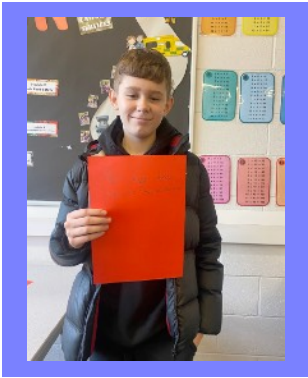


The Rowans Response to the Covid Pandemic 2021





Introduction

“The impact of the coronavirus will be one of the defining features of a whole generation of British children. The lockdown has had a severe impact on every family and on every aspect of education in this country” - Alice Barnard, Edge Foundation Report 2020

Young people are facing a disrupted education, isolation from their friends and loved ones and it is inevitably going to have an impact. According to the Youth Index 2021, 1 in 4 young people “feel unable to cope with life” since the start of the pandemic.

Even before the pandemic arrived, Medway was ranked in the 30% most deprived local authorities nationally in the 2019 Indices of Deprivation (IoD). Medway also now has fourteen neighbourhoods ranked in the 10% most deprived and thirty-seven in the 20% most deprived nationally. This is important to note when recent figures from an online survey by the Institute of Fiscal Studies showed that children from better-off households are spending 30% more time each day on educational activities than are children from the poorest fifth of households. Additionally, according to the Centre for Social Justice (2020), educational outcomes in AP are statistically, significantly poorer. Only 4% of pupils manage to achieve a basic pass (grade 9–4) in maths and English. For context, 64 per cent of pupils in state-funded secondaries achieve a pass in these two qualifications.

The Rowans AP Academy has on average 65 Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils on roll. All of these pupils have either been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion from their mainstream settings. All pupils may or may not have additional learning needs and have been identified as having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some pupils are undergoing assessment for an Education and Health Care Plan. 56% of the pupils attending the Rowans were Free School Meals compared to 46% in other AP's and 17% nationally. The Rowans offers holistic care, combining quality, personalised education with emotional support. Many of the pupils have been out of education for a substantial period of time and therefore need intensive work to ensure they can access learning. For the pupils not attending school, a robust remote learning system was set up. All families were spoken to and anyone needing a laptop was provided with one, and where families had connectivity issues, a router or dongle was given. Any work set did not require printing, and all pupils were provided with a Google account to get onto the Google Classroom.



Mrs May

Headteacher

I have been so proud of how the pupils and their families have coped with lockdown and the subsequent impact on education, which was unsettling for all. The focus throughout the pandemic has always been on what is right for the pupils, within the ever-changing Government guidance. All staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that we have maintained our sense of community, whether pupils were learning in school or remotely. We very quickly

established a team of staff whose role it was to lead and manage the remote learning. Another team of staff put processes and procedures in place to increase our welfare safeguarding checks and maintain links with appropriate external agencies. A team of staff built the enrichment programme, delivering a weekly activity for each pupil to support their wider learning and supporting positive mental health. All pupils and staff in school worked within small 'family bubbles', with a daily programme of learning and enrichment.

The support, encouragement and quality assurance of the Trustees has been invaluable and a further example of our strength as a community. To maintain connectivity with our school and wider community, we have build our social media presence and shared often and widely. This has included posting a celebratory video for pupils' birthdays, sharing sources of support for positive mental health, providing up-to-date information, sharing our weekly assemblies and celebrating all the learning that has continued throughout the lockdown periods both in school and remotely. Weekly, we have celebrated an in-school learner of the week and a remote learner of the week. We have enjoyed the social media interactions and responses as well as being flattered by local schools who have used our ideas. This has been a difficult and challenging time for all, we continue to be proud of our school community and the resilience they have shown, continuing to support the school and providing such positive feedback.

As we now emerge from lockdown and the protective measures are slowly lifted, the impact of the pandemic on our young people will continue to become apparent. One of the greatest impacts has been the cancellation of GCSE exams and the alternative evidence-based centre assessed grades. There has also been a loss of social interaction for many young people both within school and clubs and activities outside of school. Loss has been felt in many ways, there has been a loss of routine, structure, opportunities alongside a loss of formal and informal support. Longer term, it is yet unknown what the impacts of the pandemic will be, academically, socially, emotionally and physically. To support our pupils at The Rowans we immediately refocused on our schools vision and values and in response to feedback from parents and pupils we increased mental health support and introduced life skills challenges for wellbeing. We will continue to use research, whilst keeping the pupils at the centre of all decision making, to ensure we are responding to identified issues as well as supporting individual pupil needs.

Key Highlights

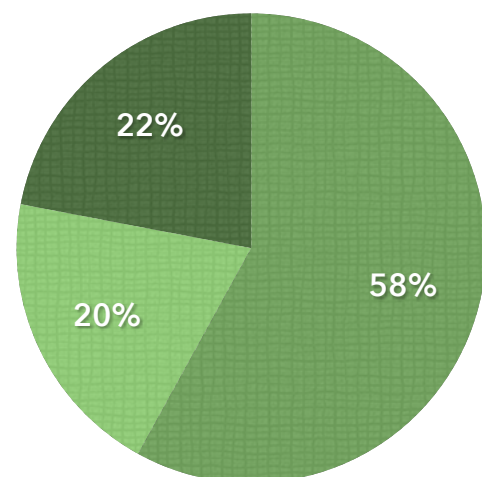
51%

of pupils scored themselves lower in term 3 on their Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire in comparison to their term 1

53%

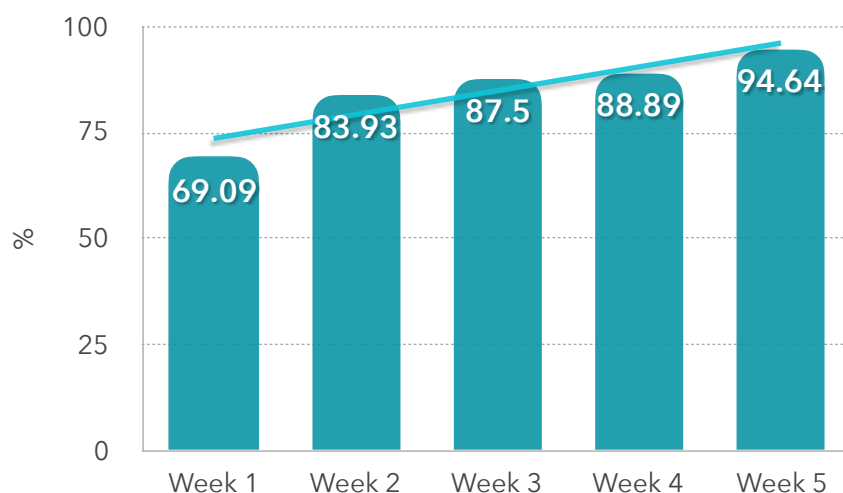
of parents scored their children lower in term 3 on their Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire in comparison to their term 1

Do you feel like you are out of a routine?

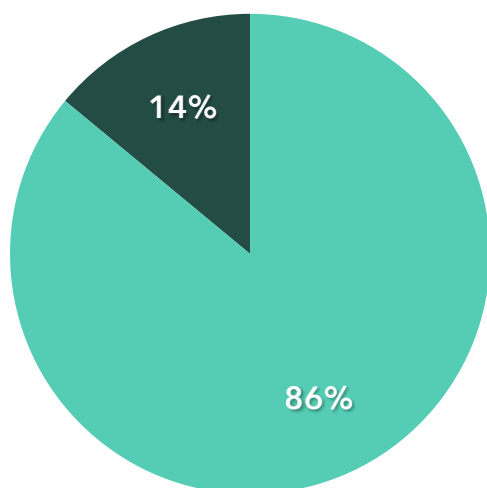


● Yes ● No ● Not Sure

Attendance and Engagement

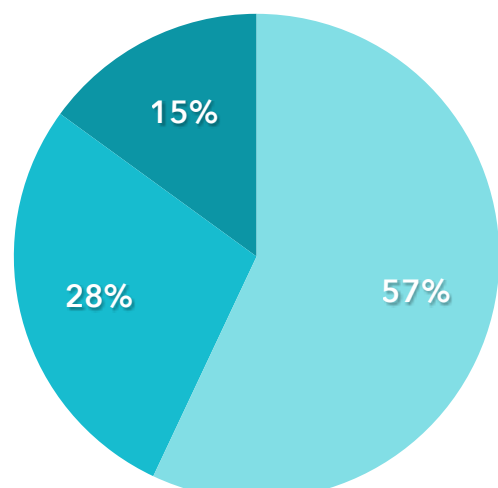


Do you feel you have managed your child's learning at home during this National Lockdown?



● Yes ● No

Do you feel that your child's mental health has suffered at all during this National Lockdown?



● Yes ● No ● Not Sure

Mel's Story

"The Rowans is the best school I have ever attended"



My name is Mel and I am 15 years old. I enjoy drawing and painting and anything art based. I use art more as therapy than a hobby. It helps me to express my feelings and I feel like I use art as my crutch to let out my feelings.

A few years ago I used to have bad anger problems; I was always fighting and getting into trouble. In the first mainstream school I attended, it wasn't the correct place for me. So, they sent me to the Rowans. At first I had no hope in myself and didn't allow myself to do better. Now, after attending the Rowans, it has opened my eyes to the world and it made me realise that I can achieve and become anything I want to be. Learning new things everyday and building great relationships with friends and teachers.

During lockdown, it has really affected me not being able to attend school regularly and consistently. However, the Rowans did a lot for me during lockdown and they helped me in many ways. They organised food parcels and vouchers, enrichment packs and also provided online learning every day. They also phone regularly to check up on us. In my opinion, the Rowans is the best school I have ever attended.

Leigh's Story

"I had never really settled or felt like I belonged"



My name is Leigh and I am 14 years old. I live at home with just me and my mum. I joined the Rowans after an incident at my old school.

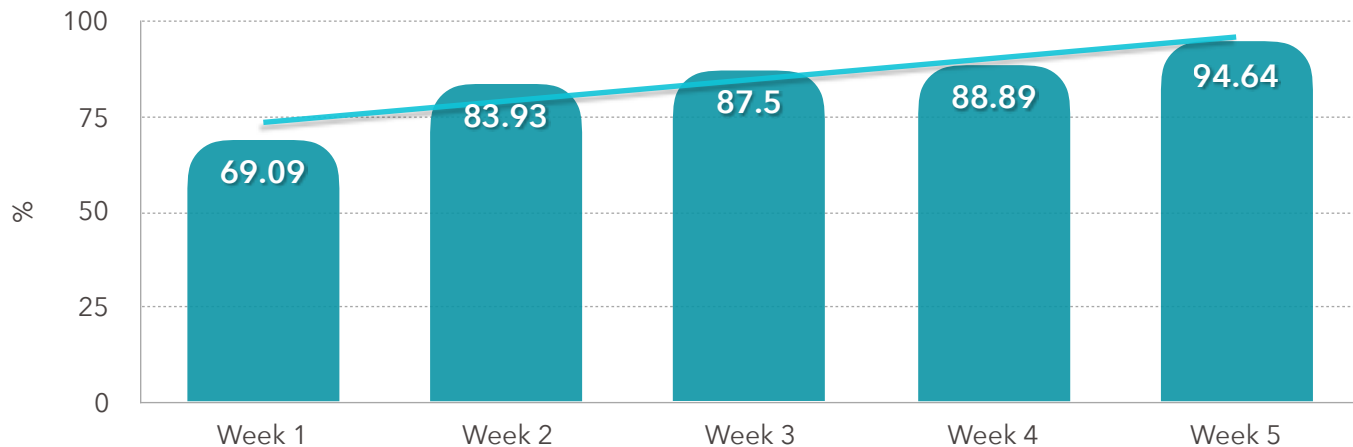
I was never really badly behaved before this, and I had never had a permanent exclusion before. It was one mistake but it turns out to have been one of the best mistakes I had ever made. This is because I ended up at the Rowans. In my previous 4 schools, I had never really settled or felt like I belonged. This started to worry me because it affected my attendance a lot. However, ever since I started coming to the Rowans, I don't struggle to wake up and I find myself looking forward to coming into school.

Throughout lockdown, the Rowans has not shut down at all and they have continuously supported me and my family. When I had to take time off school, they provided me with online learning. As soon as I was ready to return during lockdown, they welcomed me back and made sure to keep up my routine.

Trends and Data

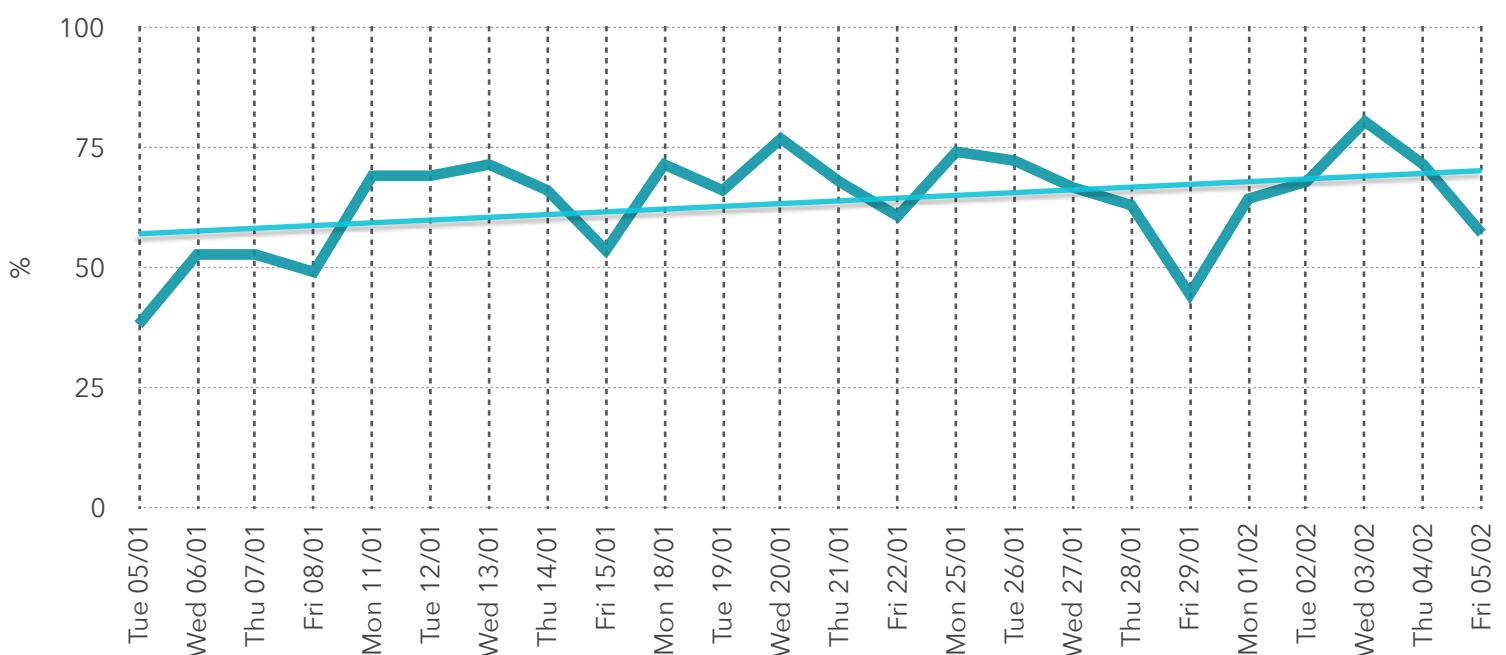
In comparison to the previous lockdowns, during the lockdown that started in January 2021, there were considerably more pupils who either attended school or had a blended approach of attending school and doing remote learning. As a result of this, all of the data on this page below accounts for all pupils at the Rowans, not just those specifically doing remote learning.

Attendance and Engagement



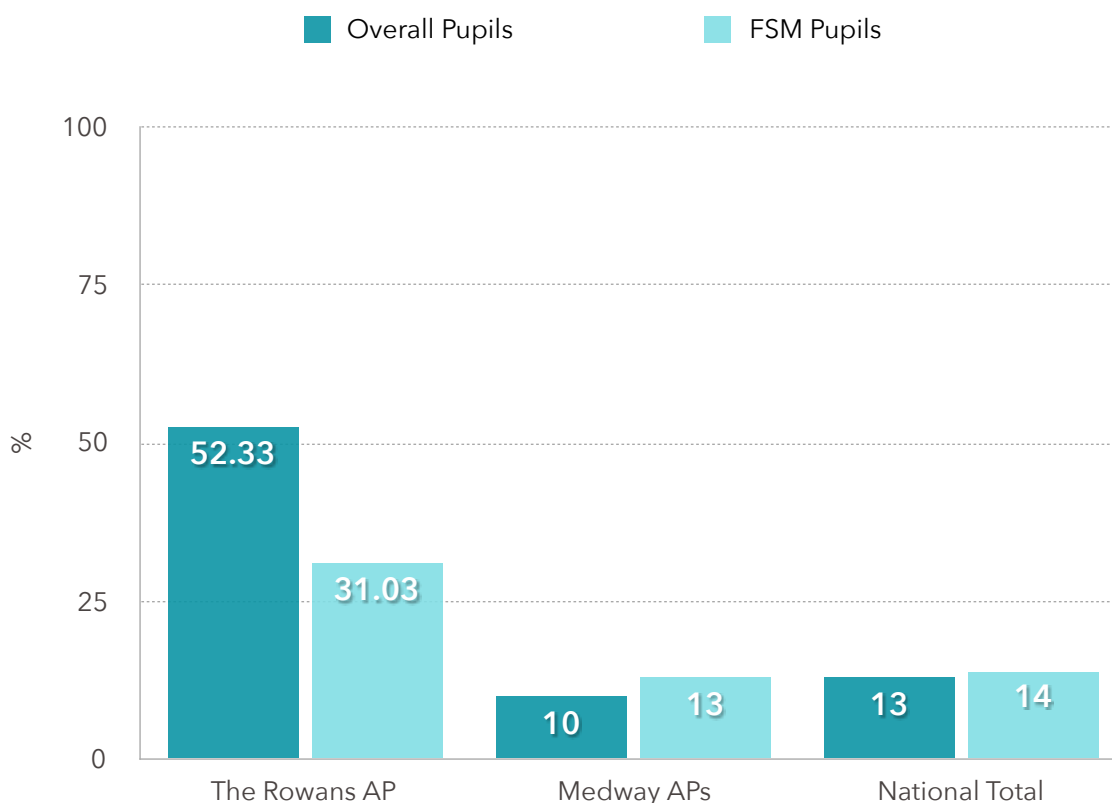
This data is positive and shows that after some teething issues, we were able to adapt to our pupils needs and provide them with the work and content that they needed. After that first week, a few of the pupils were provided with work packs to complete as they struggled to cope with the technology and remote learning package.

Attendance and Engagement by Day

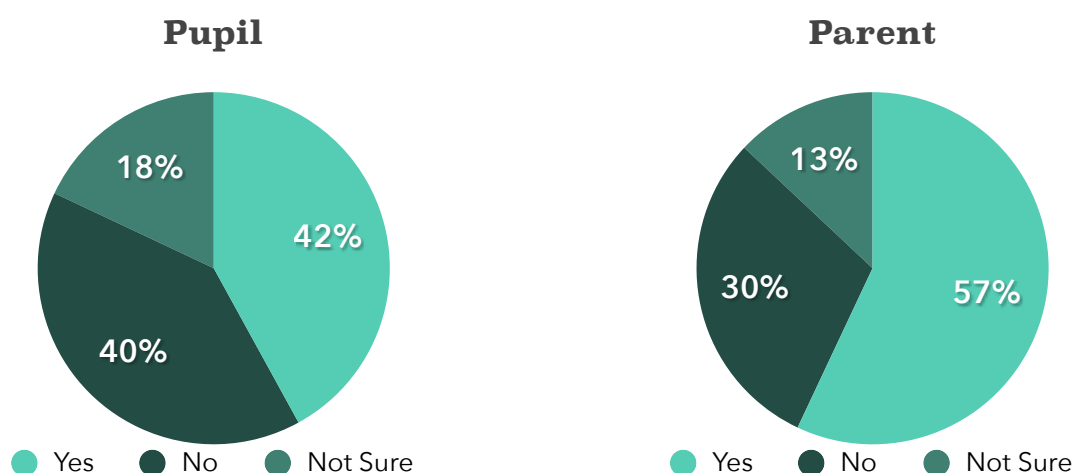


Overall, the average attendance and engagement figures for both remote learning and physically attending school were 63.11%. For Pupil Premium it was 62.08% and for non-Pupil Premium it was 64.95% which shows a very slight difference. For FSM pupils, their attendance was 59.85% and for non-FSM pupils their attendance was 67.78%.

This chart below looks specifically at those pupils who physically attended school during this lockdown period and then comparative data for other Medway AP's as well as the national total attendance. The chart shows that the Rowans AP had a higher percentage of attendance for both their FSM pupils and overall.



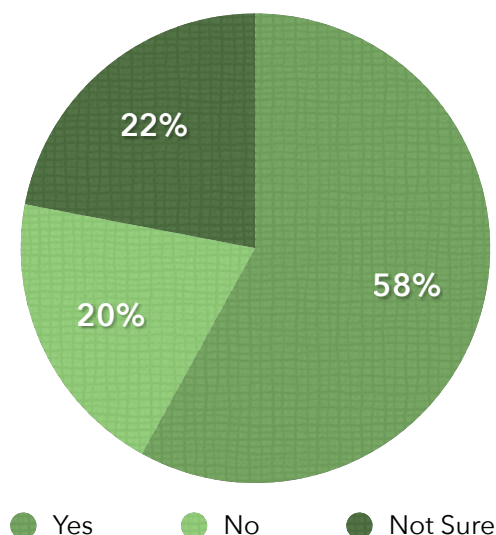
A COVID questionnaire was sent out to parents and pupils to assess their thoughts on how they have handled the most recent national lockdown. Interestingly, 42% of pupils felt as though they had fallen behind academically, with 57% of the parents responses echoing a similar concern for their child's academic progress.



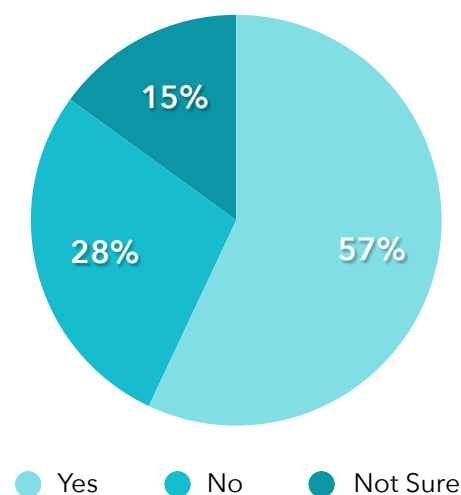
Out of the cohort of pupils accessing their education remotely, 79% of them felt like the remote learning package and support provided was enough for them. In comparison, 86% of parents with children working remotely felt that it was enough.

Furthermore, 100% of the parents agreed completely that the communication and updates provided by the school were enough.

Do you feel like you are out of a routine?

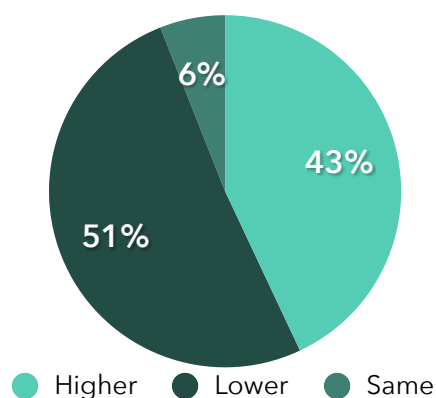


Do you feel that your child's mental health has suffered at all during this National Lockdown?

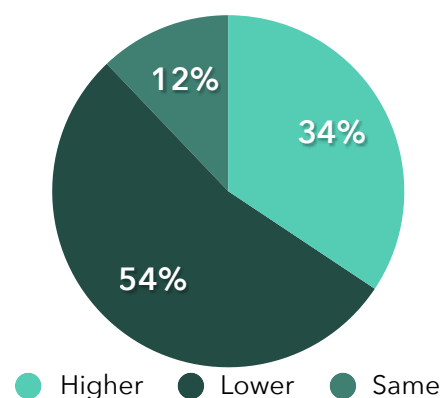


On top of the COVID questionnaire, as a school we also complete a Strengths and Difficulty questionnaire three times a year. The SDQ is given to pupils, as well as parents who answer questions based on their child. The questionnaire is a brief emotional and behaviour screening tool that captures the perspective of children and young people, as well as their parents. 51% of pupils scored themselves lower in term 3 during lockdown, than when they returned to school initially in September. 43% scored themselves higher but interestingly, of that 43%, 45% of their parents actually felt as though their child had deteriorated since September. For the parents overall, 53% of parents scored their children lower in term 3 during lockdown, than when they returned to school initially in September. 34% of parents scored their children higher, but of those 34%, 50% of the children actually gave themselves a lower school in comparison to September. Together, this indicates that there is a divide between a parents perception of their child's behaviour and mental health in comparison to how the child actually perceives themselves.

Pupils



Parents



Mental Health

“What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candour, and more unashamed conversation” - Glenn Close

The Youth Index Report 2021 conducted by the Princes Trust highlights the significant impact the pandemic has had on young people and their mental health. Their report for this year suggests more young people are feeling anxious than ever in the 12-year history of the Index. Additionally, over 50% say that their mental health has worsened since the start of the pandemic. This is particularly relevant to the data collected within our own setting. A questionnaire was designed to investigate the impact of COVID on our families. One of the questions asked of parents was whether they felt as though their child's health had suffered during the lockdown period. The results show that 57% of parents felt as though it has had a negative impact on their child's mental health which is a worrying statistic.

The Youth Index Report also indicates that those young people with fewer than five A*-C grade GCSEs have a lower score than those with more GCSEs. On top of that, the data also suggests that young people from poorer backgrounds (i.e. received free school meals) have a significantly lower overall score than their peers. The environment in which our pupils have lived in statistically put them at a disadvantage to their peers, and by even attending an Alternative Provision, those statistics are even more worrying. This further reiterates our method of a holistic approach towards education and offering a blended learning opportunity during the pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic, the mental health of pupils at the Rowans AP has been a priority. It has been vital that we maintained regular contact with our pupils and families in order to monitor and advise on mental health. This has been achieved in a number of ways:

- Weekly contact from a dedicated welfare team who, as part of their calls, enquire after mental health and then refer them to the relevant staff or services.
- Regular completion of SDQs and COVID questionnaires to provide data, feedback and insight.
- A weekly enrichment bag which has been delivered to homes during term time and holidays. These have included art packs, cookery packs and other treats.





- A specific focus on mental health during Children's Mental Health week. During this, daily challenges were provided to improve mental health and these were posted on social media and encouraged during in-school activities.

- Weekly activity ideas have been provided to all staff as well as via social media, which encourages pupils to look after their mental health.

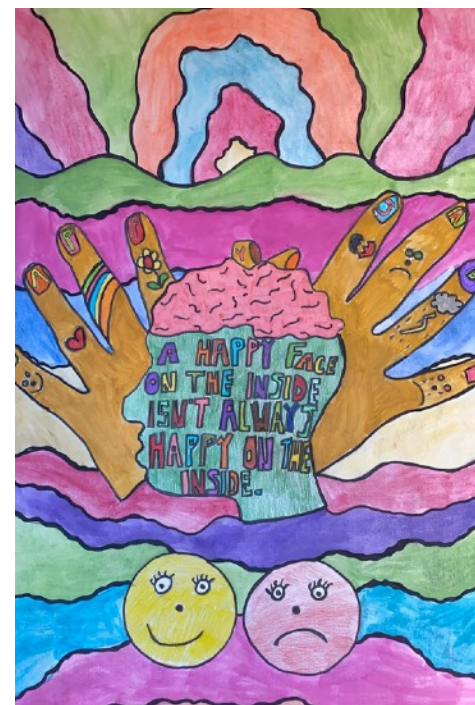
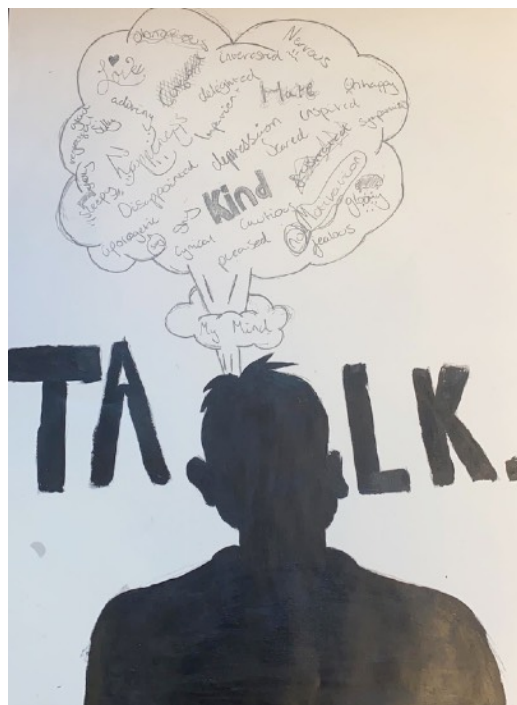
- Our counsellor, Tina, has continued to provide counselling sessions to identified pupils and their parents over the phone.

- Key staff have completed training on KOOTH, the only mental wellbeing community. Information from this has then been regularly shared with pupils and families.

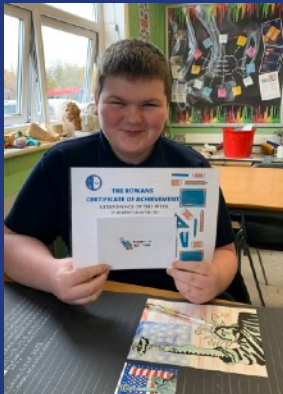
- All families received a letter with information regarding mental health and services which they could access.

- Continued provision of individual interventions where pupils could discuss any concerns.

THE WINNING ENTRIES BY PUPILS FOR THE 'EXPRESS YOURSELF' ART CHALLENGE FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK:



George's Story



"This helped make my lockdown experience a more positive one"

My name is George and I am 15 years old. I currently live in Cliffe, Rochester. I enjoy playing games, staying at home and watching movies.

I came to the Rowans after I got excluded at my last school for aggressive behaviour. I have been here for almost a year and I have really enjoyed it.

Although lockdown came as a surprise, it has not really affected me personally because I enjoy messaging people online more than talking to them in person. Also, my school remained open and were really supportive of what I needed. That helped make my lockdown experience a more positive one.

The enrichment packs have food and activities in them. After a few weeks I was struggling with motivation to do any school work. My parents and school arranged for me to attend school. This has been good for my routine and my education. I was in a small group with the same teacher everyday and this really helped me.

Tom's Story



"It has been a year that has really taught me a lot about myself"

My name is Tom and I am 15 years old also. I live in Gravesend and really enjoy drawing and playing video games.

I joined the Rowans about a year ago after being excluded from my last school. It has been a year that has really taught me a lot about myself.

In a good way, lockdown has not affected me much because I've been able to continue make progress in school, especially in maths and English. I feel like I've really matured.

Throughout the entire lockdown, the Rowans has been open and this has helped to support me in all aspects of my life. The enrichment packs are really nice to receive and they gave me something to do outside of school, when I got home.

I was fortunate enough to attend school every day and I felt that it was an excellent opportunity for me to maintain links with school staff and pupils and for me to continue to have a routine.

Remote Learning Package

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today" - Malcom X



KS3 TIMETABLE

MONDAY	TUESDAY
1. Reading	1. Reading
2. PE	2. Maths
3. Live maths lesson - 11am-12pm	3. Live English lesson - 11am-12pm
4. Art	4. STEM
5. Live science lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm	5. Live humanities lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm
WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
1. Reading	1. Reading
2. PE	2. English
3. Live maths lesson - 11am-12pm	3. Live ICT lesson - 11am-12pm
4. Science	4. PSHE
5. Live English lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm	5. Live quiz lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm
FRIDAY	ENRICHMENT
1. PE	1. Virtual fitness challenges
2. Maths	2. Live skills challenges
3. Live art lesson - 11am-12pm	3. Enrichment packs
4. English	
5. Live mind games lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm	

During the initial lockdown, we contacted all families to discuss their technology needs to ensure that learning could still take place at home. Any pupil who did not have access to a laptop or WiFi, were provided with the equipment necessary to enable this to happen. Remote learning takes place on Google Classroom and follows the same broad and balanced curriculum as is offered in school wherever possible and appropriate. However, there are some small adaptations: there are timetabled weekly quizzes and mind games to ensure pupils receive a broad range of learning activities that do not necessarily always mean being in front of a screen.

We have adapted a blended approach towards remote learning, taking the best of both

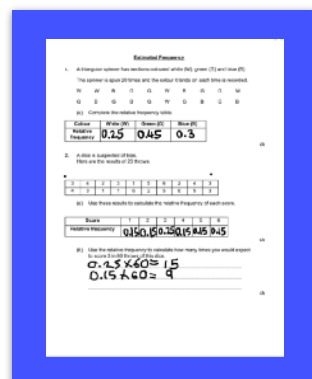
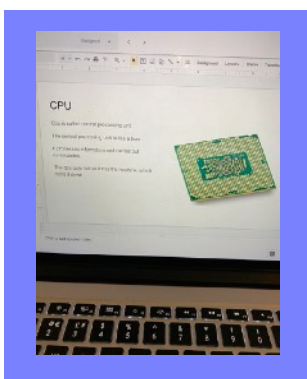
synchronous and asynchronous approaches. Synchronous learning takes place live online, with a teacher delivering the lesson through Google meet twice a day. Asynchronous learning does not require live interaction, instead content is available online such as pre-recorded videos and set assignments for pupils to access and work independently. Any work set online will not require printing to further make it accessible. We recognise that each approach has enormous advantages for children learning in different environments. Using Google Classroom as our learning platform allows our learners to access a wide range of different teaching styles and lessons, ensuring that we continue to offer a broad, creative and balanced curriculum and pupils working remotely make progress.



KS4 TIMETABLE

MONDAY	TUESDAY
1. Reading	1. English
2. PE	2. PE
3. Live English lesson - 11am-12pm	3. Live maths lesson - 11am-12pm
4. PSHE	4. Options A
5. Live maths lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm	5. Live options A lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm
WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
1. Maths	1. Maths
2. Reading	2. Reading
3. Live English lesson - 11am-12pm	3. Live options B lesson - 11am-12pm
4. Skill building	4. Options B
5. Live quiz lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm	5. Live English lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm
FRIDAY	ENRICHMENT
1. English	1. Virtual fitness challenges
2. PE	2. Live skills challenges
3. Live maths lesson - 11am-12pm	3. Enrichment packs
4. Options C	
5. Live options C lesson 1:30pm-2:30pm	

The Youth Endowment Fund published a report on how to engage young people during the COVID-19 pandemic and within this report, it highlights clear, practical advice to undertake for remote learning. The biggest takeaway from this report is to be flexible and this is something that we have prided ourselves on doing; whether that be offering a blended approach to learning, or by providing work packs to those pupils who struggle with technology. Additionally, the report suggests to make the content fun, use technology that can be engaged with easily and using online fitness activities; these are all things that we have worked hard to offer for our pupils.



Question	Approximate
Find the cost of:	9.90 + 10.50 = £20.40
6 tickets costing £9.99 each	6 x £9.99 = £59.94
11 books costing £3.99 each	11 x £3.99 = £43.89
8 videos costing £4.85 each	8 x £4.85 = £38.80
7 rolls of wallpaper costing £6.20 each	7 x £6.20 = £43.40
4.2m of chain costing £2.99 per metre	4.2 x £2.99 = £12.56
3m x 15cm of material costing £4.99 per metre	3 x £4.99 = £14.97
5.1 kg of beef costing £6.99 per kg	5.1 x £6.99 = £35.55
4.85 kg of turkey costing £3.89 per kg	4.85 x £3.89 = £18.88
If videos cost £7.99, how many can you buy for £41?	£41 ÷ £7.99 = 5.13 (5)
If books cost £3.99, how many can you buy for £21?	£21 ÷ £3.99 = 5.26 (5)

In School Package

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." - Arthur Ashe

The pupils who have the opportunity to attend school are allocated specific family bubbles that do not change or exceed a certain number of pupils. Within these bubbles, pupils are offered a bespoke timetable filled with the lessons they would normally attend and engage with. As highlighted in the Youth Endowment Fund report, the key is to being flexible and so the situation within school was monitored closely and adjustments were made to suit the pupils needs. Pupils were able to continue with their practical lessons which included DT and cooking.

Pupils were arranged into family group bubbles with a teacher and a teaching assistant. There were 2 KS3 family groups and 4 KS4 family groups. Pupils were placed within groups according to their academic, social and emotional needs alongside the strength of relationships with staff. All family groups had individual timetables with separate times for break and lunch, to ensure there was no mixing of groups. Staff showed flexibility and adaptability in teaching all subjects, with remote support from specialist teachers. This mirrored a primary model of teaching and our pupils certainly felt supported. During a time of uncertainty, being with the same group each day meant that pupils and parents felt safe and supported. All pupils taught in school continued to make academic progress in their subjects, with options subjects really benefitting from the face-to-face time with pupils. Over the term, the number of pupils in school, increased week on week and the school responded positively and quickly with parental requests for pupils to return to school.

One particular highlight was a family group who spent a little time each day clearing rubbish from the local area. They made a huge difference to the local environment and pupils felt a sense of achievement and community responsibility.



Keeping Our Community Connected

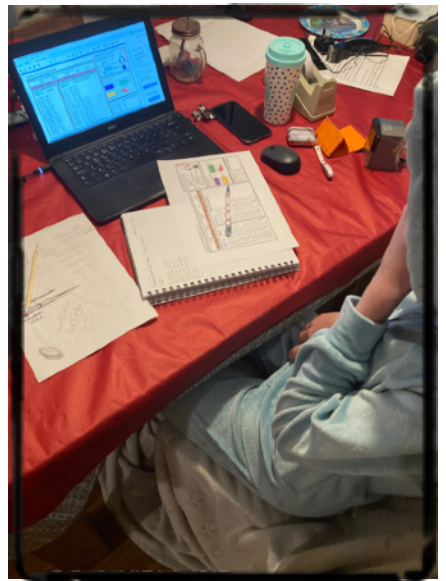
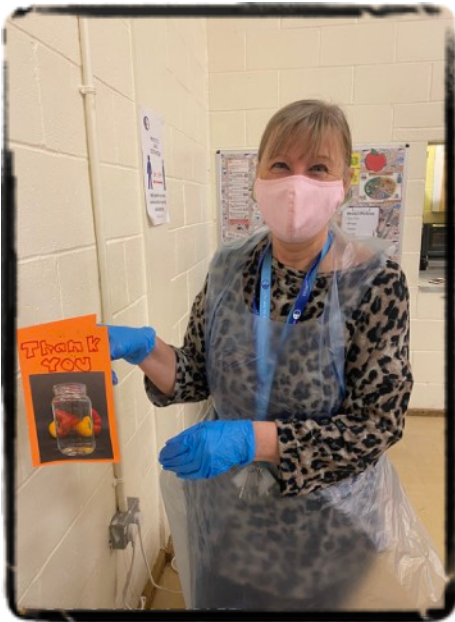
"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all" - Aristotle

Maintaining our connectivity as a school and wider school community was a priority as we know the power of connection and positive relationships. There were 3 main ways that this was achieved beyond the systems and processes already explained; we produced a weekly assembly which was shared via our social media platforms of Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. This contained celebrations, recognition, learning, fun, enrichment, awards and a focus such as diversity, inclusion and kindness. Secondly, we delivered enrichment activities each week to every pupil. These included ingredients to make meals, a reading book, craft activities and grocery packs. These were extremely popular with pupils and their families with positive interaction



via social media showcasing what had been made/produced. There were some particularly impressive pancakes made to celebrate pancake day! Finally, we built our social media presence via our social media platforms. We used it as a way to connect to parents, to show them what the school were continuing to do and offer. We also made a video when it was a pupil's birthday, something we have continued to do. Throughout all our social media posts was the hashtag #ApartButTogether, stressing the importance of community.





Changing Staff Roles and Perspectives



Throughout the lockdown period, myself and a colleague were given the responsibility for the organisation and running of our whole school remote learning package. As I am considered clinically vulnerable due to my medical condition, this opportunity allowed me to work from home safely whilst still supporting my school. At all times, I knew there was flexibility for me to attend school if I wanted to and if I felt comfortable doing so. I took this opportunity up on a couple of occasions in order to work with specific pupils on their photography portfolios. Communication was essential during this period, especially as I only attended work physically a small number of times. There were weekly whole-staff meetings where I was able to not only be updated by members of staff in school, but I was also able to update everyone about the remote learning package and the data for that.

At the start of the second Lockdown period, I was part of a KS4 family bubble. Despite having to keep our distance from one another and stay in our small groups, there was a real sense of support and teamwork within the school and a great deal of maturity shown by the students. When I unfortunately had many changes in personal circumstances which made my childcare difficult, I was incredibly lucky to be able to switch over to the remote learning team based at home. This meant that I was able to support my family, as well as the students, from home. SLT were very understanding and supportive, and the remote learning team were quickly able to brief me on my new expectations. I was able to support live virtual lessons within KS3 as well as conduct welfare phone-calls to a number of families each week. These phone-calls were a great way of getting to know students; and talking to them after so long apart was really lovely! It was also a great opportunity to build relationships with family members that I wouldn't normally get to talk to.



During the second lockdown, I was in school and placed in a KS3 family bubble. This gave me a great opportunity to develop my relationships with some of the younger pupils within the school, and to develop some new skills of my own. The staff leaders in the bubbles were responsible for delivering the learning across all the different curriculum subjects, and with the expertise of specialist subject staff, I quickly went from being an English teacher to a Science, Maths, Food, ICT, Art and Humanities teacher too!! We received lots of support from the Interventions Team and SLT in school, as well as enjoying hand-delivered breakfasts and lunches together each day as well. The in-school family bubbles also

provided enough flexibility to allow me to work from home one day each week, on producing the school's pre-recorded assembly – which are another set of useful skills which I would never have developed if it weren't for the pandemic!



BE KIND
TO EVERYONE,
INCLUDING
YOURSELF.

MAY YOU BE PROUD
OF THE WORK YOU DO
THE PERSON YOU ARE
AND THE DIFFERENCE
YOU MAKE



"What do you want to be
when you grow up?"



"Kind," said the boy

Charlie Mackery