

9 June 2014**Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION****SUMMER 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 summer term 2014.

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

2. The senior leadership team (SLT) met on 30 January 2014 and reviewed progress on the 2013/14 virtual school improvement plan and self evaluation form (SEF). An updated data evaluation on key stage outcomes was shared at the meeting and it was agreed that the main messages in terms of strengths and weaknesses in provision and outcomes should be shared with all head teachers in the spring term head teacher briefings. The SLT also suggested changes to the new Personal Education Plan content, in particular to the sections relating to the attainment and progress of Looked- After Children (LAC).
3. SLT met on 20 May 2014 when the agenda covered the final annual report of the Virtual School, which comprised the final data evaluation, updated SEF and an evaluation of progress on the Virtual School improvement plan. The SLT also considered plans to roll out the monitoring of provision for Looked After Children on transition from year 6 to year 7 and across key stage 3.

Virtual School Staff

4. The number of statutory school aged young people at the time of writing was 624. Of these, 326 are Nottinghamshire LAC in Nottinghamshire schools; 26 are in reception, 142 are primary age and 158 are secondary age. 89 are Nottinghamshire LAC placed in Nottinghamshire but educated in other local authority schools with 4 of reception age, 35 primary and 50 secondary. A further 77 are Nottinghamshire LAC placed out of county and educated in other local authority schools, with 6 being of reception age, 30 of primary age and 41 secondary. In addition there are 132 LAC from other Local authorities

educated in Nottinghamshire schools, with 14 in reception, 54 primary and 64 secondary.

5. The two permanent Looked After Children Achievement Officers (AOs) and the temporary seconded AO continue to support schools, social workers, carers and the wider network for looked after children. Currently the permanent officers have a LAC caseload of 214 (Broxtowe/Gedling/Rushcliffe and Newark) and 228 (Mansfield/ Ashfield/Bassetlaw) children and young people. In addition, the seconded officer has a caseload of 27 LAC across the County and is also monitoring and challenging the provision made for 84 year 11 LAC in both in and out of county schools. As a result the Virtual School has increased the levels of support and challenge to schools where LAC are underperforming against national expectations. In addition AOs also support adopted children and their families, when parents seek support. At present the team is supporting 75 adopted children.
6. The officers continue to undertake training on the needs of looked after children alongside Designated Teachers from Nottinghamshire schools. They have attended training this year with Kate Cairns on the trauma and attachment needs of looked after children in educational settings alongside Designated Teachers from Nottinghamshire schools.
7. The co-ordinator of the virtual school has been on planned long term sick leave since April 2014 and her work is being covered by the Team Manager, AOs and the named Educational Psychologist who works two days a week for the virtual school.
8. The advert has been placed for the appointment of a permanent additional LAC Achievement Officer in the new structure and interviews will take place on 16 May 2014.

Termly Designated Teacher Training

9. Designated Teachers have accessed training this year with Kate Cairns on the trauma and attachment needs of looked after children in educational settings, which has included sessions on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, behaviour in the physical environment, understanding trauma, effective use of the pupil premium and self-harming behaviours. The final sessions are on 9, 10 and 11 June 2014. All events have been attended by 110 to 120 school delegates across the year and have been well received in all cases.
10. Training has also been provided for Designated Teachers new to post, delivered by the Virtual School Co-ordinator and the Team Manager. The last event was on 31 March 2014 and once again was well received. The session covers the role of the Designated Teacher, information on the Virtual School team and their role in support of LAC and schools, useful resources, an update on the attainment and progress of LAC from the latest data evaluation and effective use of the pupil premium.

11. A flyer has just been sent out to schools advertising the annual conference, which will take place on 18 June 2014.

Designated Teacher Memos

12. 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. Fronter continues to be a reference point for school staff and all resources are placed on this web site.

School Links

13. 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.

Social Care Links

14. The Team Manager for the Virtual School has agreed to attend a team meeting for social workers in the summer term 2014 to discuss 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 will include discussions on the completion of the new Personal Education Plans (PEPs), involvement of LAC AOs in PEP meetings for the children they are supporting, 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.

Floor Target Schools and schools not yet good

15. The virtual school continues to monitor looked after children in below floor target schools.
At present there are no LAC in schools which are were below the floor in 2013.
16. The latest data published by Ofsted on the proportion of Nottinghamshire schools which are good or outstanding indicates that on 31 August 2013, 65% of LAC were attending good or outstanding schools. 7.1% (35) LAC were attending a school that Ofsted had judged as inadequate. Of these, 12 are attending Wings (Nottinghamshire), which is subject to special measures. This data will be updated during the summer term to take account of the most recent Ofsted inspection data published in March 2014 for inspections up to the end of December 2013. Data will be published in June for inspections up to the end of March 2014.

Data

17. The SIMS tracking system is now populated with looked after children and young people and has been trialled by two primary schools and one secondary school in the spring term 2014. The new system will be shared with all head teachers at the summer term head teacher briefings and guidance notes will be provided for school data managers. The system will be used by all schools for their summer term progress data returns. This will enable the Virtual School to collate and report on LAC progress in year for all LAC in Nottinghamshire schools. The system then needs to be rolled out to out of county schools and other educational settings.
18. Collections continue to be monitored by the LA to support 100% return.

LAC Strategy Performance Measures

19. The updated evaluation of attainment and progress for looked after children at the end of key stages 1, 2 and 4 is attached as **Appendix 1** and a short presentation on the key themes will be made at the Sub-Committee meeting. The achievement and progress of Nottinghamshire looked after children is good overall at key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics and compares favourably with national outcomes for looked after children. It is also good at the end of key stage 2 in English and mathematics at level four and above and once again compares favourably with national outcomes. The achievement of Nottinghamshire looked after children at the end of key stage 4 is good in terms of the proportion achieving five or more A* to C grade GCSEs. However the attainment of Nottinghamshire looked after children at five A – C grade GCSEs including English and mathematics is an area for improvement.

Achievement Event

20. The 2014 Achievement event will take place at the Albert Hall, Nottingham, on Saturday 19 July. There have been 87 nominations to date for LAC from reception age to year 11. 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.

Pupil Premium

21. This has now been distributed to all schools in and out of the local authority. The Co-ordinator will write out to all schools in six months time to establish the impact of the payments on looked after children's educational attainment. This will be reported to the Committee during the Spring term 2015 when this information has been analysed.

Projects - Letterbox Club 2014

22. 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.

23. LAC will start to receive parcels towards the end of May 2014 and then once every month for a further five months, with the last parcel arriving in October 2014. The parcels will be brightly coloured and so easily identifiable. If the child's placement changes during this time parcels will be sent to their new address until the end of the programme.

Personal Education Plan

24. The new paperwork is now with the new looked after children social work team and any completed PEPs are being forwarded to the Co-ordinator for quality assurance purposes. The updated and improved PEP documentation is being used in PEP reviews for all Looked After Children of school age. The Children in Care Council has been consulted on the child/young person input section which is now available in booklet form. These are being used to consult LAC on their views to inform the PEP review.

Good News

25. The multi-modality project, reported in the spring term 2014 report to the Sub-Committee, is having a significant impact in terms of improving children's interest in and enthusiasm for reading.
26. There is an increasing number of LAC taking part in performing arts sessions through the eleventh session workshops and youth programmes delivered in the old library in Mansfield outside of school hours. This culminated in their participation in a show performed over two nights at the Palace Theatre in Mansfield.

Other Options Considered

27. This report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

28. This report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

29. 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 summer term 2014 be noted.

John Slater

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (KLA 21/05/14)

31. 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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