

14 January 2013**Agenda Item: 5****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****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 2012.

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

2. The senior leadership team (SLT) met on 30 November 2012 and the 2012/13 virtual school improvement plan was shared. It was agreed that priority one would require altering to reflect the attainment and progress of pupils in special schools. Data was discussed and it was agreed that prior attainment would need including in data held on looked after pupils in order to track progress efficiently.
3. To prepare for the Ofsted inspection of looked after children services where the virtual school may be inspected as a stand alone service, a self evaluation form (SEF) has been prepared. The SLT considered this and concluded that the virtual school was on a journey of improvement. Areas to be considered for including in the SEF for 2013/14 are post 16 and special schools specifically. It was also suggested by the SLT that case studies are prepared to support the SEF particularly focussing on progress of individual LAC. This will be undertaken in the coming months.
4. A member of the virtual school senior leadership team, who is head teacher of an academy in the north of the County, expressed an interest in running a short course English GCSE for looked after children. This was discussed again. However the new format of GCSEs does not now lend itself to being able to run such a course. It was suggested that consideration of IGCSEs (GCSEs that are done online) could be an alternative. However, there was concern that these will not be acceptable to some post 16 providers. Further work on this would be undertaken with the SLT and providers.

Virtual School Staff

5. The two Looked After Children Achievement Officers continue to support schools, social workers, carers and the wider network for looked after children. Currently the officers have a caseload of 118 (Broxtowe/Gedling/Rushcliffe & Newark) and 149 (Mans/Ash/Bass) children and young people. Each Officer supports both looked after children and young people and adopted children and young people. Both Officers support some post 16 young people where there is a need for continuity.
6. Both Officers continue to undertake training on the needs of looked after children. In November 2012 both attended a seminar in Derbyshire on insecure attachment needs and education with a focus on strategies to support the staff in schools. This was evaluated as excellent and both Officers use the materials to support Nottinghamshire schools cross phase.

Termly Designated Teacher Network Meetings

7. To provide ongoing continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities and information sharing events, Designated Teacher Network meetings have been held in the Autumn term. The co-ordinator of the virtual school and team manager for school improvement delivered a session on the new Ofsted framework. The training focussed on the four areas of the inspection framework and sharing of good practice where schools have been recently inspected with good outcomes. Evaluations from the sessions have been consistently positive. The next Network meetings in the Spring term 2013 will focus on use of the pupil premium.

Designated Teacher Memos

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

School Links

9. The virtual school co-ordinator has been invited to deliver a workshop in March 2013 to newly qualified teachers.
10. The virtual school co-ordinator continues to deliver training cross phase where necessary and this continues to receive good evaluations.

East Midlands Network

11. The Nottinghamshire virtual school hosted the East Midlands network meeting of virtual schools. This is a very successful group which shares good practice and builds links to support out of county placed young people. The group this time has shared SEFs, personal education plan documentation and data management systems.

Social Care Links

12. The virtual school co-ordinator has agreed with the service manager of the new looked after team aspects of training which will be delivered to social workers to support looked after children/young people in education. This will include sessions on admissions and personal education plans. Pupil place planning colleagues will support the sessions on admissions.
13. The LAC Achievement Officers will also use the looked after social work team building as a base to work from in order to provide regular ongoing support to social workers.

Fronter

14. The Fronter room for the virtual school is now accessible to all schools. This will be continually updated with information available for schools on important aspects of education and looked after children.
15. The virtual school co-ordinator also works alongside the adoption service to support a Fronter room for adopters and also alongside fostering teams for a similar room.

Floor Target Schools

16. The virtual school continues to monitor looked after children in below floor target schools.
17. Reports received from improvement advisors to date indicated young people in these schools are making progress in line with expectations. Spring term monitoring will be undertaken.

Data

18. An evaluation of Year 6 and Year 11 data was shared with the SLT at the November 2012 meeting. This has been used to inform the improvement plan for the virtual school 2012/13. The plan builds on successes to date.
19. The co-ordinator of the virtual school has also met with the Information and Data Systems team to consider a data collection and tracking system. A data specification has been sent to the IT Services team and a meeting has been arranged on 14 December to look at acquiring an efficient system. The teacher assessment data collection will continue whilst this is being developed.

Achievement Event

20. Planning has begun for the 2013 Achievement Event to be held at Rufford Park once again following positive feedback concerning the venue. The date has been fixed for 6 July 2013.

Projects

21. The 2012/13 multi modality project is underway and going very well. Over 20 children and young people are taking part.
22. The co-ordinator of the virtual school is also in contact with the Arts and Sports for Children and Young People team looking at music opportunities through the Music Hub. It is being considered whether a term long project is to be run through the Summer term to support LAC who are having difficulties in education and at risk of exclusion in the run up to the Summer holidays. This would include obtaining a music qualification as well as opportunities for English and maths tutoring where appropriate. A further meeting will be held in the Spring term 2013 to establish if this is possible.

Letterbox Club

23. A report on this will be submitted by the library service to the Culture Committee in 2013. This report will be circulated to the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee when available. Evaluation to date is very positive again with a cohort of 74 children taking part (21 living outside of Nottinghamshire). The children's view is very positive, with 17 out of 23 children liking the parcels 'a lot'. Adults' views were equally positive with carers feeling the parcels had a positive impact on the child's willingness to read.

Personal Education Plan

24. The new looked after children social work team will trial this in the Spring term 2013.

Good News

25. Book tokens have been sent out once again to children and young people for a variety of successes including attendance, participation and achievement.

Other Options Considered

26. This report is for information only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

27. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, 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 report be noted.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (NDR 12/12/12)

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

Background Papers

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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