

2019

Sheffield Children's University

How does it make a difference?



Evidencing the impact of out of school learning accredited and celebrated by Children's University in Sheffield

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Acknowledgements

This report is testament to the ongoing commitment and support of our fantastic schools and Learning Destinations who always do their best for the families in our city, regardless of the circumstances. We are so proud to work alongside you to reward, inspire and motivate the children and young people of Sheffield. Thank you for continuing to invest in us and our work and for making this report possible.

Thank you to those who have supported and invested in our work this year, especially Sheffield Hallam University, South Yorkshire Futures and Sheffield City Region. Working to expand CU across the region has been a dream come true, and there are so many more exciting things to come. A special thanks also to Sheffield City Trust and the City Hall for hosting our fantastic 100th ceremony celebrations and making them feel so special.

My sincere thanks to Mark Miller for his professional input and support.

Helen, Sakina and the team – what a year it's been! Thank you for your dedication and steadfast support. Now more than ever, I'm so grateful for your resilience and strength in always being up for the challenge! Special thanks to Helen for her work on the case studies included in this report too.

Finally, a HUGE thank you to all the children, young people, parents/carers and families who are right at the heart of our Sheffield CU family and continue to motivate and inspire us with their support, encouragement and passion. Celebrating you and your achievements is undoubtedly the best part of the job.

Katie.

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Introduction

Sheffield Children's University (CU) is part of a national initiative that encourages children and young people from the age of 5 to try new learning experiences in and outside of school; at breakfast, lunchtime and after school clubs and in their own time, in the local library, museums, sports centres or further afield.

Voluntary participation in high quality learning in their own time is reinforced and celebrated through a national award scheme which starts at 30 hours, and progresses to 1000 hours.

Culminating in an inspirational graduation experience, this learning adventure gives children and young people the opportunity to enrich their childhoods, nurture a lifelong love of learning, unlock their skills and talents and develop their aspirations and confidence regardless of their backgrounds.

The key objectives of Sheffield CU are to:

- Encourage children, young people and families to **seek high quality learning opportunities** both in school and in the community
- **Raise aspirations** of children, young people and their families
- **Raise attainment and attendance** at school
- Have a **positive impact on attitude and behaviour**
- Support children's **health and wellbeing**
- Encourage children and young people to **take control of their learning**
- **Inspire, demonstrate and share** best practice in extended learning provision

The success and continued growth of Children's University in Sheffield is a result of a strong and thriving network of schools subscribed to CU and community Learning Destinations (approved activity providers and clubs) where children and young people can collect CU credits using a Passport to Learning.

Both schools and Learning Destinations commit to adding value to their activities by providing participation data to ensure children and young people are recognised for their commitment to out of school learning.

This information is entered into a CU module on the Capita ONE database and analysis of participation is shared with schools, families, organisations and the Local Authority. Children and young people receive a detailed learning profile evidencing their activities and hours of engagement with every award which can form part of their record of achievement and support future employment and higher education applications.

Sheffield CU in numbers

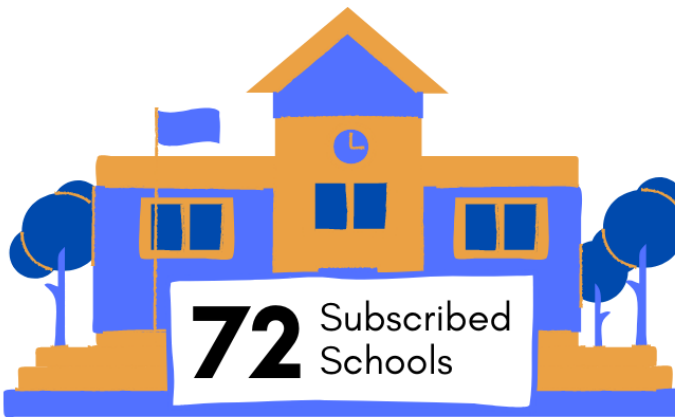


47,404 children and young people with CU credits



3,611,060

CU credits earned

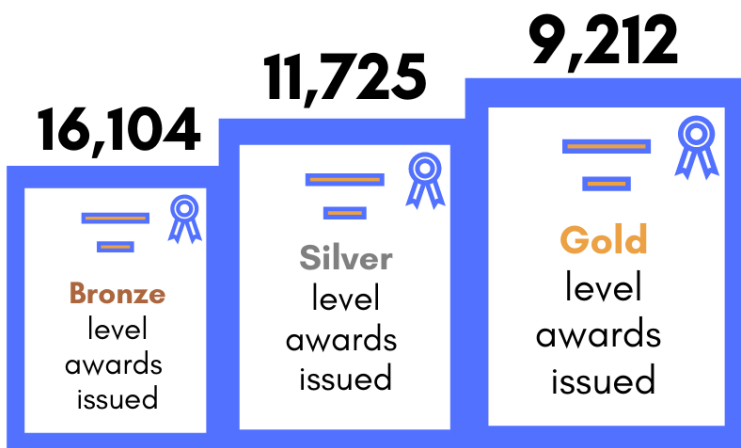


23,720
boys



23,684
girls

229 Learning Destinations



in the last 3 years



Headlines 2019/20

- **The 100th Sheffield CU Gold Award Ceremony** was celebrated across 3 extra special ceremonies in November and provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on how much CU in Sheffield has grown and developed over time. The first annual ceremony took place in 2009 with 70 award winners attending from 5 schools. Fast forward 10 years, and the team hosted 12 ceremonies for over 4,000 award winners from over 70 schools in 2019!
- **36 children and young people** were invited to attend a special 1000 hr graduation experience for achieving their Gold Fellowship Award, the highest CU honour. They were invited to experience a 'real' graduation during graduation week at Sheffield Hallam University and had the opportunity to follow the graduation journey of a student as well as being presented with outstanding achievement awards
- **8 activities were funded through the Sheffield CU Acorn Fund** which enables children and young people to bid for funds to develop, sustain or re-invigorate a CU activity in school. Activities funded in this round included a basketball club, slime club, switch club (SEND), art club, cooking club, gardening club and a sign language club
- **26 schools took part in the Sheffield CU/Theatres Project in a Box** which provided children and young people with a specially commissioned script that didn't have an ending! School staff were supported to set up their own Theatre Club to give children and young people the opportunity to grow their character, storytelling and performance techniques by completing the play. Though the end event was cancelled due to coronavirus, resources were turned into a series of family friendly learning activities that could be completed at home
- **Over 100 daily home learning challenges** were rapidly developed by the team and rolled out in March in response to coronavirus and the resulting lockdown period. These activities were specially designed to support our schools and families at this extraordinary time and ensure that children and young people continued to have access to high quality learning opportunities that could earn them CU credits. This work continues and hundreds of children and young people have taken part so far, proving that learning really can happen anywhere!

- **2,000 children and young people were invited to the first ever Sheffield CU virtual award ceremony** in July 2020 to celebrate their achievements before and during lockdown. The full experience involved taking part in a brand new 'Create your own CU ceremony' home learning challenge and then watching an extra special virtual ceremony video online. The ceremony itself included speeches from VIPs, musical performances and a local poet, a science experiment, and special mentions for our award winners
- **The 6th Festival of Fun programme of activities took place in summer 2020** despite challenges around coronavirus and social distancing thanks to the adaptability of our army of Learning Destinations who delivered over 70 free activities live and online. For the first time, children attending other CU centres in the South Yorkshire CU family were also able to participate in some of the virtual activities
- **£95,000** was pledged by the South Yorkshire Mayor Dan Jarvis to support the expansion of the successful Sheffield Children's University model across South Yorkshire. This work has already resulted in the creation of a brand new Children's University in Rotherham, led by Rotherham School Improvement Service. It will also support the set-up of another brand new CU centre in Barnsley and will continue to provide opportunities to work collaboratively for the benefit of families across the region as well as harness and share good practice.

Overview

This report provides an analysis of participation and performance in Sheffield, comparing academic achievement in Key Stage 2 SATS taken in Y6 at primary school, and Key Stage 4 GCSE's taken in Y11 with participation in CU activities. Results of this annual analysis have continually shown a clear link between participation in CU activities and achievement and attendance at school, with performance remaining constant and in some cases improving.

Whilst the large number of CU subscribed primary schools and participation allows for the analysis of citywide data, the much smaller number of secondary schools subscribed to CU requires the use of a reduced dataset to create a meaningful comparison.

This report will also include a number of case studies which aim to provide the context behind data and give a real insight into the further impact of Sheffield CU on families, schools and Learning Destinations.

Primary Key Findings – Y6 SATS 2019

- **51% of Y6 children who took their SATs in Sheffield had CU credits**, a slight increase compared to 2018
- **284,354 CU credits were earned by Y6 pupils**, a 19% increase on last year's figure showing levels participation have continued to grow
- **67% of all CU participants achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths**, improving on both the local and national average, compared with just 60.9% of non CU pupils
- **CU pupils improved on lower than average citywide progress scores in both Maths and Reading in 2019**. For those at CU award levels, progress in Reading was in line with those with similar prior attainment nationally whilst progress for these pupils was significantly above average in Maths
- **53.6% of CU disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in the combined measure**, compared with 44.2% of non CU disadvantaged pupils. Performance of disadvantaged pupils at CU award levels improved significantly on this result, bettering the local average across the board, and by an average of around 23% at Gold award levels
- **Attendance for CU disadvantaged pupils was significantly better than non CU pupils** as they improved on the average for disadvantaged pupils as well as the citywide average for all pupils in some cases
- **25.7% of CU SEN pupils achieved the expected level in the combined measure** compared to 18.7% of non CU SEN pupils. Results improved significantly for those at CU award levels, rising to 40.7% of those with 100 hours of CU participation which is considerably above the local average for SEN pupils
- **59.3% of CU pupils in the most deprived areas in the city achieved the expected standard in the combined measure**, bettering non CU pupils (52.1%) and the Sheffield average (55.9%). Results at CU award levels were particularly significantly as they improved on both the city and national average for all pupils

Secondary Key Findings – GCSE 2019

- **31% of Y11 students in the designated CU area in the North East collectively earned over 35,000 CU credits.** 59% of these students had at least a Bronze award for 30 hours, an increase of 9% when compared to last year. 36% were at Gold award level or above, a significant increase of 16% from 2018
- **Significantly more students at CU awards levels in the North East achieved a Grade 5 or above in English in Maths** than non CU students. For those at Gold award levels, 33% of students with 100 hours or more achieved this measure, whilst 43% of those with 200 hours received Grade 5 or above in English and Maths, surpassing both the Sheffield (38.8%) and national average (40%)
- **Whilst CU and non CU students as a whole had similar Attainment 8 scores, CU Bronze, Silver and Gold award winners improved on this result,** beating the CU area average in all cases. For those over 100 hours, the average Attainment 8 score was 43.9 whilst for those over 200 hours, this increased to 47.1, beating both the citywide and national average
- **CU students improved on lower than average citywide Progress 8 scores** as those at CU award levels performed as well as those with a comparable starting point nationally
- **More CU disadvantaged students at Gold levels achieved a Grade 5 or above in English and Maths than non CU disadvantaged students,** improving significantly on the CU area average. Students with over 200 hours also improved on the Sheffield average by over 9%
- **Attainment 8 scores for CU disadvantaged students were significantly higher than non CU students in the CU area,** rising above both the area and city average. At each award level CU students also improved on this result, consistently performing better than non CU students by an average of 6 points, but also continually exceeding both the CU area and Sheffield averages for disadvantaged students
- **Attendance of CU students was 10% higher than non CU students in CU schools.** At CU award levels attendance was well over 90% across the board, bettering the CU area and Sheffield average in most cases

Primary Participation and Performance Analysis

Key facts and figures

- **51%** of Y6 children who took their SATs in Sheffield had CU credits, a total of 3,196 pupils which is a slight increase compared to 2018
- **284,354** CU credits were earned by Y6 pupils, a 19% increase on last year's figure showing levels participation have continued to grow
- **65%** of pupils in North East of the city had CU credits, accounting for 29% of all Y6 participants in Sheffield. Participation levels remained stable in other areas, though the South West saw a significant increase of 15% this year
- **57%** of all CU Y6 pupils have at least a Bronze Award for 30 hours of participation in CU activities, reflecting last year's figure
- **27%** of all pupils achieved a Gold Award for 100 hours, an increase of 3% compared to 2018, which also saw a 3% rise
- **12%** of CU pupils have over 200 hours, a further increase of 2% based on last year's figure, reinforcing the continued growth in participation and progression through CU awards seen previously

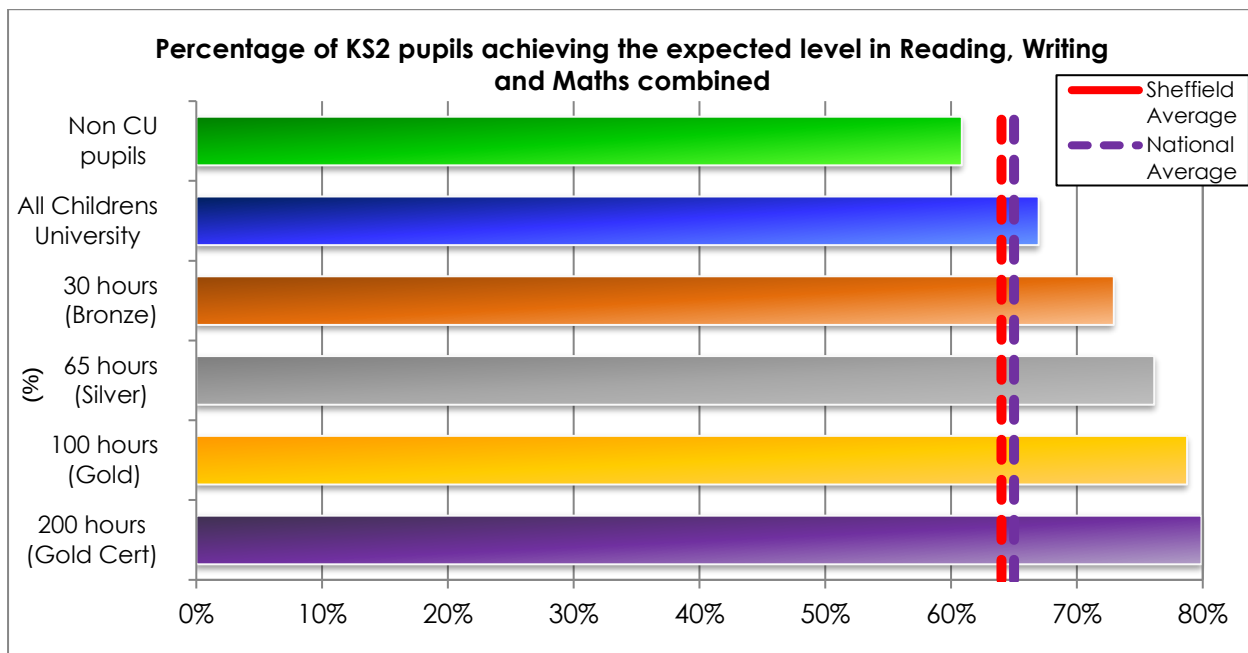
Citywide

A key performance and accountability measure for schools is the percentage of pupils achieving the 'expected standard' in a combined measure of both English and Maths in their SATs.

To achieve the expected standard, pupils must have a scaled score of over 100 in Maths and Reading and have been teacher assessed to be working to at least the 'expected standard' in Writing. In Sheffield overall, 64% achieved this measure in 2019, compared with the national average of 65%.

67% of all CU participants achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths, improving on both the local and national average.

Meanwhile, 60.9% of non CU pupils achieved the expected standard in the combined measure, falling below CU pupils by 5%, as well as the local and national average.



At CU award levels, performance improved significantly, surpassing both the local and national average across the board and by over 15% at Gold award levels.

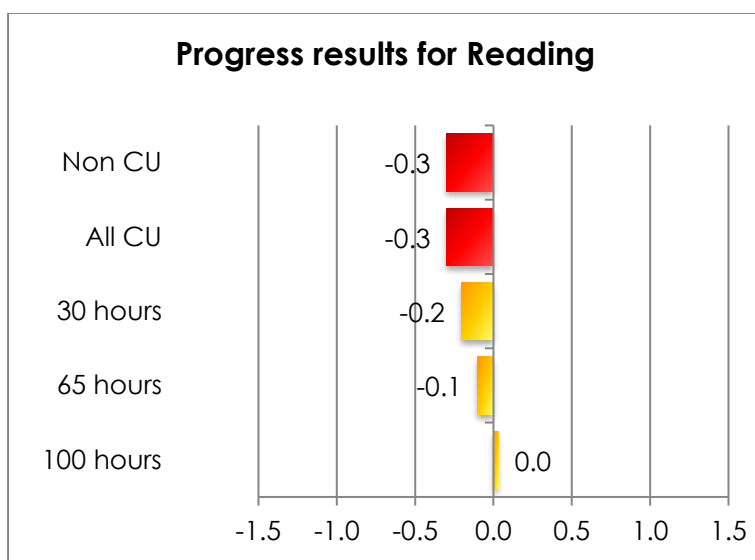
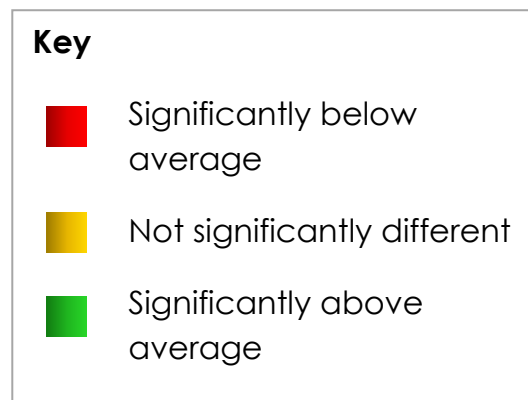
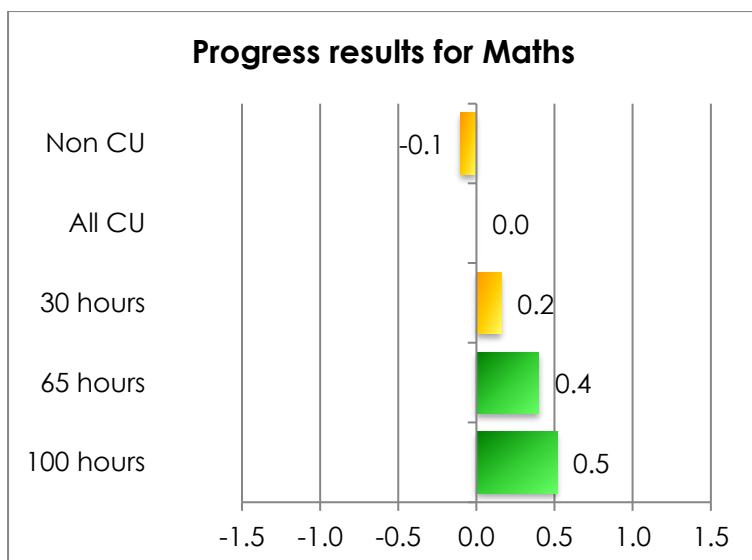
Progress

Progress is a value added measure shows whether pupils make more or less progress when compared with other pupils with similar prior attainment nationally. Measuring progress in this way means the different starting points of pupils is accounted for.

As progress results are based on a particular group of children, it's important to account for natural uncertainty so confidence intervals are applied. This allows for analysis of whether progress levels are significantly above the national average, not significantly different, or significantly below average.

Results in Sheffield in 2019 were not as strong as the previous year, particularly in Reading and Writing and as a whole, progress was below the national average.

The Maths progress graph demonstrates that results for both CU pupils and non CU pupils were not significantly different from those with similar prior attainment nationally. However, at CU award levels, progress for both Silver (65 hours) and Gold (100 hours) award winners was significantly above average, improving on the wider local result.



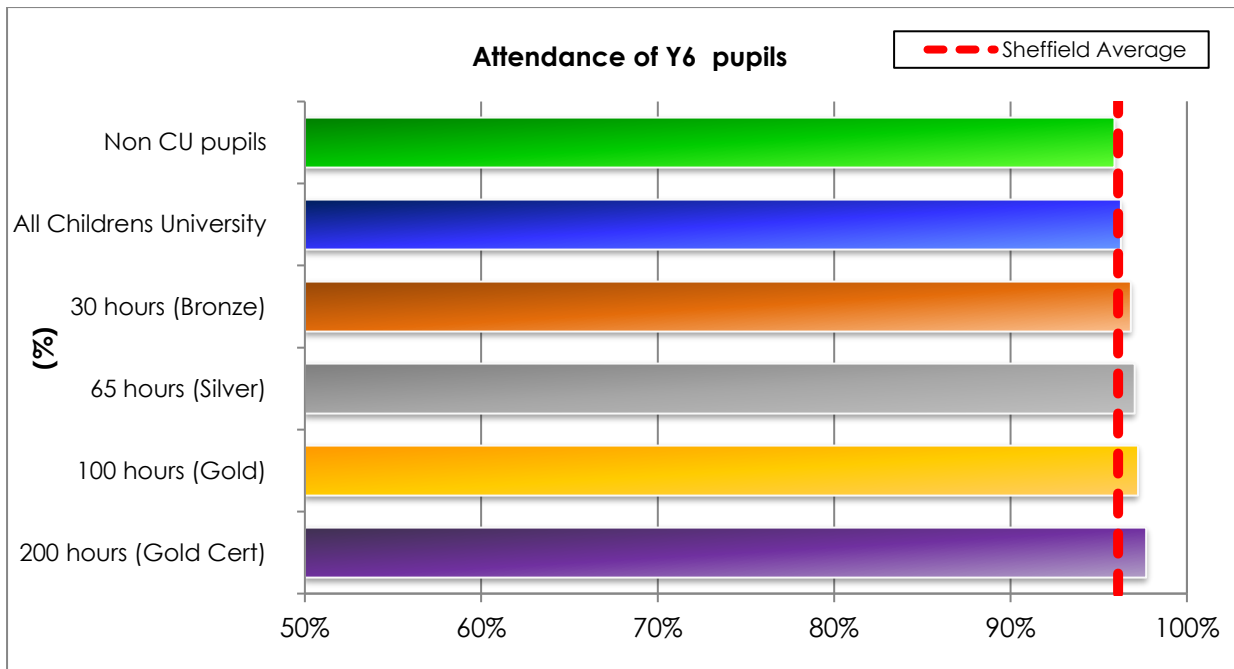
As a city, reading progress results were significantly below the national average in 2019. Whilst CU and non CU pupils as a whole reflected this outcome, pupils at CU award levels, improved on this result and performed as well as those with similar prior attainment nationally.

Attendance

The average attendance across Sheffield in 2019 was 96.1%.

During this year, attendance for non CU pupils was slightly below the Sheffield average at 95.9%, whilst attendance for CU pupils was slightly above average at 96.3%.

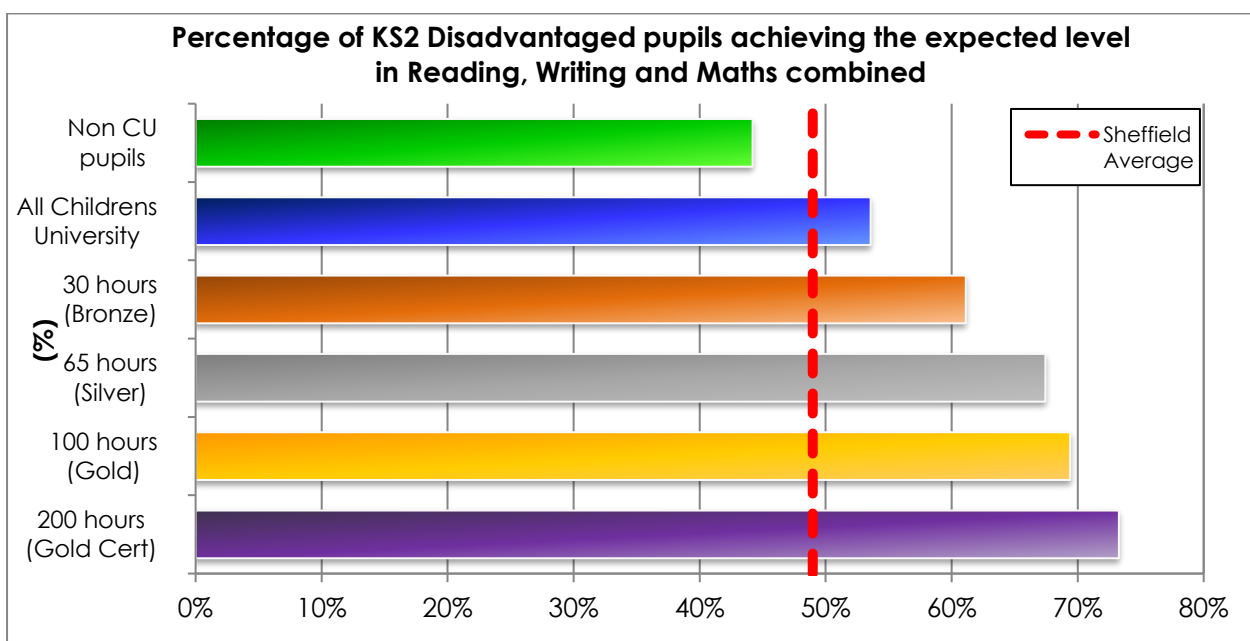
At each CU award level, attendance improves on the citywide average, rising to over 97% for those at Gold award levels for 100 and 200 hours.



Disadvantaged

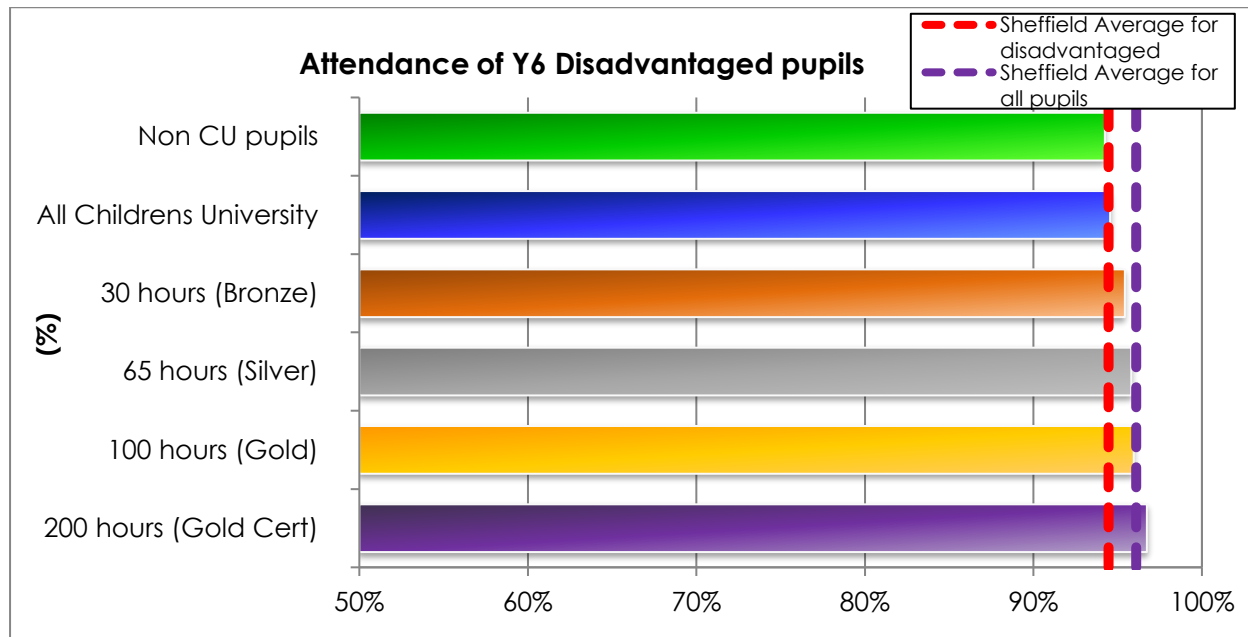
Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any time during the last six years and/or are Looked After Children (LAC). Generally, the academic performance of these pupils is lower so they receive Pupil Premium funding which supports schools in raising their attainment.

Of the 2,340 Y6 disadvantaged pupils in 2019, 51% have CU credits, with more than half (53%) having achieved a Bronze award or more for 30 hours of participation, matching last year's figures.



44% of non CU disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in the combined measure, falling considerably below the local average by 5% and their CU counterparts by 10%.

Performance of disadvantaged pupils at CU award levels improved significantly on this result, bettering the local average across the board, and by an average of around 23% at Gold award levels.



Attendance for CU disadvantaged pupils at CU award levels is also significantly better than non CU pupils, as demonstrated in the graph above.

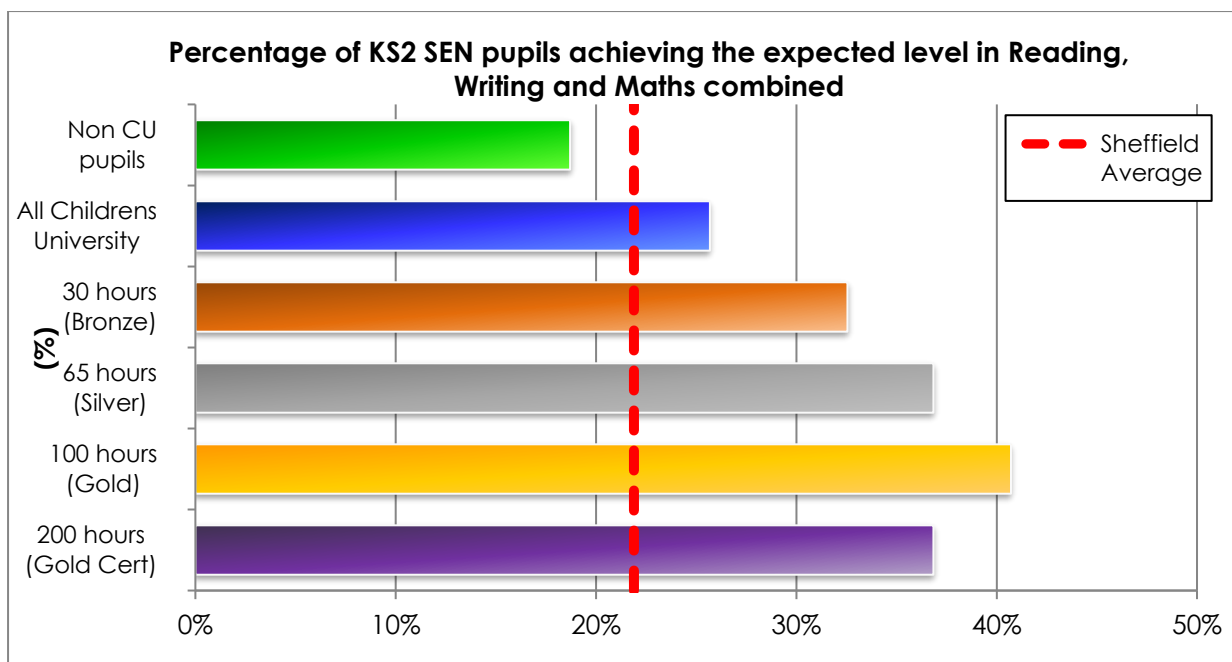
Whilst on average CU and non CU pupils as a whole have similar levels of attendance, this improves considerably at CU award levels, bringing them in line with the average for all Sheffield pupils and in some cases, improving on this result.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

This measure includes children with a statement of SEN or an education and health care plan (EHCP), and those receiving school-based support.

In 2019, 46% of Y6 SEN pupils had been awarded CU credits. Of these pupils, 53% have at least a Bronze award whilst 25% have achieved a Gold award, an increase of at least 3% in both cases when compared to last year's figures.

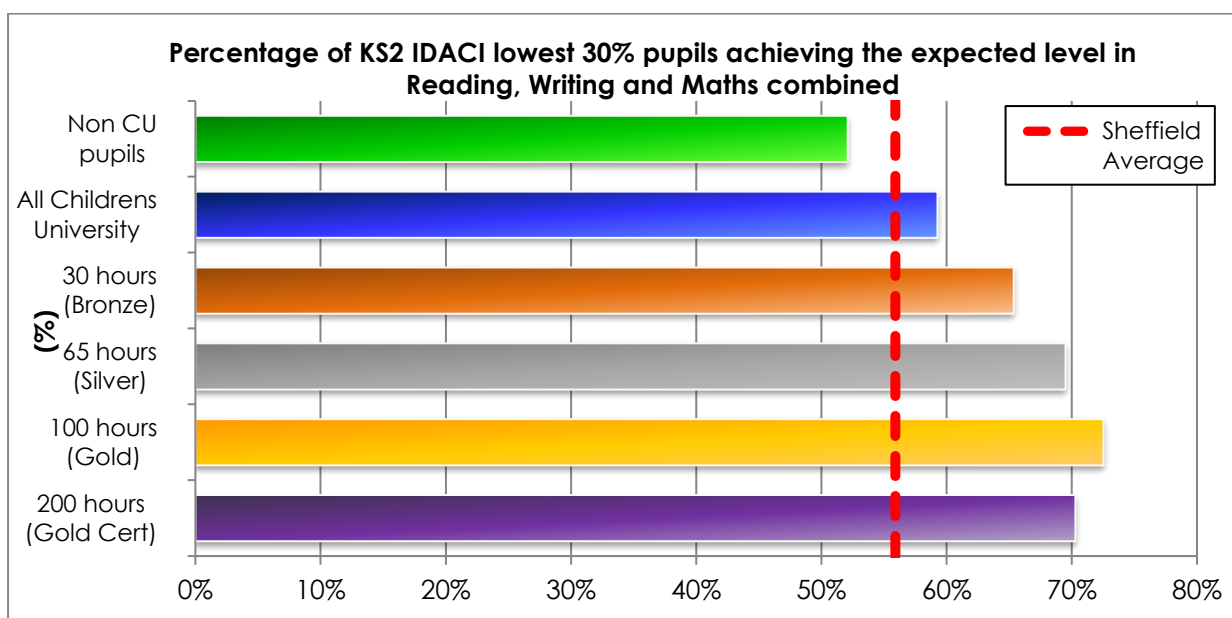
18.7% of non CU SEN pupils achieved the expected level in the combined measure compared to 25.7% of CU SEN pupils. Results improved significantly for those at CU award levels, rising to 40.7% of those with 100 hours of CU participation which is considerably above the local average for SEN pupils.



Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)

IDACI measures the proportion of children under the age of 16 in a local area that live in low income or income deprived households.

This report looks at results for Y6 pupils who live in the bottom 30% of lower super output areas (an area defined by population for statistical purposes).

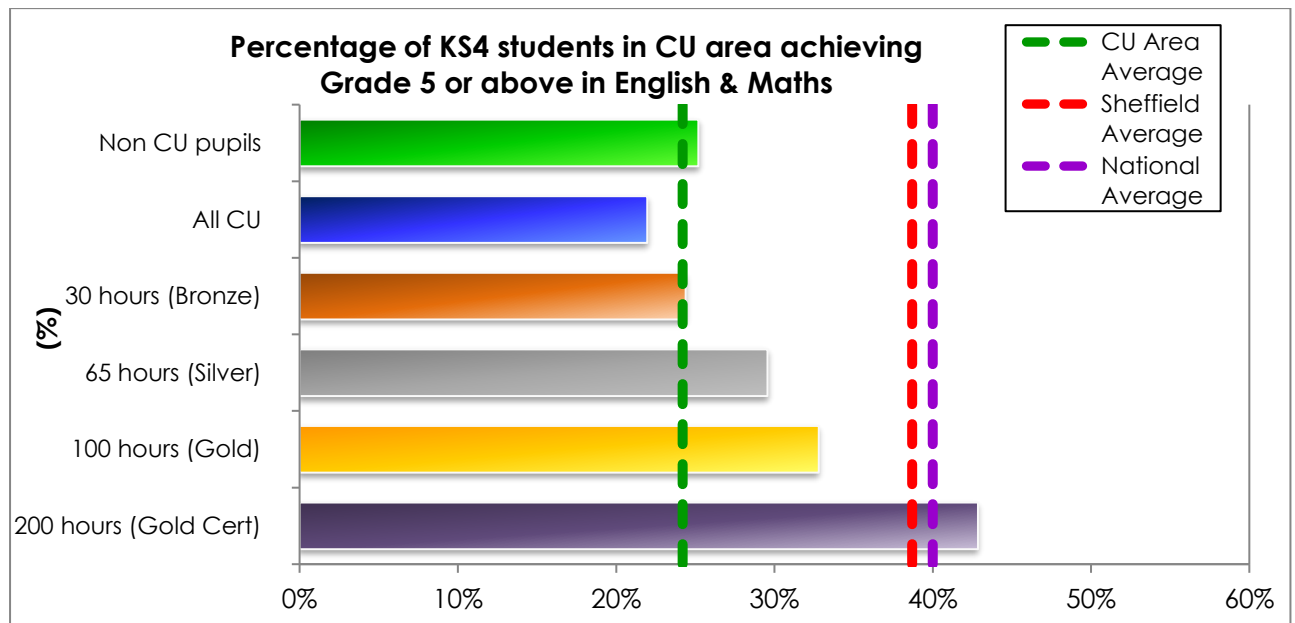


59.3% of CU pupils in these areas achieved the expected standard in the combined measure, bettering non CU pupils (52.1%) and the Sheffield average (55.9%). Results at CU award levels were particularly significantly as they improved on both the city and national average for all pupils.

Secondary Participation and Performance Analysis

- **11%** of all Y11 GCSE students had CU credits in Sheffield, replicating last year's figure
- **55%** of these students had taken part in at least 30 hours of CU activity, an increase of 6% from 2018. **16%** had achieved a Gold award for 100 hours, a 4% decrease from last year's figure
- **65%** of these CU students attend a CU subscribed secondary school in the North East of the city, accounting for a large majority of CU participation. As a result, analysis will continue to focus on this as a designated 'CU area' where attainment, attendance and aspiration is generally lower than average. This also ensures there is a valid comparison between students who have access to similar opportunities
- **31%** of Y11 students in the designated CU area have collectively earned over **35,000** CU credits in total
- **59%** of these students have at least a Bronze award for 30 hours, an increase of 9% when compared to last year. **36%** are at Gold award level or above, a significant increase of 16% from 2018

CU Area

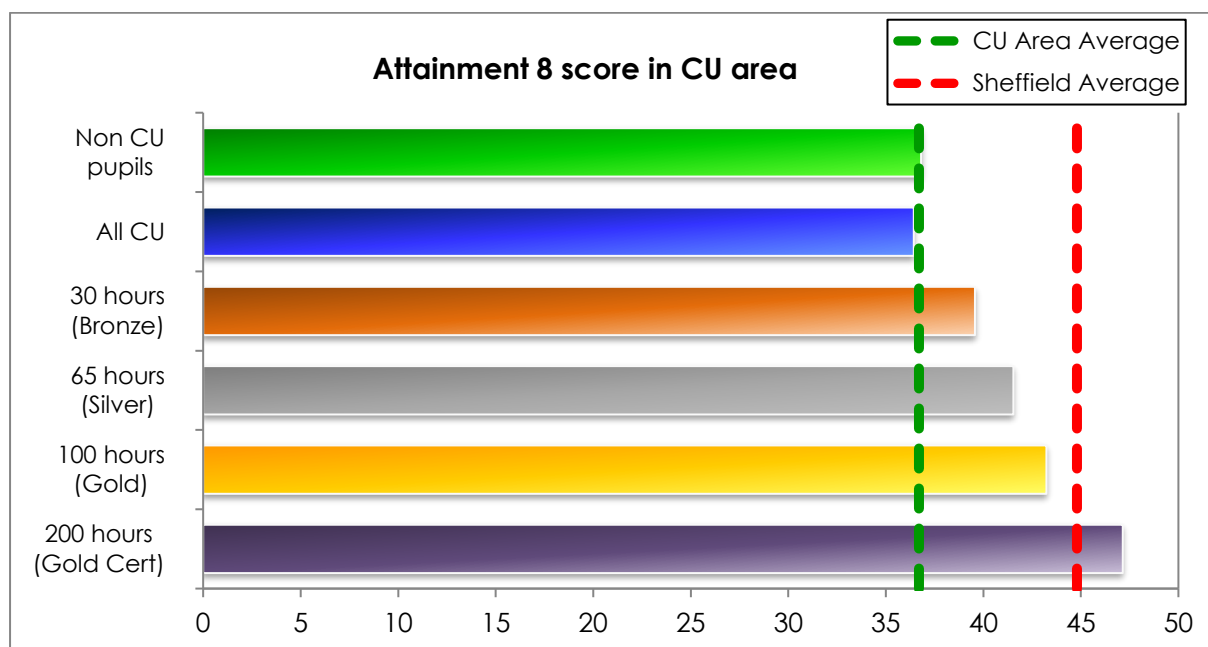


A key accountability measure for secondary schools is attainment in English and Maths at Grade 5 or above. In Sheffield, performance in this measure was slightly lower than in previous years.

Whilst 25% of non CU students achieved this measure in the CU area compared with 22% of CU students, at CU award levels performance improves significantly. For those at Gold award levels, 33% of students with 100 hours or more achieve this measure, whilst 43% of those with 200 hours received Grade 5 or above in English and Maths, surpassing both the Sheffield (38.8%) and national average (40%).

Attainment 8

Attainment 8 is another key accountability measure for secondary schools. This measure reflects a student's average achievement across a range of 8 subjects including English and Maths which is double weighted. The average national attainment 8 score in 2019 was 44.7 and the Sheffield average was 44.9.



The graph demonstrates that both CU and non CU students as a whole had similar Attainment 8 scores which were in line with the area average.

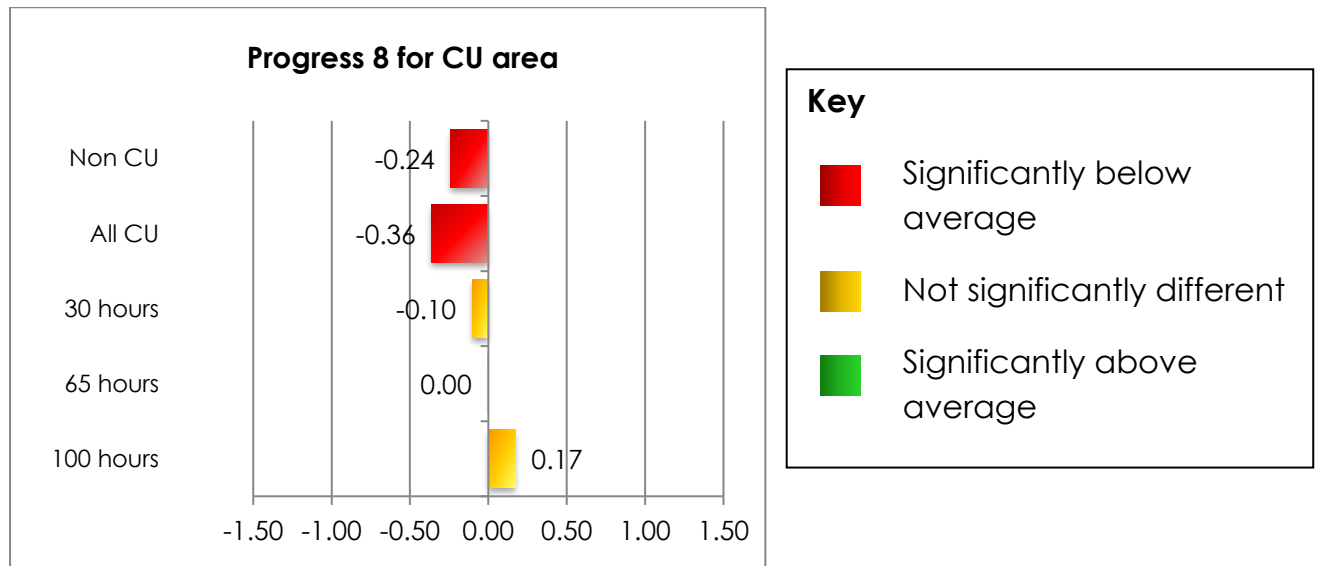
However, CU Bronze, Silver and Gold award winners improved on this result, beating the CU area average in all cases. For those over 100 hours, the average Attainment 8 score was 43.9 whilst for those over 200 hours, this increased to 47.1, beating both the citywide and national average.

Progress 8

The Progress 8 value added measure captures the progress a student makes from primary to secondary school. It compares Attainment 8 scores with the

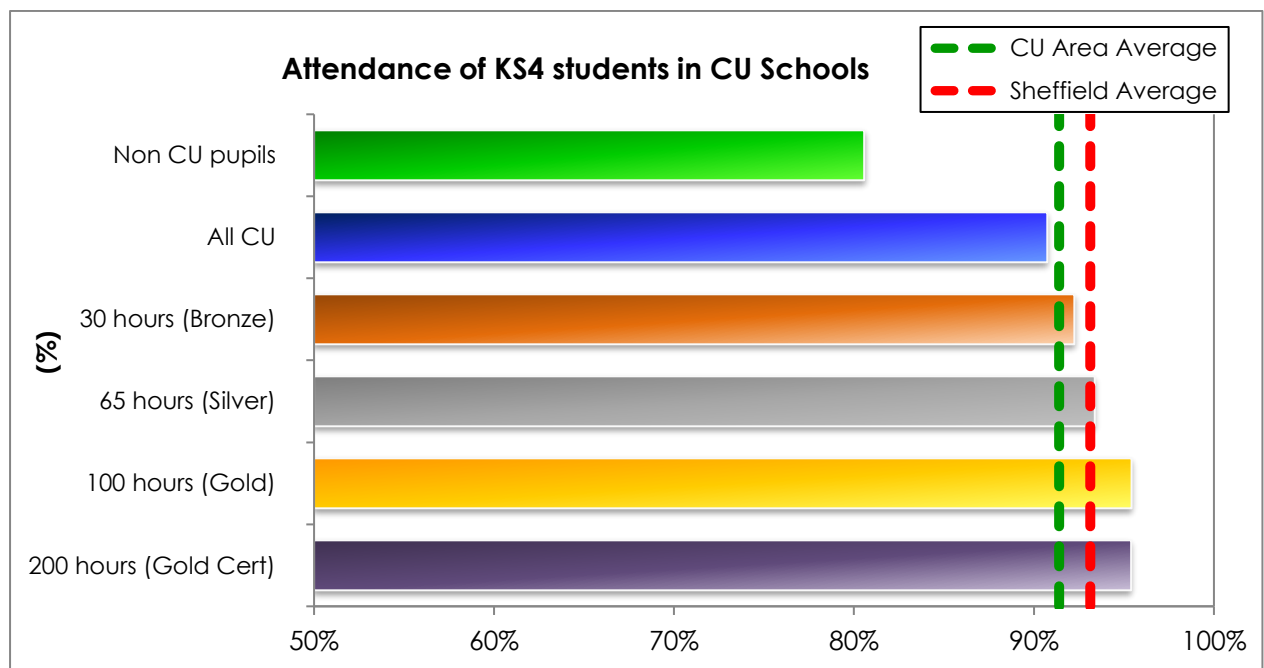
average Attainment 8 score of all pupils nationally who had a similar starting point.

The average Progress 8 score in Sheffield was -0.03, slightly lower than 2018. Performance of all CU students and non CU students in the CU area fell below the city average and overall, they both made less progress than those with similar prior attainment nationally.



However, for those students at CU award levels, outcomes improved as they performed as well as those with a comparable starting point nationally, and in most cases bettered the local average score too.

Attendance



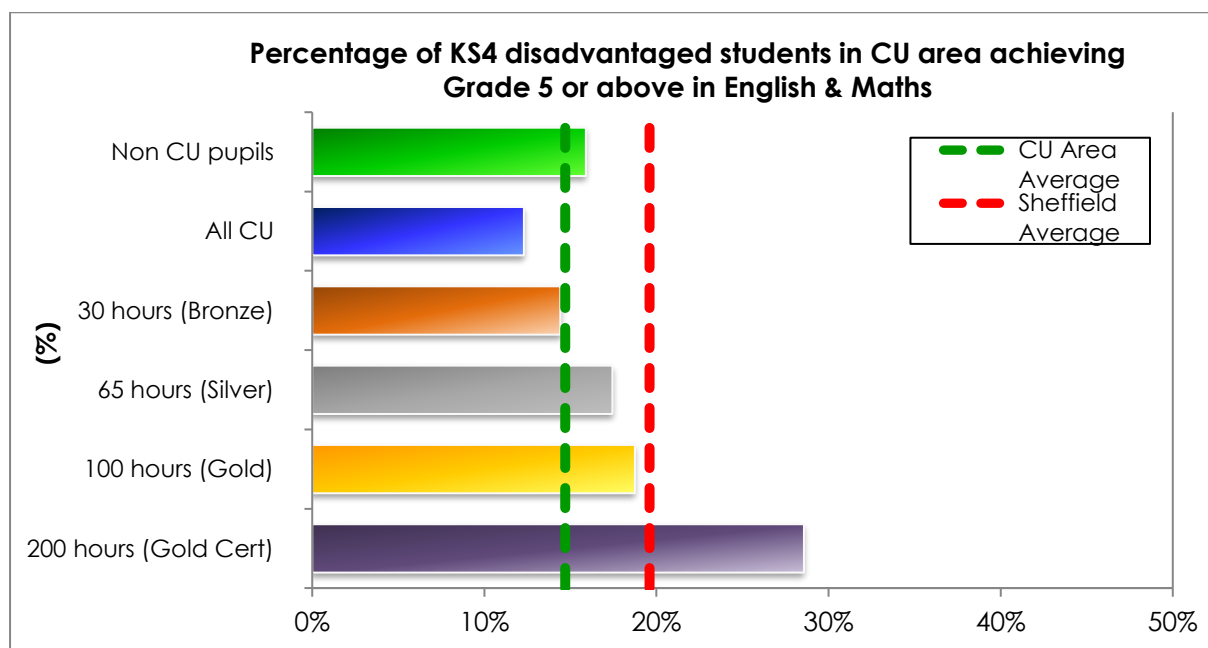
Attendance figures for one of the largest CU secondary schools in the CU area were unavailable in 2019, as previously. The absence of this information impacts on results of any analysis but attendance figures for the remaining CU subscribed schools will be presented in the interests of transparency.

Attendance of CU students was 10% higher than non CU students in these schools. At CU award levels attendance was well over 90% across the board, bettering the CU area and Sheffield average in most cases.

Disadvantaged

1,658 Y11 students in Sheffield were classed as disadvantaged and were eligible to receive the Pupil Premium subsidy in 2019. 17% of these students had CU credits, a 1% decrease on last year's figure.

In the CU area, 34% of Y11 students have CU credits, accounting for over 70% of all the Y11 CU disadvantaged students in Sheffield.

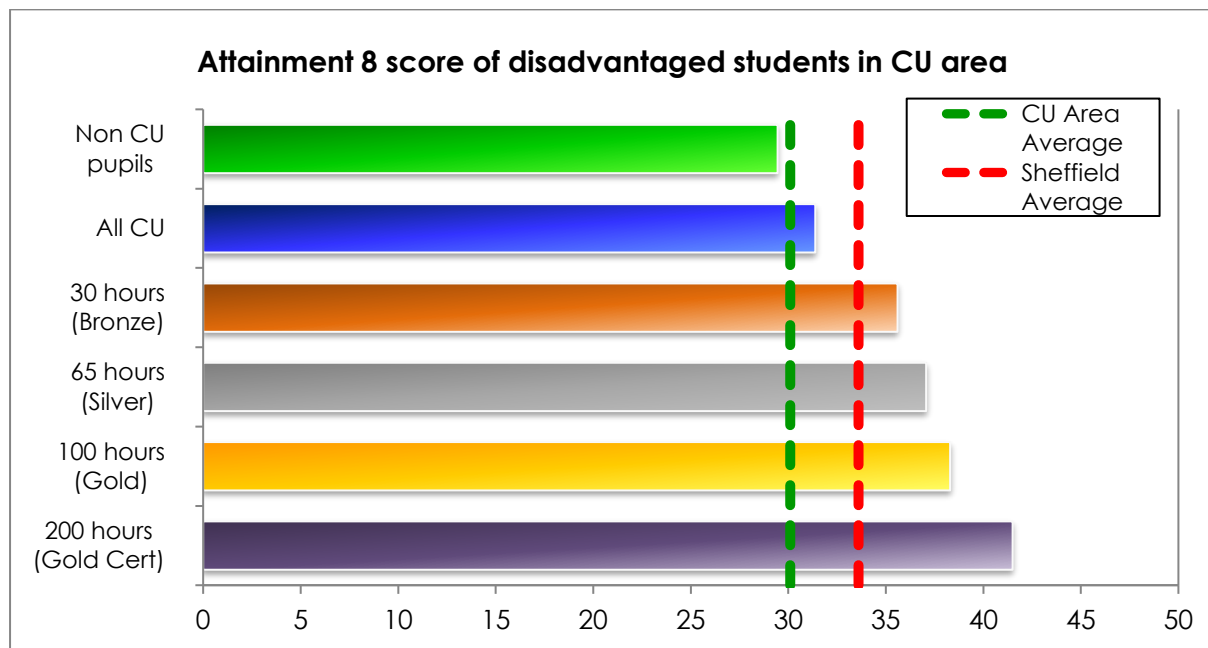


As a whole, more non CU disadvantaged pupils achieved a grade 5 or above in English and Maths than CU pupils in the CU area. Performance improved for those with CU awards, with students at most levels bettering the CU area average and coming within at least 2% of the Sheffield average for disadvantaged students.

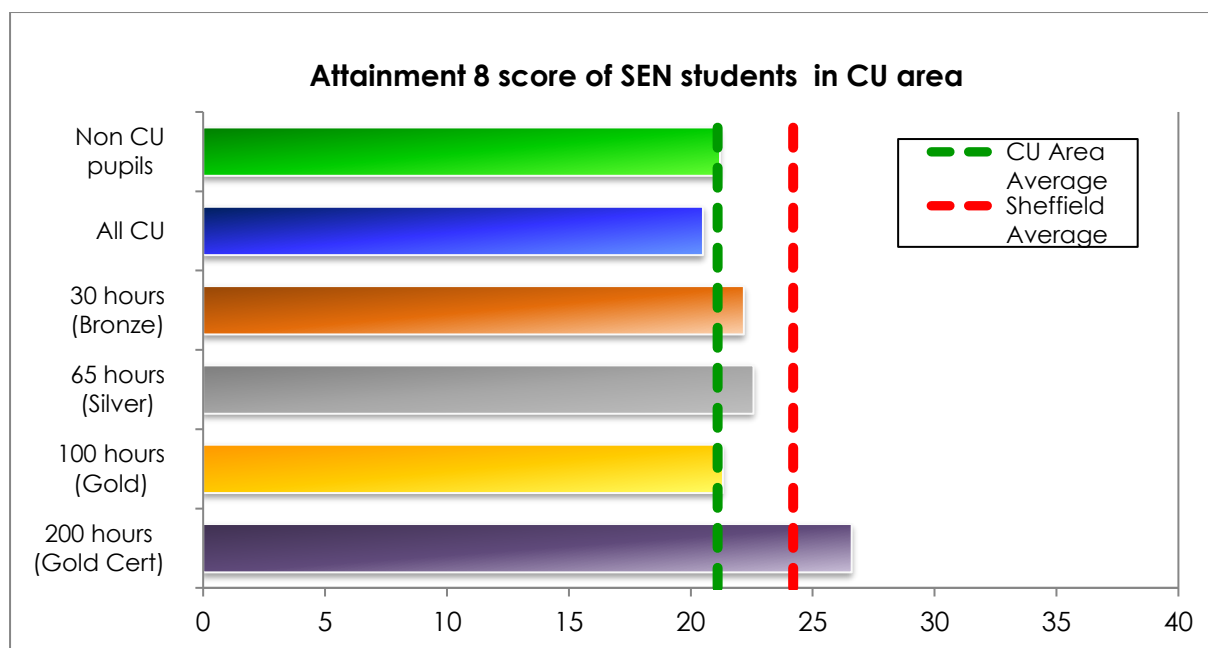
At Gold levels, 18.8% and 28.6% of students achieved this key measure, improving significantly on the CU area average and in the case of those with 200 hours, bettering the Sheffield average by over 9% too.

Attainment 8 scores for CU disadvantaged students were also significantly higher than non CU students in the CU area, rising above both the area and city average.

At each award level CU students also improved on this result, consistently performing better than non CU students by an average of 6 points, but also continually exceeding both the CU area and Sheffield averages for disadvantaged students.



Special Educational Needs (SEN)



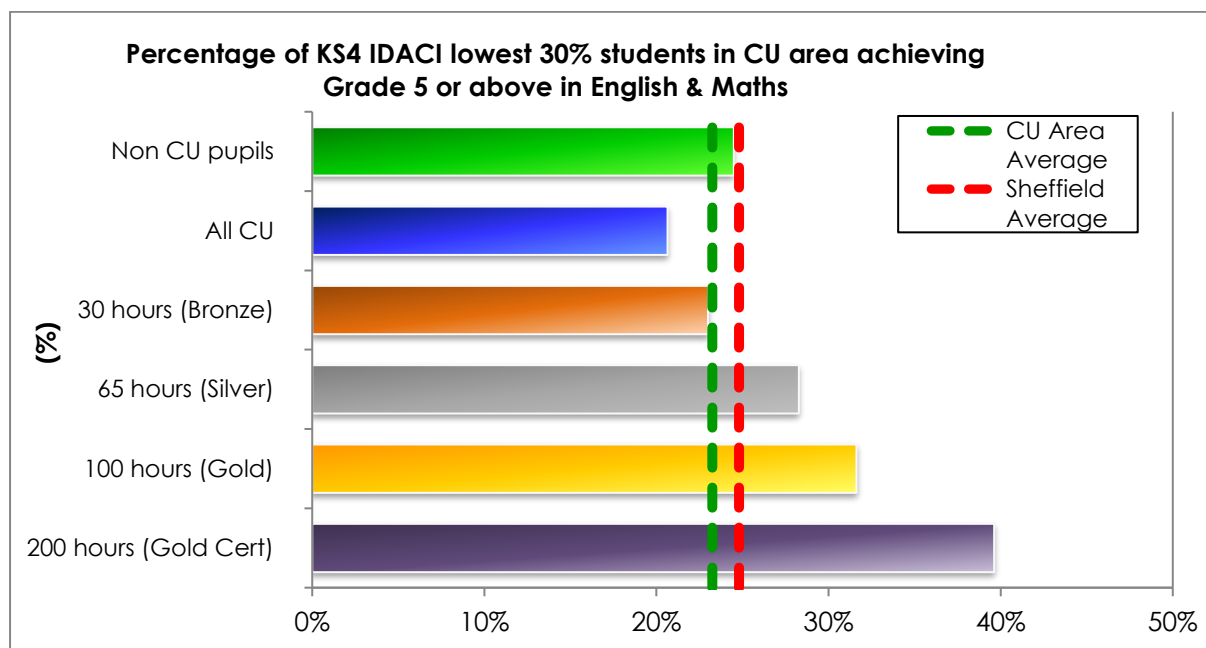
23% of SEN students in the CU area had CU credits, a 5% decrease on last year's figure.

Attainment 8 scores for both CU and non CU SEN students in the CU area were within 1 point of each other, and roughly in line with the CU area average for SEN students.

At CU award levels, scores were higher and consistently improved on the CU area average for SEN students. SEN students with over 200 hours of CU activity also improved on the Sheffield average by over 2 points.

Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)

2,337 Y11 students were living in the bottom 30% low income areas in Sheffield in 2019 and of these students, nearly half live in the North East which contains some of the most deprived areas of the city. In this CU area, 32% of these students had CU credits.



Over 20% of CU students identified as living in the lowest income areas in the North East achieved the key benchmark of Grade 5 of above in English and Maths, compared with just over 24% of non CU students.

The percentage of students achieving this measure was much higher for those at CU award levels, in most cases significantly improving on both non CU students as a whole, and the area and city average by at least 4%.

Case Studies

Hillsborough Pumas Football Club

Hillsborough Pumas Football Club was founded in 2000 and 20 years later, they have around 300 individual children and young people, playing across 19 teams, including a Football Association (FA) Wildcats team for girls. They have achieved the FA's highest club status, the 'Charter Community Club' which demonstrates their commitment to their local and wider community. An impressive accolade, but their Club Secretary, Douglas Connor, is quick to explain; "It's one thing being called a 'Community Club' but it's another thing to live it, so we asked ourselves What does being a 'Community Club' mean to us?, and it all went from there."



Creating a warm and friendly, family feel within the club has certainly helped the Pumas to grow, but Douglas is quick to point out that their growth is most notable since they became a validated Learning Destination with Sheffield Children's University, back in January 2014.

"Whenever we re-highlight that the club is a part of Sheffield CU, we get another flurry of calls, texts and emails

from parents. Some realising that their child can collect CU credits for their Pumas activities, and others asking how to get involved in the club and if snowballs from there. It's a really positive thing for our club to be involved in CU and we're proud that we were the first football club to become a Learning Destination in Sheffield" he adds. "Of course, as an FA Charter Standard Community Club, we tick all the FA boxes, but to have the extra, external quality accreditation of CU means we are broader than football - and we're proud of that."

It's clear that Hillsborough Pumas is more than 'just a football club'. "It's about the personal development of each of our players too. We want to support their development both on and away from the football pitch" Douglas explains. "At age 16, players can achieve FA coaching qualifications, and we support their learning within the club through training and shadowing opportunities, again expanding their confidence and experience. They're

always keen to help coach at the kids camps, and their extra hands are always welcome!" he adds.

They find girls and the younger children in particular relate better to the younger coaches, and this has proven especially so where children may have special educational needs and disabilities. "You see them stood on the side line, or not wanting or feeling able to join in. One of our young coaches kicks a ball to them with a smile, and their eyes light up. Football is a universal language, and with a little 1-1 support, they're soon joining in, looking to our junior coaches for that reassurance and praise. It's great to see" beams Douglas.

Cameron is just one of their junior coaches who a few years ago, was the proud recipient of the 'Sheffield and Hallamshire FA Young Volunteer Award'. He has recently applied for a national position on the FA Youth Council, using all the confidence, motivation and determination he's gained through his experiences with the Pumas in particular. Douglas adds "This has been his dream for a very long time, and if he's successful, it will undoubtedly be a wonderful experience that will stand him in a great position for his future learning, training and employment". He, like so many other young players coming through the ranks of Hillsborough Pumas, is blazing a trail at a club, local and national level. Douglas summarises the club's ethos; "Of course, some young players just love football for the weekly training and matches, but for those that want to take football in this direction, or indeed their wider learning, we need to be able to deliver and support them as best we can".



Being part Sheffield CU is an important part of this ethos too as Douglas explains; "Families love to see their kids receiving their CU awards and they bring them along to the next training session, proudly showing off their certificates and badges, and that's just as proud a moment for us coaches too. It certainly helps to keep them motivated, not just in football but in their learning at school or elsewhere, and of course, for their futures, whatever path they take."

Sheffield Young Carers

As our work has developed over the last 10+ years, we've had the privilege of working in partnership with lots of fantastic organisations. Many have helped us shape the CU offer in different ways, to ensure it is inclusive and accessible to as many children and young people as possible, especially those who face the most challenging barriers to participation. One partner that has been instrumental in helping us to adapt our offer for the children, young people and families they support is Sheffield Young Carers (SYC) who have been a validated Learning Destination since early 2014.

Deputy Manager, Laura Selby explains what being a young carer means for a child or young person; "Young carers are children and young people who provide care to family members who have long term physical or mental illnesses, disabilities or substance misuse issues. Caring responsibilities can include many things, from practical support in the home and emotional support, to personal care, or dealing with emergencies." SYC does an incredible job of supporting as many young carers of Sheffield as they can but 1 in 12 children and young people take on mid- to high-level care for an ill or disabled family member (BBC, 2010). This means there could be 7,000 young carers in Sheffield alone, many of whom are unknown to services or professionals, so SYC felt CU could be another great way to reach and acknowledge even more young carers in our city.

One young carer from Sheffield helped us to gain an understanding of their experiences; 'I'm 17 and I care for my older sister because she has chronic epilepsy, learning disabilities and tuberous sclerosis. I care for her by helping her when she has seizures, reminding her to eat and take her medication, sometimes cooking meals and helping with basic hygiene as well as just mental support. I am one of 5 children and I also have a little sister age 4 so she needs my help too sometimes. I care for her by dressing her, feeding her, showering her and entertaining her when my parents are busy with my older sister.'



Laura explains how young carers can be affected; "Caring responsibilities can have a huge impact on education, employment and financial situations, as well as on social, emotional and physical wellbeing. In many cases, young carers commit so much time to their responsibilities at home, they're unable

to take part in additional learning activities or events outside school or benefit from all that CU has to offer as a result."

Though they may not be taking part in organised activities, young carers are still learning and developing their skills in different ways as Laura explains; "All those caring responsibilities are also a source of tremendous learning too, and we at SYC wanted to work with Sheffield CU to recognise and reward that, as well as support young carers to identify and reflect on the learning and skills they are developing each and every day."

With this in mind, the CU 'Learning Through Caring' programme was born, enabling young carers to receive 1 CU credit per week in recognition of learning and skills development that takes place through their caring responsibilities. Through a termly review discussion with a member of school staff, young carers can now also reflect on the valuable life skills they have developed through their responsibilities at home and receive CU credits and awards for their efforts. Laura adds "This discussion also helps young carers to realise how transferable these skills are, for college, university, employment and later life."

And the support doesn't stop there. SYC also offer support for 8-25 year olds through 1:1 sessions, group support and holiday respite activities, to help them build resilience, reduce isolation, and improve their wellbeing. To recognise the learning taking place there, all activities are CU-eligible too; 'I started getting CU credits through Sheffield Young Carers when I joined their service aged 15. We did fun things with them to get a break from our caring but I also learnt a lot from our group sessions on topics like health and wellbeing, how to manage my caring, safety in the home, drugs and alcohol awareness, manual handling, and first aid.'

Though it's still early days with this programme, the value of using Children's University as a mechanism to encourage young people to reflect on the learning and skills they develop through their caring responsibilities is already clear, as one young carer explains; 'Sometimes it's hard but caring has taught me so many skills - now I'm able to cook and clean, have good time management skills and good listening skills, as well as loads of mental endurance and tolerance. I learnt all kinds of useful skills to help me in my caring role and also in my life in general - I'm really good at working in teams now and I also built my confidence a lot through the activities we did and meeting other people who were also young carers like me.'

For more information, please contact Laura Selby: laura.selby@sycp.org.uk

Conclusion

Results from this report clearly support and strengthen previous findings and provide further compelling evidence of the link between participation in CU activities and academic performance, attendance and attitude.

Performance in key measures as a whole in Sheffield in 2019 remained stable in some cases, but in many cases it declined. Analysis of the results of those participating in Sheffield CU however provides an improved and more positive picture. In each performance measure, children and young people who are members of Sheffield CU consistently perform better than their non CU counterparts as well as the local and citywide average. Detailed analysis of progress, attainment and attendance measures repeatedly show similar levels of performance for CU students across vulnerable groups, CU schools and the city as a whole.

These findings are further reinforced by national research completed in December 2017 by the Education Endowment Foundation who concluded that children in the CU schools made two additional months progress in reading and maths compared to children in the other schools. Also, children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in CU schools made an additional month's progress in maths and small gains in 'teamwork' and 'social responsibility' compared to those eligible in other schools.

Case studies demonstrate the importance of creating strong networks through collaborative working and sharing of good practice. Through this work, CU is able to understand the different learning needs and access barriers children and young people face and adapt practice to ensure there are opportunities to engage for all.

Furthermore, they provide clear evidence that participation in CU activities actively contributes to the personal development of children and young people, particularly the development of essential life skills, positive character traits and cultural capital. The importance of this is supported by extensive national research, which underpins the Character Education Framework provided to schools by the Department for Education. Through their participation in CU, children and young people are able to cultivate these skills, which help them thrive in later life, particularly in education and employment. This is a key area of development for Sheffield CU and through future work with schools and Learning Destinations, children and young people will be supported to further reflect and build on these skills.

Sheffield Children's University

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