

9 December 2013

Agenda Item: 4

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION**

**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 2013.

Information and Advice

Virtual School Senior Leadership Team and Virtual School Improvement Plan

2. The senior leadership team (SLT) met on 23 September 2013 and discussed the virtual school improvement plan and self-evaluation form (SEF) for 2013/14. Suggestions were made for improvements to the documents and members of the SLT agreed to send examples of front sheets to improve the review process of both documents.
3. A further meeting has been arranged for 5 December 2013.

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. To date the number of looked after children (LAC) currently receiving support from the virtual school is 316. The number of statutory school aged young people at the time of writing is 692 (out of a total of 900 looked after children), some of whom are educated out of county.
5. Both officers continue to undertake training on the needs of looked after children and they have attended the designated teacher training running this Autumn term.
6. The virtual school has secured an extra temporary member of staff to join the team. This post is a secondment for 12 weeks from 4 November 2013.

Termly Designated Teacher Training

7. Five workshops have been delivered over the Autumn term 2013 and will be repeated in the Spring and Summer terms. These workshops are being delivered by Kate Cairns and her associates and have covered the following subjects: Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), behaviour and the physical environment, understanding trauma, making effective use of the pupil premium and self-harming behaviours. All these workshops have been evaluated very well by delegates and whilst there has been a small take up this term (94 delegates across the five workshops) the numbers for the Spring and Summer terms are much improved (45-50 delegates in each workshop each term).

Designated Teacher Memos

8. These continue to be sent out regularly, minimally half termly. Designated teachers continue to advise the virtual school that they find these updates very useful.

School Links

9. Individual requests continue to be received for training from the virtual school on the needs of looked after children cross phase. The virtual school offers bespoke training sessions to schools and FE colleges as a result.

East Midlands Network

10. The East Midlands Network meeting of virtual schools was held in Derby city on 14 November 2013.
11. The co-ordinator has been elected by the East Midlands Network to serve on the National Steering Group for Virtual School Heads and the first meeting of this group was held on 17 October 2013. This was a very useful meeting with much to share with colleagues in the East Midlands regional group. The national conference for virtual school heads will be held at Oxford University on 27 March 2014 and the co-ordinator will be attending.

Social Care Links

12. The co-ordinator of the virtual school and admissions colleagues attended a team meeting in the Spring Term. A follow-up meeting with social care colleagues was held in June 2013 and provided a useful input on the admissions processes for looked after children. Training will be provided on the new personal education plan (PEP) in the New Year for looked after team social workers.
13. The LAC Achievement Officers will also use the looked after social work team's building as a base to work from in order to provide regular ongoing support to social workers.

Frontier

14. The Fronter room is still available to schools. The Support to Schools Service is currently undertaking a review of how effective this is as schools are not accessing it as regularly as other on line resources. The virtual school will be reviewing whether Fronter is the most effective platform for communication in light of this review.
15. 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. These services are not undertaking a review of the Fronter system, therefore the virtual school will continue to be involved in this area.

Floor Target Schools

16. The virtual school monitors all children in schools below floor targets. Education improvement advisors will discuss looked after children's progress, attendance, behaviour and any support needs in the primary schools they are supporting.

Data

17. The SIMS system is now populated with looked after children and young people. Some functions such as contextual information can be used. The Local Authority is committed to have a fully functional system by January 2014.
18. Almost 100% of primary, secondary and special schools have now returned progress data for looked after children attending their schools in 2012/13. Any outstanding data will be requested again (5 schools).

LAC Strategy Performance Measures – provisional outcomes for 2013

19. Provisional outcomes for 2013 are as follows:
 - 12.7% of looked after children in Nottinghamshire schools attained 5 A*-C including English and mathematics in 2013.
 - 66.7% attained 5+ A*-G including English and mathematics.
 - 46% of all looked after children in Nottinghamshire schools attained a grade C or above in at least three subjects but not in English or mathematics.
 - 26% of the looked after children attending Nottinghamshire schools made expected (3 levels) progress in English and 21% made expected progress in mathematics
 - At the end of key stage 2 66.7% of all LAC in Nottinghamshire schools achieved level 4 or above in reading.

- 38.9% of all LAC in Nottinghamshire schools achieved level 4 or above in writing.
 - 55.6% of all LAC in Nottinghamshire schools achieved level 4 or above in mathematics.
 - 33.3% of all LAC in Nottinghamshire schools achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics.
20. There can be no direct comparison with previous years' outcomes as reading was not measured separately.
 21. However this outcomes data for 2013 relates only to looked after children attending Nottinghamshire schools and does not include Nottinghamshire looked after children attending out of county schools. It also includes looked after children from other counties attending Nottinghamshire schools.
 22. National data on all Nottinghamshire looked after children in and out of county will be available in January 2014.

Achievement Event

23. The achievement event was held in July 2013. This was attended by Councillor Peck, Councillor Foale and Councillor Plant. It was well attended by looked after children, their carers and families and everybody had a good day. An evaluation of this event will be undertaken during October half term with young people to decide on next year's date and style of event.

Pupil Premium

24. The 2013/14 grant will be forwarded to schools before Christmas. The new style PEP has a section asking for use and impact of the pupil premium. Schools have been attending workshops on pupil premium through the head teacher briefings last term and the designated teacher training this academic year. This is to ensure that all schools have the most up to date information on the Sutton Trust research which highlights best practice for using the pupil premium, Ofsted tools and trauma related practice to inform use of pupil premium for maximum impact.

Projects

25. The 2013/14 multi-modality project is now beginning. This project has been furthered by the use of tablet technology and will have a larger cohort than previous years.
26. The virtual school is pleased to report that following on from the music project supported by the virtual school last academic year, County Youth Arts is running the same model this academic year at the Old Library in Mansfield. 4/5 looked after pupils are attending these projects as part of their school curriculum.

Personal Education Plan

27. The new paperwork is now with the graphics department of the local authority. The Children in Care Council will be reviewing the young people's documents over the next meetings up until Christmas and it is anticipated that the new format will be distributed in January 2014.

Good News

28. Book tokens have been sent out once again to children and young people for a variety of successes including achievement, engagement and sporting achievements.
29. A young person has won first prize in a national Christmas card competition and has been acknowledged for his achievement.
30. One secondary school has also continued to have a group of looked after children meet together regularly for support and social time. The member of staff supporting this has spoken to primary and secondary heads briefings about the group and a number of schools showed interest in this type of support for looked after children.

Other Options Considered

31. This report is for information only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

32. This report is for information only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

33. 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 Autumn term 2013 be noted.

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@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (KLA 12/11/13)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.
C0317