

13 March 2017**Agenda Item: 5****REPORT OF THE ACTING 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 2017.

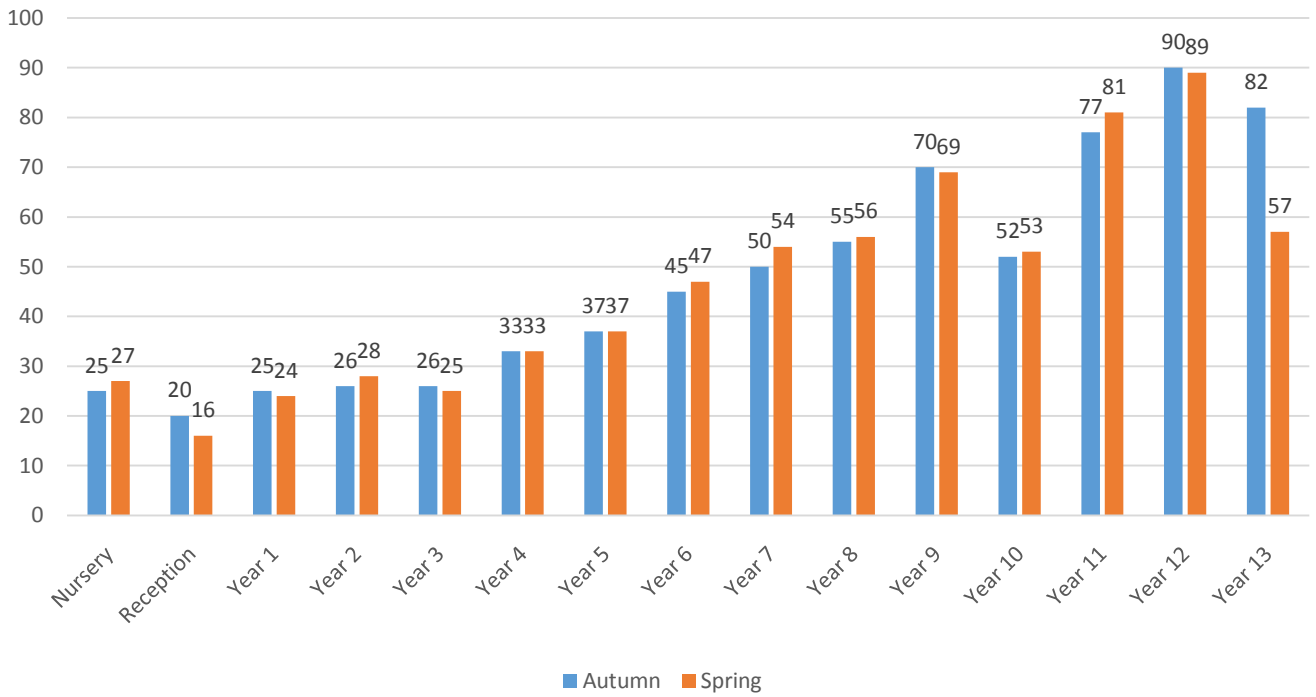
Information and Advice**Virtual School Senior Leadership Team, School Improvement Plan and termly tracking processes**

2. The senior leadership team (SLT) meets on a termly basis to review the virtual school's improvement plan.
3. The collection of the autumn termly teacher assessment data along with other relevant pupil level information such as progress towards attainment and learning targets, attendance, behaviour, attitudes to learning has been completed. This valuable and crucial process enables the virtual school team to closely track, monitor and intervene as appropriate to ensure Looked After Children (LAC) continue to make progress and achieve their potential. The tracking information is also used productively during meetings with schools, social workers and carers to inform discussions about interventions or support that may be required for a LAC in schools or educational settings.

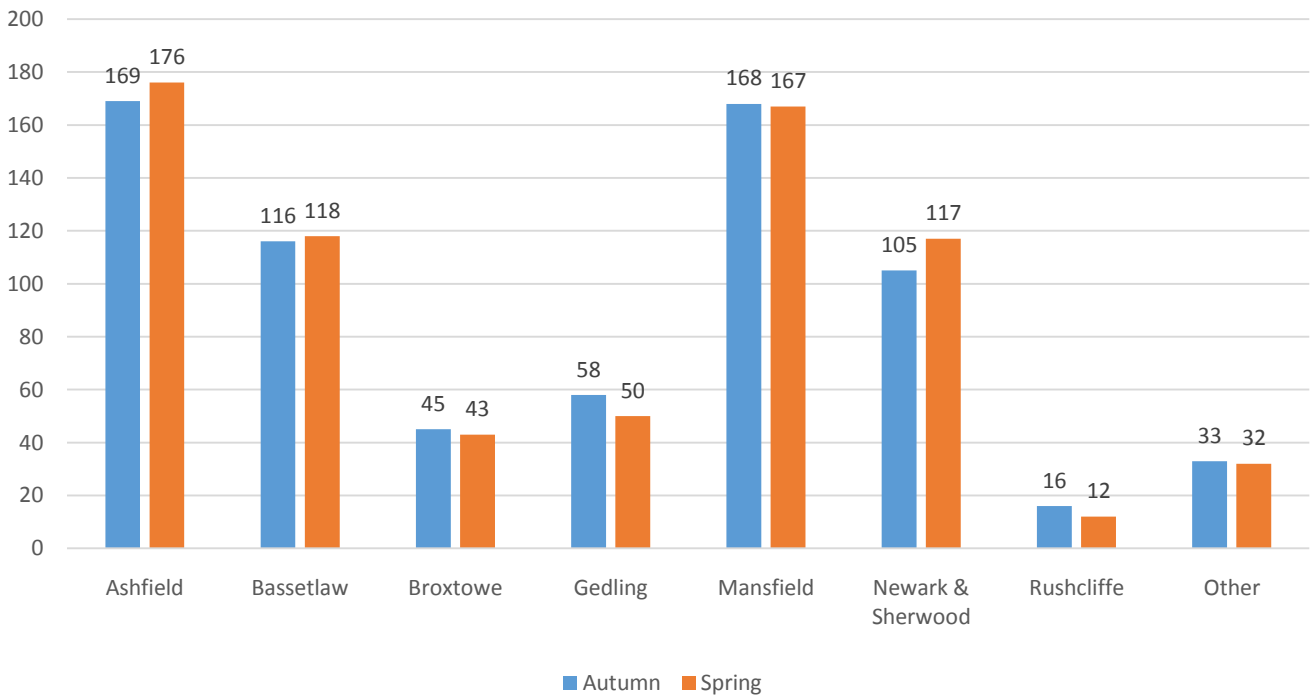
Numbers on roll and composition of Nottinghamshire's Virtual School

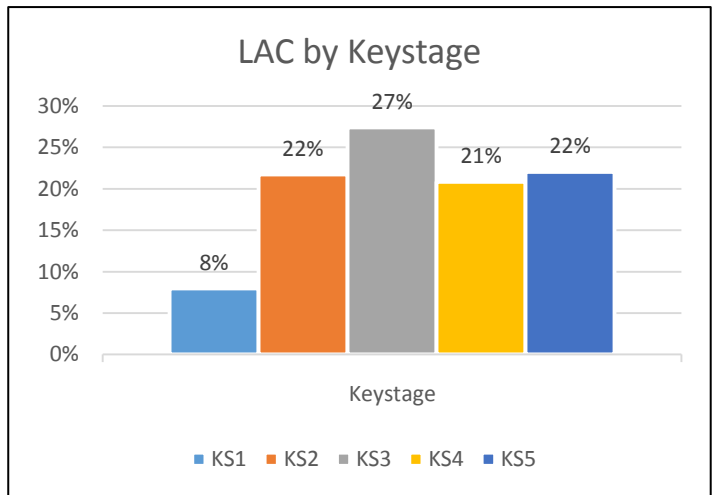
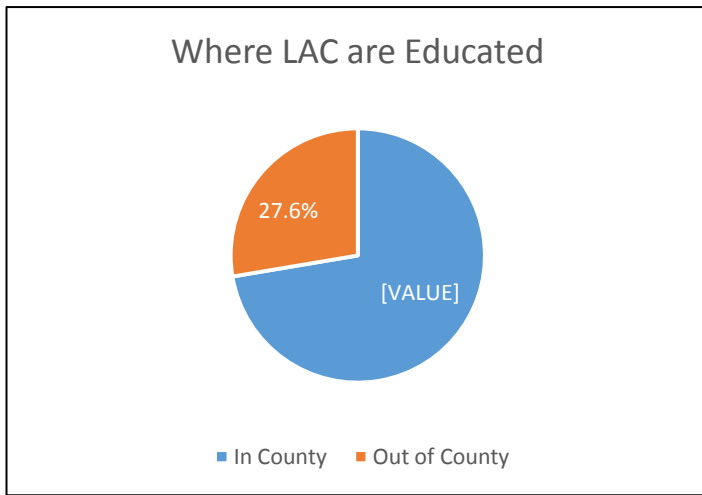
4. The number of LAC in each key stage, year group, residence and educational location is shown below. The current total for LAC at statutory school age in Nottinghamshire's virtual school is 523 (compared to 516 in the autumn report and 559 in 2015-16). The profile of the virtual school in 2016-17 is broadly similar to its profile in 2015-16 with the exception of the Year 9 cohort where there appears to have been a noticeable increase in LAC numbers. All information below correct as of 26 January 2017.

Number of LAC by Year Group



LAC by District

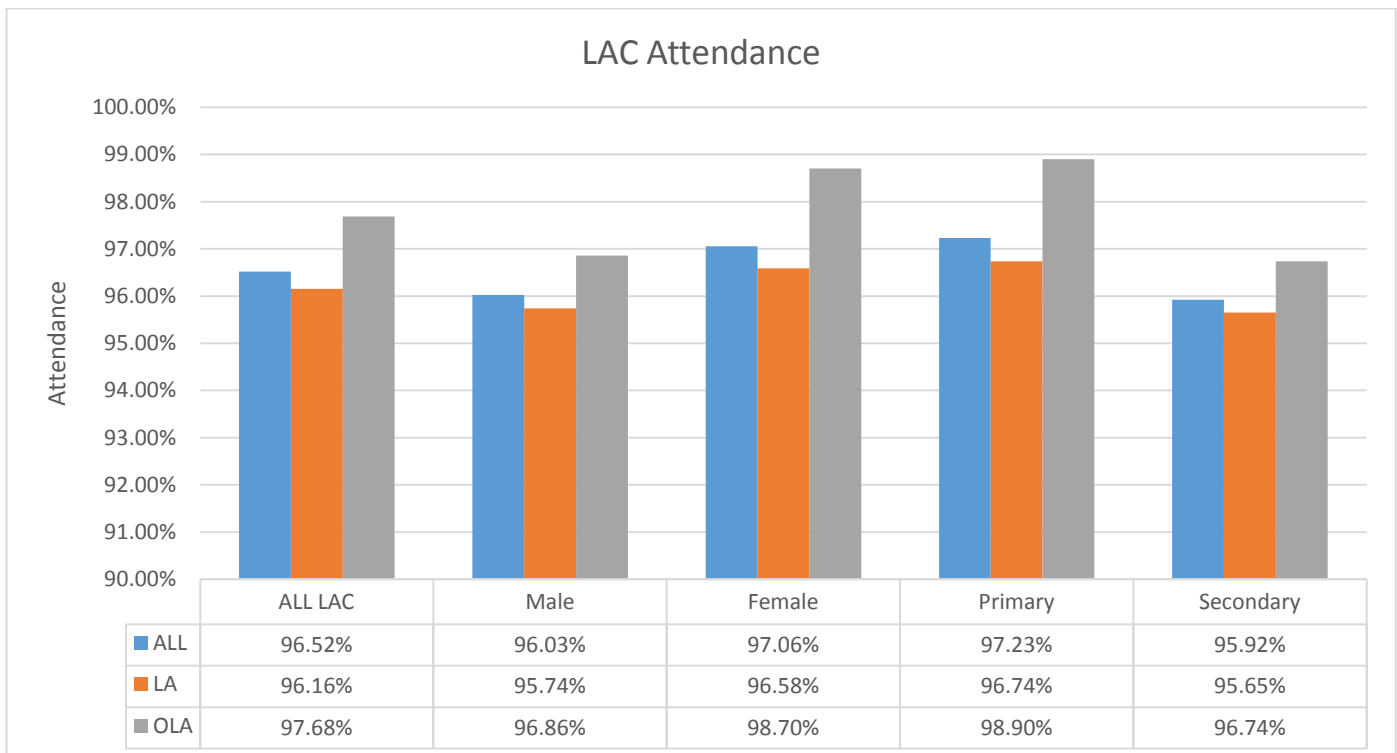




Commentary on 2016 outcomes for LAC

- A detailed commentary on the provisional, unvalidated outcomes for Nottinghamshire’s Looked After Children was provided in the autumn term report to Corporate Parenting Sub Committee. Validated results are not expected to be released until the end of March 2017 and therefore the previously reported outcomes remain unchanged.

Attendance



The above information is based on internally collected data from schools which includes a 98% return from primary schools and an 81% return from secondary schools.

6. The chart is based on all of Nottinghamshire’s LAC both in and out of county (OLA – educated out of local authority). It is pleasing to note that our ‘out of county’ LAC have secured very good attendance. The national expectation is that schools should aim for above 95% pupil attendance. Nottinghamshire’s LAC cohort’s attendance rate is above this figure in both the primary and secondary phases.

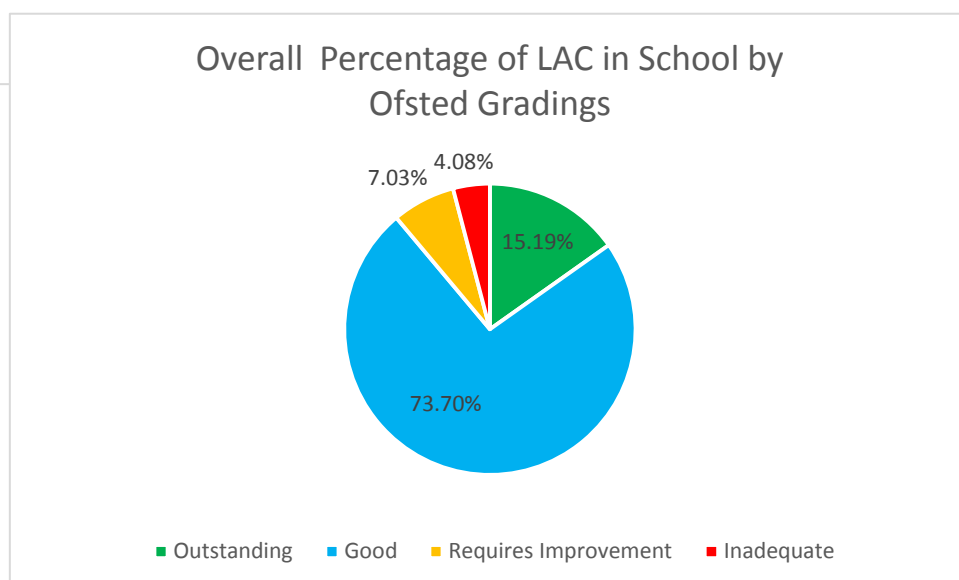
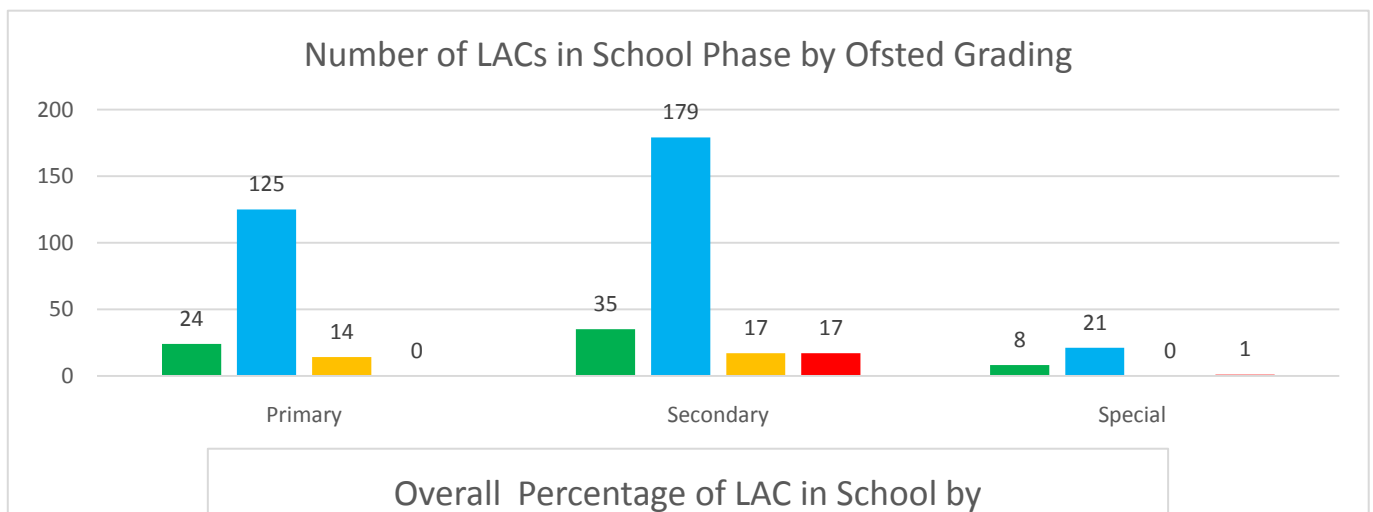
NEXUS project

7. Nexus is a national project supported by the Association of Children’s Services Directors which aims to create a **consistent, national evidence-based system** to assist with reporting the educational outcomes of LAC children. It is hoped that in the future, this will enable local authorities to **assess, monitor and report** on the educational achievement and progress of children in care (both nationally and locally, and at both an institutional and individual level). This project is due to be fully operational in spring 2017.

To date the progress made includes:

- data access agreements have now been agreed which will enable the population of data into proposed reports.
- draft reports have been circulated to a selected group of local authority Virtual School Heads and Data Analysts for comment. Feedback will then be used to inform any required amendments before usage during the first phase of the project.

LAC placements in schools according to Ofsted Grading



8. Wherever possible, the local authority adheres to the statutory guidance as set out in 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children' (July 2014), which advises that all looked after children should be placed in good or better schools.
9. It is noted that there continues to be an improvement in the percentage of LAC being educated in good or better schools.

Attachment Aware Schools

10. The virtual school continues to work with a number of partnerships of schools to develop good practice across the County in supporting the needs of children and young people with attachment difficulties. In collaboration with the educational psychology service, we are currently undertaking evidence-based research across our Attachment Aware School Partnerships into the impact of this professional development project. This research will be undertaken by a research assistant and a report will be written and shared in due course.

Multi Model Project

11. Nottinghamshire's Multi-Modal literacy project, led by Dr Petula Bhojwani from Nottingham Trent University, is now in its 6th year of development and in 2016-17 there has been a very positive focus on enabling secondary school-aged LAC pupils to use 'tablet' technology to further develop their confidence in literacy and 'app' technology. The Ashfield School took part with 10 LAC pupils accessing the project. The end of the sessions culminated in a presentation by the young people and a 'skype' interview with the author of the book used by the pupils to produce their literacy apps. All the pupils reported an increase in their enjoyment of tackling literacy projects and staff witnessed an increase in the confidence of all the pupils when taking part in the literacy based activities. The school is now using the software to maintain engagement with multi model activities and it is hoped the young people will feel confident to support others in the school to access support in accessing exciting literacy opportunities. This particular project is to be written up and published in a book.
12. The 2017 project for primary-aged LAC pupils is just about to begin for a targeted cohort of learners. New resources and book materials are currently under development and we hope that the LAC pupils involved, supported by Dr Petula Bhojwani and officers from the Virtual School, will be able to 'show-case' their learning at Nottinghamshire's high profile Closing the Educational Gaps conference in July 2017.

Letterbox Club

13. The virtual school has received the evaluation of the 2016/17 'Letterbox Club' project. Once again, feedback suggests that it has been very well received with both carers and children/young people very much enjoying the parcels and contents. The evaluation has indicated a positive impact on the participants' enjoyment of reading and in some cases inspired children to begin reading with their carers.

Good News

14. Book tokens continue to be sent out to looked after children for a host of reasons including achieving accelerated learning, reaching targets and beyond target grades and accomplishments in sports and drama.

Other Options Considered

15. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

16. This report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working 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 2017 be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (TMR 14/02/17)

19. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

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.

Autumn term report of the virtual school for looked after children – report to Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on 13 December 2016.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0953