



Wakefield Annual Standards Report

Academic Year 2020/2021



wakefieldcouncil



FOREWORD

(Foreword by Cllr Isherwood & Vicky Schofield)



Cllr Margaret Isherwood

Cabinet Member for
Children & Young People

Handwritten signature of Margaret Isherwood in black ink.



Vicky Schofield

Acting Corporate Director,
Children & Young
People's service

Handwritten signature of Vicky Schofield in black ink.

Welcome to the 2022 Annual Standards Report. This report covers the academic year 2020/2021. For a second year, Covid-19 has meant that the information on pupil and school performance is limited.

But for the second year, it has been a story of successes of a different nature. In a year when we moved from optimism in September 2020, to the darkest of times in early January 2021, the common feature once more was the resourcefulness and endeavour of those who place children and families at the heart of all they do.

We have seen schools return to their primary role as educators with the legal expectation placed on schools to provide remote education. Through the creation of the Wakefield Connect programme, local councillors were pleased to enhance the government's initiatives to address digital poverty by providing computer equipment to disadvantaged children.

Wakefield Families Together (WFT) grew in strength and impact throughout the academic year. Increasingly, children and their families are receiving the right support at the right time. This multi-agency approach to educational, pastoral, and welfare support allowed schools to re-focus their energies on addressing pupils' learning.

The importance of a return to the routines that underpin and help stabilise every child's upbringing and mental well-being cannot be understated. The uncertainty about consistent and regular school attendance since the first days of the pandemic in March 2019 has had a marked impact. Therefore, as we move forward, improved school attendance will be a key priority across the district. It is essential every child and young person attends their school, college, or training provider every day to reap the benefit of the range of initiatives now in place.

Despite the challenges brought by Covid-19, our ambition remains for every Wakefield child to thrive at school and leave well-prepared for their adult life. You can find more information about our ambitions within the Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2022, which can be found at

www.wakefieldtogether.org.uk/Documents/cyp-plan-2019-2022.pdf.

CONTEXT

Despite all we had hoped for at the end of the 2019/20 academic year, Covid-19 continued to provide the backdrop for education in the district. Although schools gradually developed their remote education offer during the autumn term, nothing could have prepared colleagues for the rapid about-turn on the first day of the spring term when a third lockdown was introduced.

Inevitably, national tests were thrown into chaos, with teacher assessment again used instead of formal examinations. Ofsted monitored schools, before re-initiating inspections, and then again returning to monitoring schools once more.

Despite all of this, the constant throughout was the resilience and ingenuity of council officers, school leaders, and their staff. The Council's Public Health team deserve praise in particular for their tireless work; often going beyond government advice to keep students, staff, and their families safe.



Did we do what we had hoped during 2020/21?

In the previous Annual Standards Report we identified several next steps based on the district's performance in 2019/2020. These assumed the pandemic would ease and schools would return to normal much more quickly than was the reality.

Recovery

The schools advisory team returned to their traded role of supporting school improvement. Advisers continued to support headteachers as they reacted and responded to the ever-changing guidance from DfE and local public health officials.

We also continued building on the early successes of WFT, embedding integrated working practices between Council departments for the benefit of Wakefield's most vulnerable children, families, and communities.

Re-launch

We re-doubled our efforts to give every child the best start to their education. As well as renewing '50 things to do before you're 5', we introduced our early reading project 'One Wakefield' to over 60 schools in the district.

Re-integrate

In its first full year of operation, the district's four inclusion panels met monthly and contributed to a significant drop in permanent exclusions, which almost halved the previous year's figures.

Re-invigorate

The pandemic highlighted the importance of the education system, in its entirety, working in collaboration. Dialogue between education providers has never been more focused. The collective understanding of poverty, children's mental and physical well-being, and the potential for the integrated services approach of Wakefield Families Together to address these issues are all giving rise to a sense of optimism about what is possible.

Revenue

The traded services and schools business support teams built on their rapid learning from the first lockdown – identifying and improving the range and quality of the virtual offer to schools. Nevertheless, traded revenue was again hurt by the cancellation of face-to-face events. Looking ahead, a new service level agreement for school improvement advisory support for early years, and the introduction of inspections for outstanding school, are expected to assist in raising revenue during 2021/22.

Learn more about Traded Services at www.tradedservices.wakefield.gov.uk/AboutUs.

SEND

Around 8,400 (15.6%) of school age children in Wakefield have been identified as having a special educational need or disability (January 2021 school census). This is in line with national and Yorkshire and Humber averages but below our statistical neighbour average.

During 2020/21, Wakefield saw an increase in the proportion of school aged pupils with SEN support (from 11.9% to 12.2%). This figure is in line with the national figure (12.2%), below Yorkshire and Humber (12.4%), and well below our statistical neighbours (13.0%).

The three main primary needs for SEN support pupils are Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

The proportion with an EHCP also rose (from 3.6% to 3.8%). This is above the national figure (3.7%), Yorkshire and Humber (3.3%), and our statistical neighbour average (3.6%). The main types of need among pupils with an EHC plan are Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

Wakefield continues to have a strong working relationship with the local parent carer forum, meeting regularly to identify and resolve any emerging issues with individual schools via their link SEND professional. Settings and parents continue to access a range of support services for children and young people with SEND, including regular training.

Performance against our statutory requirements remained strong throughout the academic year. Nevertheless, national, and local research show that children and young people with SEND continue to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Visit wakefield.mylocaloffer.org for more information on SEND support available.

CHILDREN IN CARE

The virtual school has been an integral part of the improvement journey of Wakefield's children and young people's services and remains committed to this. The year has seen some significant achievements, which include:

- Completion of quality personal education plans (PEPs) well within the target rate of 90-95%, and a significant reduction in the number of PEPs quality assured and rated as less than good.
- An increase in the training delivered by the virtual school, in particular for school governors with 93 now having received training on promoting the education of children in care and previously in care.
- The introduction in September 2021 of a governing board for the virtual school. Initially a 2-year trial the board is highly committed to the oversight of the performance of the virtual school and the key indicators of success for children in care.

EARLY YEARS

A major achievement has been the development of a local authority Early Years Strategy. This has involved partners across the sector including health, education, and early help, working under the umbrella of Wakefield Families Together.

Together we've set out in the strategy our vision for early childhood in Wakefield and the key strategic priorities that will enable us to work towards achieving this vision over the next three years.

Although we have had no performance data since 2019 due to the pandemic, we know outcomes for disadvantaged children in the early years lag well behind those for all children, particularly in communication and language. In April 2021 the Early Years Development Programme finally began to be delivered involving 18 settings within the authority with the highest levels of deprivation. The one-year programme will support those involved to develop their curriculum to promote children's communication, language, and literacy. Each of the settings will achieve 'Communication Friendly Status' and have a Level 4 qualified practitioner by the end of the programme.

The '50 things to do before you're 5' programme has continued to be embedded in schools and settings, providing invaluable resources to support home learning for young children during periods of lockdown. To date 92 settings have signed up as '50 things champions' across the district to support promoting use of the app with parents and embedding the activities within their early years curriculum.

Visit wakefieldfamilies.together.co.uk/early-years for more information on early years.

ONE WAKEFIELD

One Wakefield programme is a collaborative partnership between Wakefield local authority, Wakefield system leaders, Doncaster Research School, and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

Focused on the development of early reading skills, the two-year programme provides professional learning opportunities for leaders to consider how research evidence (developed by the EEF) can inform leadership decisions, improve teaching, and ultimately improve outcomes for pupils – particularly those facing disadvantage.

Engagement with the programme has been strong with 62 schools starting the programme (52 primary, 8 secondary, one special and one secondary PRU).

Findings from an initial evaluation indicate that leaders feel participation in the programme has ‘significantly’ developed their leadership knowledge and understanding, as well as enabling them to better explore evidence and to translate this into leadership/school practice.

STRENGTHENING INCLUSION

In the years prior to 2019, levels of permanent and fixed term exclusion in Wakefield were too high, regularly exceeding the national average. Following a cross-phase review of inclusion, four inclusion panels were introduced in September 2020. Three of these are locality-based and serve secondary schools, with a further primary panel covering the whole district.

The panels meet monthly and comprise school leaders and a range of Council officers covering education, youth services, and early help. The purpose of the panels is to offer preventative support and school-to-school challenge, prior to the need for a permanent exclusion or in support of a student’s re-integration into mainstream education.

Although the academic year was punctuated with school closures and remote learning, the panels considered and offered solutions for 135 secondary and 61 primary pupils. The most positive outcome of the development of the panels was the lowest number of permanent exclusions in Wakefield’s recent history.

The annual exclusions report can be found at bit.ly/WFExclusionFigures2020 21.

POST 16

Consistently well attended the Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) Strategic Board brings together local authority officers with representatives from commerce, further education, higher education, and careers and employment support to help reduce the number of young people NEET.

After only being established this year, the board also secured the involvement of a researcher from The University of Leeds which enabled the group to learn from the experiences of other regions. This has helped to further identify and consider preventative actions for those young people most at risk of NEET.

The result has been that, compared with the previous September, the percentage of young people who are NEET has dropped from 2.4% to 1.9% in September 2021.

The board's strategy can be found at: [wakefield-NEET-strategy-2021-24.pdf](#).

ATTENDANCE

Notwithstanding the impact of the pandemic on school attendance, rates of absence were rising before 2020, with persistent absence also climbing. Both sat above the national figures.

During the first lockdown the rates of attendance for children of key workers, pupils with SEND, and children in care were consistently strong. This continued throughout the second and third lockdowns too.

Overall, during 2020/21, primary attendance was consistently higher than secondary and generally corresponded with that of local and statistical neighbours. While some of the impact on pupils' education was offset by remote learning opportunities, learning gaps became increasingly evident.

Data also suggested that much of the absence, particularly at secondary schools, was not identified as Covid-related.

Going forward, attendance will be prioritised as we strive to undo the negative impact of the pandemic on young people's academic, social, and emotional development and well-being.

DISADVANTAGE

The Covid-19 pandemic further highlighted the needs of the most vulnerable families and children in the district.

The Key groups and initiatives already highlighted in this document reflect the local authority's commitment and ambition to address social, economic, and educational disadvantage.

The continued development and embedding of Wakefield Families Together (WFT) now offers help to families at the point of need through early help and the Team Around the School (TAS). The development of Family Hubs and Youth Hubs during the coming year will add further capacity to the range of support on offer. Added to this, the recruitment of a Service Director for Health and Well-being will tighten the links and strengthen the offer between education and health.



SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

There is limited published schools' performance data available. Due to the continued Covid-19 pandemic, the summer 2021 assessments usually undertaken for Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), Key Stage 1 (KS1), and Key Stage 2 (KS2) were cancelled in their entirety.

Phonics

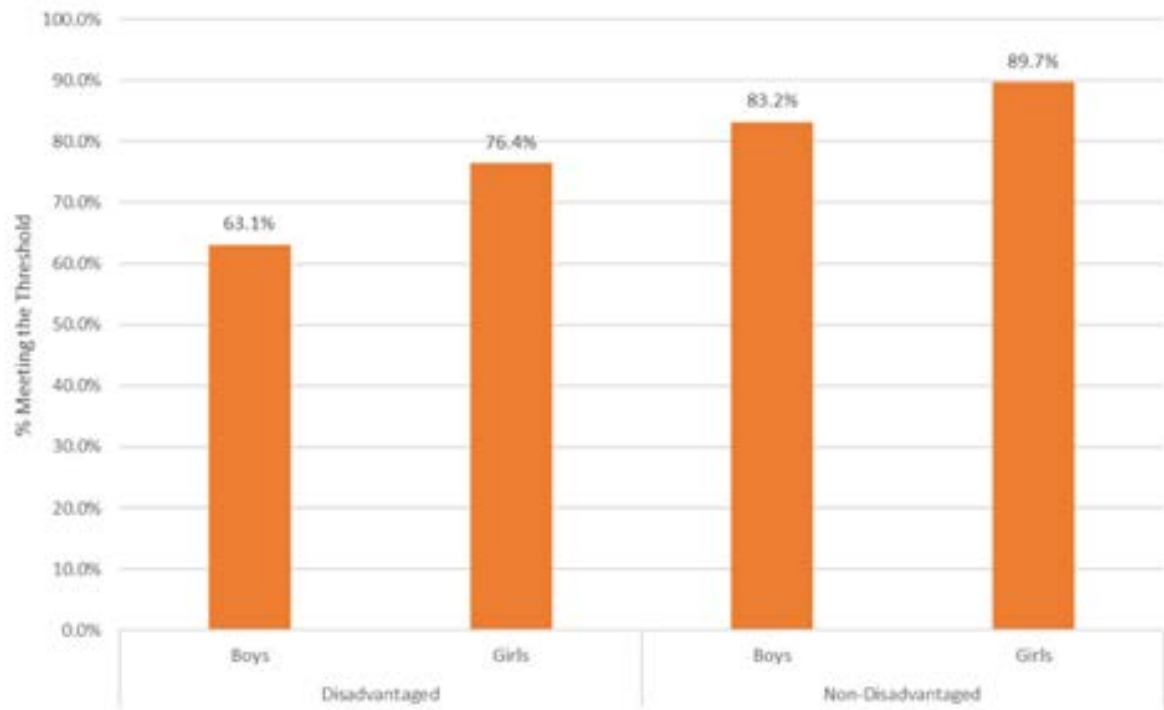
Typically, Year 1 pupils are assessed in the summer term but, due to the pandemic, Year 2 pupils were assessed in the second half of the autumn term. The change in assessment timing means it is not possible to compare with data from previous years.

83% of eligible pupils in Wakefield met the standard, compared to 79% nationally. No official statistics have been published by the Department for Education – the national figure is from the National Consortium for Examination Results (NCER).

As can be seen in the **right hand chart**, there is a 27% difference within Wakefield between the performance of disadvantaged boys compared to non-disadvantaged girls.

Whilst it is positive that Wakefield's performance was 4% above the national average, the wide range of performance, particularly by gender and disadvantage, continues. However, the One Wakefield project focus on early reading development in disadvantaged children is expected to go some way to address this, alongside the learning gaps created by periods of lost learning and development during the pandemic.

2021 Autumn Term Phonics, by Gender and Disadvantage Status



KEY STAGE 4

GCSE examinations were cancelled in 2021, as they were in 2020. However, schools were required to submit Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) to examination boards – this followed a slightly different process to 2020 so results from one year are not comparable with another.

The table below highlights the headline indicators with performance split by gender and disadvantaged status:

Key Stage 4		Wakefield				National			
		All	Boys	Girls	Diff	All	Boys	Girls	Diff
Attainment 8	All Pupils	50.1	47.0	53.4	6.4	50.9	48.1	53.9	5.8
	Disadvantaged	38.0	35.1	41.1	6.0	40.3	37.3	43.3	6.0
	Non-disadvantaged	53.8	50.7	57.2	6.5	54.7	51.9	57.7	5.8
	Gap	15.8	15.6	16.1	0.5	14.4	14.6	14.4	-0.2
% 9-5 GCSE English and Maths	All Pupils	52%	49%	56%	8%	52%	48%	56%	8%
	Disadvantaged	28%	25%	32%	7%	32%	28%	35%	7%
	Non-disadvantaged	60%	56%	64%	8%	59%	55%	63%	8%
	Gap	32%	31%	32%	1%	28%	27%	28%	1%
% 9-4 GCSE English and Maths	All Pupils	73%	70%	77%	7%	72%	69%	75%	6%
	Disadvantaged	49%	46%	53%	7%	53%	49%	57%	8%
	Non-disadvantaged	80%	77%	84%	7%	79%	76%	82%	6%
	Gap	31%	31%	31%	0%	26%	27%	25%	-2%
% Entered EBacc	All Pupils	34%	29%	39%	11%	39%	34%	44%	11%
	Disadvantaged	20%	18%	23%	5%	27%	22%	32%	10%
	Non-disadvantaged	38%	33%	45%	12%	43%	38%	49%	11%
	Gap	18%	15%	22%	7%	16%	15%	17%	1%
% 9-5 EBacc	All Pupils	19%	15%	24%	9%	22%	17%	26%	9%
	Disadvantaged	7%	5%	10%	5%	10%	7%	13%	6%
	Non-disadvantaged	23%	18%	28%	10%	26%	20%	31%	11%
	Gap	15%	13%	18%	5%	16%	13%	18%	5%
% 9-4 EBacc	All Pupils	27%	22%	32%	11%	30%	24%	35%	11%
	Disadvantaged	12%	9%	15%	6%	16%	12%	20%	8%
	Non-disadvantaged	31%	25%	37%	12%	34%	29%	40%	12%
	Gap	19%	16%	23%	6%	18%	16%	20%	4%

The data demonstrates girls outperformed boys, both nationally and in Wakefield – though the gap between the two groups is similar or slightly wider in Wakefield.

Meanwhile the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in Wakefield is wider than the gap seen nationally (except for % 9-5 EBacc).

Overall, Wakefield's performance in the Attainment 8 measure is slightly below national but is equal or better for the 2 GCSE English and maths indicators. For EBacc, Wakefield's performance is lower than national, both for entries and the performance at 9-4 and 9-5 grades.

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) indicators measure performance in 5 areas: English, mathematics, science, humanities (geography and history), and languages.

The government's ambition is to see 75% of pupils studying the EBacc subject combination at GCSE by 2022, and 90% by 2025.

KEY STAGE 5

A-Level examinations in summer 2021 were, once again, cancelled and replaced with the submission of CAGs. Consequently, results from one year are not comparable with another.

The table below shows the headline indicators for both Wakefield and national:

2021 KS5		WAKEFIELD	National	Difference between Wf and National	National Ranking (/150)
A-Levels	Number of Students	1296			
	APS per Entry	39.2	40.4	-1.2	102
	APS per 'Best 3' entries	33.4	40.2	-6.7	146
	% achieving 3 A* to A	13.9%	25.0%	-11.2%	143
	% achieving = AAB	23.1%	37.3%	-14.3%	142
	% achieving = AAB for a minimum of 2 facilitating A levels	12.0%	25.4%	-13.3%	146
	% achieving = 2 A levels	82.6%	87.9%	-5.4%	119
Academic	Number of academic students	1305			
	APS per academic entry	39.2	40.4	-1.2	101
Applied General	Number of applied general students	285			
	APS per applied general entry	31.6	32.8	-1.2	116

Key stage 5 performance at A-level in Wakefield is below national on all measures. Wakefield's Average Point Score (APS) per entry in A-levels is 1.2 points lower than the national average and ranked 102nd out of all 150 Local Authorities (LA) nationally.

Inspections

Following a suspension of all inspection activity in March 2020, Ofsted introduced 'interim visits' during the autumn of 2020. These visits were "to reassure and inform parents, government and the public about how schools are managing the return to full education for all pupils".

Building on from these, in January 2021, Ofsted started additional monitoring inspections of schools judged as requiring improvement or inadequate. These were not part of the normal monitoring of schools and were predominantly carried out remotely.

On 29 March 2021, Ofsted announced that they would not be returning to a full programme of graded inspections until September 2021 but would be resuming "on-site, lighter-touch inspections".

In total, Ofsted made 17 visits to local schools during the year all of which resulted in positive outcomes.



GOING FORWARD

Attendance

We will develop an attendance strategy for the district. This will focus on raising awareness of the importance of regular school attendance with parents and council officers. We will continue to promote the benefits of an integrated multi-agency approach to reducing persistent absence, particularly for the most vulnerable young people and their families.

Inclusion

We will continue to refine and enhance the support offer to schools to ensure all young people have the best chance of thriving in a mainstream setting. For those at risk of permanent exclusion, we will work with schools to identify and access the most appropriate support for them and their families to ensure they receive a quality education that meets their needs.

Post-16

We will build on the successes of the current NEET Strategic Board in bringing together the expertise and information necessary to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment, and training.

The focus will spread beyond those immediately identifiable as vulnerable to NEET as we attempt to identify and address earlier the issues that place any young person at risk of becoming NEET.

