

Committee:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	14 October 2016
By:	Director of Children's Services
Title of Report:	The Virtual School Annual Report including report on the use of the Pupil Premium
Purpose of Report:	To report on the work of the Virtual School 2015 – 2016 and on educational outcomes for children who are Looked After by East Sussex County Council, and the use of Pupil Premium for Looked After Children (LAC).

RECOMMENDATION:

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

1. Background

1.1 The Virtual School (VS) consists of a team who work with Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Foster Carers to support the education of all East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Looked After Children (LAC) and formerly LAC wherever they are educated.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 See Appendix 1

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 The East Sussex Virtual School is recognised as an example of good practice by the DfE and continues to influence national policy (for example, statutory guidance on Promoting the Education of Looked after Children published last summer).

3.1 The Pupil Premium Grant for Looked After Children continues to be managed as it has been over the last three years in a non-bureaucratic easily understood and accessible way.

3.2 The Grant will be used to improve educational outcomes, reduce exclusions, improve attendance and reduce the numbers of care leavers who are not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET).

3.3 This will be achieved by supporting Personal Education Plan (PEP) targets, developing the 1:1 tutor programme, providing additional funding for schools for training and resources and ensuring wherever possible the security and consistency of school placements.

3.4 That Pupil Premium for LAC will “not be used to provide central services that would reasonably be expected to be funded by the local authority to comply with their duty to promote the educational achievement of the children they look after” (*Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head 2014-15, DfE*).

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Anna Brookes

Local Member(s): All
 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

1. Summary of Virtual School Developments and Achievements

1.1 The Virtual School (VS) consists of a team who work with Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Foster Carers to support the education of all East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Looked After Children (LAC) and formerly LAC wherever they are educated.

1.2 The VS is led by a Virtual Headteacher and a Head of School, the core team consists of 10 members of staff (7.5 FTE) plus a number of claims only staff, mainly Tutors and Teaching Assistants who work directly with children funded through Pupil Premium (PP). In addition there are 2 posts funded by PP that extend the remit of the VS to support adopted children and Care Leavers. The whole team consists of 3 Teachers, 2 Education Support Workers, 5 Caseworkers and 2 Administrators. The team was based in Hailsham Community College until April 2016 but is now based at Dunbar Drive in Hailsham although most of the team have adopted an agile approach and therefore work from a variety of bases.

1.3 The core services provided by the VS include monitoring and evaluating the attendance and progress of all ESCC LAC, to provide a named Caseworker for every East Sussex school and for any school outside of East Sussex that has an ESCC LAC on their roll. The VS provides advice, training and support for all those who are involved in a LAC's education and will challenge any professional that makes decisions that may impede a child's educational progress. In addition to these core functions the VS manages the LAC PP which enables significant additional support for learning.

1.4 The VS organises a number of residential and day courses for LAC including a 3 day Year 6 transition residential, a 2 day Year 11 revision residential, spring school in the Easter holidays for Years 7,8 and 9 and weekly summer holiday activities for Early Years children. These residential activities provide the children and young people with specific skills and experiences, and at the same time ensure that VS staff build relationships with the young people that they support.

1.5 The Annual Children in Care Awards evening celebrated the many outstanding achievements this year. Just like the Oscars we invited nominations and all nominees and their carers were invited. Award categories were for Educational Achievement (Attainment and Progress), Making a Positive Contribution and Gifted and Talented. Award winners included two Year 11 students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) who achieved 5+ A*-C including English and Maths (including one who achieved an A in Maths). Care Leavers too received awards including one now at University having achieved excellent BTEC and Apprenticeship experience and another, also at University following excellent A level results. Enormous thanks should be extended to Bede's, a partner boarding school, who hosted and fully funded the event including a sit down dinner and entertainment. We continue to work in close partnership with Bede's who provide boarding places for a number of our children and allow us to use their facilities during the school holidays.

1.6 ESCC VS continues to be seen as a model of good practice nationally and we await with interest a DfE report into the effectiveness of VSs which we have contributed to. We also continue to work more closely with Ofsted and are keen to support the inspection process through, for example, providing inspectors with the corporate parents view of how schools support LAC to achieve their potential.

2. Virtual School priorities for the school year 15/16

2.1 To expand and increase the quality of the tutor programme and to recruit more skilled staff to provide direct support for children and schools

- A significant programme is in place of directly appointing, training and managing a team of Specialist Teachers. Currently 17 Tutors and 4 Support Staff are employed directly on a claims only basis. The cost of this programme since September 2014 has been approximately £155,000. 260 young people have benefited from this programme which contributes significantly towards academic progress, particularly in English and Maths and also improves attitudes to learning. All LAC are offered, and are encouraged to take up 1:1 tuition.

- The use of specialist staff to work with the most challenging young people to prevent permanent exclusion and reduce the likelihood of fixed term exclusions has also been expanded. Although the impact on overall exclusion levels and persistent absence has yet to be seen in the overall data, some very powerful individual case studies can illustrate its effectiveness on an individual basis.

2.2 To improve the skills and support for Designated Teachers and other school staff:

- The VS continues to support schools access to the Thrive programme, a therapeutic programme used in schools. 21 primary schools, 12 secondary schools and 2 special schools have staff who have undertaken the programme. In East Sussex there are now 50 Thrive practitioners across schools and Children's Service teams, 11 in ESBAS, 1 in adoption support, 1 in placement support and 1 in Lansdowne Secure Unit. The Thrive programme helps to develop a common approach and a common language in supporting all vulnerable children to access learning in schools
- Attachment training for school staff has been delivered in 70 schools over the last 4 years. 110 Early Years Practitioners have received attachment training. Over 120 foster carers have attended training by the VS in looking at ways to support the education of the children and young people they care for. Training specifically tailored to the needs of Designated Teachers continues to be offered although the uptake is low. The offer of coaching and support to Designated Teachers and key adults has been available but again the uptake remains low

2.3 To increase the capacity of the VS through working with and through other Children's Services teams

- There has been a very significant improvement with inter-team working with teams across Children's Services that work with, or make decisions that may impact on, LAC. There are now named designated officers, who understand the nature of the care system and share a common understanding of their duties as corporate parents. There are named officers in ESBAS (Behaviour Support Service), ISEND (Inclusion, SEN and Disability), School Admissions, Transport and the Speech and Language team.

A significant priority for the VS two years ago was to recruit an Educational Psychologist (EP) to work 50% of the time within the VS and 50% of the time with EP Team. This has so far proved elusive. Currently the VS is able to access 50 hours of EP time and, whilst this is extremely helpful, there are limitations on how this time is used.

2.4 To expand work experience placements and apprenticeship programme for Care Leavers and the provision of engagement projects..

- There have been 12 work experience placements provided to Care Leavers by ESCC since September 2014. This includes 1 FT internship for one of our undergraduates. There is a service level agreement and additional funding available for the Youth Employability Service (YES) to ensure that there are 2 identified YES Advisors who work with Year 11 and the Care Leavers team. Care Leavers are now part of ESCC Employability Strategy. An accredited course for independent living skills has been commissioned. A VS Case Worker has been appointed to work alongside the Care Leavers team to provide and commission engagement and enrichment projects for young people and help focus work on improving educational and training outcomes.

3. Virtual School priorities for the school year 16/17

3.1 To develop a Key Stage(KS) 4 intervention programme in partnership with other teams to support those young people who though successful in KS1 – KS3, for one reason or another, disengage and therefore underachieve at KS4.

3.2 To increase our capacity to provide additional educational psychology hours.

3.3 To work with the Assessment and Planning team in ISEND to develop a new Personal Education Plan (PEP) that will be compatible with school based plans.

3.4 To be clear about how we measure the progress that a child is making including progress from Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of KS1

3.5 To take into account Progress 8 measures of successful outcomes at the end of KS4

3.6 To build on existing good practice of joint planning between social worker, young person and Designated Teacher.

3.7 To develop extra-curricular programmes with partner organisations (and develop the concept of partner organisations) with an emphasis on identifying and supporting gifted and talented young people.

3.8 To develop and embed “agile working” across the team to ensure that accommodation restrictions do not present obstacles to team working

4. Use of Pupil Premium (2015 – 2016)

4.1 The PP for LAC of £1900 per child, is managed by the Virtual Headteacher and is used to support the education of LAC. In the financial year 2015 – 2016 the total fund was £859,464. The PP for formerly LAC (also £1900 per child) is paid directly to the schools that they attend. The PP for LAC in early years settings is £400 a year and is managed by the VS.

4.2 Requests for funding from PP, and the evaluation of the impact the additional resources have on learning, is identified through the PEP. Although in order to be responsive, requests can be made to the VS at any time by Designated Teachers, Social Workers or VS Case Workers.

4.3 A VS PP panel meet once a month to consider all requests. The criteria for allocating funding are in two parts. The first is that the additional resource will support the young person’s learning and improve their educational outcomes; the second is that the funding would not normally be expected to come from any other funding stream (such as core VS budget, SEN funding, school base budget, fostering allowances etc.) The criteria are well known and the evidence for this is that almost all requests are met.

4.4 PP may also be used to support groups of children and young people by, for example, providing specialist training for staff, supporting school based inclusion projects or by increasing the capacity of other teams, including the VS itself, to provide support for LAC and formerly LAC.

Table 1 – Breakdown of Expenditure

Budget Heading	Allocated	% Budget	Examples of Types of Expenditure
Alternative Provision	£56,730	7%	Includes accessing courses through third party providers such as DV8, Challenger Troop, Act on It and costs associated with work experience and other off- site provision.
Assessment	£5,500	1%	Speech and Language Therapists, EP's
Books	£25,226	3%	All children in primary school and those children who opt in in secondary school receive termly parcels of books and educational resources that we commission from "Bags of Books" in Lewes.
ESBAS	£39,440	5%	Ensuring that every LAC has access to ESCC behaviour and attendance support when needed.
ESMS	£11,121	1%	Ensuring that every LAC has access to the ESCC Music Service.
Extending Remit	£92,891	11%	Additional staffing to extend the remit of the VS to support all those children and young people who were formerly LAC(adopted children, those on Special Guardianship Orders and Care Leavers in full time education)
Extra Curricular	£12,692	1%	Music lessons (other than those provided by ESMS) and support for Sport and Drama.
IT Equipment	£19,557	2%	Laptops, tablets and associated hardware and software including apps.
Resources	£8,658	1%	A range of items such as magnetic letters, calm boxes, phonic resources etc.
School Based Inclusion Projects	£45,432	5%	Where schools with large numbers of LAC have developed inclusion projects that will benefit LAC and other vulnerable learners and have requested part funding
Schools Visits	£6,639	1%	Usually a maximum of one third of the cost of a school visit is supported (the rest coming from the foster carer's allowance)
TA/INA Support	£56,744	7%	Funding for schools to increase Teaching Assistant provision to support individual pupils
Therapy and Support	£77,007	9%	Fegans, Counselling, Sand play and Thrive sessions
Training	£43,826	5%	Mainly Thrive training. 18 schools have received support to enable a member of staff to become Thrive trained
Maintaining School Places	£205,835	24%	The cost of transporting children who have had to move home either because they have just come into care or where there has been a change of placement.
Tuition	£152,166	18%	The provision of 1:1 tuition in a range of subjects but predominantly English and Maths

Table 2 - Categories of Recipients

LAC	£737,493	86%
Care Leavers	£64,372	7%

Adopted	£8,187 ¹	1%
All Groups	£49,411	6%
Total	£859,464	

Table 3 – By Type of School

		No. of requests ²	No. of children
Nursery	£1,318	6	29
Primary	£222,578	557	166
Secondary	£202,833	452	155
Special	£53,212	112	63
Projects ³	£357,903	40	328
College	£10,965	35	82
University	£10,655	4	24
Total	£859,464	847	

5. Educational Outcomes (end of school year 2015)

5.1 For the last six years LAC in East Sussex have performed well at school when compared to LAC in other local authority areas. Since 2014 the proportion of local LAC with SEN has been greater than the proportion nationally with SEN and this has had an impact on reported comparative outcomes, particularly at KS4. Across all key stages in 2014/15 East Sussex LAC generally outperformed the national outcomes when broken down by SEN groups (those without SEN, those with SEN support and those with Statements of SEN or with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)).

5.2 The good educational outcomes for ESCC LAC are achieved as a result of a number of factors: a high proportion of “attachment friendly” schools, the collaborative relationship between social care and educational services, targeted and imaginative use of PP together with a strong sense of corporate parenting responsibilities.

5.3 In KS1 there were 13 children who had been in continuous care for the 12 months ending on 31st March 2015 who undertook KS assessments at the end of Year 2 last summer. 9 children have SEN (69% of the cohort). All the children attend East Sussex schools.

1 Pupil Premium for Adopted Children is paid directly to Schools. This sum relates to funding that has come from the LAC Pupil Premium.

2 The number of requests refers to the number of separate requests for funding in the year.

3 Projects includes all uses of Pupil Premium that benefit a number of different children for example school based projects, staff development and building additional capacity.

KS1

All Pupils	LAC (East Sussex)	All (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	ALL (England)
% achieving	L2+			
Reading	69%	91%	71%	90%
Writing	54%	88%	63%	88%
Maths	69%	94%	73%	93%

L2+ Reading	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	ALL (England)
NO SEN	4/4 100%	96%	NA	96%
Statement or EHC Plan	1/4 25%	24%	NA	27%
SEN without Statements	4/5 80%	47%	NA	60%

L2+ Writing	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	ALL (England)
NO SEN	4/4 100%	94%	NA	95%
Statement or EHC Plan	0/4 0%	19%	NA	21%
SEN without Statements	3/5 60%	29%	NA	51%

L2+ Maths	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	ALL (England)
NO SEN	4/4 100%	98%	NA	89%
Statement or EHC Plan	1/4 25%	26%	NA	29%
SEN without Statements	4/5 80%	50%	NA	67%

5.4 Of the four children who failed to achieve level 2 in Reading and Maths, one was working towards national curriculum levels in all three subjects and three achieved level 1 in all three areas. Only one child achieved a level 2 in Reading and Maths but not in Writing. The four children who do not have SEN all achieved level 2s and in most cases achieved higher level 2s (2As and 2Bs). Two children (both with SEN) achieved a level 3, one in Reading and one in Maths.

5.5 In KS2 there were 30 children who had been in continuous care for the 12 months ending on 31st March 2015 who undertook KS assessments at the end of Year 6 last summer. 21 children have SEN (70% of the cohort) and 12 of these (30%) have Statements of SEN or EHCPs. This is higher than national proportions at KS2 where the percentages are 65% and 24% respectively. Of the 30 children, 24 are educated in maintained schools or academies within East Sussex and 6 are educated outside of East Sussex. In total 5 (17%) are educated in special schools.

L4+ Reading	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	Non LAC (England)
NO SEN	9/9 100%	95%	94%	95%
Statement or EHC Plan	4/12 33.3%	39%	33%	30%
SEN without Statements	8/9 88.9%	72%	70%	69%
L4+ Writing	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	Non LAC (England)
NO SEN	9/9 100%	96%	92%	95%
Statement or EHC Plan	3/12 25%	26%	20%	21%
SEN without Statements	8/9 88.9%	65%	54%	57%
Level 4+ Maths	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	Non LAC (England)
NO SEN	9/9 100%	94%	89%	94%
Statement or EHC Plan	3/12 25%	28%	26%	26%
SEN without Statements	8/9 89%	64%	61%	64%

KS2							
All Pupils	LAC (East Sussex)		All (East Sussex)		LAC (England)		ALL (England)
% achieving	L4+	EP	L4+	EP	L4+	EP	L4+
Reading	72%	82%	90%	91%	71%	82%	89%
Writing	71%	79%	89%	96%	61%	84%	87%
Maths	69%	80%	86%	89%	64%	77%	87%
By SEN group							
Expected Progress Reading	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	Non LAC (England)			
NO SEN	9/9 100%	n/a	95%	94%			
ALL SEN	14/19 74%	n/a	73%	78%			
Statement or EHC Plan	5/10 50%	n/a	53%	49%			
SEN without Statements	9/9 100%	n/a	85%	83%			
Expected Progress Writing	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	Non LAC (England)			
NO SEN	9/9 100%	n/a	96%	97%			
ALL SEN	14/20 70%	n/a	76%	81%			
Statement or EHC Plan	5/11 45%	n/a	54%	53%			\
SEN without Statements	9/9 100%	n/a	88%	86%			
Expected Progress Maths	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	Non LAC (England)			
NO SEN	9/9 100%	n/a	92%	93%			
ALL SEN	15/21 71%	n/a	68%	74%			
Statement or EHC Plan	6/12 50%	n/a	49%	47%			
SEN without Statements	9/9 100%	n/a	80%	79%			
Whole cohort of 30 - progress cohorts less than this as some data not counted							

5.6 With the exception of progress in Writing, ESCC's LAC outperformed national cohorts in all measures despite having a higher than average number of children with SEN. All nine children (100%) without SEN achieved at least a level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths, this compares to just 82% of LAC without SEN across the country as a whole. 43% of our children with SEN achieved level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths compared to just 33% LAC nationally and 39% of non LAC. In terms of the progress children made all SEN groups outperformed national LAC outcomes in Mathematics and other than those with Statements of SEN or EHCPs, they also outperformed national LAC outcomes in Reading and Writing.

5.7 In KS4 there were 45 children who had been in continuous care for the 12 months ending on 31st March 2015 who finished Year 11 last summer. 40 children have SEN (89% of the cohort) and 26 of these (58%) have Statements of SEN or EHCPs. This is higher than national figures in England generally at KS 4 where the percentages are 55% and 23% respectively. Educationally, this is our most challenging cohort by far. Of the 45 children 33 are educated in East Sussex maintained schools or academies and 12 are educated outside of East Sussex (6 of these in special schools) In total 15 (33%) are educated in special schools.

(RAG applies to comparison with national LAC outcomes)

All Pupils	LAC (East Sussex)		All (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	England all 2015
% achieving	Cohort	%		%	%
5+ A*-C Including En and Ma	45	8.9%	56.3%	13.8%	57.3%
Expected Progress English	35	31.4%	72.5%	34.5%	71.3%
Expected Progress Maths	36	30.6%	68.8%	26.3%	67.0%
By SEN group					
5+ A*-C inc EN and MA	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	Non LAC (England)	
NO SEN	0/5 0%	64%	31.70%	64.20%	
ALL SEN	4/40 10%	14.80%	8.20%	19.10%	
Statement or EHC Plan	2/26 8%	9.90%	2.80%	8.80%	
SEN without Statements	2/14 14%	16.70%	12.50%	22.10%	
Expected Progress English	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	Non LAC (England)	
NO SEN	2/4 50%	n/a	54.80%	75.30%	
ALL SEN	10/31 32%	n/a	30.80%	46.50%	
Statement or EHC Plan	4/19 21%	n/a	17.70%	29.30%	
SEN without Statements	6/12 50%	n/a	41.80%	51.50%	
Expected Progress Maths	LAC (East Sussex)	ALL (East Sussex)	LAC (England)	Non LAC (England)	
NO SEN	2/4 50%	n/a	48.50%	72.50%	
ALL SEN	7/32 22%	n/a	21.60%	36%	
Statement or EHC Plan	2/19 11%	n/a	11.70%	21.40%	
SEN without Statements	5/13 38%	n/a	29.80%	40.20%	
whole cohort of 45 - progress cohorts are less than this as some data not counted.					

5.8 Given the exceptional nature of this cohort these outcomes should be considered as a positive achievement given the proportionally high level of SEN. If indeed the data is analysed against SEN groups and comparisons are made with LAC and non LAC children the picture looks very different. The only group to underachieve were the group of 5 children who did not have identified SEN. Had two of these children gained a grade C rather than a grade D at GCSE English or Maths then East Sussex would have outperformed national outcomes within every group identified above.