

17 March 2014

Agenda Item: 4

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION**

**SPRING 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 Spring term 2014.

Information and Advice

Virtual School Senior Leadership Team and Virtual School Improvement Plan

2. The senior leadership team (SLT) met on 23 September 2013 and discussed the virtual school improvement plan and self-evaluation form (SEF) for 2013/14. Suggestions were made for improvements to the documents and members of the SLT agreed to send examples of front sheets to improve the review process of both documents.
3. The SLT met again on 30 January 2014. The SEF and improvement plan were considered fit for purpose with the addition of the implementation plan for reviewing objectives. It was agreed that relevant revision guides would be purchased by the Virtual School for year 11 pupils. The secondary head teacher on the SLT suggested requesting 'schools rate' to reduce cost. This was agreed and has been actioned. Further updates have been made to the SEF and improvement plan to incorporate the most recent data available at the time of writing. These documents will be updated again when the Department for Education (DfE) releases the Local Authority RAISEonline report. These will be sent to the SLT in the second half of the spring term.

**Deployment of Virtual School Staff and Challenge to Schools on Looked After Children
Performance**

4. The number of statutory school aged young people at the time of writing was 610; some of these are educated out of county. Currently there are 298 primary aged looked after children (LAC) and 312 secondary aged LAC. 163 are out of county (72 in primary education and 91 in secondary).
5. The two Looked After Children Achievement Officers continue to support schools, social workers, carers and the wider network for looked after children. This can take the form of

training to schools, development of bespoke educational packages or school support to ensure LAC access the best educational provision they can. Virtual school staff also challenge all stakeholders as necessary on issues that may impact on outcomes of LAC. The number of LAC currently receiving support from the virtual school is 340.

6. Those children/young people not supported by the virtual school are monitored through termly tracking data submitted to the virtual school by schools. Personal education plans are also submitted to the co-ordinator for quality assurance purposes. If issues emerge as a result of this monitoring, the virtual school will become involved with additional LAC to support schools to resolve the identified issues which are preventing learning.
7. The annual evaluation of data is shared with all head teachers in all phases of education at the spring term head teacher briefings, using the most recent data available. The virtual school shares the strengths and areas for development in detail for all LAC pupils, boys and girls by key stage and identifies the areas requiring improvement. The virtual school also provides information on appropriate interventions which it challenges head teachers to ensure are in place to support any underachieving LAC in their schools. This is followed up by LAC achievement officers during school visits.
8. The virtual school made a business case for an additional achievement officer in the academic year 2012/13. This was successful and a temporary member of staff, seconded to the team until March 2014, has been providing direct challenge to all schools with year 11 LAC, in and out of county, to ensure that designated teachers are monitoring LAC pupils' progress against aspirational targets and have plans in place to accelerate progress for underperforming LAC. This has involved visiting schools and other settings to ensure that young people are receiving the correct support to achieve the best outcomes possible, have had correct careers advice and guidance and, if required, the LAC achievement officer has supported schools and settings to think creatively to support vulnerable young people. This member of staff will also ensure the revision guides are sent to the pupils as soon as they are delivered. A progress review is planned in each of these schools in March or April 2014. The new Education Improvement Service (EIS) structure includes a third permanent LAC achievement officer which has now been approved and once a permanent appointment has been made the virtual school is aiming to roll this programme out to other year groups. Meanwhile schools return termly progress tracking data to the virtual school which is used to plan universal and targeted interventions in areas of underperformance.
9. The impact of the virtual school is evidenced in the very recent value added data which has just been released in the local authorities RAISEonline for 2013. This indicates that:
 - there is a **rising trend in value added** for LAC **at the end of key stage 2** between 2011 and 2013.
 - value added is calculated using aggregated average point scores in reading, writing and mathematics for all Nottinghamshire LAC pupils compared with national aggregated scores for all pupils. A score of 100 denotes the average national value added score for all pupils. Figures above 100 are deemed to be above the national average for value added and figures below 100 are below the national average for value added.
 - The value added to LAC attainment, from their baseline on entry to Notts schools, has improved from below the national average in 2011 (98.9 Notts/ 99.8 national) and in

- 2012 (98.1 Notts/ 99.6 national) to above the national average in 2013 (100.7 Notts/ 99.8 national), where nationally LAC are below average.
- in mathematics in 2013, value added for Notts LAC is above national (105.5 Notts/ 99.8 national)
 - in reading value added for Notts LAC is above national (101.5 Notts/ 100.0 national)
 - in writing value added for Notts LAC is above national (100.4 Notts/ 99.8 national).
10. This indicates that the work of the Nottinghamshire virtual school in partnership with Nottinghamshire schools is having a positive impact on outcomes for Nottinghamshire's looked after children (see **paragraph 24** for the full data evaluation).
11. **At key stage 4, the trend in value added 2011 to 2013 for Notts. LAC is stable and in line with value added nationally, (where the average score is 1000, based on the average point score for all pupils taking into account their best 8 grades at GCSE or equivalent)**
- 2011: 948.9 Notts LAC, 944.5 national LAC
 - 2012: 948.6 Notts LAC, 951.6 national LAC
 - 2013: 928.6 Notts LAC, 949.6 national LAC.
12. This indicates that the value added for LAC both in Nottinghamshire and nationally is below the national value added for all pupils. The virtual school therefore continues to have a focus on improving progress and attainment overall at key stage 4 and on improving the number of Notts. LAC who reach the age related expectation of 5 A*-C including English and maths (see **paragraph 8**)

Termly Designated Teacher and LA Training

13. Five workshops on the following subjects have been delivered during February 2014: Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD); behaviour and the physical environment; understanding trauma; making effective use of the pupil premium; and self-harming behaviours. All these workshops were at full capacity and feedback was consistently positive.
14. All LA officers continue to undertake training on the needs of looked after children and they have attended the designated teacher training running this autumn term.

Designated Teacher Memos

15. These continue to be sent out regularly, minimally half termly. Designated teachers continue to advise the virtual school that they find these updates very useful.

School Links

16. Individual requests continue to be received for training from the virtual school on the needs of looked after children cross phase. The virtual school offers bespoke training sessions to schools and FE colleges as a result.

East Midlands Network

17. The East Midlands Network meeting of virtual schools is due to be held at the end of March 2014.
18. The National Steering Group for Virtual School Heads will also be meeting at the end of March followed by the national conference for virtual school heads which will be held at Oxford University on 27 March 2014 and the Co-ordinator will be attending both events.

Social Care Links

19. Training will be provided on the new personal education plan (PEP) to the looked after team social workers; the Co-ordinator is currently awaiting an invitation to a social care training event.
20. The LAC Achievement Officers will also use the looked after social work team's building as a base to work from in order to provide regular ongoing support to social workers.

Floor Target Schools

21. The virtual school monitors all children in schools below floor targets. Education improvement advisors will discuss looked after children's progress, attendance, behaviour and any support needs in the primary/secondary schools they are supporting.

Data

22. The SIMS system is now populated with looked after children and young people. Some functions such as contextual information can be used.
23. Collections continue to be monitored by the LA to support 100% return.

Evaluation of test and examination results for Looked After Children in 2013

24. The key headlines, updated with the latest RAISEonline data, are as follows:

Key Stage 2 with a cohort of 38 pupils (18 of 23 with matched data, that is a key stage 1 and key stage 2 assessment, have special educational needs and 6 of the 18 have a statement of special educational needs.)

- The proportion of all Nottinghamshire LAC achieving a **good level 4 or above in reading** is 53% compared with 49% nationally. RAISE reports this as in line with national as the number of pupils not reaching a good level 4 is not statistically significant
- The proportion of all Nottinghamshire LAC achieving at **least level 4 or above in reading** is 63% compared with 63% nationally. RAISE reports this as in line with national
 - the gap between Nottinghamshire non-LAC and LAC is 23% (63% LAC/86% non-LAC) on this measure compared with a national gap of 23% (63% LAC/86% non-LAC). The Nottinghamshire gap is in line with the national gap.

- there is no comparative data on this measure for previous years
- the proportion of LAC in Nottinghamshire schools making two levels progress from key stage one to two in reading is in line with all Nottinghamshire pupils and non-LAC (88.9%/88.5%) in reading.
- The proportion of all Nottinghamshire LAC **achieving a good level 4 or above in writing** is 45%, compared with 54% nationally. RAISE reports this as in line with national as the number of pupils not reaching a good level 4 is not statistically significant.
- The proportion of all Nottinghamshire LAC **achieving at least level 4 or above in writing** is 45%, compared with 54% nationally (3 children). RAISE reports this as in line with national as the number of pupils not reaching a good level 4 is not statistically significant.
 - the gap between Nottinghamshire LAC and non LAC is 39% (45% Notts LAC/84% Notts non-LAC) on this measure compared with a national gap of 29% (54% LAC/83% national)
 - there is no comparative data on this measure for previous years
 - however, the proportion of LAC in Nottinghamshire schools making two levels progress from key stage one to two in writing is in line with all Nottinghamshire pupils and non-LAC pupils (92%/92%) in writing
 - nevertheless, this is an area for improvement within the virtual school improvement plan and has been raised with head teachers at head teacher briefings this term. Head teachers have been advised to identify underperforming LAC in their schools in this area and have been asked to use the pupil premium funding to ensure appropriate interventions are in place for current cohorts.
 - this data will also be shared with secondary head teachers at the forthcoming head teacher briefing and they will be asked to target pupil premium and year 7 catch up funding to support year 7 LAC who are not yet meeting age related expectations in order to accelerate their progress and catch up with their peers.
- The proportion of all Nottinghamshire LAC in **key stage 2** achieving a **good level 4 or above in mathematics** is 45% compared with 45% nationally. RAISE reports this as in line with national.
- The proportion of all Nottinghamshire LAC achieving at **least level 4 or above in mathematics** is 61%, compared with 60% nationally. RAISE reports this as in line with national
 - the gap between Nottinghamshire LAC and Nottinghamshire non LAC is 25% (61% LAC/86% non LAC) on this measure, compared with a national gap of 25% (60% LAC/85% non LAC). The gap is in line with the national gap.
 - the gap has narrowed in comparison with 2012 by 3% (1 child)
 - the proportion of LAC in Nottinghamshire schools making two levels progress from key stage 1 to 2 in mathematics is below all Nottinghamshire pupils and non-LAC (72.2%/89.4%/89.5% - 4 children)
 - this is therefore also an area for improvement
- The proportion of all LAC in Nottinghamshire schools achieving a **good level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics** is 32% compared with 33% nationally.

- The proportion of all LAC in Nottinghamshire schools achieving **at least a level 4** or above in **reading, writing and mathematics** is 37% compared with 45% nationally.
 - there is no comparative data on this measure for previous years
 - the gap between Nottinghamshire LAC and non LAC is 39% on this measure, compared with a national gap of 31% (a difference of 2.5 pupils)
 - the proportion of LAC in Nottinghamshire schools making two levels progress from key stage one to two in reading, writing and maths is just below all Nottinghamshire pupils and non-LAC pupils (69.4%/78.7%) on this measure (3 children)

This indicates that LAC make as much progress as their peers across the key stage in reading and mathematics. However in 2013 the gap is wider than national due to the under-performance of three children in writing.

The Virtual School Improvement Plan therefore has a significant focus on working with schools to accelerate the progress of LAC across all year groups so that an increasing proportion of LAC reach age related expectations by the end of key stage 2, with a particular focus on writing.

Key Stage 4 with a cohort of 63 pupils (42 of 56 with matched data, that is a key stage 2 and key stage 4 assessment, have special educational needs and 14 of the 42 have a statement of special educational needs.)

- The proportion of all Nottinghamshire LAC achieving at least **5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at A*-C grade including English and mathematics** is 13% in 2013 compared with 20% nationally. This outcome is an improvement on 2012, when LAC achieved 9.8% on this measure. However, attainment is still not as high as in 2011 when 14.6% of LAC attained 5 or more A*-C (including English and maths).
 - non LAC in Nottinghamshire achieving at least 5 or more A*-C grades including English and mathematics is 63%. The gap between Nottinghamshire LAC and non-LAC on this measure is 50%, compared with a national gap of 40%. (The gap is wider than the national gap. The difference equates to 6 LAC needing to achieve this measure for the gap to be in line with the national gap)
 - the Nottinghamshire gap on this measure has, however, narrowed in comparison with 2012 when the gap was 51.2%. The national gap has narrowed by 4%.
- The proportion of Nottinghamshire LAC achieving at least **5 or more A*-C grades** is 42.9%.
 - the performance of Nottinghamshire LAC is above LAC nationally (36.6%).
 - the proportion of all children in Nottinghamshire achieving at least 5 A*-C grades or more is 88.4%, which is 6.6% above the national average for all children (81.8%)
 - the attainment of Nottinghamshire LAC on this measure remains broadly in line with outcomes in 2009 and 2012, which were a significant improvement on outcomes across 2010 - 2011
 - the gap between all Nottinghamshire children and LAC in Nottinghamshire is 45% on this measure and is in line with the national gap of 45.2% on this measure

- The proportion of LAC in Nottinghamshire schools making expected progress (3 levels) in English is 26% compared with 36% of LAC nationally and 70% of non LAC pupils in Nottinghamshire and nationally. This is reported in RAISE as in line with national.
- The proportion of LAC in Nottinghamshire schools making expected progress (3 levels) in mathematics is 21% compared with 32% of LAC nationally and 68% of non LAC Nottinghamshire pupils and 70% of non LAC children nationally.
- This indicates that LAC make significantly less progress from their starting points than non LAC children in Nottinghamshire and nationally, although progress is in line with national for LAC (see 2 bullet points above this one) and value added is in line with value added nationally (see paragraph 11 above).
- The Virtual School Improvement Plan therefore has a significant focus on working with schools to accelerate the progress of LAC across all year groups so that an increasing proportion of LAC reach age related expectations by the end of key stage 4.

Achievement Event

25. The 2014 event planning is now underway and consideration is currently being given to using the Nottingham Playhouse or The Albert Hall as the venue in place of Rufford Park, due to the number of attendees. Young people also felt they wanted to move the venue to one more suitable for a formal event. Young people are to visit venues with the virtual school and looked after youth team to make the final decision.

Pupil Premium

26. £900 Pupil Premium per eligible LAC (in care for six months continuously) is now in the process of being sent to all schools with Nottinghamshire looked after pupils. Schools have to inform the virtual school of the type of support that is being provided before the funding is released. Examples of schools' use of the pupil premium funding are listed below:
 - occupational therapist input in class for sensory processing, resources and staff training
 - class residential visit
 - music therapy with music therapist
 - extra support within class so that LAC can work within a small group
 - additional time with learning mentor to discuss relevant issues: relationships, safety
 - weekly maths tuition at home with 'First Class Solutions' tutor
 - alternative curriculum provision
 - TA support to attend sports club/social activities
 - TA support in class – for bespoke reading, writing, handwriting practice
 - 1:1 support for multi-modal project
 - Transport to attend 'Science on Stage' rehearsals at the Royal Concert Hall
 - additional support for transition to KS3
 - weekly counselling sessions

- coursework support catch-up, revision guides and equipment
27. LAC achievement officers monitor the impact of these interventions with schools that they are supporting.

Projects

28. The 2013/14 multi-modality project is now underway with phase two starting in January 2014. There are now more than 30 children and young people taking part in this project which ran for the first time in 2010/11. The practitioners have received some very positive feedback from a participant's carer recently, who highlighted the enormous benefits for our LAC taking part in such an innovative project. A full evaluation of this project will be available after August 2014.

Aims of the project are:

- to engage young, vulnerable people in literacy through a multi-modal approach involving the use of different text types as well as different source materials (audio, visual, pictorial, digital as well as more traditional written texts)
- to support teachers and carers to look for opportunities to engage children in their care with literacy activities that lead to creative, high quality outcomes;
- to support teachers in recognising opportunities to engage young people in literacy through developing links with home and school;
- to develop teachers' and carers' subject knowledge of multi-modal texts;
- to raise teacher confidence about selecting visual and digital texts to engage vulnerable groups and improve attainment;
- to raise awareness of and develop skills in ICT to support young people's literacy development.

Personal Education Plan

29. This document has been updated to reflect the new reporting measures now in place. It has been redesigned to ensure appropriate educational information is provided to enable the Co-ordinator to challenge and support schools with looked after children on the educational progress that is being made.
30. Children/young people have redesigned their section of the PEP, where they input their views on the provision in the school or other educational setting. The paperwork has now been signed off by the Children in Care Council and is ready for printing and distributing with the new personal education plan document.

Good News

31. Book tokens have been sent out once again to children and young people for a variety of successes including:
- excellence by performing above the targets set at school
 - applying oneself in studies and having high attendance
 - highest number of behaviour credits in school

- brilliant work in numeracy and big improvements in writing
- story written and published
- for achieving a distinction and also for passing a tractor test
- exceeding targets; good GCSE results; continued enthusiasm at school
- great PEPs
- good progress at school

32. Book tokens are also presented at the annual Achievement event.

Other Options Considered

33. This report is for information only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

34. This report is for information only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

35. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service 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

1) That the update on the virtual school for the Spring term 2014 be noted.

John Slater

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (NDR 25/06/12)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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