

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This was the first year in which the Pupil Premium for Looked After Children (LAC) has been managed nationally by Virtual Headteachers rather than being delegated to schools. In East Sussex of course the Pupil Premium has been voluntarily pooled and managed by the Virtual School since its inception in 2012 and our approach to managing and distributing the fund in order to benefit our LAC has not had to change.
- 1.2 Last year there was a significant increase in the funding available as the Pupil Premium for LAC increased from £900 per child to £1900 per child (sometimes referred to as Pupil Premium Plus). The total fund rose from £358,000 to £855,000. Per capita funding remains unchanged for 2015 – 2016 although an expected fall in the number of LAC will mean a decrease in the total fund available in future.
- 1.3 The increased funding last year enabled the Virtual School to work more strategically in order to support the education of our LAC as well as holding and distributing a fund on a needs-led basis. The continuation of the Pupil Premium Plus into 2015-16 will mean that the projects initiated in 2014-15 (see below) will be able to continue and we will continue to be able to respond to need as identified by each child's Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- 1.4 Last year a proportion of the pooled fund was used to support children who, although they did not generate a Pupil Premium payment, were looked after or had previously been looked after. This included those new into care, those at nursery school, care leavers in education, adopted children and those on Special Guardianship Orders or Residence Orders. With the exception of care leavers, these groups now attract Pupil Premium, although in the case of adopted children this is paid directly to schools and in the case of those in nursery education Pupil Premium is funded at £400 pa. We continue to use a small proportion of the fund to support care leavers (see Table 2)
- 1.5 As with all central government funding it is difficult to predict the longevity of Pupil Premium. However, whilst Pupil Premium was introduced during the tenure of the previous government, the development of Pupil Premium for LAC and previously looked after children, and its management by Virtual Headteachers, was driven by the Children's Minister who has remained in post after the election.

2. The Work of the Virtual School 2014-2015

- 2.1 The Virtual School is made up of a small team of educationalists who have a responsibility to promote and support the educational success of East Sussex LAC wherever they are educated. We are based at Hailsham Community College but work across the County and beyond. We are part of the LAC and we have our own Governing Body. We are looking for a new base from September 2016.
- 2.2 Every School in East Sussex and every school outside the county where an East Sussex LAC attends has a named worker from the Virtual School who is available to support the designated teacher and other staff to ensure that our children succeed.
- 2.3 We track the educational progress of all our LAC and make weekly contact with schools to check attendance. We use SIMS just like a "real" school to enable us to evaluate the progress children are making

- 2.4 We attend PEP reviews and will advise, support (and, if necessary, challenge) any professional who has a responsibility for our children.
- 2.5 This year we have continued to widen our brief beyond our statutory role for LAC. We continue to support care leavers in full time education up to the age of 25 and this last year we have formally taken on the role of supporting the education of children previously in care (adopted, SGO and Residence Orders). Pupil Premium for those formerly in care is paid directly to the schools those children attend.
- 2.6 We provide training for a wide range of professionals including designated teachers, trainee teachers at the universities, social workers and foster carers and can provide whole school training for teachers, TAs and INAs on the impact of attachment difficulties in the classroom. Last year we provided Attachment training in schools, we trained foster carers in how best to support the education of their children and in the specific areas of supporting Literacy and Numeracy and in Dyslexia awareness and we have supported schools accessing training from other providers.
- 2.7 We also organise an annual conference (this year it was on June 30th) for all those with an interest in the education of LAC.
- 2.8 The Virtual School runs a number of courses for LAC and care leavers, including a Summer programme of 5 half day sessions for children of reception age and their carers, a residential course for Y6 pupils focussing on transition to secondary school, a "Spring School" for KS3 Pupils, a residential revision course for Year 11 students and summer schools for both Year 10 and Year 12 students.
- 2.9 The Virtual School works closely with local boarding schools and together with a national charity has developed an assisted places scheme for LAC that has attracted national interest. We aim to place 3 or 4 children each year at local boarding schools at no additional cost to the local authority. Those who have been placed so far are thriving and benefiting from the high quality pastoral care available in some of the best public schools
- 2.10 We manage the Pupil Premium Grant for LAC.

3. Pupil Premium 2014-2015

- 3.1 We were once again able to meet nearly all requests for Pupil Premium this year. This is as a result of both the increase in funding and a more widely held understanding of the criteria used to access the fund. Where requests were declined it was inevitably either because there was an existing source of funding in place (for example foster carer's allowances) or the request did not relate to an intervention or activity that would impact sufficiently on a young person's learning (for example some of the requests we received for tablet computers etc.) The following paragraphs give a brief overview of the allocation (for full list see Appendix 5a Table 1)
- 3.2 In total there were 1174 requests for funding from Pupil Premium for the 394 school aged children who are looked after. An average of nearly three separate requests per child.
- 3.3 There was a significant increase in the amount allocated to **maintaining school places** and this was used both for providing alternative curriculums for children who would otherwise

have been at risk of exclusion or disengagement and was also used to fund transport for children who had to move their care placement but where we wished to maintain their school placement. New protocols are in place so that, except in an emergency, a placement change must be approved by the Virtual School if it is likely to have any potential impact on a child's school place. See Appendix 5b Case Study 4

- 3.4 **Tuition.** Provision of 1:1 **tuition** remains a significant driver of good outcomes, particularly in English and Maths. This year we embarked on a strategy of employing our own tutors on a claims only basis rather than relying on agency staff. This has significantly improved the quality of the tuition provided by tutors who are becoming experts in the field of supporting LAC to achieve. All LAC have access to personal tutors who are all trained and qualified teachers. This year we were able to recruit 15 additional tutors which means we now have the capacity to provide tuition to all year groups and not just to “exam” cohorts in Year 6 and Year 11. See Appendix 5b Case Study 12
- 3.5 One of the most effective uses of Pupil Premium is developing the capacity of schools to more effectively support the learning of LAC through **training**. The Virtual School provides general training to school staff from within its own resources and does not draw on Pupil Premium to do this. Pupil Premium has funded a number of schools to train teachers and support staff in the Thrive Approach (a whole school approach to supporting children with additional emotional needs) as well as making contributions towards other staff development in schools that will benefit LAC.
- 3.6 We aimed this year to increase the capacity of the Virtual School through working with and through other Children's Services Teams. We have developed the concept of “Designated Officers” in all the teams that work with LAC, borrowing on the existing model of Designated Teachers in schools. We have designated officers who work with us to help ensure joined up working around LAC in SEN, the Educational Psychology Service, Admissions, Early Years and ESBAS. As **ESBAS** is a traded service, we have used Pupil Premium to fund 69 direct interventions from their team where schools have requested this. See Appendix 5b Case Studies 5 and 10
- 3.7 We have recruited 4X **Teaching Assistants /Individual Needs Assistants** also on a claims only basis and they are available to provide additional support within the classroom to support the child's learning. We also have used Pupil Premium to make a contribution to the funding of additional hours of support from school's existing staff. This type of support is often used to support a child whilst they are being assessed for an EHC Plan. See Appendix 5b Case Study 3
- 3.8 Pupil Premium has been used to support a wide range of **extra-curricular activities** where it is felt that this will impact positively on motivation and attitude toward learning. Activities include Sports Clubs, School Holiday Clubs, Drama and Dance Clubs. We have also used Pupil Premium to contribute toward **school visits** although we would always expect foster carers to fund most of these from their allowances. See Appendix 5b Case Studies 9 and 11
- 3.9 **Educational Resources** covers a very wide range of requests and includes all non IT resources used directly by the children or used by teachers to help support them. The biggest element of this budget is the Book Club which we now organise ourselves (rather than using the national LetterBox Scheme) in partnership with a local bookshop. 236 children receive

termly parcels of books and other educational material for them to use at home with their foster carers to help encourage reading and educational play. The parcels are extremely popular with the children who love the content and the personal way it is addressed (and tailored) to each individual. See Appendix 3 Case Study 15

- 3.10 Pupil Premium has also funded **therapeutic support** for 33 children ranging from Play Therapy, Drama Therapy and Thrive sessions, **music lessons** for 48 children and **IT equipment** for 89 children. See Appendix 5b Case Studies 2, 5 and 12.

4. Pupil Premium 2015 - 2016

- 4.1 As Pupil Premium is now paid from the first day a child comes into care it is not possible with any certainty to ascertain the exact sum as adjustments are made throughout the year. At the start of the financial year there were 363 school aged LAC that would indicate a total Pupil Premium fund for LAC of £689,700. However in year adjustments and time lags following a removal from care would suggest a budget of £750,000 can be anticipated.
- 4.2 The Virtual School will continue to manage the Pupil Premium as it has done since its inception: responding to needs identified at PEP meetings, supporting schools in the work they do to “go the extra mile” and embed and consolidate the capacity building that we started in 2014 – 15 following the increase in the size of the grant.
- 4.3 Given the uncertainty over future funding we will prioritise requests for funding from schools that will build capacity within to best support our children and young people. We will continue to promote and support The Thrive (therapeutic) approach and other training with school staff
- 4.4 Capacity building includes developing and expanding our team of tutors and peripatetic support staff, continuing to develop the concept of designated officers within other children’s services teams, increasing access to specialist educational psychology services and accessing Traded Services on behalf of schools that request this.

5. APPENDIX 5a Distribution of Pupil Premium 2014-2015

Table 1. Total Allocation of the Pupil Premium by expenditure category

	Requested	Funded 2014/151	Number of requests ²
Assessment	£1,180.00	£1,300.00	6
ESBAS	£70,680.00	£69,810.00	69
Extra and Alternative Curriculum	£37,312.45	£36,658.45	64
IT Equipment and Software	£18,738.60	£11,953.02	89
Maintaining School Placement	£318,668.80	£317,868.80	140
Music	£10,791.31	£11,851.31	48
Educational Resources	£55,116.29	£53,223.74	393
School Visit Contribution	£8,455.01	£6,617.01	32
TA/INA Support	£60,594.92	£59,571.32	87
Therapeutic Support	£12,735.85	£12,315.85	33
Training and Development	£117,137.60	£114,216.95	27
Tuition	£165,797.50	£159,613.50	186
Totals	£877,208	£855,000	1174

Allocation by School Type

Primary	£304,485	£331,798	672
Secondary	£284,151	£248,134	319
Special	£145,074	£131,365	66
Care Leavers	£29,838	£30,443	50
Across Phases	£113,660	£113,260	67
	£877,208	£855,000	1174

¹ The amount funded can be larger than the amount requested for example following a review that recommends and intervention continues beyond the initial period identified.

² The number of requests is greater than the number of children. For example a child may receive book parcels, Tuition and access extra curricular activities – this would count as three requests.

Reception and Key Stage 1

1. SI KF (Reception)

K has cerebral palsy and epilepsy and although she can function well within a mainstream setting she does have some problems with the left hand side of her body being weaker, therefore some physical tasks are more challenging. K attended the Virtual School Summer School for Reception children which she took part in really well and enjoyed. Since starting at her mainstream school the Virtual School has also provided a Numicon Number kit for home learning; a writing slope for school; Motricity extra support and also extra TA support in PE lessons. These are having a positive impact on her engagement and her handwriting is beginning to show signs of improvement. Support will continue for K as she moves up the school.

2. SI AC (Year 2)

A has been in Care since the age of two and has been in the same stable foster placement for most of that time. A is very bright and may be gifted in Maths, however he has always struggled with behaviour and school describe him as attention needy. Following an ESBAS assessment the Virtual School funded 10 sessions of Thrive emotional support work which has had a positive impact on his behaviour this year. The Virtual School are also funding drumming lessons for A which school describe as being a release for him.

3. MK (Year 2) (BD)

MK experienced understandable upset at the news she would not be returning home to her birth parents, her placement broke down and her behaviour at her mainstream school deteriorated to a point where there were times she had to be restrained in order to prevent her hurting others and she was eventually excluded for a fixed term. The Virtual School funded additional 1:1 support for her which enabled a successful reintegration in which she spends part of each day with her class and part of the day with her support worker engaging in both school work and therapeutic “thrive” activities. The Virtual School is supporting the school with the process of developing an EHC plan so that the school is supported in meeting her needs.

Key Stage 2

4. AJ(Year 4) and JK (Year 6)

Sibling pair attending primary school in the Wealden area. Both children are making exceptional progress at school. As a result of a placement breakdown at short notice the two children were placed in an emergency short term foster placement in Newhaven with the prospect of having to change school. Given the foster placement was short term and given that one of the children was shortly to transfer to secondary school, the Virtual School used Pupil Premium to fund transport to their existing schools while a long term placement could be found.

5. SJ (Year 4)

When SJ was removed from the care of his aunt and came into the care of the local authority, he had to change schools due to his placement location and because some of his cousins with whom he had previously lived, attended the same school. S was unable to cope well with the change and his behaviour regressed to the point where he was exhibiting extreme, violent behaviours in school, was not engaging

in learning and was at risk of permanent exclusion, following three fixed term exclusions. Consequently, he was placed on a reduced timetable in October 2014 and a robust package of support was funded by the VS as part of his reintegration plan which included ESBAS support; 1:1 VS tutor support every morning and Artbox therapy. He was originally withdrawn for 1:1 tuition, but has been gradually reintroduced to working in the classroom with reduced support. He has now started to re-engage with learning and is enjoying school. When S was placed on a reduced timetable, the school were uncertain as to whether a mainstream school would be able to meet his needs, but are now very optimistic that his experience with them will continue to be positive. Since the support package has been in place, he has not received any further fixed term exclusions. His behaviour has vastly improved, but as he is academically behind his peers and currently continues to need one-to-one adult support so that 'trigger-points' can be recognised and managed without him becoming dis-regulated, the VS are funding INA support for the remainder of this academic year and term 1 of the next.

6. MR (Year 5)

Since first coming into care, M has been separated from his three siblings (two siblings have returned to the care of the birth parents) and moved schools twice and placement four times, within two years. Due to his siblings returning to the care of his parents, he had to move schools and there was no time to prepare him for this transition, so the Virtual School provided one of their full time INAs at the new school. Due to M's challenging behaviours, he had to be withdrawn from class for considerable amounts of time and he struggled to make any academic progress. Emotionally he was in 'crisis', as he was trying to make sense of the fact that he was going to remain in foster care and blamed himself, as he perceived himself as the 'naughty' child. After the Care Order was granted, permanent foster carers were identified, but this necessitated another move of school at the beginning of year 5. His SW had established that the Virtual School's INA had become a trusted adult for M and would be key in planning for a successful transition. The INA was able to accompany M on several visits to the new school, prior to him starting and also visited his new placement to support home/school communication. Gradually, the INA was also able to withdraw his support to prepare M for being unsupported at the new school and ending his relationship with him. The INA sent several postcards to M over the summer months and at the start of the new term at the new school, so that M knew he was being 'kept in mind'. M has settled well into his new school ; he has managed without an INA, his behaviour is more settled and he is now making academic progress and if this continues, is on track to exceed his end of KS2 targets.

7. EB (Year 5)

E was attending an independent school in a class of six when he came into care, but due to its closure, he had to transfer to a state-maintained mainstream Primary school. Prior to attending the independent school, he had been home schooled. E presented as a highly anxious, introverted child, was academically behind his peers, lacked the ability to initiate contact with other children and as he also had no experience of state education. Moving to a large Primary School represented a huge transition for him. Initially he attended mornings only and the Virtual school funded a 1:1 tutor, not only to support him academically, but also to help him understand classroom rules and routines, to develop his social skills and adjust to being part of a large school community. With this intensive level of support, E was able to gradually adjust to school life and over a period of seven months progressed from being withdrawn for 1:1 tuition on a part-time timetable only, to attending full-time and reintegrated to learning independently in the classroom. He was also beginning to make some friends. The support provided by the Virtual School enabled E to have a positive experience of mainstream school life and recognise himself as an independent learner

8. SD – Year 6

In Year 5, S was in a nurture class with much younger children for the majority of the year. S was non-compliant and often aggressive towards staff and peers, both verbally and, at times, physically resulting in a number of fixed term exclusions. She was unable to remain in her mainstream class even for very short periods and was not achieving her potential. A Support Worker from the Virtual School saw S on a weekly basis to support both S and the staff in her school, and prevent further exclusions. A school-based plan was developed to ensure that S would receive the full amount of support required. Towards the end of last summer, as a result of a placement move to another area of the county, an appropriate school place was sought for S but this proved very difficult. However, the VS worker had built up a trusting relationship with S and was able to assist with her transition to a flexible learning provision where she was able to attend lessons alongside other pupils. She now attends a mainstream primary school and will be transferring to secondary school in September

9. TW (Year 6)

Following a move of placement and great anxiety over her birth parents T moved to her current school at the end of year 5 at which point she was making poor progress across all subjects. Last year the Virtual School funded 1-1 and small group tuition to support her academic progress and she took part in Challenger Troop (an army course) to help develop her self-esteem. This was all funded by Pupil Premium. T's last assessment in March showed her having made significant progress across all areas, leading her to win a school award for the most improved student.

Key Stage 3

10. CJ (Year 7)

C has been in Care since he was 4 years old and has had 4 changes of carer in that time which has had a significant impact on his behaviour which had led to some fixed term exclusions. There were concerns expressed that C may find the transition to secondary school difficult. The Virtual School provided additional transition support which included C attending the Virtual School Year 6 residential course, "Thrive" emotional support and extra visits to school supported by a Virtual School worker who knows him well. He settled well but has still struggled with friendships. Following a PEP meeting it was agreed that in addition the Virtual School would fund ESBAS to do some individual work with CJ and then set up a small group to work on friendship skills. This has been very successful and resulted in fewer incidents on the behaviour log and no exclusions from this new school.

11. CW (Year 7) (BD)

C had been in and out of care whilst at Primary School and was the only one of his siblings to remain in care long term and this contributed towards him finding it very difficult to make friends and he was often inappropriate with his peers. Within a week of transferring to his secondary school there were significant concerns about his behaviour and there were several incidents in his first term that led to fixed term exclusions all of which had been triggered during free time where incidents happened that then impacted on the rest of the school day. The Virtual School funded a lunchtime sports club which provided C with an activity he would enjoy and also served to give him a physical outlet for his energy and improve his relationship with his peers. This was successful and there were no more exclusions and C is much more secure within his peer group.

12. KM (Year 7)

K came into care during year 5, prior to this her attendance was incredibly poor. Since coming into care K's attendance has been 100% and she is really enjoying school, working hard in all subjects, as well as accessing after school clubs in dance and sports. K received 1:1 tutoring twice a week initially and then weekly from year 5 and we continued this through to term 2 of year 7 from a dyslexia and language specialist consultant funded by the Virtual School and this experience has prompted her to request further tutoring to support her learning. KM is receiving a further block of 1:1 tutoring at school from the Virtual School which she is very engaged with and enthusiastic about. K has been receiving book parcels from the book club and is now an avid reader and has moved to a reading age of 12/0. K also attended The Virtual School residential course at the end of year 6 and Spring School during year 7, and these have really helped develop her confidence. Her designated teacher describes her as "a popular and delightful student". K's reading has progressed one whole level at secondary school within the first four terms of Year 7.

13. VC – Year 7

V has complex special needs and has accessed a large network of support within school and from outside agencies. This included Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, intensive intervention in class and home tuition funded by the Virtual School. V has a statement of SEN pertaining to her range of learning and emotional difficulties and now successfully attends a Maintained Special School. V's social skills and independence are very limited hence the special school allocation but with the level of provision academically she made outstanding progress in key stage two, achieving a level 4 in Reading. As a result of her academic progress, initially V was not offered a special school place however the Virtual School put together a very strong argument that while V had made the academic progress, such an intense level of support in a mainstream secondary setting would not be available and she would be at risk of being socially isolated and exceptionally vulnerable.

Key Stage 4/5

14. RB (Year 11)

R had a statement for significant cognitive delay and moderate learning difficulties, his auditory memory and processing were on the 1st percentile. R did well in years 7 and 8 in terms of effort, engagement and enjoyment of school but found year 9 very hard. R became very conscious of the gap between himself and his peers and was finding lessons very hard. Maths had always been particularly difficult for R as he struggled to retain any strategy from one lesson to the next. R's behaviour deteriorated significantly in school and he disengaged from lessons. It seemed that R had given up on himself and his self-esteem was very low. Following deterioration further in his behaviour after the death of his birth father in year 10, the Virtual School caseworker suggested a behavioural consultant work with R in school for 10 sessions. This proved to be very effective and following this intervention R began to re-engage with education. He then requested tutoring to help him with his English and Maths in year 11 which he received until he left school. R achieved well in his BTECs achieving level 2 passes, entry level Maths and a number of GCSEs including English.

Group Case Studies

15. The Book Club

The Virtual School runs its own "Book Club" in conjunction with a local independent book shop and bi-monthly every child that is in Year 1 to Year 8 is sent a parcel of books addressed directly to them at their

placement address. Each parcel of books contains a minimum of 3 books, with a variety of fiction, non-fiction and activity books which have been selected on an ability basis so that every child can access their parcel. We receive very positive feedback from carers, social workers and the children themselves regarding the book project and how wonderful the parcels are and that they are encouraging the children to read more and to spend time sharing these books with the adults around them. At last year's Children in Care Awards, I introduced myself to the children at the table and instantly two of them asked if I was the lady who sends them the book parcels and we proceeded to have a long talk about the book parcels and their contents. The children were able to tell me all about the books that they had received, their favourite books and also suggest some books that could be sent in future parcels.

This year in conjunction with the Children in Care Council, we have started a Book Club for those students in school years 7 – 8. The CICC decided that as these students are older, they would prefer to have more say about the contents of their parcel and so after an initial parcel containing a dictionary & thesaurus, the students are sent a letter offering them a choice of 6 books of which they can order 2 books of their choice. Again we are receiving very positive feedback about this parcel from the CICC, the students themselves and their carers. The most recent feedback we have received states "Thank you for my Granddaughter's books this is of great help to her. She does love to read".

236 children have accessed the Book Club in the financial year 2014-15.

From a foster carer.

SG and DG have received their books again today and I wanted to write to you to express our gratitude for this ongoing service. The children always look forward to receiving them, especially because they both have a parcel each to open. It is lovely to see the anticipation on their faces as they rip the packaging and the excitement on seeing the contents inside. Please see below what each child has to say about it.....

"I like the book parcels because I love to read. I really enjoy them. I like the diary best this time"

"Thank you for the books I have had so far. I like the diary best now as I can put a lock on it. I am looking forward to having more books to help me to read better!"

This service has such a large positive impact on their lives and for this I thank you.

16. Fegans Counselling Support

Children in Care are often in a state of uncertainty regarding long term plans for their future, while awaiting Court decisions. This can mean that at times they are unable to access the CAMHs Service. In these instances where children and young people need emotional support the Virtual School has used Pupil Premium to commission Fegans Counselling service.

These sessions are child led and often the focus is around friendships and managing behaviour in school. Schools report that following counselling sessions children are calmer and more able to focus on their work.

One Y2 child was unable to be allowed out at playtime/lunch due to his aggressive outbursts and inability to play with other children. After some Fegans counselling he was then able to start going out for limited periods and gradually built up to being out with his peers the whole time. In all he had 30 counselling sessions.

17. Summer School

The Virtual School runs a Summer school for children starting Primary school in September. This consists of a weekly session where they attend accompanied by their foster carers to enable the carers to be supported as well as the children. The sessions aim build confidence and encourage the children to

develop and interest in the world around them preparing them to take on new challenges. At the same time the sessions help to develop foster carer's skills and abilities to support their foster children at school.

APPENDIX 5c Educational Outcomes over the last 4 years

Target measures in Bold	2012	2013	2014	2015	2014 LAC England
KS4 5+ A*-C English and Maths	20%	25%	12.5% (new measure)	11.1%	12% (new measure)
KS4 Expected Progress English	37%	46.7%	22.5%	31.4	34.5%
KS4 Expected Progress in Maths	25%	36.7%	26.5%	30.6%	26.3%
KS2 Level 4 English	52%	R 65%	R 62.1%	R 70.0%	R 68%
		W 41%	W 55.2%	W 66.7%	W 59%
KS2 Level 4 Maths	70%	71%	48.3%	70.0%	61%
KS2 Expected Progress English	67%	R 81%	R 75.9%	R 82.1%	81%
		W 69%	W 89.7%	W 79.3%	82%
KS2 Expected Progress Maths	91%	75%	75.9%	80%	75%
KS1 L2+ Reading	71%	88%	72%	69%	71%
KS1 L2+ Writing	65%	65%	67%	54%	61%
KS1 L2+ Maths	82%	76%	67%	69%	72%

APPENDIX 5d East Sussex Looked after Children Educational Outcomes 2015 (Provisional)

Outcomes are provisional. Outcomes for KS1 and KS2 have been cross checked with the Data, Research and Information Management Team. Some of the KS4 outcomes have been obtained by telephone calls to carers and schools and therefore need to be interpreted with caution at this stage. All comparisons with figures for England as a whole use 2014 data as 2015 data is not yet obtainable.

Key Stage 1 (Children at the end of Year 2)

Cohort

There were 13 children who had been in continuous care for the 12 months ending on 31st March 2015 who undertook Key Stage assessments at the end of Year 2 last summer. 9 children have special educational needs (69% of the cohort). There is no readily available data on the number of looked after children in England at KS1 who have identified Special Needs so it is difficult to make comparisons. All the children attend East Sussex schools.

Outcomes

Percentage of children achieving level 2+	East Sussex LAC 2015	England LAC 2014	England ALL 2014
Reading	69%	71%	90%
Writing	54%	61%	86%
Maths	69%	72%	92%

Commentary

Of the four children who failed to get 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 writing. The four children who do not have educational special needs all achieved level 2s and in most cases achieved higher level 2s (2As and 2Bs). Two children (both with educational special needs) achieved a level 3, one in reading and one in maths.

Case Studies

AC - Year 2

AC came into care at just 2 years old and after one initial move from temporary care, he has remained settled with one foster family. However, behaviour challenges have always been an issue both at Nursery, School and home.

In Reception he found it difficult to listen and focus, share resources, cooperate with peers, and follow instructions. Pupil Premium was used to provide an extra half day INA support and he finished the year with below age related expectations. He continued to find conforming to behaviour expectations in the classroom challenging and so the Virtual School provided assessment using the Boxall Profile, afternoon INA support and Play Therapy and in Year 2 he received "Thrive" nurture support for emotional wellbeing.

The extra support has enabled him to have greater focus and he achieved well in his Year 2 SATs – R2b; W2b; M3. While his classroom behaviour is now more settled, he continues to struggle at times, friendships are an ongoing difficulty and behaviour at home continues to challenge.

AS - Year 2

AS is one of a sibling group of five children who are all placed in care, at 3 years old A was placed with her two younger siblings into a very busy foster family, while two older siblings were placed with another foster family. This foster placement has remained stable. She was placed in the town of her birth and this has presented additional challenges. Despite these initial difficulties this remains a very stable placement and will continue long term.

AS finished reception well below age related expectations. Assessments carried out by the Virtual School identified poor fine motor skills, difficulty with visual discrimination, poor auditory processing all of which meant she struggled to focus in a busy classroom environment. The Virtual School funded additional TA support in the afternoons so that AS could access extra personalised support which has had a very significant impact. AS achieved really well in her Y2 SATs. Results were: R2b; W2b; M2b. She has started at her new junior school and has settled well, now on an equal footing with her peers. Her carers are currently considering a Special Guardianship Order.

Key Stage 2 (Children at the end of Year 6)

Cohort

There were 30 children who had been in continuous care for the 12 months ending on 31st March 2015 who undertook Key Stage assessments at the end of Year 6 last summer. 21 children have special educational needs (70% of the cohort) and 12 of these (30%) have statements or EHC plans. This is higher than looked after children at Key Stage 2 in England generally where the percentages are 65% and 24% respectively. Of the 30 children 24 are educated in East Sussex maintained schools or Academies and 6 are educated outside of East Sussex. In total 5 (17%) are educated in Special Schools.

Outcomes

Percentage of children achieving	East Sussex LAC 2015			England LAC 2014		England all 2014	
	L4+	L5+	EP	L4+	EP	L4+	EP
Reading	70.0%	26.7%	82.1%	68%	81%	89%	89%
Writing	66.7%	20.0%	79.3%	59%	82%	85%	91%
Maths	70.0%	23.3%	80.0%	61%	75%	86%	93%

Commentary

With the exception of progress in Writing, East Sussex's looked after children outperformed looked after children in England in all measures despite having a higher than average number of children with Special Educational Needs. All nine children (100%) without special educational needs achieved at least a level 4 in Reading Writing and Maths, this compares to just 80% of looked after children without Special Educational Needs across the country as a whole. 43% of our children with SEN achieved level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths compared to just 34% nationally

Case Studies

SD Year 6

In Year 5, S was in a nurture class with much younger children for the majority of the year. S was non-compliant and often aggressive towards staff and peers resulting in a number of fixed term exclusions. A Support Worker from the Virtual School saw S on a weekly basis providing a pastoral role which helped to support both S and the staff in her school, and prevent further exclusions.

With the support of the Virtual School a school-based plan is now in place. Following a placement breakdown and a move to a different area, S attended a special school full-time for one month and subsequently dual registered with a mainstream primary until December 2014. From January 2015 S attended mainstream full-time. The school provided a network of support staff who were available during the school day. In addition to this, the Virtual School funded an individual tutor once a week to boost S's academic progress until the end of Key Stage 2. With the support of the Virtual School a school-based plan was developed leading to an EHC Plan for S.

The VS worker continued to provide emotional support once a week during this time with 1:1 'special time' activities in school, help with transition to the new schools and visited S at her new foster placement during the summer break.

Despite fears that S would struggle to sit the SATS tests, she exceeded all expectations achieving level 4 for English and was just one mark away from a level 4 in Maths. S is now attending a mainstream secondary school.

SP Year 6

S was neglected at home and was often the carer for his younger siblings prior to coming into care. At the end of key stage 1 S had been assessed by his infant school as being a 2c in English and 2B in maths although his junior school considered this to be a too generous interpretation of his ability. S has had 5 moves of placement and a school move all of which have had an impact on his behaviour which in turn affected his learning.

S has received of a wide range of support from the Virtual School since 2012 including the funding of 1:1 support and the management of a reduced timetable for some of Year 4 and 5. These interventions were successful and S now is able to make progress at school without intensive support other than 1:1 to tuition in English and Maths in Year 6 paid for by Pupil Premium. S achieved Level 4s across all subject areas at the end of Year 6 and is now settling well into his secondary School.

DR Year 6

When D came into care in 2011 at the end of Year 2, his speech and language was so severely delayed that he was unable to speak in sentences and this was significantly impacting his level of social interaction and his enjoyment of school. He was found to be at strong risk of dyslexia and combined with his language difficulties, his special educational needs were reflected in his end of KS1 results; reading 1C and writing P8. The Virtual School supported the school's application for an SEN Statement and this was granted in July 2012. D accessed a comprehensive intervention programme to help support language and literacy development with the support of an INA. He was gradually able to start to work more independently, but by the end of Year 4 continued to struggle with self-confidence and writing tasks.

Due to a change of foster placement, D moved to a new school in Term 4 of Year 5. This school was particularly 'attachment- friendly' and recognised that DR needed additional support to build self-confidence and social skills in order for him to make the best progress. He accessed an 'Aspirations' group that allowed him to discuss his wishes and feelings in a safe environment with a trusted adult. His growing confidence was transferred to the classroom and he felt confident enough to attend a residential PGL school trip at the end of Year 5. D's conscientiousness combined with the school's support and some additional writing tuition in Year 6, funded by

the Virtual School, resulted in exceptional progress and he achieved level 5s for reading and Maths and level 4 for writing in his end of KS2 SATS.

Key Stage 4 (Children at the end of Year 11)

Cohort

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 special educational needs (89% of the cohort) and 26 of these (58%) have statements or EHC plans. This is higher than looked after children in England generally at Key Stage 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.

Outcomes

	East Sussex LAC 2015		England LAC 2014	England all 2014
Percentage of children achieving	Cohort	%	%	%
5+ A*-C Including En and Ma	45	8.9%/11.1%	12.0%	52.1%
Expected Progress English	35	31.4%	34.5%	69.3%
Expected Progress Maths	36	30.6%	26.3%	64.0%

Commentary

We are expecting the headline figure of 8.9% of children achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Maths to increase to 11.1% following an appeal and remark of a student's script who obtained a grade A at GCSE English Literature and a (totally unexpected) grade D at the international GCSE in English Language.

The Expected Progress percentages are very provisional – especially as the “official” DfE published cohort is difficult to determine at this stage – it excludes those children for whom there is no Key Stage 2 test results (3 children have teacher assessment only in English and 4, teacher assessment only in Maths) and six children attend non maintained (private) special school which can be excluded from any progress calculations. The majority of children who have not made “expected Progress” were working at “W” at the end of KS2 – that is they were deemed to be “working towards” a national curriculum level or were working on P scales. Most of these children did not sit GCSEs but (appropriately) took entrance level exams or undertook other forms of assessment.

Given the exceptional nature of this cohort, to have got close to, and in one case exceeded, national LAC outcomes should in my view be considered a positive achievement.