

APPENDIX A

Virtual School for Cared for Children

Progress Report to Scrutiny Committee October 2011

Cared for Children (sometimes called Looked after Children) are the children that are subject to care orders and those who are voluntarily accommodated (they may be fostered or in residential homes or still living with their family). We as a local authority are their corporate parent, responsible for their care and support. The Virtual School takes the lead in ensuring that all of our Cared for Pupils have the best educational opportunities possible and that there is consistency of approach across Cheshire East. As the outcomes for Cared for Children, both locally and nationally, are far worse than those of their peers (e.g. 26% 5 A*- C GCSEs as opposed to 75% of all pupils), there is a real need for clear lines of accountability and someone to champion these vulnerable pupils and their needs. The Virtual School enables us to take an overview of all of our Cared for Children (C4C) and their progress. It also enables us to support and challenge schools and other agencies in their work with these children and young people. The Virtual School came into existence on 1st September 2010 and is active in training, championing the needs of C4C and looking to improve outcomes and consistency. We provide training, advice and support for Foster Carers, Designated Teachers and Social Workers as well as working closely with all agencies that support our children.

Since our inception in September 2010, we have delivered well received training to all of the groups listed above, channelled financial support as appropriate to our C4C, been present and involved in hundreds of meetings, set up data systems so that we can track the progress of all school-age C4C termly, funded wider schemes such as Letterbox, re-designed the Personal Education Plan (PEP), raised the profile of C4C within the LA and partner agencies, improved outcomes in many areas (see page 3), helped to manage school moves and admissions and supported all of our Cheshire East Cared for Children, from Cumbria to Sussex. The recent Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services commented as follows:

'The head of the virtual school provides clear strategic direction to the multi-disciplinary virtual school team. This team has strong relationships with cared for children, and provides strong advocacy for them, when necessary. The work of the virtual school team is well embedded and provides a coordinated, holistic approach to the education of cared for children and young people, including those who are recognised as being gifted and talented. This ensures that they receive good support for their education and as a result barriers to learning are reducing.'

Virtual School Priority Actions 2011-12

1. Early Years:

Establish lists and tracking for Early Years.

Improve number accessing 2,3,4 year old offer.

Improve EYFS PEP completion rate to 90%+

Early Years Training for Foster Carers.

Roll out training to all settings.

Work closely with EYFS Team to target settings with more or complex C4C.

2. Key Stage 1

Analyse 2011 results and look for trends.

Target additional support to improve outcomes at end of KS1.

3. 14-19

Appoint 14-19 worker jointly with YOS and 14-25 Team. Ensure effective induction to team and positive first encounters with schools. Complete new post 16 PEP and roll out to schools and colleges. Work on pathway planning to ensure efficient transitions post 16. Utilise and improve relationships with Connexions, Post 16 Teams, YOS, 14-25 Team etc for benefit of C4C/Care Leavers. Improve NEET figures for Care Leavers/C4C. Liaise with 14-25 team to ensure all eligible C4C/Care Leavers access 16-19 Bursary Fund.

4. PEPs

Establish multi-agency PEP Quality Assurance group to finalise new PEP format, write model PEP for Schools/Social Care colleagues, quality assure PEPs randomly on a termly basis.

5. Well-being

Set up events throughout the year to support Foster Carers and Cared for Children, to build relationships and improve self-esteem. Organisation and liaison with annual celebration event/other high profile events to raise self-esteem/profile of Cared for Children.

6. Establish Advisory Board

Liaise with Corporate Parenting Board to ensure Virtual School links in with wider priorities of Local Authority/Children's Trust. Establish Advisory Board for Virtual School – meeting 3 times per year.

Cared for Children results 2011 (provisional)

Key

66% - Improvement on 2010

2011 results	2010 results
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Key Stage 1 (7 Year olds) 2011 results

	Speaking and Listening	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science
Achieving Level 2 and above	65%	65%	65%	76%	71%
2010	75%	67%	62%	71%	75%
Achieving Level 2B and above		59%	29%	53%	
2010		57%	33%	50%	
Level 3	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
2010	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%

Key Stage 2 (11 Year olds) 2011 Results

	Reading	Writing	English overall	Maths
Making 2 +Levels progress from KS1	85%	92%	92%	83%
2010			79%	79%
Level 4 +	69%	62%	69%	62%
2010	74%	53%	68%	74%
Level 5	15%	0%	8%	22%
2010	42%	5%	21%	37%

This Cohort (2011) included 6 pupils (46%) who made 3 or more Levels progress in either English or Maths or both (3 pupils).

Key Stage 3 (14 year olds) 2011 Results

	English	Maths	Science
Level 5 +	40%	40%	60%
2010	53%	37%	58%
Level 6+	5%	25%	10%
2010	5%	16%	11%

Key Stage 4 (GCSE) results 2011

	Entered for GCSEs	Gained 1 + GCSE	5+ A*-G GCSE	5+ A*-C GCSE	5 + A*-C GCSE including Eng and Maths	5 + A*-C GCSE including Eng	5 + A*-C GCSE including Maths	Average Point Score
2011	95%	92%	67%	33%	11%	22%	22%	171.1
2010	62%	62%	54%	27%	10%	15%	10%	170.3

In terms of comparator information, this information is currently being analysed and will be available for the actual Scrutiny meeting.

A Case Study

We supported 5 cared for siblings at Monks Coppenhall Primary. Virtual School funding provided learning mentor support for all 5 children through the very distressing situation of moving from being placed with parents on a care order to being split up into 2 pairs and 1 child to go into foster care, and more latterly through trying to come to terms with the fact that their future is long term fostering as this has taken a profound toll on all of them. This money has paid for sessions with their siblings to talk about the issues and helping them deal with them. It has proved invaluable and helped to build up their emotional resilience which has been very fragile. Other funding provided books and stationary for all as there were no books, crayons or magazines of any kind in their parental home at the time of them being taken into care. Letterbox Club provided books and lots of support for the oldest sibling. 1:1 provision has helped all those eligible both last year and for C and A double sessions last year. Pupil A met or exceeded all her targets in her Year 6 SATs and the other siblings all made good progress across the year.

Glossary

Personal Education Plan (PEP) – these are written annually (and updated 6 monthly) and are designed to reflect the support needed by a Cared for Child in their educational setting.

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage : All providers of education and care to children from birth to the age of five must follow the standards set in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework

Phil Mellen

Head of Virtual School for Cared for Children