



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Report to Corporate Parenting Panel

17 October 2011

Agenda Item:

REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER, REGULATED AND CORPORATE PARENTING SERVICES

AUTUMN TERM REPORT FROM THE CO-ORDINATOR OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide information concerning the educational attainment and progress of Nottinghamshire's Looked After Children (LAC) and progress on the School Improvement Plan for the Virtual School.

Information and Advice

Background

2. Following the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting in April 2011, it was agreed that the Panel would receive a termly update from the coordinator of the Virtual School for Looked After Children. The Panel meeting in July updated Members on the revised structure of the Virtual School, and outlined plans for the future development of the school. The following report to Members will provide an update on the impact of actions.

The Virtual School

3. Sue Denholm took up her post of coordinator of the Virtual School on 1 August 2011. An initial focus has been to develop a small team of professionals to support and challenge schools around provision for LAC. Following the restructuring of the Behaviour & Attendance Service, funding will be allocated to the Virtual School budget to ensure that high quality alternative provision can be commissioned for identified children and young people. Following a review of the 'staffing' for the Virtual School, this funding may also secure the future employment of 1-2 officers to work directly with LAC in schools and settings.
4. Following the unsuccessful advertisement for a LAC officer, we are currently looking towards seconding an officer with the appropriate skills to support the coordinator at this time of significant change. Liaison and discussion with key team and group managers is currently underway to identify a suitably qualified officer at this time.
5. The school continues to be line managed by the team leader for primary effectiveness and there is an increasing involvement of key advisers to focus on areas for improvement especially at this time when capacity is limited due to our inability to fill the post of LAC achievement officer.

6. To build capacity further, the Virtual School has also convened a senior leadership team (SLT) which will include the headteachers of Flintham Primary, Carlton Central Juniors, Ash Lea Special School and Quarrydale School. The Virtual School's coordinator, a senior educational psychologist and a service director in CFCS will also sit on this team. The first meeting will be held on 20 October 2011 to monitor and evaluate the impact of the development plan for the Virtual School.
7. The Virtual School continues to work with surrounding local authorities within the East Midlands. Meetings are held on a termly basis with the autumn term meeting being held in October 2011.

The development plan for the Virtual School

8. An early draft of the development plan for the Virtual School has been completed and focuses on the following areas:
 - To raise attainment and accelerate progress
 - To improve the data collection and analysis of LAC
 - To ensure the Virtual School is able to support and challenge schools around the education of LAC
 - To support schools in their understanding of the educational needs of LAC including the effective development of a designated teacher for LAC
 - To spread good practice.
9. The plan has been reviewed to identify key actions and the current focus now is to ensure that it is rigorously monitored in relation to the attainment, achievement and emotional well being of LAC. The plan will be reviewed by the SLT when they meet on 20 October and it is envisaged that feedback from this leadership team meeting will inform these regular reports to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Actions for Autumn Term 2011

10. At SLT meeting review and update the development plan for the Virtual School to ensure improving attainment and achievement for all LAC.
11. The development plan to be finalised and copied to the Corporate Parenting Panel during the spring term.

Using data to monitor the attainment and progress of Looked After Children

12. Eleven LAC children took their end of Key Stage 2 SATs in May 2011. Attainment and 2 levels progress data are as follows:

Attainment data for KS 2

	2011	
	Nottinghamshire LA	Nottinghamshire LAC
	%	%
English (Level 4)	82.6	54.5
Maths (Level 4)	83.2	81.8
English & Maths (Level 4 combined)	77.1	54.5
<i>Total pupils</i>	<i>8147</i>	<i>11</i>

13. Approximately half of the 11 LAC children at the end of KS2 attained at age related expectations.

Progress data for KS 2

	2011		
	National	Nottinghamshire LA	Nottinghamshire LAC
	%	%	%
English	83	85	90.9
Maths	82	85.3	81.8
<i>Total pupils</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>7805</i>	<i>11</i>

14. The progress data for LAC recognises the good progress the 11 children have made. In English, 9 of the 11 children made 2 levels progress throughout the Key Stage which is above both the local and national 2 levels progress data for English. In relation to mathematics, 8 of the 11 children made expected progress in mathematics, just below the national average for mathematics.

15. Attainment and progress data for KS4 will be reported during the spring term.

16. As outlined in July, an ongoing challenge is to develop robust educational tracking of the attainment and progress of LAC on a yearly basis. A Performance & Data officer is now supporting the development of a tracking system which will support the yearly collation and analysis of teacher assessment (TA) for all LAC and those who have just left the care

system. Attendance and Exclusion data will continue to be monitored. The timeline for reporting TA on a yearly basis will be from June 2012.

17. As reported in July 2011, the analysis of in and out of care data continues to be reviewed on a weekly basis to ensure prompt intervention as required.

Planned Action

18. To build on the existing data analysis to develop a coherent system to collate and analyse yearly or twice yearly TAs in English and mathematics.

19. It has been agreed with the data team that TAs in English and mathematics will be collated in June with the first collection being June 2012.

Monitoring of Year 11 LAC by Senior Leadership Team

20. Following the monitoring exercise of Year 11 LAC students both within and out of county, key development areas have been identified and incorporated into the Virtual School's development plan to improve provision and educational outcomes of LAC.

21. Key areas for development include:

- a. Improve the monitoring of KS4 LAC students throughout Key Stage 4 to improve GCSE outcome data to ensure that young people who are able to achieve 5 A-Cs including mathematics and English are appropriately supported within and out of school.
- b. Improve the support available to young people as they progress throughout the Key Stage to ensure improved advice and support for post 16 choices and transition. This includes reviewing the Pathways Planning process.
- c. Ensure appropriate monitoring of the post 16 bursary to ensure that all LAC are able to access this bursary whether they are in schools or post 16 college settings
- d. Develop schools' understanding of their responsibilities for educational outcomes of LAC, including when planning for alternative provision out of school.
- e. Improve the effectiveness of the personal education plan (PEP) to identify stronger targets that will appropriately challenge and support LAC. This will include continuing professional development (CPD) for social workers and reviewing officers on their understanding of what is 'good progress'.

Planned Actions

22. Revise the PEP format and improve the use of the plan by all officers to improve the attainment and progress of LAC.

23. Continue to identify high quality alternative provision, particularly for KS4 and post 16 pupils, which allows all LAC to obtain appropriate qualifications that support their transition to college, university, apprenticeships or work.

24. Review the use of pathways plans to improve careers support for students post 16.

Celebrating LAC achievements

25. The annual achievement event took place on 24 September 2011 and was a resounding success. Rufford Park was an excellent venue and over 90 children and young people attended with their parents and carers. Certificates were presented by Councillor Owen and Councillor Allin supported by Steve Edwards and Rachel Coombs.
26. Positive feedback was received from participants on how much the day had been enjoyed and the importance of celebrating the achievements of LAC was noted by all who attended.

Additional Funding for Looked After Children

27. Schools and governors have been informed about the additional funding available to support the education of LAC.

The Pupil Premium

28. All Nottinghamshire County Council Looked After Children and young people in Nottinghamshire schools have received their pupil premium. Any child or young person out of the local authority is receiving theirs as schools invoice the LA. A request for impact data will be made in approximately 6 months' time.

One to One Tuition

29. Following the success of the provision of both English and mathematics one-to-one tuition in 2010-2011 to LAC in Years 3-9, we have continued to make a targeted allocation from the Tuition Grant during 2011-2012. The target group of LAC will widen and will now include children in Year 2 as well as KS4 pupils in Years 10 and 11. In exceptional cases, schools may decide that this support is not appropriate, possibly for a child already in receipt of high level needs funding. However, it is anticipated that for almost every LAC in mainstream schools as well as the Nottinghamshire Learning Centre, 10 hours of English and/or 10 hours of mathematics tuition will be provided.
30. National and local data suggests that tuition has been particularly successful. Nottinghamshire impact data at June 2011, at Key Stages 2 and 3 suggests that of the 145 LAC who have accessed tuition, 73.1% made 1 + sub level progress while 11.1% made 3+ sub levels progress. Whilst this is slightly lower than some national data available regarding LAC, a direct comparison is not reliable as the national data only includes LAC whose progress had stalled whereas Nottinghamshire targeted all LAC regardless of whether they had stalled or not.

The Personal Education Allowance (PEA)

31. Designated teachers and independent reviewing officers have been contacted to advise them that PEA allowance is still available to support LAC's education and applications are coming through. Laptops have been ordered and will be arriving shortly for pupils requiring them through the PEA.

The Bursary for LAC Post 16

32. Following the removal of the Educational Maintenance Allowance, a post 16 bursary has been introduced by the current government. LAC and other vulnerable groups have been identified to receive this bursary. An Educational Improvement Adviser is tracking post 16 LAC to ensure this bursary has been paid by the school or college.

Progress, projects and developments of the Virtual School for LAC

The Letter Box Club

33. Following last year's successful Letter Box Club it will be funded to run again this year. National feedback as well as local feedback has been very positive (report **attached**). Years 3, 5 and 7 will be included in the project for this academic year. Further feedback about the local impact of the project has been requested from the Library Service.

The Multi Modal Project

34. This project has now been completed with a display of the participants' work being showcased at the Achievement Event on 24 September 2011. Liz Kitts and Petula Bhojwani are in the process of writing up the paper following the completion of the project. The project will be re-run again this coming academic year with a number of children and young people expressing their interest in joining the project on 24 September.

Designated teachers and schools

35. A detailed communication has been sent out to all designated teachers in primary and secondary schools including academies. This memo alerted the staff to funding streams, training, one-to-one tuition details and the details of the Virtual School.
36. Online training, currently provided by AKAMAS, is still available to designated teachers and wider staff to support schools in meeting the needs of LAC in the classroom.
37. During the Autumn Term CPD/briefing events for primary head teachers and senior leaders, with a separate session for secondary head teachers, a short session has been led by the coordinator of the Virtual School to update schools on their responsibilities with regard to LAC. The Pledge has also been mediated with a particular focus on the 'Education' chapter. Schools have been informed that spring 2012 designated teacher CPD will build on the training delivered in June 2010.

The Pledge

38. All schools who attended the head teachers and senior leaders CPD (20 secondary schools & 260 primary schools) have been given both a paper and electronic copy of The Pledge. Schools who have not attended will be posted copies of the Pledge to ensure that commitment by Nottinghamshire County Council is shared in all schools.

Action

39. To review the effectiveness of the AKAMAS online support for schools with consideration given to continuing to buy online modules as appropriate.
40. To plan and deliver the spring term designated teacher training.

LAC – a priority for Education Improvement Service

41. Following the head teacher CPD events this term, all schools are now aware of the position of the Virtual School in the Education Improvement Service. Schools have been informed that the authority is placing the highest priority on the attainment and progress of Looked After Children and the Virtual School will be key in supporting them with this

Planned Action

42. Develop electronic communication with schools with the development of a Virtual School 'room' on Fronter.
43. Introduce regular communication to designated teachers on at least a termly basis to ensure the education of LAC remains a priority in all schools.

Other Options Considered

44. This report is an information only report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

45. 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.

Implications for Service Users

46. Further development of the practice of the Virtual School for LAC will improve the educational experiences and life outcomes for LAC.

Financial Implications

47. None.

Equalities Implications

48. By improving educational outcomes and experiences for LAC, the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers should be narrowed and their career costs reduced.

Crime and Disorder Implications

49. The long term benefits of improving outcomes and life chances for LAC will include that less LAC will be represented in the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures, the prison population or among the homeless in the future. Also a reduction in the number of former LAC whose own children become LAC.

Human Rights Implications

50. It is the right of every child to receive a good education and the Virtual School for LAC needs to operate effectively to achieve this for all our LAC.

Safeguarding of Children Implications

51. The Virtual School is committed to the safeguarding of children and young people and is of the highest priority. Staff of the Virtual School are up to date in safeguarding training with the next update course to be attended in December 2011. The Improvement Plan for the Virtual School recognises safeguarding as a high priority and, through Designated Teacher Training in the spring term 2012, safeguarding will be part of the work carried out on this agenda for all schools to re-iterate the importance of appropriate educational provision and the link to children and young people being safeguarded.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1) That the Panel notes the report.

Rachel Coombs

Group Manager, Regulated and Corporate Parenting Services

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (NDR 07/10/11)

53. Nil.

Background Papers

'The role and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for LAC: Statutory guidance for school governing bodies' DCSF 2009 (publicly available, previously tabled)

'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children: Statutory guidance for Local Authorities' (publicly available, to be tabled)

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.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

M19C2896