainment in Phonics also increased considerably, with a +7.8 % increase. At the end of Key Stage 2, 7.5% of children with an EHCP achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing & Maths (RWM), an increase of +2.2%. However, outcomes are -1.3% lower than the national SEND EHCP cohort of 8.8%. At the End of Key Stage 4, the EHCP cohort achieved an average Attainment 8 Score of 19.0, +5.0 higher than the national average. The Attainment 8 Score has increased by +2.1 points since 2022 and by a sizeable +8.7 since 2018. The LA's SEN EHCP pupils are in the 12th percentile for Attainment 8 Score compared to other LAs.
14. Also, the School Effectiveness and Achievement Quality Improvement Team's Analysis of SEND comments from Ofsted school inspections in York Local Authority from July 2021 to July 2024 about provision for children and young people with special educational needs shows an encouraging and uplifting perspective on the work achieved in school. 68% of Ofsted Inspectors commented on the effectiveness of the support given to meet the needs of children with special educational needs.
15. As identified through the Ofsted Inspection comment, the ambition of school leaders and staff, the desire to have an inclusive education system, the commitment to providing an environment that meets the needs of all learners, and the desire that children achieve well and are prepared for their next stage of learning has a positive impact on children's and young people's outcomes.
16. The School Effectiveness and Achievement Quality Improvement Team assurance reviews and discussions with school leaders consistently reaffirm commitment to an inclusive educational system. School leaders and staff across the city have attended a range of professional development opportunities, including SEND Champions, a CPD offer for the city to support SEND in mainstream run by Pathfinder and the York

Neurodiversity Programme in partnership with the ADHD Foundation. The positive impact of SEND Champions and Neurodiversity Programme training is evident in how many of our maintained schools have embraced it, leading to a shift in how SEND is viewed and led in schools. These not only impact positively those children and young people with additional needs but also those who are economically disadvantaged. However, these strategies are in their infancy, and we know much work must be done.

17. **Our pioneering Early Talk for York (ETfY) programme**, which aims to improve the speech, language, and communication outcomes of disadvantaged children, has already seen significant gains, which we aim to build on in the future. Analysis reveal a robust correlation when ETFY is implemented effectively, where the results consistently improve. For ETFY participating schools, outcomes for good level of development for disadvantaged peers enhanced by 2.2% from 47.5% in 2022/2023 to 49.7% in 2023/2024, this is in contrast to their non-disadvantaged peers whose outcomes fell by -1.6% over the same period. The improvement in disadvantaged outcomes is a testament to the positive impact of the ETFY program.
18. We will focus on developing ETfY with additional resources to support WellComm speech and language programme, including supporting parents/carers, supporting more childminders to be involved in the whole approach, adjusting our model of ETFY specialist support as the approach grows and seeking to start an independent evaluation of the approach.
19. We will continue to champion children from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups whose outcomes are below those of their peers nationally and ensure that gaps in achievement between different groups of children and young people are closing.

## **Consultation**

20. No formal consultation has been taken; however, a range of discussions and educational meetings between professionals, settings, schools, agencies, charities and other stakeholders have taken place to understand the challenges faced in meeting the complexities of meeting the needs of disadvantaged children and young people.

## Options

21. Members may request further updates and the attendance of the relevant officer at a further meeting to clarify/update on any outstanding recommendations or agree that no further updates are required.

## Analysis

22. This report has no analysis as it is not a decision-making report.

## Council Plan

23. The Attainment GAP report relates to the Council Plan, particularly relates to:
  - i. **Best start in life** - meeting the council's aim to improve all children's outcomes with a specific focus on '*Appropriate early childhood education to deliver (on infant and parental mental health leading to) improved speech, language and communication outcomes.*'
  - ii. **Ready for the future** – meeting the council's shared ambition where '*children and young people will leave education with the qualifications and skills they need for employment, training or further study.*'

## Implications

24. To continue to prioritise gaining improved outcomes for our most disadvantaged children and young people in the City.
  - **Financial** *None required*
  - **Human Resources (HR)** *None required*
  - **Equalities** *None required*
  - **Legal** *None required*
  - **Crime and Disorder** *None required*
  - **Information Technology (IT)** *None required*
  - **Property** *None required*
  - **Other** *None required*

## **Risk Management**

25. There are no known risks.

## **Recommendations**

26. Members are asked to consider the report's contents and consider plans for ongoing scrutiny of the issues raised within the analysis of the data and the key priorities for improvement.

Reason: To ensure that the committee fully discharges its responsibilities where a local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards Section 13A of the Education Act 1996.

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**Report  
Approved**

**Date** 3 January 2025

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** N/A

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Background Papers:

None.

### Annexes

Annex A - Early Years Foundation Stage  
Annex B - Phonics expected standard Year 1  
Annex C - Phonics expected standard Year 2  
Annex D - Key Stage 2 Reading Writing and Mathematics  
Annex E - Key Stage 2 Reading expected standard  
Annex F - Key Stage 2 Writing expected standard  
Annex G - Key Stage 2 Mathematics expected standard  
Annex H - Key Stage 4 Progress 8  
Annex I - Key Stage 4 Attainment 8  
Annex J - Key Stage 4 English and Maths Grade 4+  
Annex K - Key Stage 4 English and Maths Grade 5+  
Annex L - Key Stage 4 EBacc Entered  
Annex M - Key Stage 4 EBacc APS



## **Abbreviations**

APS = Average Point Score

CNE = Children North East Charity

DFE = Department for Education

EBACC = English Baccalaureate

EEF = Education Endowment Foundation

EYFS = Early Years Foundation Stage

ETfY = Early Talk for York

Ever 6 FSM = Children in receipt of Free School Meals within the last six years

GAP = The gap between Disadvantage and non-Disadvantaged peers

GLD = Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage

KEYPAS = KeyPAS is the NCER's web-based tool for importing, cleaning, analysing and reporting on the various assessment data collections for which Local Authorities have a statutory duty to collect.

KS1 = Key Stage 1

KS2 = Key Stage 2

LA = Local Authority

MIS = Management Information System

NEXUS = National Consortium for Examination Results

SEN = Special Educational Needs

YSAB = York Schools and Academies Board