Nottinghamshire County Council	**Report to Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**
	11 March 2013
	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 2013.

Information and Advice

Virtual School Senior Leadership Team and Virtual School Improvement Plan

2.   The senior leadership team (SLT) is due to meet on 18 March 2013 and will review progress on the 2012/13 virtual school improvement plan.   Updated data, shared at the last Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee meeting, held on looked after pupils will also be discussed at the meeting.

3.   The virtual school's self evaluation form (SEF) will be further considered by the SLT and any progress made against the actions will be discussed. Suggested case studies will be drafted for consideration by the SLT to support the SEF.

Virtual School Staff

4.   The two Looked After Children Achievement Officers continue to support schools, social workers, carers and the wider network for looked after children. Caseloads are currently 136 (Brox/Ged/Rush & Newark) and 204 (Mans/Ash/Bass). 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.

5.   Both officers continue to undertake training on the needs of looked after children. In January 2013 both attended a further follow on seminar in Derbyshire on insecure attachment needs and education. This course was an in depth instruction 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

6.   The next network meetings in the Spring term 2013 will focus on the use of the pupil premium. The co-ordinator will be attending a national good practice conference on pupil premium. Resources and information will be shared with colleagues who attend the network meetings for the Spring term.

Designated Teacher Memos

7.   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 teachers has been positive and encourages contact from all schools with the virtual school. Any colleague that is unable to attend the Spring term network meeting will have feed back on pupil premium through the memo and Fronter.

School Links

8.   Requests continue to be received for training from the virtual school on the needs of   looked after children cross phase.

9.   All schools have once again been given access to the online training modules on attachment, trauma and behaviour.

East Midlands Network

10.   The next East Midlands network meeting of virtual schools will be held on 4 March. This is a very successful group which shares good practice and builds links to support out of county placed young people.

Social Care Links

11.   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. The first of these sessions has been delivered on admissions procedures. Colleagues from pupil place planning also contributed. All attendees evaluated the session as very useful. Social care colleagues are using the teams effectively to manage change of school places, as a direct result of this training.

12.   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

13.   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 for looked after children.

14. The virtual school co-ordinator also works alongside the adoption service to support a Fronter room for adopters and there is also a Fronter room which supports foster carers.

Floor Target Schools

15. The virtual school continues to monitor looked after children in below floor target schools.

16. Reports received from improvement advisors to date indicate that young people in these schools are making progress in line with expectations. Spring term monitoring sheets have been sent out.

Data

17. A meeting with the IT services team was held on 7 February 2013 to agree a timetable for procuring a data management system for the virtual school, which will enable improved tracking of looked after children's progress in all key stages. Progress on this critical area of work will be included in the next report.

Achievement Event

18. 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.

Pupil Premium

19. 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.

Projects

20. The 2012/13 multi modality project is underway and going very well. Over 20 children and young people are taking part.

21. The virtual school is supporting a music based project with colleagues from the music and arts departments that will offer a chance of accreditation in an arts award and an opportunity to experience many styles of music. This project will be aimed at young people who may be vulnerable to exclusions, particularly in the run up to holidays.

Personal Education Plan

22. The new paperwork is now with the new looked after children social work team and any completed PEPs will be forwarded to the co-ordinator for quality assurance purposes. The aim is to have the updated and improved PEP

documentation in circulation for all looked after children of school age by January 2014. The Children in Care Council has been consulted on the child/young person input section and this will be in a booklet format. The co-ordinator is to attend a meeting of the Council again to have further discussions on the layout.

Good News

23. Book tokens have been sent out once again to children and young people for a variety of successes including attendance, participation and achievement. One secondary school has also continued to have a group of looked after children meet together regularly for support and social time. This group has been visiting primary schools to assist in transition to secondary school. This has been very positively evaluated and book tokens have been sent to all children who participated.

Other Options Considered

24. This report is for information only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

25. 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 Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee notes the update on the virtual school for the Spring term 2013.

John Slater
Service Director, Education Standards and Inclusion

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Sue Denholm
Co-ordinator of the Virtual School
T: 01623 434149
E: sue.denholm@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (KLA 15/02/13)

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

Background Papers

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0183