

December
2020

State of Dorset Children



In this bulletin all data relates to statistics that pre-date Covid unless stated otherwise

Experiences in a child's early years lay a foundation for health and wellbeing and our services for children and families have an important role in building future resilience.

By identifying those most at risk of poorer outcomes later on, our resources can be targeted where they are needed most so that we can respond to risk and vulnerability.

The number of 0-4 year olds is expected to decrease by about 1,300, while the number of 5-15 year olds is projected to decrease by about 2,200 between 2019 and 2029¹.

Big Numbers Box

67,900² total children

60% Pupils with an EHC Plan educated in mainstream schools

479 Children and young people in care in Dorset

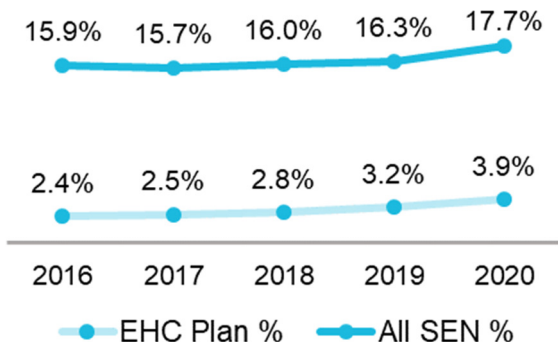
67 Looked after children in every 10,000 in Dorset

Primary school children with an EHC SEN plan **3.9%**

23% 21 percentage points fewer pupils from low-income families achieve 9-5 in English and Maths

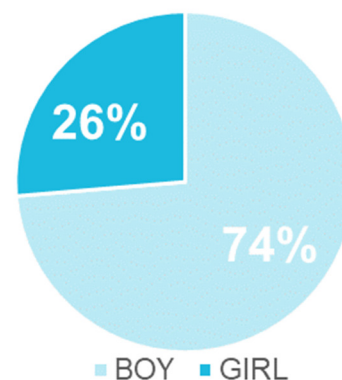
Box 1: Special Educational Need

SEN Pupils in Dorset Council Schools



The percentage of children with Special Educational Need has increased in Dorset each year since 2017. The percentage with either a statement or an EHC Plan has increased every year since 2016. There has been a more pronounced increase since Christchurch schools have been removed from the Pupil Census. Schools in Christchurch had a lower proportion of SENs pupils³.

Dorset Council School Pupils Education, Health and Care (EHC)



- One in four of pupils with an EHC SEN plan are classified as Autistic Spectrum Disorder and just under one in five have speech language and communication needs.
- It is likely that a pupil may have more than one special educational need.
- 60% of pupils with an EHC Plan are educated in Mainstream Schools in Dorset.
- Three quarters of Dorset Council School Pupils with an EHC are boys and just under two thirds with SEN Support are boys. This is very similar to the national picture.

Sources

- 1 2019-trend based population projections (experimental), Dorset Council
- 2 2019 Mid-year estimates, 0-17 year-olds, ONS
- 3 Dorset Council, Children's Services
- 4 LG Inform and Department of Education

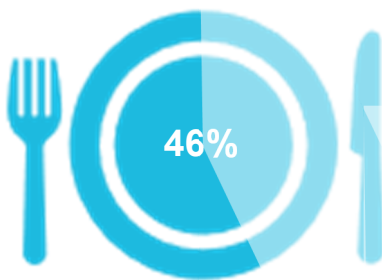
Acronyms

- EHC = Education, Health and Care plan
FSM = Free School Meals
SEN = Special Educational Needs

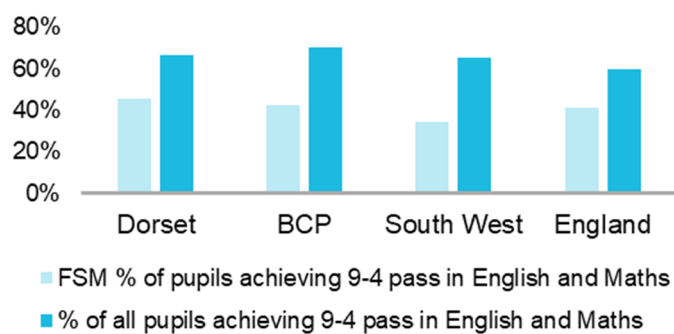
Box 2: Education

- In 2019 72% of pupils achieved a 'Good Level of Development' at the end of Reception year, an increase of 1% on 2018 and the same as the national figure.
- 67% of pupils achieved the 'Basics' measure (standard pass or higher in English and Maths GCSE), this is above the national figure of 60%. For pupils eligible for Free School Meals the figure was 46% compared to the national figure of 38%⁴.
- 15% of primary pupils claim Free School Meals, marginally below the national average⁴.

Pupils eligible for FSM achieving Basics measure at GCSE



Percentage of Pupils GCSE pass English and Maths 2018/19



What are we doing about it?

There is evidence to show that what a child experiences in early years, starting in the womb, affects health and wellbeing in later life. Early intervention is therefore key and cutbacks in spending on this for short term financial gain can lead to greater long term costs, both financial and social⁶.

By creating Locality Areas, the council is working with partners and communities to ensure children get the right help, at the right time and in the right place, to prevent difficulties for families from becoming bigger problems. The idea is that organisations work together to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people and support them all the way from birth to getting a job.

Through working with our partners to ensure that we all take a 'whole family approach', the council uses early intervention programmes, such as the Troubled Families programme, which aims to reduce demand and dependency on costly reactive public services by families experiencing complex issues, and deliver better value for the taxpayer.

The council works with partners to support parents and children in the early years through a range of Early Childhood Services. This includes information and advice; parenting support; group work activities; support to access childcare; help with preparing for school; and education and training opportunities.

Evidence suggests that smarter working with the whole family leads to improved outcomes and better value for money and, as some will need ongoing support, there needs to be a continuum of services to support vulnerable people over time.