

Committee: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date: 23 October 2009

Title of report: Virtual School for Looked After Children

By: Director of Children's Services

Purpose of report: To introduce the new Headteacher of the Virtual School, report on the education results for looked after children, and outline the priorities for 2009/10.

Recommendation: The Panel is recommended to note and endorse the contents of the report.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no financial implications in the report.

2. Supporting information

2.1 The report on the education results for looked after children in 2009/10 is attached as Appendix 1.

3. Conclusion and reason for Recommendation

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note and endorse the contents of the report.

MATT DUNKLEY
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Adrian Money, Virtual Head Teacher, Tel: 01323 841470

Local Members: All
Background documents: None

Virtual School for Looked After Children

1. Introduction

1.1 Adrian Money was appointed as the Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children in East Sussex on 1 September 2009. He will build on the work of his predecessor, Geoff Ellis, to drive forward the development of the Virtual School and narrow the gap in attainment for looked after children. Adrian is well known within East Sussex having been the headteacher of Tideway School in Newhaven until August 2009 and been teaching in East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove for the last 30 years. He has a strong commitment to inclusion and providing support to more vulnerable young people, and has a particular interest in looked after children through his own personal experience of adoption and his work as a respite foster carer for Brighton and Hove. Adrian is also a School Improvement Partner (SIP) for East Sussex.

2. Attainment

KS2 Results	2006	2007	2008	Outcome 2009	Target 2009	Target 2010
English L4+	42%	46%	50%	36%	48.1%	40.9%
Maths L4+	33%	42%	40%	57%	45.1%	45.5%

2.2 In English an outcome of 36% against a target of 48.1% was achieved but with a much larger cohort (28 children against the 22 for whom the target was set). It is planned for the academic year 2009/2010 for the Virtual School to set centrally the individual progress targets based on two levels of progress from KS1 in English and Maths and to track progress against these in order to be able to more effectively provide support for learners at risk of falling behind. The target for 2010 is achievable - national progression rates applied to the current cohort of 26 children would result in an outcome of 42% Level 4 English.

2.3 The outcome in Maths of 57% exceeded the target of 45.5%. However, the target for 2010 exceeds national progression rates by a significant margin (31% level 4 Maths assuming children make the national expected progress from KS1).

2.4

KS4 RESULTS	2006	2007	2008	Outcome 2009	Target 2009	Target 2010
5+ A*-C en/ma	-	-	6.25%	6.3%	21.7%	26.5%
5+ A* - C	25%	6%	13%	16.7%		
5+ A* - G	59%	60%	54%	52.1%		
1+ A* - G	78%	90%	84%	70.8%		
Number of students				48		
Numbers GCSE results				37		

2.5 The outcome of 6.3% against a target of 21.7% is disappointing. Given that fewer than 15% of this cohort achieved Level 4 in English and Maths at KS2, significantly higher than national progression rates would have had to have been achieved to reach the target. However, only 26% of the cohort made the expected rate of progress in English and 21% in Maths and this is significantly lower than the national progression of 60% for English and 54% for Maths (National Data set). From 2009/10 the Virtual School will be setting minimum outcome targets for all children and young people in care based on national expectations of progress and will be tracking progress towards these targets and supporting/challenging schools to enable these targets to be realised. The 2010 target is unlikely to be reached. Even if national progression rates are applied to the current year 11 cohort only 8 young people would gain 5+ A* -C including English and Maths which would lead to an outcome of 18%.

3. Attendance

	2007/08	2008/09
Year 1	96.38%	97.88%
Year 2	93.79%	95.73%
Year 3	96.39%	94.94%
Year 4	95.15%	90.06%
Year 5	97.08%	92.38%
Year 6	96.84%	96.08%
Year 7	96.02%	96.23%
Year 8	93.93%	92.45%
Year 9	87.61%	92.80%
Year 10	80.40%	88.83%
Year 11	71.21%	82.56%

3.1 The attendance figures which were produced at the end of July 09 show an improving trend in looked after children's attendance at school. A detailed investigation into the year groups where the attendance appears to drop, has shown that this relates to one or two specific children. The year 11 figures now include study leave which is counted as authorised absence. These results compare very favourably with the overall attendance figures in East Sussex.

4. Priorities 2009/2010

4.1 There are four over-riding priorities for the 400 pupils of the Virtual School.

4.2 There needs to be a significant improvement in the ability of the Virtual school to track student progress. It is proposed that the Virtual School takes the lead and sets the end of Key Stage targets for all the children and young people based on prior attainment and expected progress and its knowledge of the young people. These targets can then be "extrapolated up" for each individual school's targets for looked after children (LAC) and for the overall targets for the Virtual School itself. Once every child in care has a challenging and agreed target, the virtual school, together with School Improvement Partners, will monitor students' progress towards the targets through Personal Education Plans (PEP) and through school target setting meetings. The student outcome targets will be derived from student progress targets. Primary schools have already set progress targets for students using the new national "progress expectation" approach and secondary schools will be setting these targets this autumn. This approach is explained more fully in the GCSE analysis and indeed has been used to evaluate exam results 2009 at KS4.

4.3 To support the above process by developing a database system that can provide the Virtual School with accurate and easily accessed student records and reports. The Virtual Headteacher is currently working with the School Information Management System (SIMS) team and the e-business team to develop this further.

4.4 To make the Virtual School rather less virtual. The governing body and Virtual Headteacher are currently working on the development of a draft prospectus which will include a name for the school, a set of values and aims, together with a clear description of the services on offer. Once this is completed as a draft document there will be a consultation process including of course the young people themselves.

4.5 To develop a robust system for self evaluation for the Virtual School including systematic feedback from schools, carers and young people and to produce a School Evaluation Form and a School Development Plan for the Virtual School.

4.6 Adrian Money can be contacted on adrian.money@eastsussex.gov.uk, tel: 01323841470

Adrian Money
Virtual Headteacher for Looked after Children