

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 6 September 2023

**Subject:** Manchester Inclusion Strategy Update

**Report of:** Strategic Director for Children and Education Services

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**Summary**

This report provides an update on the implementation of Manchester’s Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 and an overview of the key priorities and next steps.

**Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to consider the content of this report and attached draft of the revised Inclusion Strategy, reflect and comment upon:

- The significant progress that has been made since the launch of both the original Inclusion Strategy in November 2019 and the refreshed 2022-25 Strategy.
  - The key priorities and next steps which have been identified for the coming academic year.
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**Wards Affected:** All

<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city
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Through the learning and education system children are informed and understand environmental issues and the negative impact of carbon; promoting safe and healthy lives.
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<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments
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Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	It is important we build a safe, healthy, happy and successful future for all of Manchester's children so that they can benefit from and contribute to the sustainability of Manchester thriving, economically diverse and successful. Children and Education Services work with all schools and early years settings in Manchester to promote children's learning and engage with those children and their families who need help, support and protection. The aim is for children to be safe, healthy and make progress in terms of education, training, social development so that they are successful and contribute and benefit from living in Manchester.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Children and young people matter in Manchester. The work of the Children and Education Directorate is driven by a commitment to provide opportunities and achieve positive outcomes, building a safe, happy, healthy and successful future for all of the city's children and young people
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Increase the influence Manchester's children and young people have on decisions that impact on them by supporting and enabling their voice to be heard; promoting a fair and inclusive place to live and work.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	A safe and effective children and education system is important to promote the awareness and inclusion of children in the engagement of wider societal issues; which together with a successful education offer make Manchester a place parents and carers choose to visit, live and work.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Continually improve outcomes and opportunities for all children and 'reduce the gap' against the national attainment average

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### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Children and Young Person's Scrutiny report on Manchester's Promoting Inclusion and Preventing Exclusion Strategy, June 2019
- Manchester Inclusion Strategy, November 2019
- Children and Young Person's Scrutiny report providing an update on the implementation of the Manchester Inclusion Strategy 8 January 2020.
- Children and Young Person's Scrutiny Committee report providing an update on the implementation of the Inclusion Strategy 2019-2022, an overview of the draft revised strategy for 2022-25 and key priorities for the coming year.
- The Manchester Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 [Policies and strategies - Manchester Inclusion Strategy | Manchester City Council](#)

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Manchester Inclusion Strategy (2019-2022) was launched in November 2019 in response to an annual increase, both locally and nationally in school exclusions over a number of years. The year long, Manchester multi-agency consultation on the reasons for these exclusions and the approaches which helped or could help to prevent exclusion indicated the need for a city-wide strategy which put a strong emphasis on promoting high-quality inclusive practice for all children and young people rather than on a more limited focus of merely preventing exclusions
- 1.2 The global, COVID-19 must clearly be acknowledged and the unprecedented changes this brought to the lives and educational experiences of children and young people, their families and to early years settings, schools and post 16 settings. Much has been learned from this period and this learning has been reflected in the revised Manchester Inclusion 2022-2025 which was launched in September 2022.  
[https://www.manchester.gov.uk/directory\\_record/376574/manchester\\_inclusion\\_strategy](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/directory_record/376574/manchester_inclusion_strategy)
- 1.3 The Manchester Citywide Inclusion Statement was developed in consultation with wide ranging partners. It states, **“We believe it is important that every child and young person in our early years’ settings, schools and post 16 provisions, whatever their age, identity, circumstance or ability, has a sense of belonging, feels respected and is valued for who they are.”** This important statement aligns fully with Manchester City Council’s ambition for the city to be ‘child friendly’ and gain UNICEF Child Friendly City accreditation.
- 1.4 The following report gives an overview of the Inclusion Strategy work that has been undertaken during 2022-23. It demonstrates the growing sense of cohesion across the rich and multiple workstreams being implemented to promote inclusion across Manchester. Through the wide-ranging work with education settings, parent, carers, children and young people and other partners it is clear, that Manchester’s conversation about inclusion has significantly expanded since 2019. Inclusion has become a vital part of the implementation of all improvement priorities and initiatives. The report acknowledges that schools’ use of suspensions and exclusions remains, in line with national trends, a challenge. It identifies the priority work to be carried out by all partners during 2023-24 to address this concern and to continue to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people through city-wide inclusive approaches.

## 2.0 Manchester Inclusion Strategy activity since July 2022.

### 2.1 Summary of what has been delivered to support improvements in inclusive universal provision

Since July 2022 the following activity has been delivered to support improvements in the universal offer to children and young people:

- Embedded a multi-agency 'Team Around the School' model for targeted schools where high levels of need have been identified. There have been five Team Around the School multiagency meetings during 2022-23. This process has led to a number of schools having different, more strengths-based conversations about young people and how best to meet their needs through a revised, whole school approach to inclusion.
- One of the biggest initial requests from education settings during the 2018 Inclusion Strategy consultation was for an Inclusion Toolkit to be developed. The Manchester Inclusion Strategy Toolkit, developed by One Education Ltd.'s Educational Psychology Team, was piloted during the summer term of 2022. The toolkit, openly available to download via the link below was launched in September 2022 and widely promoted including via Headteacher briefings, SENCo & Designated Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Leads Networks, Post 16 Reference Group, the Youth Justice Service and Social Work Teams. <https://www.oneeducation.co.uk/inclusiontoolkit>
- Thematic training sessions and leaflets linked to the Inclusion Strategy Toolkit have been developed and made available to education settings and wider services. These include training sessions and leaflets focusing on:
  - Use of the toolkit
  - School belonging
  - Anxiety based school avoidance
  - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
  - Emotional regulation
  - Covid legacy – supporting children with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).
  - Strategic Inclusion Planning at Leadership Conference
- Worked with Parents and Carers to produce a parent leaflet and guide to the Inclusion Strategy.
- The M-Thrive digital front door has been launched and continues to develop giving information about the M-Thrive offer across the city which provides a single point of entry, front door approach to the emotional wellbeing and mental health offer for young people aged 5-18. The service is designed to advise, guide, signpost and get help for young people within Manchester currently facing mental health and emotional wellbeing issues. [M-Thrive | Home](#)
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion training has been developed and delivered via The Healthy Schools service. <https://www.manchesterhealthyschools.nhs.uk/events/language-of-inclusivity-and-anti-racism-training-pre-recorded-session-download>
- Proud Trust LGBT+ Inclusion Training sessions commissioned by the Virtual School for education settings and MCC Education Services. <https://www.theproudtrust.org/schools-and-training/training-for-professionals/>

- Work between the Virtual School and Agent Academy and the Northwest Business Leadership Team to conduct research into the values of young people, including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, having access to diverse role models to support them to develop and pursue their career aspirations. As an outcome of this research, produced material can be used with young people in educational settings.
- There has been lots of different activity to engage with different groups of Manchester Children and Young People. One of the most extensive engagement exercises has involved wide-ranging conversations with young people through the Our Year campaign. This consultation enhanced our understanding of the things that are important to young people and informed not only the Our Year plans and submission to become a Child Friendly City but also the development of the Manchester Inclusion Strategy Toolkit and associated training.
- Legacy of COVID training and support to schools.
- In September over 100 schools were represented by over 200 delegates at a Manchester School Attendance conference. The conference focused on the new DfE guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)
- The Think Equal- Programme is a Greater Manchester Initiative to teach social and emotional learning to children aged 3-6 years. To date the programme has been initiated in 105 Manchester schools. [Think Equal in Greater Manchester - Supporting Social Emotional Development and Wellbeing in the Early Years - Mental Health \(gmintegratedcare.org.uk\)](https://gmintegratedcare.org.uk/think-equal)
- Dingley's Promise initiated which is an Early Years Inclusion Programme. Manchester is one of the 30 local areas that are participating in the Dingley's Promise Early Years Inclusion programme. With the support of Comic Relief funding, Dingley's Promise charity will be delivering a series of ten courses to Manchester's Early Years practitioners, spread over 5 years, to improve inclusive practice when working with young children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). It is expected that the training and shared resources will increase learners' awareness of the needs of all children, especially those with SEND, and their confidence in supporting the learning and well-being of all children in their setting. The programme places a strong emphasis on co-production with parents and carers. Over 150 Manchester Early Years settings, schools and child minders have registered and begun to access the training.
- A spring term Key Stage 2 – 3 Transition conference was attended by over 100 Manchester Schools. Effective transition practice and paperwork was shared along with the findings from a piece of pupil voice research by the Manchester Metropolitan University and information about the 2023 transition read offer. This year around 8,000 copies of 'The Lion Above the Door' by author Onjali Q Rauf has been given to Manchester Year 6 pupils. The initiative is to help pupils as they prepare for their new secondary schools and

to keep them reading over the summer. The initiative is organised by Read Manchester in partnership with Manchester City Council.

- Development of the Primary Ordinarily Available provision offer. This has been co-produced with parents and carers to describe the support, strategies and activities that are available to children and young people with additional needs in Primary settings, regardless of formal diagnosis or commissioned specialist support.
- A dedicated officer within the Education team was appointed specifically to focus on work to support refugee families. This has greatly supported timely communication and progressing actions to support children, young people and families.
- 5 SEND reviews and 10 safeguarding reviews of schools across the City have been conducted during 2022-23. Both exercises have provided supported, reflective spaces for schools to identify their good practice, areas for development and key improvement actions to take forward.
- Manchester recommissioned its Post 16 NEET Prevention and Reduction Service. The successful provider was Career Connect. Strong multi-agency partnership work with schools and colleges is being undertaken across the city to ensure the early identification of and support for young people who are at risk of becoming not in education, employment and training (NEET) as well as supporting young people who are currently NEET towards and into appropriate provision.
- Autism in Schools work has been undertaken in six high schools to promote and share good practice. This is due to be expanded in a further three high schools. This project has been a collaboration between the Community Speech and Language Therapy team, the CAMHS Speech and Language Therapy Team, One Education educational psychologists, and the University of Manchester's Speech and Language Therapy department and Psychology and Mental Health department. The aim is to create environments within mainstream schools that can support autistic young people to form connections with other autistic and neurodivergent young people.
- Outreach support and advice has been delivered by our specialist schools to schools throughout the year with a strong focus on the effective delivery of Quality First Teaching to young people with additional needs.
- We currently have 120 Rights Respecting Schools in the City with 22 more who are working towards the bronze award. Of these:
  - 47 schools are at Bronze level (6 of these have been achieved since 2022)
  - 42 schools are at Silver level (7 of these have been awarded since April 2022)
  - 31 schools are at Gold level (11 new since April 2022 plus 6 Gold reaccreditations).

Initial data indicates that many of these schools have lower rates of exclusion and suspension than schools that are not involved in this programme. There will be further analysis carried out on this.

- The Virtual School Team has been working with Agent Academy and the Northwest Business Leadership Team to undertake some local research into the value of young people having access to diverse role models when thinking about their career aspirations. The research findings will be used to support the development of resources and materials to be used with young people in educational settings. There will be further information during 2023-24.

## **2.2 Summary of what has been delivered to support improvements in early intervention.**

Since July 2022 the following activity has been delivered to support improvements in early intervention to identify and meet the additional needs of children and young people:

- Group consultation on meeting the needs of learners with social emotional mental health needs has been made available for all schools. These online sessions are facilitated by Educational Psychologists and the Head of Outreach in the City of Manchester Learning Partnership.
- Inclusion training for parents and carers on understanding and meeting their children's needs has begun to be delivered via the 150 Manchester Primary schools and Early Years settings who have signed up to the Early Years Dingley's Promise Inclusion Programme.
- The refresh of the school cluster model is helping to ensure the right conversation is happening at the right time and strengthening relationships and communication between Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Social Workers.
- The Autumn term Post 16 Inclusion Conference raised the profile of the Manchester Inclusion Strategy and encouraged Post 16 settings to make use of the Inclusion Strategy Toolkit to support young people towards and into Post 16 provision and to attend and achieve well in their chosen programmes.
- The Manchester Virtual School has been working closely with the Manchester Youth Justice Service to implement a strengthened multi-agency approach to supporting the education, employment and training of all young people accessing their service through an electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP).
- Implementation of the new Manchester Alternative Provision (AP) Framework. This was the first year of a new approach which involves schools commissioning Alternative Provision directly and holding the accountability for attendance, progress, outcomes and reviewing the young person's education offer. The aim is that Alternative Provision should be used by schools as a time limited intervention providing targeted support early to reduce preventable exclusions and not as a final destination or as an alternative to



permanent exclusion. The Local Authority has supported the development of a framework of Alternative Provision which offers a range of part time and full time offers which is available to our schools to commission provision from. The Education team also has a dedicated officer working with providers and schools to match children to the most appropriate provision and identify gaps in the offers available.

- Mental Health Support Team and Thrive in Education in all secondary schools providing multi-agency working to support whole school approaches. The Mental Health in Schools Teams have undertaken a mapping exercise of the different types of Universal, targeted and specialist activities taking place in targeted schools. This has included input from students on their views of the different types of interventions.
- A Secondary outreach offer for children with social emotional mental health needs was implemented during 2022-23 with a priority focus on providing earlier intervention to young people in Key Stage 3 to support schools to understand young people's underlying needs and how best to support them and thus reduce the risk of suspension and exclusion. This offer is being expanded from September 2023.
- There has been a strong focus throughout 2022-23 on education settings, social workers and other multiagency services working in partnership to use of the About Me template and approach to prevent children and young people with SEND and their families having to keep repeating their story to different professionals at different times. Good practice in the use of the About Me template has been promoted in education and social care training sessions and via the About Me stand at the Local Offer drop-ins.
- Promoted the use of the Anxiety Based School Avoidance toolkit to support young people struggling to attend school. [Anxiety Based School Avoidance | Help & Support Manchester](#)
- There have been regular on-line NEET Prevention Panels in each Locality. These have been attended by Manchester's Post 16 Lead, local mainstream and special schools, the Virtual School, the Work and Skills Team, Post 16 Commissioning colleagues, Career Connect and Manchester's school Attendance Lead. These conversations support the early identification of young people at risk of becoming not in education, employment and training and provide a problem-solving space to consider the best way to support them towards and into a positive destination.
- We have implemented the first year of the SAFE Taskforce (**S**upport **A**ttend **F**ulfill **E**xceed) which is a DFE grant funded intervention to support young people at risk of becoming involved in Serious Youth Violence. Analysis of data from GMP/ Childrens Services and Education sources demonstrated that schools remain the safest place for young people to be, and consequently any intervention should aim to support them to attend well and to engage positively with the schools' expectations, to avoid exclusion or suspension.

- Evidence provided by the DFE through the Youth Endowment Fund suggested that the intervention that would have the best impact with this type of issue was mentoring. The SAFE task force comprising of secondary headteachers and other partners made the decision to fully invest in this, in a phased approach, offering 12 months of intense support for young people considered at risk. This would be scaled over the first year, with all schools receiving some offer by the end of the first year. There are xx targeted schools across the City who all have 2 fte mentors allocated to the school this year and the remaining secondary schools will access 2 days per week from a mentor from September.
- To date, 8 mentoring organisations have been commissioned and 280 young people across the city have been offered a mentor to support them for the remainder of their year 8 into year 9. From year 2 of the project the focus will shift to Year 7 pupils with 460 young people accessing the support offered.
- Initial feedback from the project is that schools value the additional support, and when young people engage with their mentor it is having a positive effect. Improved attendance, engagement with learning and improved mental health are all being reported by schools and mentors. Funding is secured until April 2025 and the Mentor organisations have been added to the Alternative Provision Framework to enable ongoing commissioning of this intervention beyond the life of the project.

### **2.3 Summary of what has been delivered to support improvements through the continuum of provision & specialist support.**

Since July 2022 the following activity has been delivered to support improvements through the continuum of provision and specialist support to identify and meet the additional needs of children and young people:

- There has been a successful Secondary Special Free School Presumption which will lead to increased special school capacity with a new Secondary Special School being opened in the north of the city in September 2024. In addition to this there have been a number of special school expansions across the City with 615 new places created in recent years.
- A new commissioner, specifically for Post 16 provision has been recruited, is in post and working with partners to develop a cost-effective offer for young people aged 16 plus with SEND.
- Manchester's Healthy Schools Team has continued to develop and deliver "Behind the Behaviour" training which, as an element of the Inclusion Strategy Toolkit, is supporting schools to develop their understanding of and proactive response to children and young people's unmet support needs.
- Children and Parents (CAPs) Service is a multi-agency team made up of Clinical Psychologists, Specialist Health Visitors, and Parent Group Leaders providing community-based psychological support to Manchester families with children under 5. As well as seeing families directly, the service also offers

specialist consultation and training to Early Years and other professionals working with infants.

- The Disabled Children's Social Work Teams are now based in Localities with a Virtual Team within Early Help. Work has been undertaken to review and improve the Short Breaks process and offer. Through this work a strong and ever-evolving community of practice with parents and carers and Education, Health and Social Work colleagues has been developed. This continues to contribute to improvements in the ongoing work of the Disabled Children's Social Work Teams.

#### **2.4 Summary of what has been delivered to ensure that exclusion from educational settings is only ever used as the last resort and that when it is used good quality support is in place to support the child or young person**

Since July 2022 the following activity has been delivered to prevent the unnecessary use of exclusion and to ensure that young people who are excluded receive the right support to meet their needs:

- School attendance, suspension and permanent exclusions data have been systematically shared via the locality based In-Year Fair Access panels (IYFAP), School Network meetings and broadcasts to enable schools to have a city-wide view of exclusion. This has enabled schools to compare their own use of suspensions and exclusions with other provisions across the city and to reflect on their strong practice and areas for development.
- Support and Challenge conversations have continued to take place with schools and academy trusts regarding high levels of suspensions and exclusions. Reasons behind any increased use of exclusion have been discussed and actions, including multi-agency involvement, to address this have been explored and taken forward.
- The review and restructuring of the Manchester Secondary PRU has been completed and the PRU had a positive OFSTED inspection in Autumn 2022. The main focus of the PRU is now to provide high quality provision to children and young people who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools and to support them towards appropriate Key stage 3, 4 and 5 destinations depending on their age and support needs.
- There is now a specialist task force in place at Manchester secondary Pupil Referral Unit. This is a DfE led pilot project consisting of a multiagency team of specialists, collocated within the PRU. The overarching aims of this pilot are to reduce the risks of children becoming victim to any aspect of Serious Violence, by working to improve their outcomes through collaborative working: to identify our children's barriers to learning and their understanding of the world around them, (for example; difficulties attending and engaging with school, ability to understand their behaviours), offering the correct assessment, support or intervention at the right time to remove or navigate around these barriers. The offer is consent based, with a focus on developing

trusted relationships with children and their families, using the ‘think family approach’; using active listening to enable a better understanding of children’s lived experiences and then collectively identifying SMART targets to positively move forward. The task force uses a tiered model of support, this consists of Tier 1 workers; Restorative Practitioners, Engagement Workers, Family Worker and Youth Workers who work to develop and establish trusted relationships with children and families. In addition, Tier 1 workers are also upskilled by our Tier 2 Specialists to deliver targeted and preventative interventions, and will also, when necessary, broker relationships with Tier 2 Specialists when further assessments and interventions are required. Tier 2 specialists include; Complex Safeguarding, CAMHS, Youth Justice, Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist, Counsellor or POST 16 worker. All PRU staff have access to regular reflective practice, advice and guidance drop-in sessions with task force specialists; CAMHS, SALT & Educational Psychologists.

- The Virtual School Team have been attending regular meetings with Post 16 providers to discuss care-experienced young people and those supported by the Youth Justice Service where there have been concerns raised both about difficulties with securing a college place or the risk of early withdrawal from programmes and/or exclusion. These conversations have further strengthened multi-agency working. During the year over 30 Post 16 exclusions have been prevented.
- Restorative approaches are, with the support of Remedi, embedded within Complex Safeguarding checks and support education settings to understand young people’s needs and how best to support them.

### **3.0 What we know about Inclusion across the city**

3.1 Examining the impact of the Inclusion Strategy is in itself a complex exercise as it can’t be assessed by looking at hard, quantitative data alone. One of the major differences which has emerged since the Strategy was first launched in 2019 is that there is a different and more strengths-based conversation happening across the city about what Inclusion means and the implications of this for our work with children, young people and families. Before looking at some of the inclusion related data we hold, it is important that we also consider some of the comments that have been made by education settings and partners about Inclusion Strategy related work.

Feedback from education settings and parents and carers about the Inclusion Strategy Toolkit and associated training sessions have included:

- *“The toolkit is an amazing resource that will help us so much on many different levels. Thank you!”*
- *“The toolkit is so helpful and practical. From a place of scepticism I was entirely won over!”*
- *“This training and the toolkit are really informative, inspiring and validating!”*
- *“Really enjoyed the session, really informative with lots of take away ideas to support in the classroom”*

- *“Extremely informative with lots of clear steps on how to support children and staff.”*

As we approach the end of the summer term in 2023 we are looking at our end of year data to show progress that has been made and to identify key priorities for the coming year.

- 3.2 Anecdotally we know that high rates of suspensions and permanent exclusions have been a challenge across the country during 2022-23. This is born out in Manchester’s provisional 2022-23 suspensions and exclusions data. The provisional suspension rate in Manchester shows an increase from 3.9% in 2021-22 to 4.6%. At the end of June, the rate of permanent exclusions was 0.16% which was slightly above the provisional end of year 2021-22 data of 0.14%. This data will change over the coming months as exclusions currently in process are either upheld or rescinded.

Within this overall figure we have seen an increased number of permanent exclusions of Manchester residents attending schools in neighbouring authorities. Colleagues in the Attendance and Exclusions team, Senior School Quality Assurance Officers and members of the Virtual School Team have all had regular conversations throughout the year with colleagues in Manchester and out of area schools to explore how potential permanent exclusions can be avoided. These conversations have led to over 40 exclusions being discontinued or rescinded. Continuing to have early conversations to prevent exclusions with Manchester Schools, schools outside Manchester and with our education colleagues in other Local Authorities continues to be a priority for 2023-24.

- 3.3 We also need to be mindful that this increase in permanent exclusions is partially as an outcome of our strategy to improve our city-wide practice in the effective use of Alternative Provision. In Manchester we have taken proactive steps towards promoting the use of Alternative Provision as an early intervention to personalise the curriculum for young people experiencing difficulties rather than merely as an alternative to the use of permanent exclusion. Our secondary Pupil Referral Unit’s main purpose has shifted this year from providing a city-wide Alternative Provision (AP) offer, to providing education for young people who have been permanently excluded. This means that we are now confident that the young people attending our Secondary PRU, are in the main, young people who have been permanently excluded rather than young people still on the roll of their mainstream school who are accessing indefinite periods of alternative provision. Further work will continue with our schools during 2023-24 to develop enhanced approaches to supporting young people so a permanent exclusion is not required. This includes promoting best practice in the use of Alternative Provision as a timebound, early intervention with young people experiencing difficulties.

- 3.4 By the end of June 2023 overall school attendance in Manchester was positive at 92.6% which, compared with the current DFE national data shows that Manchester is at the national average overall and outperforms the national average at secondary. Wide-ranging attendance improvement work will

continue during 2022-23 with a particular focus on supporting young people who are persistently or severely absent from school including those with anxiety-based school absence and on improving the attendance of children and young people who have an allocated social and/or youth justice worker.

- 3.5 Manchester continues to perform well in its work to prevent young people becoming not in education employment and training (NEET) as they move towards and into Post 16 provisions. By the end of June there were 4.9% of 16- and 17-year-olds known to be NEET including 1.0% with an unknown destination. This is in-line with our 2021-22 figure which was the lowest ever figure for Manchester Young People and is better than national and other core cities.
- 3.6 88% of our schools are judged to be good or better by Ofsted, which remains above the national average, and 100% of our 6th form and FE colleges are also judged as good or better. Manchester is extremely proud of our school and colleges, and this is a great achievement and testament to the strong and talented school and college leaders we have in our city.
- 3.7 Following a positive Local Area SEND inspection in November 2021 and a DfE visit to discuss our SEND and Inclusion practice in September 2022, Manchester has been asked by the DfE to be the lead Regional Change Partner for the Northwest region in implementing the national SEND and AP plan from September 2023. This not only shows the confidence that the DfE has in Manchester and its partnership but provides us all with a great opportunity to inform and influence national policy on SEND and Alternative Provision going forward. Our Inclusion Strategy and Inclusion Strategy Toolkit were two of a number of approaches used in Manchester that the DfE were particularly interested in and positive about.

#### **4.0 Priority Inclusion Strategy Activity for 2023-24**

A multi-agency workshop took place in May 2023 to reflect on the progress that had been made over the past year and to identify priority activities for 2023-24 in each of the four strands of the strategy:

- Strand 1: Inclusive universal provision
- Strand 2: Early intervention
- Strand 3: High quality continuum of provision and specialist support
- Strand 4: Exclusion as a last resort

#### **4.1 Priority actions to support further improvements in inclusive universal provision during 2023-24**

- Implement new school attendance guidance from DfE including the offer of targeted support meetings for all schools to identify and plan for children persistently absent.
- Manchester City Council has commissioned the Belong Network to lead a social cohesion project with schools in the north of the City. The sessions will

provide a space for professionals to reflect on and share their experiences, and to explore tools and sources of support for school communities.

- To continue to progress the Think Equal Programme roll out in all Reception Classes and the Bingley's Promise roll out in all settings and Child Minders sharing emerging learning and good practice from the implementation of both programmes.
- Promote the updated Inclusion Strategy Toolkit, available to download from September, with new content including:
  - Equality and Diversity
  - Neurodiversity
  - Supporting transitions
  - Knife crime
  - Children and Young People with parents in prison
  - Acquired brain injury and/or epilepsy
  - Inclusion audit tool
  - Specific advice for Early Years settings in each chapter.
  - Specific advice for Post 16 settings in each chapter.
  - Leaflets to download for each of the six good practice areas
  - Parent Inclusion Toolkit Guidance
- Work initially with schools and later with Early Years and Post 16 settings, parents/carers, young people and partners to develop a suite of model, inclusive, relational policies which reflect our Inclusion Statement, Guiding Principles and the Rights of the Child.
- Provide a refreshed rolling inclusion training programme for early years settings, schools, Post 16 settings, governors and other professionals. New training modules to include:
  - Voice of the child, how settings gather this and respond.
  - Teenage brain development
  - How do we listen to young people who are being given regular internal exclusions/detentions
- Continue to grow and develop the work with the Post 16 Pathway Partnership and work together to implement the new Post 16 voice framework.
- Build on the outcomes of Virtual School Northwest June Post 16 Conference to ensure system wide understanding, positive engagement and joint working by social workers, youth just workers, Post 16 providers, Designated Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, work and skills colleagues, Career Connect in key reforms and drivers including:
  - Post 16 qualification reforms
  - Post 16 Pupil Premium
  - Stable Homes built on love consultation
  - Promoting the education of children with a social worker
  - New ILACS care leaver judgement

- Continue to work closely with schools, Post 16 settings, services and the Career Connect NEET prevention service to identify, as early as possible, and support young people who are at risk of becoming NEET.
- To work with schools and partners to ensure they are well-equipped to effectively balance making reasonable adjustments to scaffold the curriculum for children and young people with additional needs whilst ensuring they have access to the full curriculum offer and entitlement.

#### **4.2 Priority actions to support further improvements in early intervention during 2023-24**

- Implement the Kickstarter programme to address the educational needs of children in Key Stage 1 as a result of lost learning during the pandemic. The aims of the programme include:
  - Improved outcomes for children in terms of EYFS scores, phonics results and KS1 outcomes
  - Improved attendance of children in this age group.
  - Accelerated progress for targeted children based on an initial baseline
  - Increased take up of community offers including childcare
  - Reduced number of requests for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Work with schools, young people and parents and carers to develop guidance on re-integration and support meetings post suspension.
- Further embed the use of the Youth Justice PEP to improve the educational experience and outcomes of young people supported by the Youth Justice Service.
- Continue to work closely with schools, Post 16 settings, services and the Career Connect NEET prevention service to identify, as early as possible, and support young people who are at risk of becoming NEET.
- Work with education settings, young people, parents and carers and other partners to strengthen our focus on the well-being, experiences, support needs and outcomes of Girls in response to the findings of the Greater Manchester BeeWell Survey and also an increase in the number of girls being excluded in the city.
- Work through the Think Equal Programme to help address the lowest Good Level of Development outcomes.
- Develop an outreach offer to schools by the Manchester Secondary PRU Specialist Taskforce to support early intervention and reduce the risk of exclusion.
- Continue to implement SAFE programme across secondary schools so that all schools are accessing mentoring and identify and share good practice case studies and learning from this work.



- Continue promoting good practice in the use of short to medium term Alternative Provision as an early intervention by:
  - Working with schools and Alternative Provisions to identify and share good practice in the early use of Alternative Provision
  - Work with schools to identify, develop and share good practice in the use internal alternative provision and part time timetables.
  - Analyse the use of single and multiple suspensions and work with schools to explore how the Alternative Provision and Reasonable adjustment are being used to effectively prevent the need for suspension.
  - Implement the Part Time Alternative Provision Pilot which will aim to encourage schools to do more, early, upstream intervention with a clear focus on improving a child's outcomes.
- Further develop the quality assurance and oversight of Alternative Provision in the city. This includes introducing a quality assurance offer for registered AND unregistered independent provisions with oversight from a dedicated Senior Schools Quality Assurance officer in the Education team.
- Continue to implement the Social Emotional Mental Health outreach and support work.
- Further develop attendance and exclusions data reporting for children with a social worker and work with social worker managers, IROs and Designated Safeguarding Leads to inform social workers and IROs conversations and the development and review of CiN and CP plans.

#### **4.3 Priority actions to support further improvements in the continuum in provision and specialist support during 2023-24**

- Work with multiagency colleagues and M-Thrive to further develop Anxiety Based School Avoidance resources including:
  - Policy
  - Tools for schools & education settings
  - Training for parents and carers
  - Social media guidance & resources
- Work with employers through the Supported Internships Forum and the Work and Skills Team to develop more supported internships.
- Work with schools, parents/carers and young people to further develop the Year 10 Chance programme for young people receiving multiple suspensions.

#### **4.4 Priority actions during 2023-24 to ensure exclusion is only ever used as the last resort and that young people who are excluded are well supported.**

- Further funding for the extension of the Task Force around Manchester Secondary PRU has been secured and we are now in the process of

restructuring the taskforce, using learning and outcomes to date to revise this offer. Over the next year further impact data will be used to plan for the future sustainability of this offer.

- Work with schools, parents/carers, young people and multiagency partners to develop citywide guidance on permanent exclusion thresholds to ensure consistency of decision making and equity of experience for young people.
- Monitor Via the IYFAP & the EHCP routes the numbers of children returning to schools from our Pupil Referral Units following a permanent exclusion.
- Work with parents and carers to develop an exclusion advocacy offer for other parents and carers including:
  - Development of guidance to help parents and carers know what different schools offer and provide.
  - Equalizing the power dynamic so that parents and carers are actively involved.
  - Ensuring that parents and carers experience a sense of belonging within the education setting's community.
  - Identification and dissemination of existing good practice (knowledge of this in some of our primary schools).
- Develop on-line exclusions training for governors which adheres to statutory guidance and remains true to our Inclusion Statement, Guiding Principles and the Rights of the Child.
- Work with Post 16 settings, parents/carers & young people to develop good practice guidance on preventing the use of exclusion and early withdrawals through the early identification of need, and use of appropriate interventions and reasonable adjustments.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The work that has been undertaken since 2019 to implement the Manchester Inclusion Strategy is supporting the city to achieve its partnership vision to ensure Manchester children and young people live safe, happy, healthy, successful and independent lives. During that time, Manchester's multi-agency partners have increasingly worked with dedication and creativity, during incredibly challenging times, to identify and support the needs of children, young people and their families in inclusive and personalised ways.

Manchester now has the challenge, as it works towards becoming a UNICEF Child Friendly City, to build upon the improvements achieved so far and to continue to enhance the experiences and outcomes of children and young people.

The Inclusion Strategy also provides a comprehensive outline of how Manchester's Children and Young People's Partnership will contribute to

progressing the Making Manchester Fairer Strategy to address health inequalities arising from poverty. [Making Manchester Fairer | Making Manchester Fairer | Manchester City Council](#)

The first three years of the strategy have reinforced the importance of all partners working together with children, young people and their families to bring our inclusion statement below to life through robust, innovative and relationship-based approaches. Work will continue during 2023-24 to accelerate and enhance the improvements that have already been achieved. The programme Manchester will engage in with the DFE as a regional change partner to implement the national SEND and AP plan will also support this work in the City going forward and will hopefully provide an opportunity to inform national policy and practice in this area.

***“We believe it is important that every child and young person in our early years’ settings, schools and post 16 provisions, whatever their age, identity, circumstance or ability, has a sense of belonging, feels respected and is valued for who they are.”***