

1 December 2014**Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION.****AUTUMN TERM REPORT FOR THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED
AFTER CHILDREN****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on the virtual school for the autumn term 2014 and to note the Pupil Premium Plus Guidance document.

Information and Advice**Virtual School Senior Leadership Team and Virtual School Improvement Plan**

2. The senior leadership team (SLT) met on 30 September 2014 and reviewed progress on the 2013/14 virtual school improvement plan and self-evaluation form (SEF) and discussed possible areas for inclusion in the 2014/15 documentation. Key stage 2 provisional data was shared which is an improving picture once again this year. Mathematics was identified as an area of improvement and the virtual school undertook to explore strategies to support schools to support LAC to improve their mathematical skills. This will be discussed at future meetings.
3. A further meeting has been arranged for 20 January 2015, when the agenda will cover any further outcome data released, updated SEF and improvement plan.

Virtual School Staff

4. The number of statutory school aged young people at the time of writing was 526. Of these, 336 are Nottinghamshire LAC in Nottinghamshire schools; 20 are in reception, 146 are primary age and 170 are secondary age. 65 are Nottinghamshire LAC placed in Nottinghamshire but educated in other local authority schools with 30 primary and 35 secondary. A further 78 are Nottinghamshire LAC placed out of county and educated in other local authority schools, 28 of primary age and 50 secondary. There are also 28 Nottinghamshire LAC placed out of county but attending Nottinghamshire schools; 11 are primary age and 17 are secondary. 19 are in residential placements with education.
5. In addition there are 140 LAC from other local authorities educated in Nottinghamshire schools, with 12 in reception, 64 primary and 64 secondary.

6. The three permanent Looked After Children Achievement Officers (AOs) continue to support schools, social workers, carers and the wider network for looked after children. The County has now been split between the three LAC AOs, allowing more capacity for managing out of county children and young people.
7. The officers continue to undertake training on the needs of looked after children alongside Designated Teachers from Nottinghamshire schools. They have attended training this academic year on child sexual exploitation and children missing from home or care.
8. The co-ordinator of the virtual school has returned from planned long term sick leave.
9. A business case for the appointment of a permanent fourth LAC Achievement Officer in the new structure has been written. Alongside this is a business case for a data manager to support the virtual school. These will go to Children and Young People's Committee for approval.

New Statutory Legislation

10. July 2014 saw the release of the legislation for local authorities 'promoting the education of looked after children'. The key points in this legislation are as follows:
 - the post of virtual school head or similar titled post is statutory
 - LAC pupil premium is managed by virtual schools to ensure it is targeted at raising the attainment of LAC.

Termly Designated Teacher Training

11. Further training opportunities for designated teachers for LAC are currently being explored. Kate Cairns and associates will be asked to deliver a day conference including workshops following the positive feedback from last academic year's training. This is planned for the summer term 2015.
12. Training is also planned for designated teachers new to post, delivered by the virtual school co-ordinator and the team manager for the virtual school. Two events are planned for 2 December 2014 and 15 March 2015. The session covers the role of the designated teacher, information on the virtual school team and their role in support of LAC and schools. They will receive useful resources, an update on the attainment and progress of LAC from the latest data evaluation and effective use of the pupil premium.

Designated Teacher Memos

13. These continue to be sent out regularly, minimally half termly. The coordinator uses this method to communicate information, news and events to designated teachers across the County. Feedback from designated teachers and head teachers has been positive and encourages contact from all schools with the virtual school.

School Links

14. Individual requests continue to be received for training from the virtual school on the needs of looked after children cross phase. The virtual school continues to offer bespoke training sessions to schools and FE colleges as a result.
15. Over the autumn term 2014 senior officers, accompanied by the co-ordinator of the virtual school, are visiting secondary schools who have Nottinghamshire LAC on roll. The purpose of these visits is to check on year 7 pupils new to the schools and their transition plans and the progress and attainment of LAC in other year groups. Reports are prepared following the visits and forwarded to the head teacher, designated teacher for LAC and the governing body. Where concerns are raised regarding LAC, whether it is behaviour or progress, a LAC AO will be allocated if not already involved. In these cases a further senior officer visit will take place in the spring term 2015. Some out of county schools will also be visited by the co-ordinator and the secondary head teacher from the SLT.

East Midlands Network

16. The last meeting was held on 26 September 2014 and the next will be hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council on 4 December 2014. The last meeting was attended by Alun Rees who is currently working with Oxford University on research around LAC, their needs and education. Alun is also developing a virtual heads e-book which will be an online resource for all those working with looked after children including independent reviewing officers, schools and social workers.

Social Care Links

17. The team manager and the co-ordinator for the virtual school delivered training to social workers on 17 September 2014. This looked at the shared challenges of supporting Nottinghamshire LAC to achieve good progress and meet age-related expectations wherever they are placed and in all educational settings. This included discussions on the completion of the new Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and involvement of LAC AOs in PEP meetings for the children they are supporting. Social workers were given an explanation of age-related expectations and what this means, the need to ensure that school changes are minimised and that as many LAC as possible access their learning in a good or outstanding Nottinghamshire school. This was very well received.

Floor Target Schools and schools not yet good

18. The virtual school continues to monitor looked after children in below floor target schools. At present there are 8 LAC in schools which are below the floor in 2014/15.
19. 63% of LAC attend good or outstanding schools in Nottinghamshire. Out of county, 70% of LAC attend good or outstanding schools. It is not the Local Authority's practice to move LAC from their schools if that school moves from outstanding or good judgements, as this is unsettling and detrimental to LACs' progress. Therefore the Virtual School will ensure that, should there be the need, the children/young people will have input from the LAC Achievement Officers to ensure their educational needs are addressed. Data will be

published in June for inspections up to the end of March 2014 this data will be refreshed on compilation of new data over the autumn term.

Data

20. The SIMS tracking system is not now being used for the collection of termly tracking data for LAC in or out of county. The Local Authority is currently investigating the most appropriate system to replace SIMS. In the interim the spreadsheet system has been reinstated.
21. Collections continue to be monitored by the Local Authority to support 100% return.

LAC Strategy Performance Measures

22. The updated evaluation of attainment and progress for looked after children at the end of key stage 2 based on provisional data for 2014 in comparison with 2013 shows an improving picture:
 - in reading, provisional results show an increase of 20% to 68% of the cohort (23 pupils) achieving Level 4 or above. More than a quarter of the cohort (9 pupils; 26.5%) achieved Level 5
 - in writing, provisional results of teacher assessment show an increase of 13.9% to 52.9% of the cohort (18 pupils) achieving Level 4 or above. 5.9% (2 pupils) achieved Level 5
 - in mathematics, provisional results show an increase of 13% to 65% of the cohort (22 pupils) achieving Level 4 or above. A fifth of the cohort (7 pupils; 20.6%) achieved Level 5
 - boys outperformed girls in the reading test in 2013/14 with more than three quarters (17 pupils; 77.3%) achieving Level 4 or above compared with half (6 pupils; 50.0%) of girls gaining this measure. Almost a third of boys (7 pupils; 31.8%) achieved Level 5 compared to 16.7% (2 pupils) of girls
 - in the teacher assessment of writing, outcomes between the genders are broadly in-line with each other at Level 4 or above. Just over half of boys (12 pupils; 52.2%) gained this measure compared with just over half of girls (6 pupils; 54.5%). At Level 5, girls slightly outperformed boys with 9.1% of girls (1 pupil) gaining this measure compared to 4.3% (1 pupil) of boys
 - in mathematics, outcomes between the genders are broadly in-line with each other at Level 4 or above. Almost two thirds of boys (14 pupils; 63.6%) gained this measure compared with two thirds of girls (8 pupils; 66.7%). At Level 5, boys slightly outperformed girls with 22.7% (5 pupils) gaining this measure compared to 16.7% (2 pupils) of girls.
23. Outcomes against other local authorities in 2012/13 ranks Nottinghamshire in:
 - KS2 reading: Joint 81st (where 1st is best) out of 88 published local authority results
 - KS2 mathematics: Joint 58th out of 87 published local authority results.
24. Using 2013/14 provisional LAC outcomes for KS2 against 2012/13 nationally published local authority tables would place Nottinghamshire:

- KS2 reading: Joint 28th, an increase of 53 places from 2012/13 position
- KS2 mathematics: 26th, an increase of 32 places from 2012/13 position.

25. As yet there is no data available for other key stages and no comparative national data for 2014.

Achievement Event

26. The 2014 Achievement event took place at the Albert Hall, Nottingham on Saturday 19 July. The awards are for a range of achievements such as good transition, good attendance, good progress, hard work, participation in extra-curricular activities and booster classes. It was very well attended with a total of 300 people in attendance, 108 of which were children and young people. The young people and their carers informed the virtual school that the venue was exceptional and in light of this it has been booked again for 25 July 2015. The special guest who attended the 2014 achievement event was Richard Whitehead who was very well received and young people and adults alike enjoyed his speech and meeting him following the presentations. The intended guest for 2015 is Ollie Hynd, para-Olympic swimmer.

Pupil Premium

27. This will be distributed to all schools with eligible LAC in and out of the Local Authority following the October 2014 final data check. Through the new statutory guidance to local authorities released July 2014, pupil premium funding has been firmly placed in the virtual school's jurisdiction. In order to ensure that pupil premium is appropriately used to support individual LAC, the co-ordinator will write out to all schools and request a detailed plan of the use and impact of pupil premium before releasing the funding. Last year's use and impact report is attached as **Appendix 1**.
28. In light of the legislation placing pupil premium under the virtual school, Pupil Premium Plus Guidance has been produced and is attached as **Appendix 2** for information.

Projects - Letterbox Club 2014

29. The Nottinghamshire Library Service and the Virtual School subscribe to Booktrust's Letterbox Club. The Letterbox Club aims to provide enjoyable educational support for looked after children. Children who are currently in school years 3, 5 or 7 will receive personalised parcels, direct to their address. The parcels contain books, number games and stationery items to use and keep, including:
- story books by authors such as Jacqueline Wilson, Roald Dahl, and Michael Rosen
 - non-fiction books looking at a wide range of subjects
 - stationery items, to encourage writing and drawing, such as age appropriate pens and pencils, scissors, stickers and note pads.
30. LAC received the last parcel in October 2014.
31. It is intended that this scheme will be continued for 2014/15 with the inclusion of year 1 in the cohort. The co-ordinator will attend the Letterbox annual conference to hear the evaluation of the first year roll out of year 1.

Personal Education Plan

32. Completed PEPs will be forwarded to the co-ordinator for quality assurance purposes. This is now embedded in social care practice.

Good News

33. The multi-modality project, reported in the spring term 2014 to the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee, is having a significant impact in terms of improving children's interest in and enthusiasm for reading. A number of emails have been received from carers highlighting the positive effect the project as had on their young people including one stating:

Further to our discussion, I would like to formally recognise the impact that the 'multimodal' literacy project has had on xx. Although the project is aimed at improving literacy in pupils, the impact the project has had with xxx is much broader. He has incredible computer skills and working with the iPad played to this existing strength. He and xxx have worked tirelessly on his projects and xxx loves using the different apps available on the iPad. The success he has had using the iPad has markedly improved his confidence with IT and he has thoroughly enjoyed exploring the functionality of the interactive apps. His confidence has grown, his self-esteem has grown and he now happily 'teaches' his friends how to create stories on the iPad. So from a personal point of view, this project which set out to achieve specific improvements in literacy has offered much more to xxx and I believe it's something which should be made available on a much wider scale.

34. A short report on the impact of the multi-modality project is attached as **Appendix 3**. The project will continue in to 2015 with a small cohort starting in Autumn term 2014.
35. This project was also included in the Autumn 2014 magazine English 4-11 produced by UK literacy association (UKLA).

Other Options Considered

36. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

37. This report is for information and policy approval.

Statutory and Policy Implications

38. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) the update on the virtual school for the autumn term 2014 be noted.
- 2) the Pupil Premium Plus Guidance document be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

39. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 12/11/14)

40. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Spring term report of the Virtual School for Looked After children – report to Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on 17 March 2014

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0514