Virtual School

Headteacher's Annual Report 2017

Nicola Axford

Virtual School Headteacher

Cheshire East Council

October 2017

Executive Summary

During 2016/17 the Virtual School has continued to support all cared for children and to continually review its operation to ensure it is meeting its statutory duties while providing effective support.

The overall number of children has risen and although still below the national rate, this increase has been significantly above that experienced elsewhere. There is also a higher number of children with high level of Special Educational Needs (SEN), which means that the overall population is more complex as well as larger in number.

The make up, operation and funding of the Virtual School has been reviewed. There has been no increase in core staffing but temporary tutors have been appointed to work directly with young people have been appointed to increase flexibility and reduce reliance on agencies and some core staffing is now funded through the Pupil Premium. The impact of these changes is currently being monitored.

All children have access to additional Pupil Premium funding to put in place actions and interventions which are additional to the normal school support and which will help them achieve targets. From April 2017 a new system has been introduced whereby schools request funding to carry out specific interventions. This will increase accountability and allow the impact to be monitored

The completion rate of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) has risen to over 90% as has the percentage completed to a good or better standard. The Virtual School are currently developing an ePEP which will reduce the paperwork and hence time needed for the PEP process without any loss of quality. The system is being tested in seven schools with the roll-out over the next two years.

Attendance overall is good and has remained high in primary schools but less so in secondary due to a number of children in crisis who had been unable to attend school or for whom suitable education was difficult to find.

Schools have been supported to try and reduce exclusions and the impact of this has been a reduction in the overall number of days lost and a reduction in the percentage of children with one or more fixed term exclusion. There have been no permanent exclusions.

The Virtual School has led on an Attachment Awareness Project with primary schools and has funded twelve schools to take part in action research. Early indications are that this is having a tangible and positive impact on the behaviour and achievements of cared for children.

Use of good quality alternative provision (AP) has increased and has had good outcomes for children who have previously been unable to sustain or access full time mainstream school. Training and support has been provided to the Fermain Academy in Macclesfield and pupils attending are now well managed and able to make good progress.

The Virtual School works closely with other teams in Social Care, SEN, School Admissions and Youth Support. In some cases this is through panels and meeting groups such as the 16+ Multi-Agency Group or Children Causing Concern meeting but is often through informal joint working and

collaboration of individual staff. As a result of these collaborations policies and procedures have been revised to become more efficient.

There has been an increase in the number of reception children achieving a Good Level of Development as a result of targeted support, mainly around communication.

Results at Key Stage 1 fell to 25% achieving the expected level. There were only four children in the group and two did not take the tests so statistically invalid although progress and support of current Year 2 children has been introduced to raise attainment next year.

At Key Stage 2 there was an improvement in the percentage of children achieving the expected level in maths, writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling but a slight fall in reading and an overall decrease in the percentage gaining expected level in all areas. Progress was significantly lower for children with SEN, often as they did not complete the tests and so were a high negative progress score was given. Work is already in place through use if Virtual School Tutor and use of tablet based monitored revision to improve outcomes for 2018.

At Key Stage 4 there has been an increase in the number of children gaining 5 or more GCSE C (or equivalent) passes and also on the number gaining the required level 4 or above in the new GCSEs for maths and English. All pupils have been supported to find positive destinations for post 16 and almost all started these programmes in Sept 2017. Progress was greatest in pupils with good levels of attendance and so this will be continually monitored and challenged. Progress and outcomes were highest for children with only one or two placements compared to those with more placements.

Post-16 engagement is supported and monitored monthly and the percentage Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) in July 2017 was 21%. The number of young people starting Higher Education (HE) is the same as 2016 although the overall number currently in HE has fallen slightly.

Cared for children involved with youth offending have significantly higher levels of SEN and the outcomes are lower than for the wider cohort. An advisor also works part time for the Youth Justice Service and oversees these cases. She is currently reviewing the support mechanisms to increase attendance at the end of the orders.

Priorities for 2017/18

1. Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of Pupil Premium.
2. Identify and implement changes resulting from the Social Care Bill which includes Virtual School Headteacher to have responsibilities for previously looked after children as well as looked after and to promote mental health and attachment awareness in schools.
3. Monitor the impact of commissioned and front line services through engagement, progress and outcomes.
4. Develop a self- assessment tool for use with and by schools to improve their practice and support for cared for children.

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1. **Self Evaluation**

Area	Self Evaluation			Priority actions for 17-18
Foundation Stage	🟩			Early intense intervention for children below targets
Key Stage 1		🟧		Enhance progress monitoring and early intervention
Key Stage 2			🟥	Identify and have support for underperforming pupils
Key Stage 4		🟧		Challenge schools where pupils under-perform
Post-16		🟧		Reduce NEET Cygnet and tutor and targeted support
Higher Education	🟩			Improve access to tasters and promote HE to Y10+
Outcomes for cfc engaged with YOT			🟥	Align PEPs with YOT documents. Confirm long term plan for YOT education support
Admissions		🟧		Agreed policy to support admissions, especially SEN
Attendance		🟧		Rapid response to falling attendance, especially SEN
Exclusions	🟩			Reduce number of repeat exclusions, especially SEN
Leadership and Management	🟩			Monitor staff capacity/wellbeing as numbers increase. Review working in line with new DfE stat. guidance
Staff Training	🟩			Increase attachment awareness in high schools. Increase number of good+ peps
Finance		🟧		Monitor new funding plan and impact of support
PEPs	🟩			Continue to see increase in quality of returned PEPs 75% of CE schools on ePEP by July 2018
Changes in school placement and AP		🟧		Increase challenge and monitoring of pupils in AP – attendance, attainment, progress and exclusions
Partnership Working	🟩			Establish agreed protocols for SEN and admissions. Work with S Care to increase engagement of F Carers
Monitoring and Evaluation	🟩			Increase detail and quality of data of monitoring data and use to priorities actions.
Participation by children and young people		🟧		Revise My Voice to allow children to comment on VS support and review practice accordingly. Work with YSS to increase feedback from children
Safeguarding and promotion of wellbeing	🟩			Work with Emotionally Healthy Schools programme to raise awareness of attachment as means of promoting mental health

Green = Area doing well   **Amber** = further work needed   **Red** = High priority for action

2. Introduction

This report presents an overview of the operation and impact of the Virtual School during 2016-2017. The Virtual School (VS) supports all children in care and relevant care leavers regardless of their length of time in care but the educational attainment data in the report relates to those who have been in continuous care from March 31st 2016 to March 31st 2017. This is the cohort reported in national data which is supplied to external agencies such as Ofsted. National comparative data, where quoted, is that published in the Statistical First Release of the Outcomes of looked after children which was last published in March 2017.

3. Remit and operation of the Virtual School in Cheshire East

Local authorities have a duty under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them. This includes a particular duty to promote the child's education achievement, wherever they live or are educated. The authority must therefore give particular attention to the educational implications of any decision about the welfare of those children. The local authority is required to appoint a Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) for the purpose of discharging the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children, wherever they live or are educated.

The maxim of the Cheshire East Virtual School is to "Engage, Achieve and Progress". The Virtual School operates in such as way as to follow the Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities in the document "Promoting the education of looked after children" (DfE, July 2014). This requires the local authority to ensure that there are systems in place which promote good education provision for cared for children and to monitor that these are in place. In Cheshire East this duty is taken further by ensuring that every young person in care has a named Virtual School Advisor linked to their case can provide challenge support to schools, carers and social workers. This in turn helps to ensure that there is suitable education in place, champion the needs of the child and challenge and support education providers to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to allow the child to reach their full potential. This is carried out through termly PEP (Personal Education Plan) meetings with additional meetings and activities put into place for those with the highest level of need. The service is provided to all children in care up to the end of the school year in which they become 18 and is available to older young people on request.

3.1 Staffing and Organisation

	Virtual School Headteacher Nicola Axford			

Admin – technical /finance	Admin – PEPS/attendance	Admin - Apprentice
Jill Sinclair	Deborah Bradbury	In post until Mar 17

Post – 16 Advisor	KS4 Advisor	KS2/3 Advisor	KS1/2 Advisor and Case allocations	YES/KS4/5	Early Years
Katie Foster	Jo McGreavy	Helen Campbell (0.6)	Claire Lawton	Helen Edwards (0.5)	Julie Ward (0.5)

Post-16 tutor	Virtual School Tutors		Family Support	Learning Mentor	Education Psychologist
Andy Sienkiewicz (temp)	Lisa Miller Sarah Bull (temp) From 1/9/17		Duncan Hales (seconded to UASC)	Katie Limb (temp to cover secondment) From 1/9/17	Gill Kenyon (0.4)

The make up and nature of the Virtual School Team is kept under review to ensure that the skills available match the needs of the cohort. Structure as of 1st Sept 2017 is shown above.
The team has evolved to provide more direct contact with children and young people so that the support can be more closely tailored to needs and monitored. Tuition has previously been made available to young people to provide additional after session to help prepare for exams or when pupils are between schools by use of agency staff if schools cannot provide the tutor. By diverting the funds to employ tutors directly will provide a service which is more flexible, responsive and can feed directly into the PEP. Both tutors are employed through the Medical Needs Team with one being funded via the Pupil Premium and the other, a temporary 1 year post, being funded from the innovation fund. The Family Support Worker was already working to support the unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) into education and has now been seconded into Social Care to

provide intensive support for these young people. The Learning Mentor has been employed on a temporary basis to work with children in school who are not progressing or are at risk of exclusion and who require support in addition to that which the school can provide.

The amount of support available from the Education Psychology Service has increased and will be reviewed further to see if this is sufficient to give advice and support to schools around children with challenging or complex behaviour.

Monthly staff supervisions are arranged for all staff to discuss their own wellbeing and workload and also to raise any cases that need input from the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH). In addition there are regular team meetings, often conducted via web-links to avoid unnecessary travel where the team can receive updates from Senior Managers and the performance of the team can be discussed. All staff is invited to identify training needs which will allow them to be more effective in their role or any specific are of interest.

During 16/17 all staff have been offered courses on attachment, emotion coaching and building resilience and individuals have attended courses on suicide prevention, improving literacy and care leaver support to access Higher Education. The VSH is a member of the NW VSH group and also of the National Association of VSH, (NAVSH) and through this network the Virtual School is able to keep abreast of current developments such as registration of Alternative Provision, Quality Assurance visits to schools and ePEPs.

The VSH has regular supervision with the Head of Service for Pupil Participation and completes a monthly scorecard for the Director of Education and Skills as a means to monitor progress. This gives a detailed breakdown of the performance of the VS and key indicators are extracted to be included on the Corporate Parent Scorecard.

The team are a very highly motivated and committed group of professionals who always act in the best interests of the child. During 2016/17 there has been a very low level of absence amongst the team with no long term sickness or stress.

Actions 2017/18
- **Monitor impact of additional staffing and caseload/wellbeing of staff**
- **Compile list of additional specialists who can be commissioned to provide specific support to individual children when needed, e.g. play therapist**

3.2 Funding
The Virtual School's main budget is the Pupil Premium Plus which is devolved to the Local Authority and is to be used as seen appropriate by the VSH as to best promote achievement and progress. The amount which is made available to the LA is £1900 per child in care as reported on the March return but the guidance makes clear that while it is expected that the majority of this is used for direct support of children, it does not need to be allocated equally as some children will need less than £1900 and some will need considerably more. The funding criteria also states that the Pupil Premium can be used to fund staff or central services such as training as long as they have a direct impact on improving the experience and outcomes for children.

Prior to April 2018, all children were allocated £1400 to support the actions identified in the PEP. The main use of this was to fund 1:1 or small group teaching, support to enhance social and emotional skills and purchase of specific resources. The remaining funds have been used to provide high cost support for children with particular needs. These include; attending high cost alternative provision for children without SEN who cannot mange mainstream school, providing a series of off-site support such as animal therapy or forest schools, having a weekly work placement to add variety and help prepare for the world or work or funding specialist support such as bereavement counselling. Significant funds were also allocated to schools and children to prepare for exams or to prepare for transition. In almost all cases this helped children to increase their skills and knowledge before the exams but always improved their preparation and confidence. The total allocation for 16/17 was £628,900 and the table below shows how this was used.

Summary use of Pupil Premium	Amount	Number of children
Basic allocation	£310,100	301
Additional payment	£194,700	97
Alternative provision	£62,700	26
Fermain places	£27,500	6
Attachment research projects	£33,000	15 schools

All school age children in care were allocated Pupil Premium (PP) once the PEP was returned to describe how this would be spent and in some cases funding was allocated to children outside this age range if the need was evident. For example a nursery child with the need for additional speech and language support or a post-16 young person not in education who wished to take up a work placement to gain skills and confidence. Some school age children did not have a basic allocation if the school felt it had all the resources needed, such as an independent special school which already receives a high level of funding or if the Virtual school was arranging and funding provision such as tuition or off-site learning.

The Virtual School also has an additional budget of the Personal Education Allowance but this was reduced in 2016/17 and has been removed since April 2017.

The table below shows the way in which this budget was allocated during the financial year 2016/17.

Summary Use of VSSF	Amount	Number of children
Educational Support/tutors	£12,000	28
Agency Provision	£28,600	21
Alternative Provision	£27,000	26
Training/venue	£11,800	150 staff
On-line learning	£20,000	20
Laptops/IT support	£15,900	35
Literacy support	£3,000	60
Resources/rewards	£5,800	

From April 2017 a new system has been introduced which does not include a standard allocation but asks schools to give a spending plan for each child. All requests are then considered by the advisor and the VSH and funding allocated accordingly. This will allow closer monitoring of the use of the money and allow the impact to be more easily seen. A second change since April has been that the Pupil Premium is now used to fund some staffing. Three existing posts are funded in this was, PEPs administration, Post-16 support and Educational Psychologist support and one of the new tutors who will work with Y6. The way that this affects the overall spending pattern and the impact on pupils will be analysed next year. Analysis of the previous spending suggest that these changes can be made while retaining the efficiency of the service and it is envisaged that the additional staffing will provide a quick response to children in difficulty and so enhance the service.

Actions 2017/18
- **Monitor the requests received and compare with pupil outcomes and progress**
- **Monitor educational psychology report and consider increase if needed**

3.3   Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

The Virtual School attends all initial PEPs for children and young people between the ages of two and eighteen years old. For younger children the PEP is completed by Social Workers as part of a care planning or review meetings. Young people who become known to Social Care after the age of eighteen are not usually relevant to the service and so do not receive the same level of support as those in care but advice from the Virtual School is available on request.

During the initial PEP the Virtual School leads the meeting to demonstrate how the PEP should be completed and how to ensure that targets are SMART and appropriate. The Virtual School also takes responsibility for ensuring that a PEP is provided to the Social Worker in readiness for the initial review which is no longer than twenty days since coming into care. PEPs are reviewed each term with the education provider to taking a lead in these by reviewing the impact of the previous actions, update the PEP and return to the Virtual School. Support and training is available to assist schools, settings or colleges with the PEP process. Each case is then reviewed to establish its support needs. Those with the highest support needs are rated as RED, in which case the advisor will attend all PEPs and probably have more frequent contact with the child, carer, school and Social Worker. Cases rated as AMBER have slightly less contact with the advisor whilst those rated as GREEN are monitored with attendance at one PEP per year. The chart below shows the ratings over the year. The number of PEPs has risen to follow the growing number of children in care and the chart below shows the number of PEPs cpmpleted each term and the number attended by the VS staff.
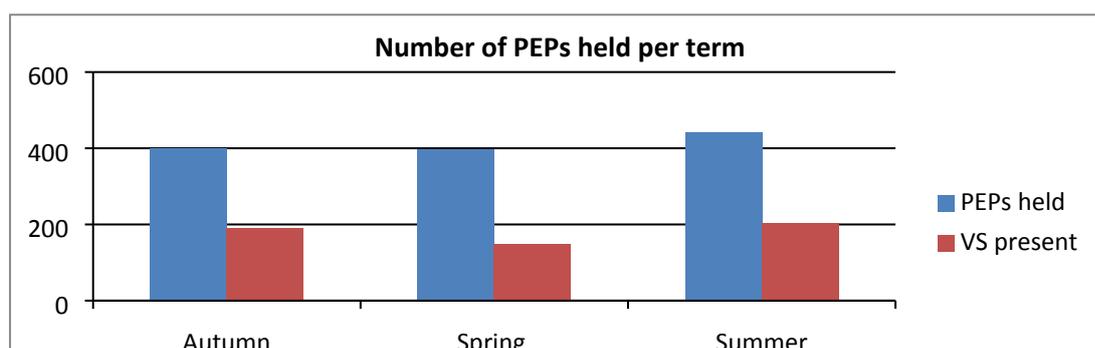
This year there has been a drive to ensure that all PEPs are completed and loaded onto the child's case with a particular focus on those of school age where it is important to monitor progress. The chart below shows the percentage of PEPs for school age children which have been completed and the RAG ratings. The target for competion is 90% each term. The shortfall in spring was due to the short length of the term – PEPs held in March were not completed and returned within the term.

Completion and RAG ratings
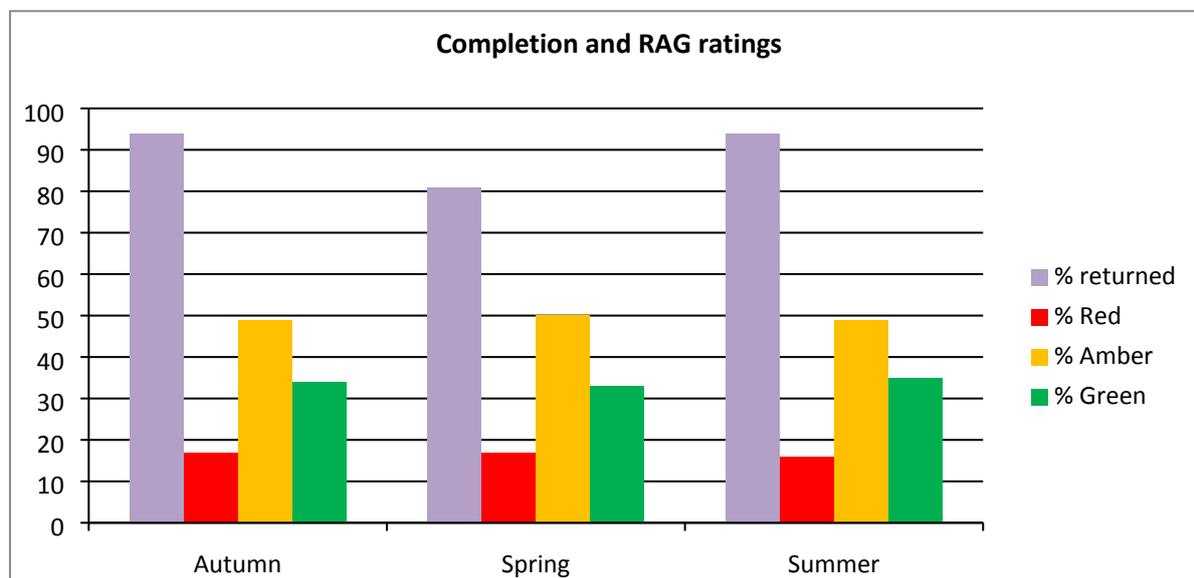
Analysis of the RAG ratings of the PEPs shows that while the ratio of each rating fluctuates slightly during the year most cases are rated as amber or green. The most frequent reason for cases being rated as amber is that attainment is below age expected which will include most children with special needs. The proportion of cases rated at each support level has remained fairly constant over the year and is similar to that of previous years. However, the rising number of children in care means that the actual number of RED cases who require high levels of support have increased from seventy to eighty-two. This group included those who were at risk of exclusion or who required intensive support from the VS to plan and oversee their provision planning.

Although the Virtual School Advisor does not attend all PEP meetings, they often do so for the more complex cases and in these situations can be a crucial and consistent link for the child. For example when a child is awaiting a new school or cannot attend school due to mental health issues the advisor will visit the child at home and make sure they have access to some tuition and learning and that this, where possible, includes a chance to include some social interaction.

The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looked after the child and the school. Social workers, carers, VSHs, Designated Teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will need to work closely together. Social Workers have been asked to prioritise attendance at PEP meetings so that they gain essential information about their child. As well as updates on their attainment and progress this should include discussion of their attitude, emotional state, friendships etc. If a child has a statement or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) then one of PEP meetings is run alongside the annual SEN review. This means that targets in the EHCP can be addressed through the PEP and that Social Workers and carers have the chance to review the impact of the SEN support for the child.

Since June 2017 the Virtual School has assumed responsibility for loading the PEPs onto Liquid Logic. This has speeded up the time in which this part of the child's record is completed and will allow more accurate recording of PEP completion.

There is a rigorous Quality Assurance (QA) process which has been developed jointly by the Virtual School and the Designated Teachers. This was reviewed in August 2016 and the threshold to be rated as good was raised to include prompt return and very clear details on the interventions and how these will be monitored.

The overall number of PEPs which have need quality assured has increased from 149 to 405, which mainly comprise those sent in by schools which the VS advisor did not attend.

Number of PEPs subject to QA
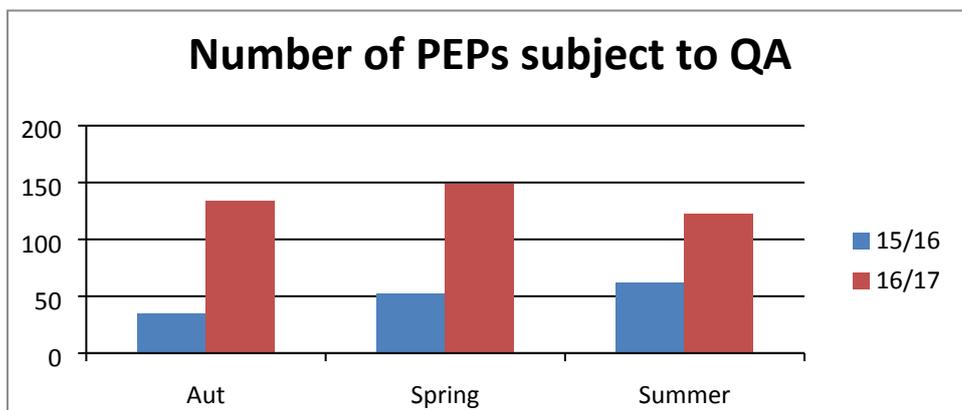
PEPs for all ages are subject to QA and the table below shows the number of each stage that were analysed through the year.

	Pre-school	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Autumn	1	48	80	5
Spring	3	57	75	14
Summer	1	26	83	12

The chart below show the judgements of the PEPs which were quality assured at the end of each term.
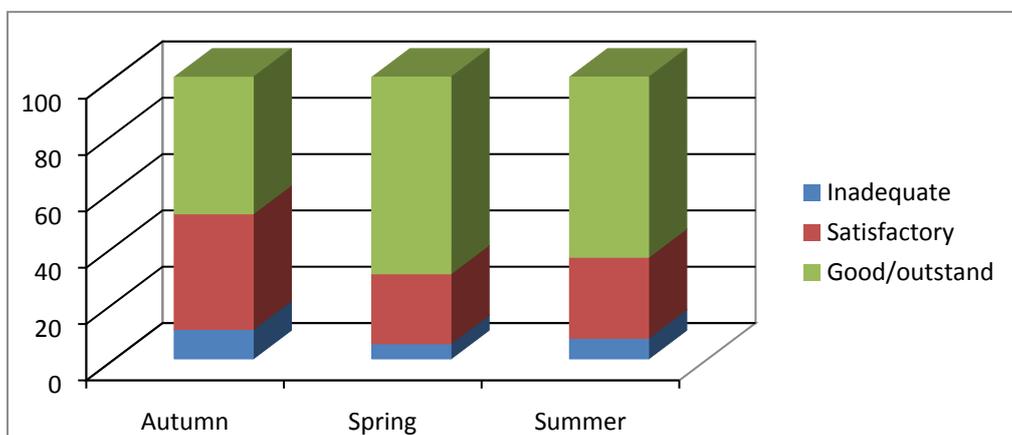
Main reasons for PEPs being judged as satisfactory and not good were

- Late returns – requested in 5 working days
- Lack of timescales or monitoring arrangements for targets
- No narrative given to share views of those attending or other teachers

PEPs judged as inadequate had significant amounts of information missing or when a previous PEP had been used as a template and not all the information had been updated. In both these cases the PEPs were returned to the school.

In addition to the continual QA process the VSH has carried out sample moderation exercises on 44 PEPs. Six elements were reviewed. The results are shown in the tables. Child participation was included this year. All children are invited to attend the PEP or to make their views known before via a 'My Voice' form which can be completed with a teacher or carer and brought to the meeting to give the child's views.

PEP sections	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
All care information is provided	83	13	4
All school information is provided	83	17	0
Evidence that child has been invited to contribute	88	13	0
School has clear overview of child's needs	83	17	0
Targets and interventions are SMART and suitable	88	4	8
Use of Pupil Premium stated clearly	70	17	4
Overall Judgement	95	2.5	2.5

Changes over time

Even with the increased level of demand this shows that there continues to be an improvement in the number of PEPs meeting the required standards which implies that there is an ingoing increase in the understanding and therefore appropriate support offered to our children in school.

Percentage of sample completed to required standard

Legend: Percentage of sample completed to good or better
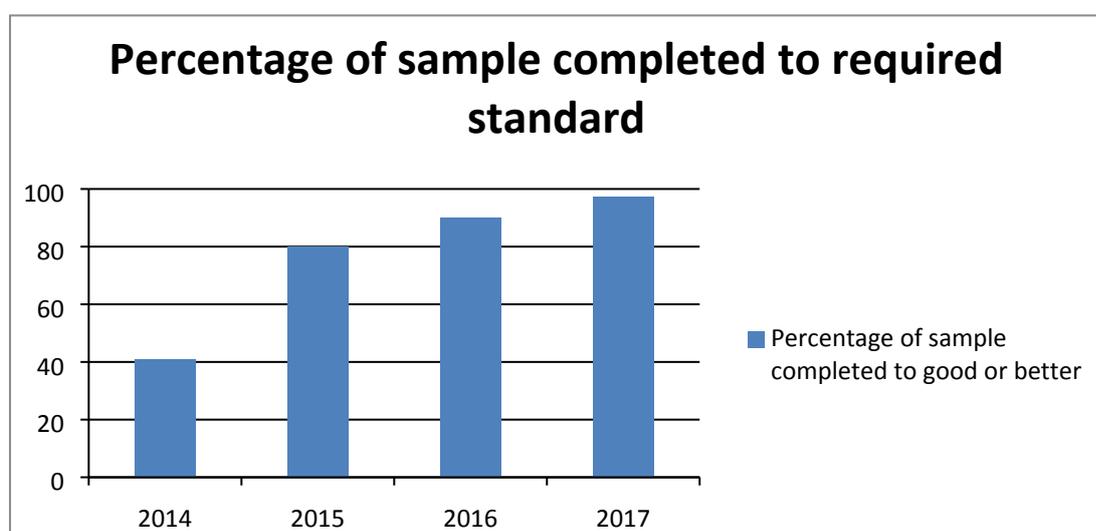
Development of an ePEP

Electronic PEPs (ePEPs) have the potential to make the PEP process easier for schools and more secure by removing the need for documents to be transferred between the Virtual School and the child's school. The Virtual School have looked at several commercial products and evaluated these and also worked with the Cheshire East Project Development Team to explore the feasibility of an ePEP on Liquid Logic. The latter option has been chosen as it will allow ePEPs to be immediately incorporated into the child's records and avoids the risks associated with data being held on an external website. It also allows for the product to be developed and modified exactly as needed rather than an 'off the shelf' product and, by being an in house product, gives good value for money. Development work has been going on since Dec 2016 and the first pilot schools began using the system from July 2017 with the intention being to bring on most schools before July 2018.

Actions 2017/18
- **Provide additional support for schools where PEPs are below 'good'**
- **Oversee roll-out of ePEP to Cheshire East schools**

3.4   School Admissions

The Virtual School are responsible for ensuring that every child has access to suitable education. Where possible and appropriate school moves will be avoided as it has been recognised that school can be a consistent and stabilising feature of a child's life. If a move is essential then the following principles apply:
- Educational provision should mean a full-time place.
- Schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' should be prioritised for looked after children in need of a new school.
- The choice of education setting should be based on what any good parent would want for their child. It should be based on evidence that the setting can meet the educational needs of the child and help them make the maximum progress.
- The child's wishes and feelings should be taken into account and the suitability of the education setting tested by arranging an informal visit with the child.

Children move schools for a number of reasons which include
- Change of foster placement which means that continuing at current school is unrealsitic
- Carers move house which means that continuing at current school is unrealsitic
- Change to live with adopters
- Change of school if proximity to social contacts/family mean are having a strong neaigitive impact on the child's progress and learning
- Change when school can longer meet needs (SEN or non-SEN)

Cared for children are given the highest priority under school admission arrangements and the usual fair access protocols do not apply. The Virtual School works with headteachers to make sure that any admission is made as swiftly as possible. Where schools are reluctant to offer places the Virtual School will consider making appeals or directing schools to admit. In 2016-17 there were no appeals made and no directions needed. All children for whom a place in primary school was requested were

allocated a place swiftly. Secondary applications to mainstream are usually slower to process with schools requesting additional information and meetings. Places were secured for all applicants except one where the child was returning to Cheshire East and required alternative provision which was not locally available and the mainstream school nearby was unwilling to accept on roll. This child continued to receive education and has now been found a place at another provider. The Virtual School works with all schools who are admitting a child to offer support, with funding if needed to ensure a smooth integration.

In 2016/17 there were fourty-nine children started a new school during the academic year. These included two children who had been home educated prior to becoming cared for and five who were moved by SEN following the review or initiation of an EHCP. All the primary moves were made smoothly and swiftly but there were delays and difficulties in securing places for four secondary transfers, two inside Cheshire East and two outside.

Actions 2017/18
- **Produce protocol for admissions of children moving into Cheshire East**
- **Work with Special Educational Needs Team to produce protocol to improve admission of children with SEN to schools inside and outside of Cheshire East**

3.5   Attendance

The Virtual School monitors and tracks the attendance and progress of all cared for children via a commissioned service and works with carers and Social Care staff as well as education providers to make sure effective plans are in place and carried out. Although there have been some primary children with reduced timetables due to medical or emotional needs the overall attendance in this age range is good and has risen during the year. A frequent cause of absence is when children are placed for adoption and are given a time to settle into their new family although we encourage carers to make contact with school as quickly as possible and to make visits and contact with the teachers.
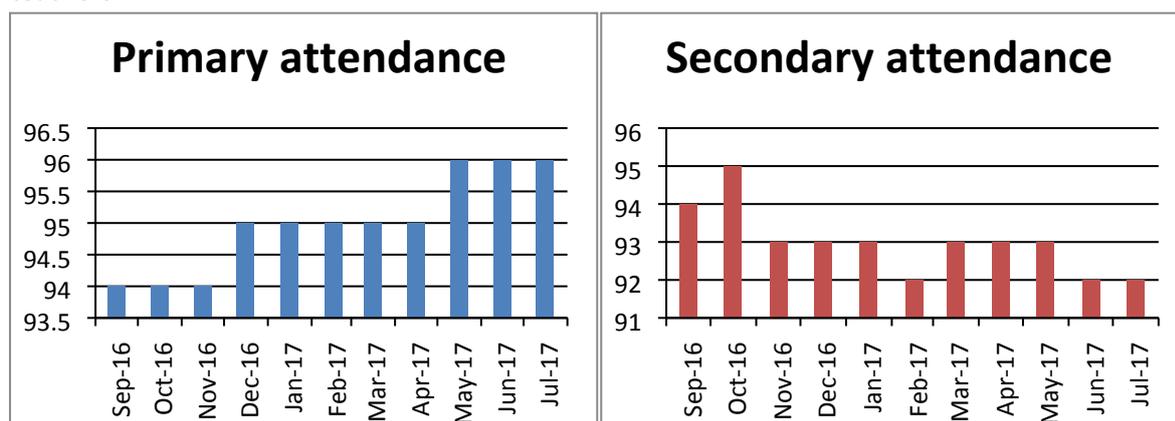
Attendance in secondary school started well but has declined during the year. While there is an inevitable reduction in June and July due to exams this level of absence and number of secondary pupils classed at Persistent Absentees (PA) has risen from 8.8% to 9.3% which equates to thirty four children and is the same as than the overal PA rate for England in 2016 rate but below the 10% rate of statistical neighbours. Fifteen of these had attendance very close to the threshold, (87%-90%)

whilst most of the others were children who had been in crisis during the year and had changed placement and/or school and may have had time between schools. Six children in this group started with very low attendance and refused to attend school but were supported and ended the year with regular attendance of 75-100% and all indicators showing that this will continue to improve.

The overall rate for all children in care was 94% but this includes the Y11 summer term data and so the target for 2017/18 will be set at 94% for secondary schools and raised to 96% for primary.

Actions 2017/18

- **Monitor attendance by school type to allow greater targeting of support**

3.6   Reducing exclusions

The Virtual School has a duty to work with Headteachers to try and avoid excluding a cared for child and to make sure that he have the support in place to thrive and make progress. During 2016/7 the Virtual School has been quick in its response to exclusion or threat of exclusions so that a joint plan for the child can be implemented which identifes any key triggers and also instances when the inappropriate behaviour does not occur and these strengths can be build on.

If an exclusion was unavoidable then there were similar meeting held afterwards to try and avoid any further instances.

The Virtual School has commissioned places at the Fermain Alternatvie Provision in Macclesfield and this has contributed to the reduction in repeat exclusions and total number of session lost. The Fermain staff have been trained in how to support children with insecure attachment and Pupil premium funding has been used to help provide a mentor/key worker to support our children.

Regular reports of the total numbers of sessions lost and the number of children invovled are reported, which include all children in care. The national data published refers only to 'eligible' children who have been in care for one year or more as of 31st March and attend maintained schools or academies. The lastest published data for this refers to 2015. The details and changes are shown in the charts below.

Total number of sessions lost - all CFC

% of eligible CFC with 1 or more FTE
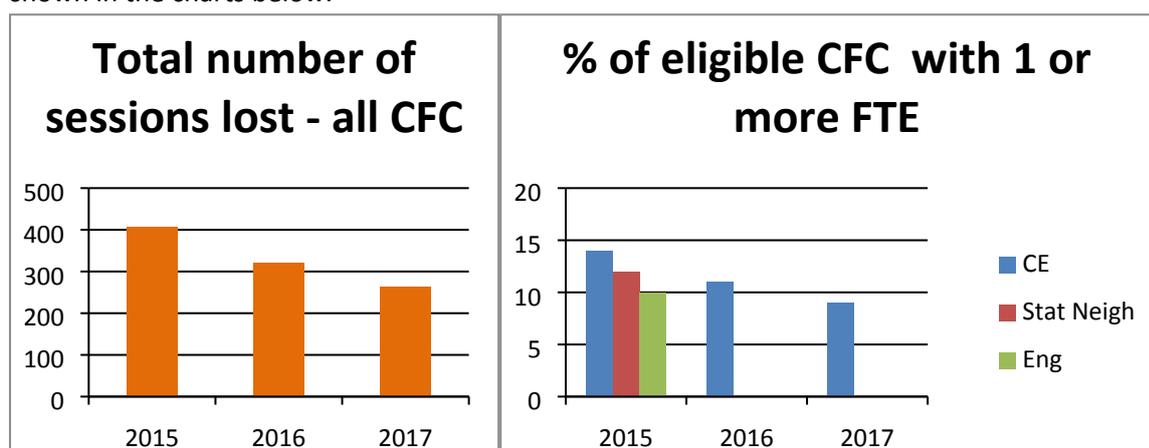
Actions 2017/18

- **Work with schools to identify pupils at risk of exclusion and put in support as preventative measure**

3.7 Participation of young people

The Virtual School recognises that young people are at the heart of all its work and thatto be effective in helping young people to succeed in education, their wishes and feelings must be listened to.

All young people are invited to contribute to their PEPs, either by attending the meeting or by sharing their thoughts on the 'My Voice' form which can be presented at the meeting on their behalf. Action plans are influenced by this input in a variety of ways such as:

- Deciding what subjects to have tutoring in and when/where this takes place,
- Determining the order in which topics are addressed in revision,
- Agreeing targets for improvement in attendance or behaviour,
- Identifying any particular issues in school which show a staff training need
- Deciding whether additional adult support, eg mentor is required.

The Children's Society set up a network of participation champions and the Virtual School has been consistently included in this although the focus this year has been on transferring this work into the Youth Support Service. This network has looked at how participation should be practical and add value to the young people. As a result this year a care leavers football team was set up to allow care leavers a chance to maintain contact with support in an informal way. The Virtual School contributed to the costs of this and a member of staff took part in arranging and leading the sessions.

The voice of young people is included in staff appointments and two students have participated on interview panels this year. In both cases they were involved in planning the questions and identifying the desirable qualities and had an equal say with other panel members when the decisions were made.

Actions 2017/18
- **Encourage young people to chair their own PEP meetings**

3.8 Partnership working

Partnership working is crucial to the effectiveness of the Virtual School and we recognise our role in part of a team with a child at the heart. Our closest working partners are Social Workers with whom we have much formal and informal contact. Some of the VS team are based at Cledford alongside the PTC team while others regularly work there and so catch up on cases. The VSH, together with the Group Manager for the Permanance and Through Care Team has set up a bi-monthly Children of Concern meeting where cases can be discussed with colleagues from Fostering, Commissioning and Youth Offending and a combined plan put into place. The PEPs are the shared responsibility of the school and the Social Worker and support is given to both to make sure these are in place and effective. Social Worker attendance at PEP meetings is an expectation and input at team meetings has helped to increase their awareness of special educational needs and the use of Pupil Premium.

The other team who are closely linked to Virtual School are Special Education and Disabilities Team (SEND). Both teams are located in Macclesfield Town Hall and this means that regular conversations can take place on cases which helps to avoid delay and build good relationships. The VSH is a member of the SEN Assessment and Moderation Panel and the Head of Service/Service Manager have agreements in place which ensure that the Virtual School is involved in any cared for children

cases who also have special educatial needs and also offer advice for any SEN issues which arise for children placed outside of Cheshire East.

The Virtual School also works with the Independent Reviewing Officerss and foster carers, providing training and support as needed. Through membership of Education, Complex Needs, Headteacher and Virtual School Head groups the Virtual School is able to remain in touch with all current events relating to cared for children and also to make sure that other teams are aware of matters which influence their area.

Actions 2017/18
- **Implement tracking system for SEN pupils to reduce delays**
- **Work with Social Care staff to review promotion and attendance of foster carers at training**

3.9 Training Provision
The statutory duties of the Virtual School include providing training on education issues relating to children in care and Headteachers and Governing Bodies are required to appoint a Designated Teacher to champion the cause of cared for children and also to ensure that this teacher has access to training. In CE this is provided in a variety of ways
   a) Update/network meetings open to all schools and led by the Virtual school
   b) Bespoke training in one school which can be around a particular child or for all staff
   c) Arranging outside speakers to provide 'expert' input.

The network event was held in June 17 and was attended by almost 80 staff. This provided information and updates on development of the ePEP, allocation of Pupil Premium and developing a self assessment tool for schools to assess their provisiob for cared for children and the progress they make. Feedback was positive with delegates stating that the sessions were useful and would help them to better support children in school.

Bespoke training has been arranged for more than fifteen schools where additional help was requested. In some cases this was for new Designated Teachers's who wanted to become familiar with the PEP process while for others it was when pupils were exhibiting behaviours which put them at risk of exclusions or was impacting on them settling to work and make progress. All Virtual School staff are able to lead this training which also includes working with colleges and training providers.

Attachment Awareness Project
The Conference in 2016 was focussed on Attachment Awareness and was led by Kate Cairns Associates who are recognsied leading experts in this area. As well as a focus for the Virtual School the Cheshire East Primary Heads recognised that increased knowledge in this are would be beneficial and so the programme was planned in partnership. Two 'ignition' meetings were held in Atumn 2016 to which all schools were invited and then schools were invited to take this further in their schools by attending further training and by designing and implementing a piece of action reasearch based around attachment.The training was on emotion coaching and resilience building. Twelve schools took up this challenge and have made changes in their schools based on their new

understanding. In autumn 2017 schools are feeding back on their projects and will present at the 2107 Conference but early indications are that this is having a positive impact.

The Virtual School also contributes to the Foster Carer training programme. Sessions have been planned on curriculum changes, preparing for tests, SEN and post-16 progression but uptake, like many foster carer training sessions attendance has been poor. This includes events planned for carers and children such as careers fairs and revision session. Training is not mandatory for carers and there is a concern that the lack of engagement could indicate that carers do not demonstrate high educational aspirations and commitment for their children.

Actions 2017/18
- **Arrange regional as well as local training**
- **Improve attachment awareness in high schools and support action research projects**

4   Contextual breakdown of Virtual School cohort

4.1 Population breakdown

The Virtual School supports all children in care, including those who become cared for as a result of nights away from home due to disabilities. Over the last two years the number of children in care has risen across England but the rate of increase has been greater in Cheshire East than that nationally or in statistical neighbour areas. This is shown in the chart below along with the average change per month which has shown a significant increase since March 2017.
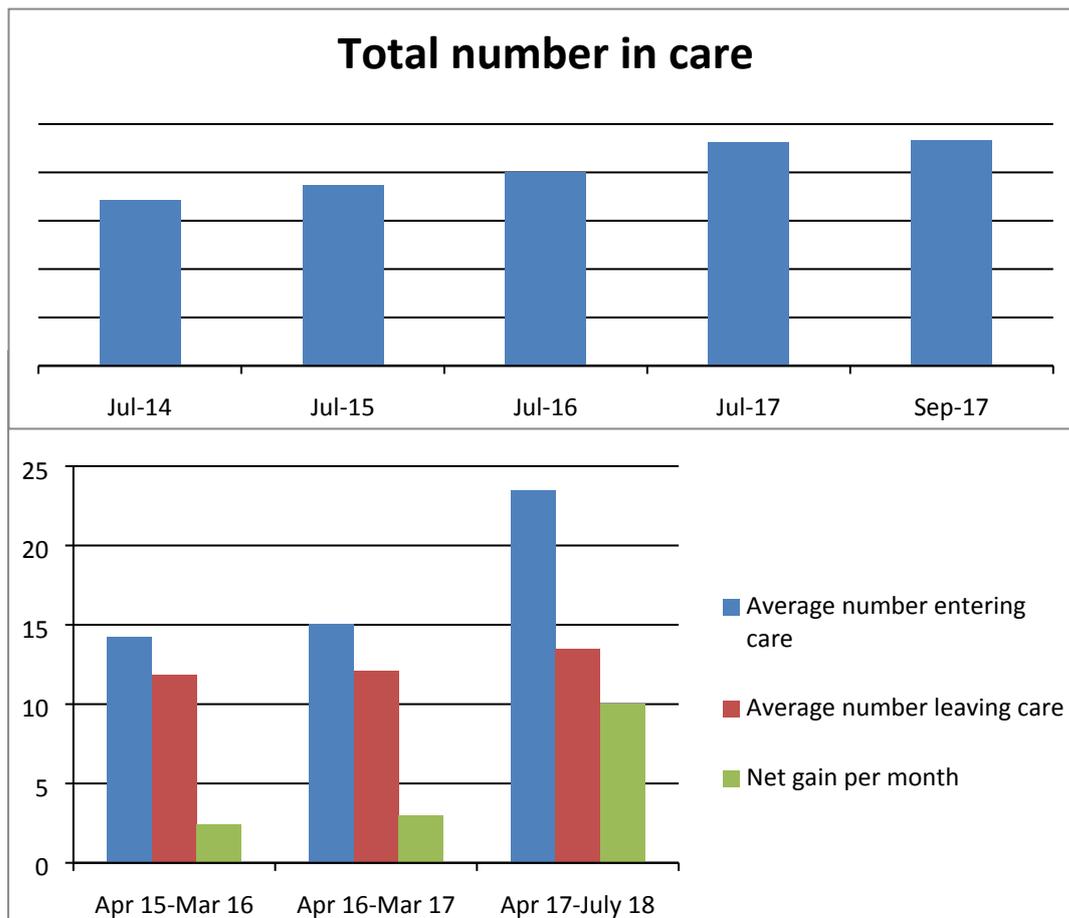
Although young people of any age can access support from the Virtual School the main focus is for those who are expected to be in education or training and so covers the time to the end of the school year when they become eighteen years old. During the two years post Y11 young people moved from being cared for to becoming semi- independent care leavers and the chart below shows the increase in this group over the year. This group also includes unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have been accommodated by Cheshire East. Although only a small group, these young people require intensive support to help them to become familiar with their new life and to allow them to access education, in some cases for the first time and they are supported in this by the Virtual School support worker currently seconded to the Social Care Leaving Care team.

Y12/13 Careleavers
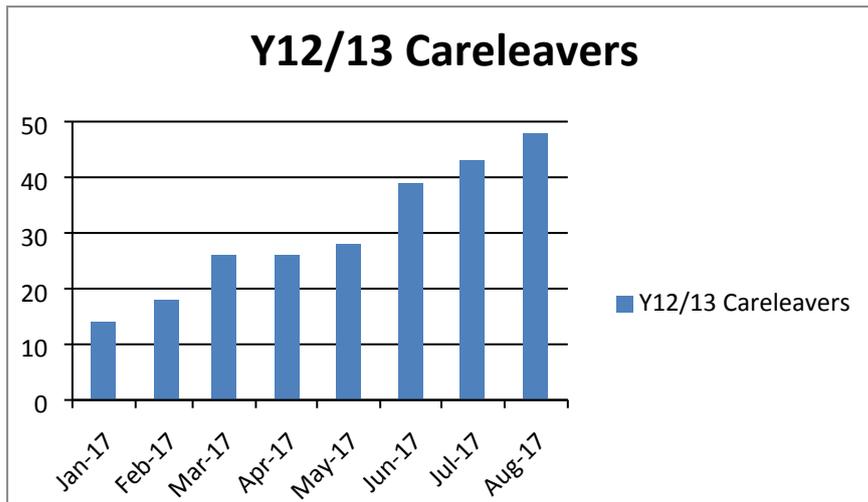
Overall the number of children and young people supported by the school rose from 425 in Sept 2016 to 512 in July 2017, an increase of 20%. All new cases have been supported by the Advisors with no additional staffing but the capacity to support all children effectively is being monitored. The number of boys in care is slightly higher than girls overall, but the chart below shows how this varies with through the various age ranges.

Age and Gender of children in care
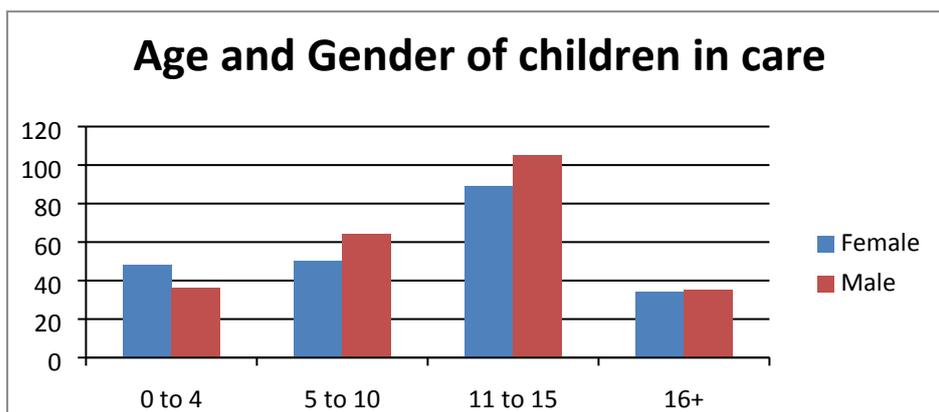
Although there are cared for children from a range of ethnic backgrounds, the vast majority of children in care are White British, as shown in the chart below.

% of cared for population
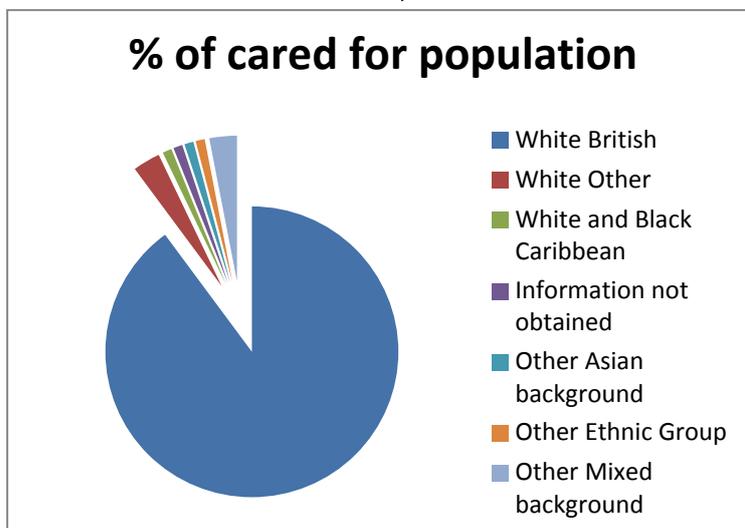
4.2 Schools Location

Whenever possible children will continue to attend the same school when they enter care to provide stability and continuity. This means that the majority of children attend schools in Cheshire East. Where children are placed with long term carers who live outside Cheshire East and when the continuation of a daily journey to their previous school is unreasonable then another school will be found and the admissions process previously outlined instigated. Children with special educational needs are placed by the SEN department of the local authority who administer their plan. This is usually the borough in which the child lives and the child's needs will be assessed and suitable education found. For some SEN children living in Cheshire East there is no suitable or available provision within the borough and so these children travel to neighbouring boroughs to attend school. The charts below show the number of children education in each location in each type of school.
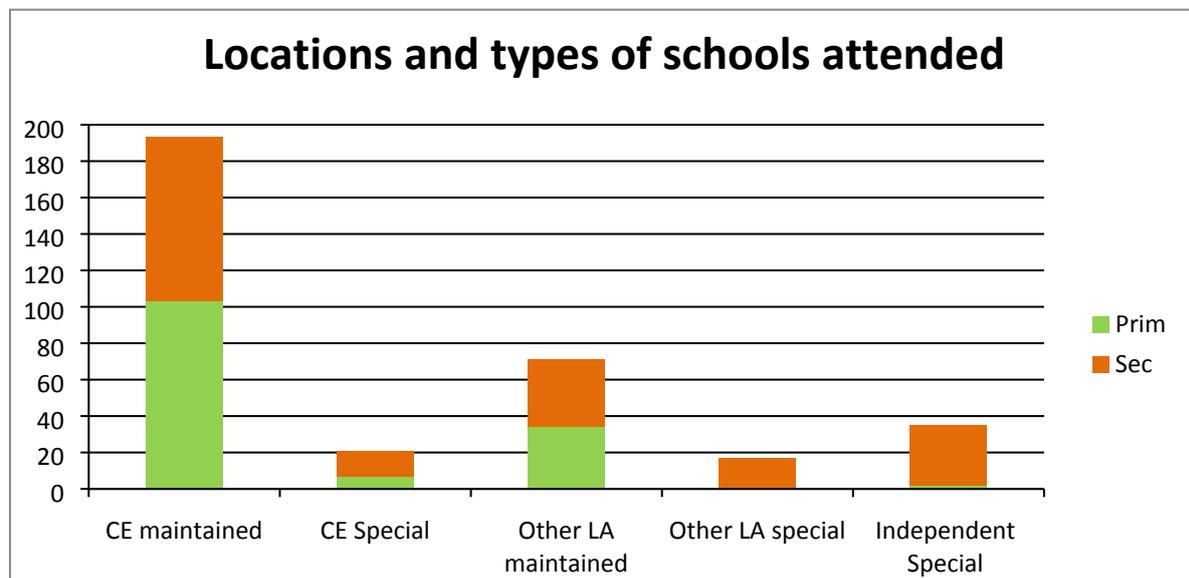
Wherever possible, the principles for placing children in schools rated by Ofsted as 'good' or 'outstanding' are adhered to. Instances when this is not the case may be when a child is already at a school when it's rating falls, and a subsequent risk assessment suggests that moving schools would have a greater negative impact than remaining or when a school rated as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' offers the best local and personal provision. The number of schools in each category per month is shown below.
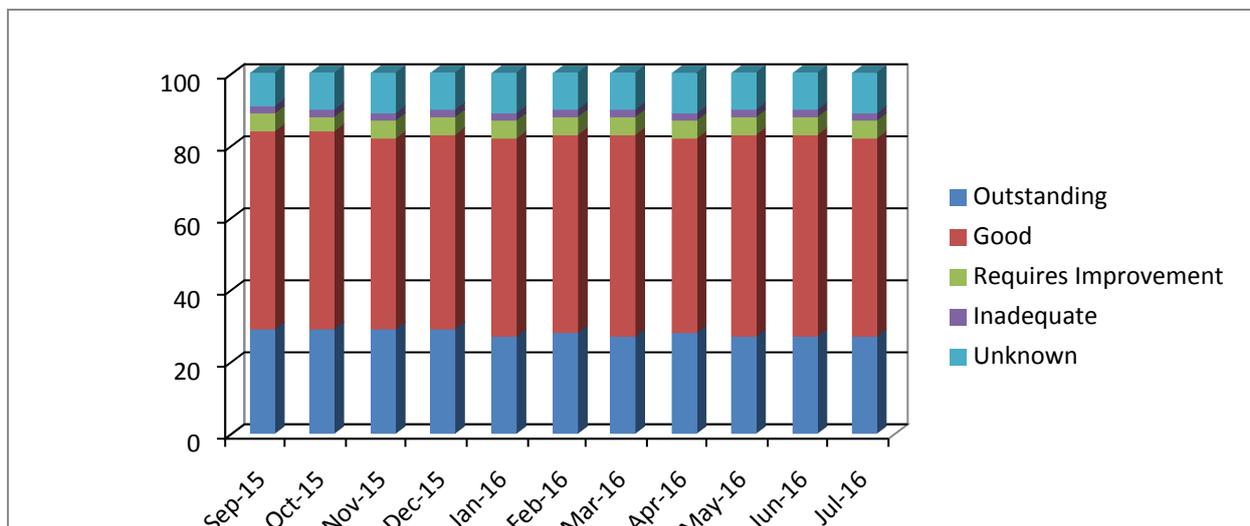
In 2016 there were seven children attending schools rated as inadequate. Six were at a new school but the final inspection of the school under its previous name found it inadequate and so that remained as its rating, although the new leadership and management are now in place. The other child was a Y11 pupil at a special school for the deaf who entered care in spring 2017 just before an inspection and when it was considered inappropriate to move schools.

Schools have an unknown rating if they are academy converters when the previous reports are removed from the Ofsted system or new schools which are not straightforward conversions from a previous school and so had no previous report.

4.3 Special Educational Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are those deemed to require support in school which is different from and/or additional to that available to all children through good quality teaching. This can be to support cognition, learning, physical or social/emotional needs. Once a need has been identified the school will try to support 'in house' and will then gather evidence to request further support if necessary. Children will be issued with either a school focus plan (SFP) for in school support or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) when the LA has agreed to assess and has provided additional support either in school or by sourcing a place at a special school. The overall level of SEN has fallen slightly this year the percentage of children requiring the support of an EHCP remains above that for statistical neighbours and for England while the rate for SFP is below these comparators. This is shown in the charts below for children in care more than one year.
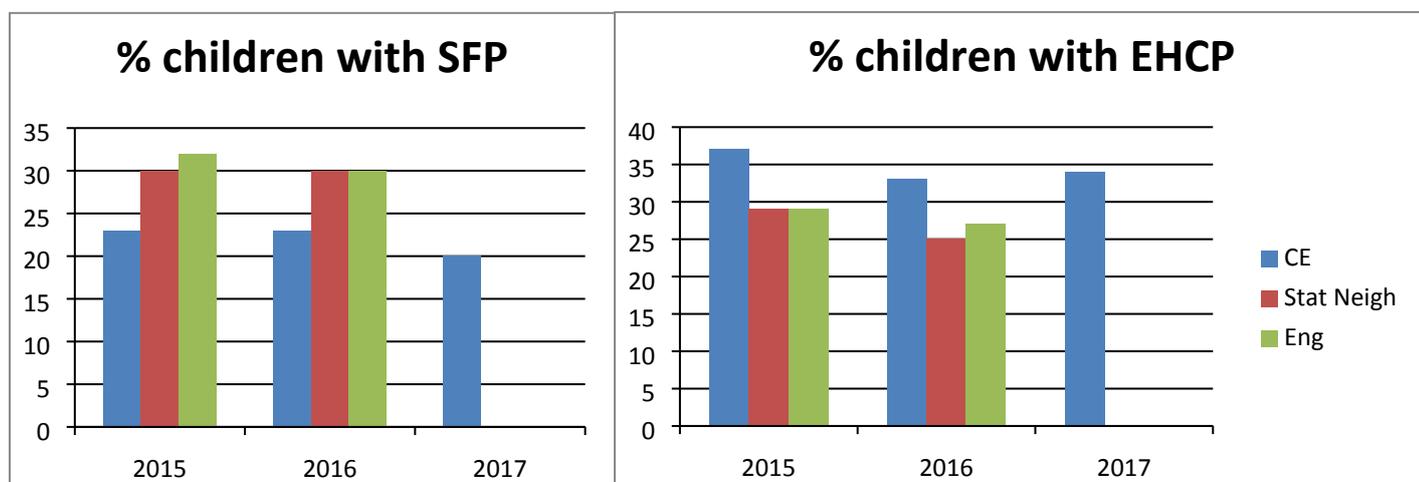
EHCP. These children are often very complex and require intensive support from their advisor, which is often compounded as they might be placed outside of area necessitating considerable time and resources spent on traveling to meetings. The number of cases of SFP and EHCP for all children supported in 2016 is shown below together with the comparative data for ECHP's in 2016.

SEN by gender and age group 2017
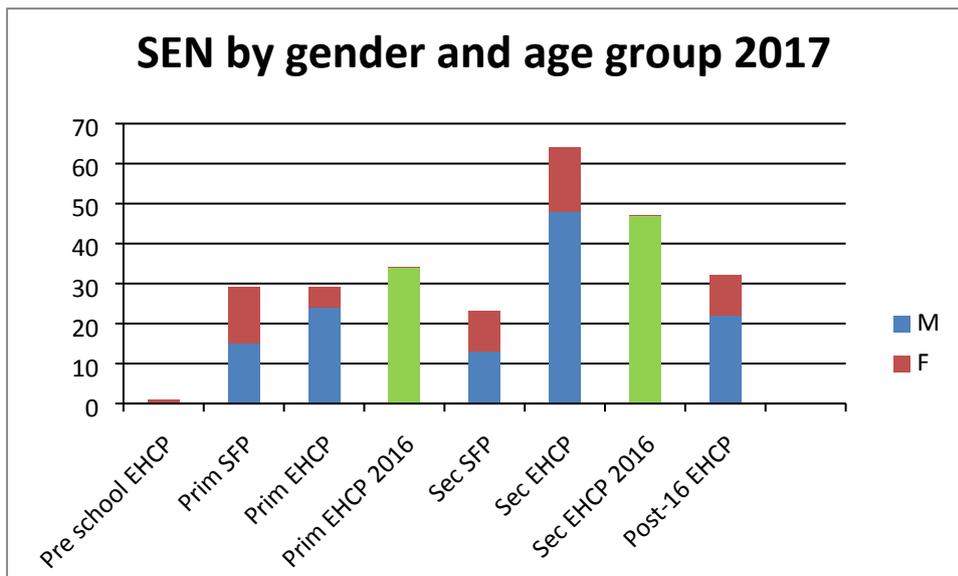
The Virtual School works establishes links with SEN teams in all areas to ensure that children are in the correct school and making progress as quickly as possible. Advisors are involved if an application for a needs assessment is made and will be contacted by the SEN team to request any contextual data which may impact on the decision. If a child has a plan then school are asked to review the EHCP at a PEP meeting so that the EHCP targets can be reflected in the PEP although these are not the same as the PEP actions are usually quite short/medium term and specific while the EHCP outcomes are more generalised or long term.

If a school or carer feel that needs are not being met the Virtual School will work with school to ensure that due process is followed and all necessary documents are submitted to the relevant SEN team. There can be a delay when finding a new school for an SEN child, particularly if placed out of Cheshire East while consultations take place and funding agreements are made. Draft protocols to address this have been drawn up and it is the intention that these are finalised before December 2017.

Fourty three children with EHCP attend Special Schools or Independent Special Schools outside of Cheshire East and twelve attend mainstream schools outside the CE borough. In most cases the SEN team in the authority where the child lives administers this EHCP so that all local knowledge can be used regarding transition and school provision. These children are often the most complex and so incidents of school moves are higher than in the general population. This can lead to a delay in finding a new school while files are moved and agreement is made between the SEN teams involved regarding the nature of the education to be sought and the funding arrangements. Plans are in place to streamline this process so that transfers are made swiftly and children can resume learning.

4.4 Alternative Provision (AP)
For some children, attendance at a mainstream or special school is not possible or appropriate and so they receive an alternative curriculum. In most cases this is arranged and monitored by the child's school and makes up part of their curriculum, perhaps 1 or 2 days per week for a fixed term. Examples of provision attended during include Forest Schools to develop self confidence and

following instructions, animal therapy to gain emotional regulation and extended work placements to increase employability skills and ability to succeed in an adult environment. Such placements are arranged at the PEP and are funded by the Virtual School but managed and overseen by school.
In some cases children may be having more severe difficulties and full time alternative provision is required. These are cases when the child's anxiety and behaviour mean that permanent exclusion is likely or when there have been several cases of repeated exclusion. The Virtual School Advisor will be heavily involved in such cases, identifying suitable places and making referrals and visiting the provider to ensure they are regulated to provide a safe, supportive environment and are focussed on achievement and progress. Alternative Provision is also sometimes the best option for pupils moving into Cheshire East, particularly those in Y10 or Y11 who have previously had would have difficulty in finding and settling into a new school.

In 2016 there were eleven children in such places, seven in Y10 and four in Y11, Of these, eight were with providers who offer a full curriculum, including GCSE's and the pupils were settled, making progress and engaged with the number of exclusions falling dramatically. Before starting AP the average number of exclusions for these pupils was 3 episodes per year but while attending AP this fell to 1 episode while the average attendance rose from 77% to 83%. All providers are either independent school registered in their own right or providers listed in the Cheshire East Alternative Providers Directory and have to meet the safety and safeguarding standards required to be in the directory. Providers are asked to give regular reports on the child's progress and to contribute to or attend meetings about the children.

In 2016/2017 The Virtual School worked closely with the Fermain Alternative Provision Academy in Macclesfield. This is an independent provision run by the Youth Federation and where places are commissioned by Cheshire East with schools paying a 'top-up' when a child is placed there. The Virtual School purchased five places and provided training to staff in attachment issues and how to support children with traumatic backgrounds in their lessons. This was found to be effective and was then supplemented by part funding of a mentor to be the key worker for cared for children. This has had a dramatic effect on the attendance and engagement of children at the Fermain and has allowed the most vulnerable to feel safe, welcome and listened to so that they can make progress in their learning. As a result one pupil with a previous attendance of 64% increased this to 92 % while another with regular exclusions before starting at Fermain has had none since and has been identified as a star pupil.

5. Educational Outcomes

Children are supported in school from they time they enter care although for some this is only a transitory time and they may return home quite quickly. Therefore the data captured and reported at local and national level relates to those children who had been in care for at least twelve months.

5.1 End of Reception- age 5 years

Children are assessed in fifteen skill areas at the end of their Reception year. Those who are assessed as reaching the expected level in the key twelve areas are deemed to have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) These areas include speech and language, social and emotional development as well as basic literacy and numeracy. Cared for children of this age have often suffered neglect and language skills are frequently under-developed, which in turn inhibits speech and language, communication and literacy skills. All children are entitled to free nursery places in the term following their second birthday and the Virtual School Early Years Advisor will work with the carer and Social Worker from this time to encourage them to take up this offer. In 2017 there were eight children who completed their reception year and the data is shown below.
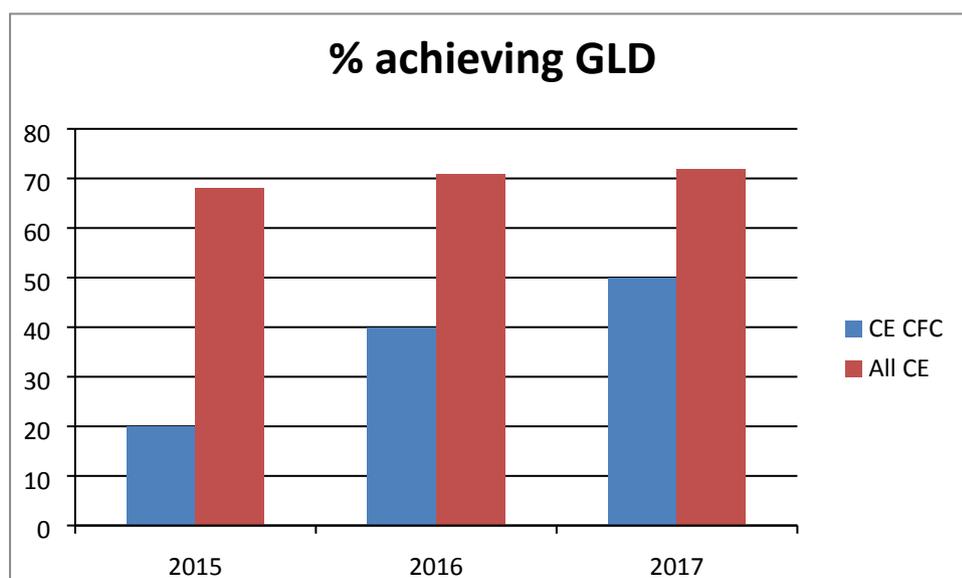
5.2 End of Key Stage 1 – age 7

There were only four children in this group in 2017 so statistical analysis should be treated with caution. This is mainly due to the number of children who move to adoption during KS1 and so leave care before completing these tests. Two children did not take the tests; one achieved the expected standard in all areas and the fourth pupil did not. This child had attended three primary schools due to changes in foster carers and only moved to the current school in April 2017. They have received lots of support, both academic and social and has been reported to be making progress. The children who did not take the tests both have SEN. One has required a very high level of support to be able to function in school this year which has been funded by the Virtual School and the other moved schools in Dec 2016 to be with adopting parents. This child has had lots if support to him them settle

and this has been reported as making progress but still operating below the level of the tests. All the children had attendance above 90% with an average of 96%

Children achieving expected levels at KS1
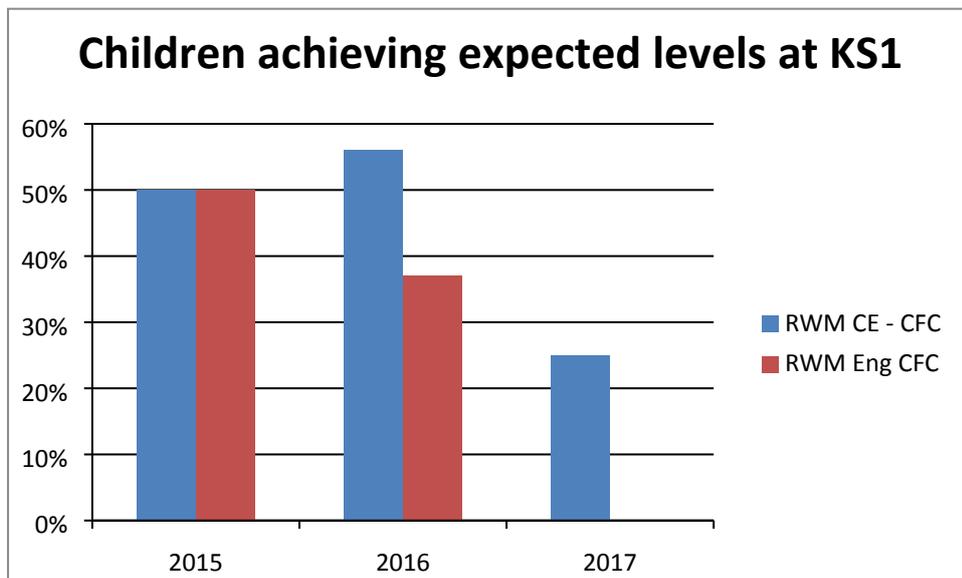
5.3 Key Stage 2 – age 11

Twenty four children completed Y6 and were therefor eligible to take the assessments. Eight children (33%) did not complete the tests as they were either assessed to be working below the level of the tests or it was felt that the test would prove to cause a higher level of anxiety than could be managed. The level of children across Cheshire East who did not complete the tests was 2%. All these children have and EHCP and so have additional learning needs as well as any anxiety that results from their experience of trauma or past life.

Children are assessed in reading (R), writing (W) grammar punctuation and spelling (GPS) and maths (M) and have to complete a total of six tests covering four hours which take place on set days and times in exam conditions, although schools are asked to help children prepare and use staff and rooms flexibly to reduce exam stress.

The percentage of children gaining the national standard (NS) for each of the tests for 2017 is shown below.

KS2 Outcomes
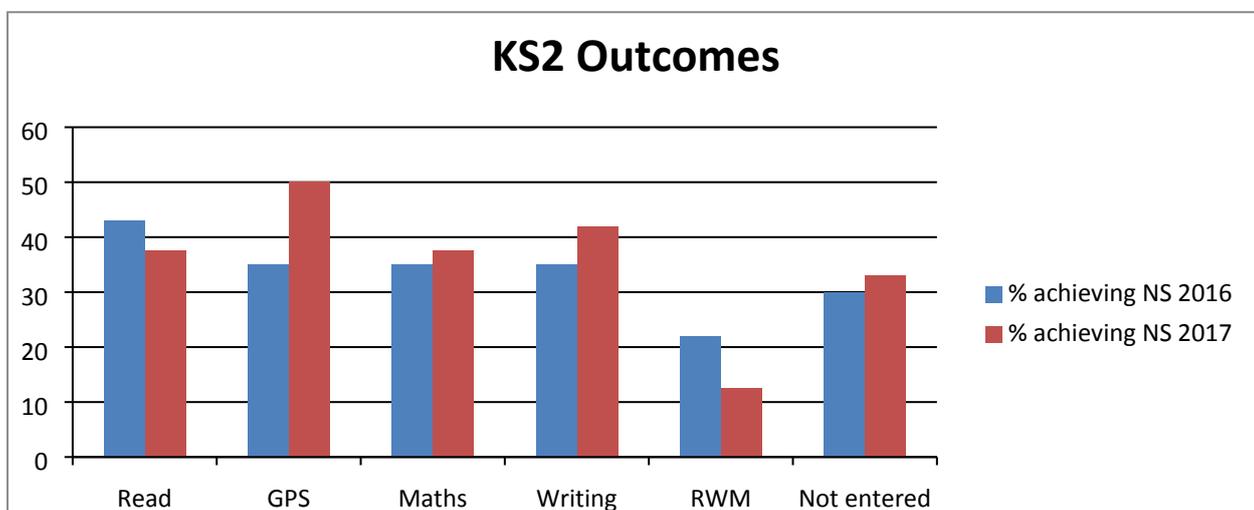
Children's progress in each subject can be measured by comparing their expected scores based on KS1 results and the actual results in Y6. If a child does not complete the tests but has a result from KS1 then they are automatically given a high negative progress rating. The overall progress data is shown below, together with the data from 2016 and the progress for just those children who completed both sets of tests. This shows that although still deficit, the progress has improved for writing and maths.

Average progress by subject

- Prog CFC CE 2016
- Prog CFC Eng 2016
- Progress CE CFC 2017
- Progress CE CFC of tests taken 2017
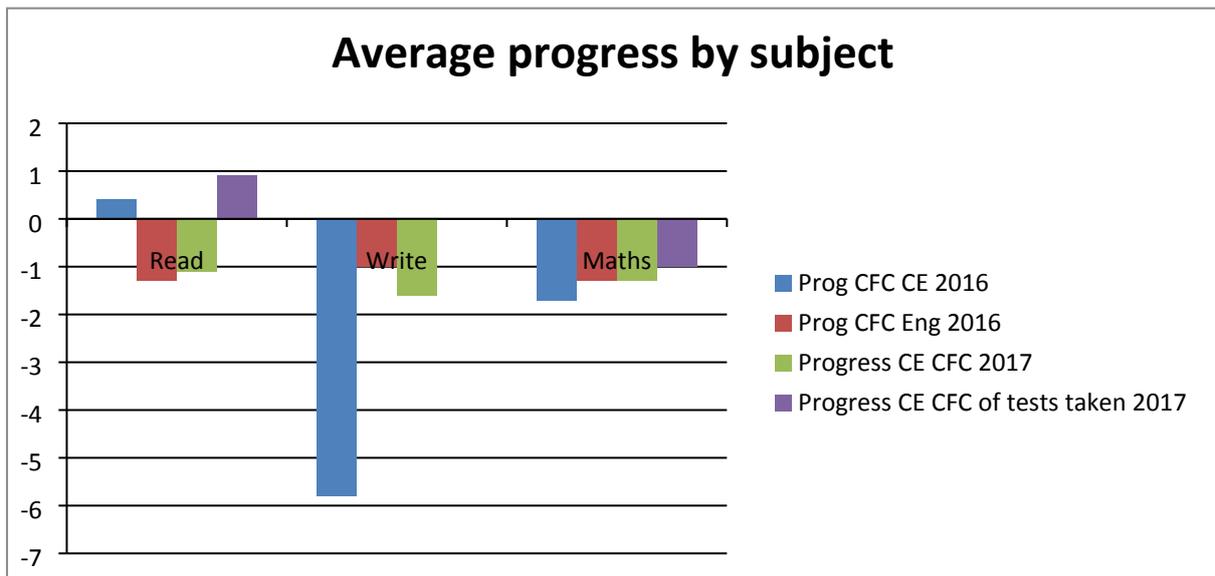
Special Educational Needs

The level of SEN within the cohort is similar to last year although the number not taking the tests is slightly higher. The chart below shows the progress made in each subject by children who had non SEN, a school focus plan (SFP) where their additional needs can be met within school or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) where additional or specialist support is needed.

Progress by SEN group

- Progress of children with EHCP
- Progress of children with SFP
- Progress of children with no SEN
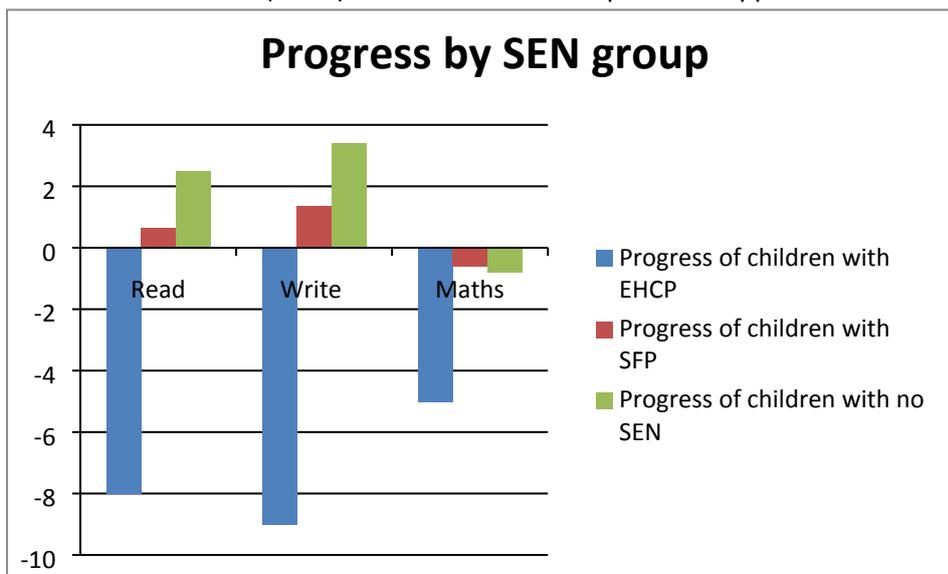
Only one of the children with EHCP completed the tests and so the rest were deemed to have made significantly negative progress, although this may not be a reflection of their actual ability. Only two children attend special schools with others being supported to remain in a mainstream setting. This is the second year of the new curriculum and assessment and so comparisons can only be made with 2016. Although there was an increase in the percentage gaining the expected standard in three of the four areas the number reaching this in reading writing and maths has fallen, which is disappointing for the pupils and their teachers as well as for those in the Virtual School who have been supporting them.

Five children met the expected standard in three of the four areas and fell no more than four marks for the threshold for the fourth area. Three did not achieve in maths, one in reading and one in writing. All these pupils have had additional support via 1:1 teaching and access to additional exam preparation. Four of these children attended Cheshire East schools, all of which are known to give good support to cared for children and which have shown an improvement this year in their overall KS2 outcomes although the school attended by the pupil who did not meet the reading standard had an 4% fall in this area overall.

All the children were offered additional tuition from January and this was put into place for 13 children. This included all the children who gained the expected levels in RWM and increased the confidence of children even when they did not quite reach the standard score in particular subjects. A Kindle Club was set up to promote reading in children who were identified as needing support in this subject. All the children who took up this offer gained the expected level in reading although one boy did not wish to participate and he gained the expected level in all subject except reading.

Attendance for the group has been very good with 79% having an attendance over 98% and an average attendance of 96%. The length of time in care ranged from eleven years to just over one year. During their current time in care most children have attended just one primary school although two have attended five schools. The majority of children have had two or three placements although four have had just one and four have had five or more. The SDQ score (Strengths and difficulties questionnaire) ranged from five to thirty six with fourteen having a score above fifteen, suggesting that professional support such as Children and Families Support Team or CAMHS be considered as well as in school support such as Learning Mentors.

Actions have already begun to improve outcomes for 2018 which include monitoring and support by the newly appointed VS tutor, provide tablet based revision and progress tracking for test preparation and monitoring visits to schools to review support plans.

One young person who has ended KS2 has written an autobiography and has agreed to take part in a video recording to be used to help schools understand and support cared for children. In this, she describes how school offered her safety and support and has equipped her for the future.

Actions 2017/18
- **Increase detail requested from schools re. progress so that support can be better targeted**
- **Use tutor to observe Y6 pupils and implement early support plan with school**
- **Provide electronic revision aids which can support test preparation and track progress**

Key Stage 4

Twenty seven pupils ended Year 11 in 2017 although two more pupils were of the age of Y11 but will not be completing their studies or taking exams until next year. 2016 data is included where appropriate and also the overall outcome for all cared for children I England for 2016 but it most be recognised that new qualifications and grading systems have been introduced in 2017 and the government have urged caution when comparing with previous years.

Overall performance measures for KS4 were changed in 2016. 5A*-C were no longer the main indicator and this was replaced with the number gaining A*-C in maths and English and also the calculated attainment and progress in 8 subjects. The indicator for 2017 was planned to by those gaining grade 5 or above but it has since been announced that pupils gaining grade 4 or above will not need to re-sit the exams and the proportion gaining Level 4 in maths and English will be reported.

The chart below shows the outcomes for individual and combined core subjects and also the number gaining 5+ higher passes including maths and English.
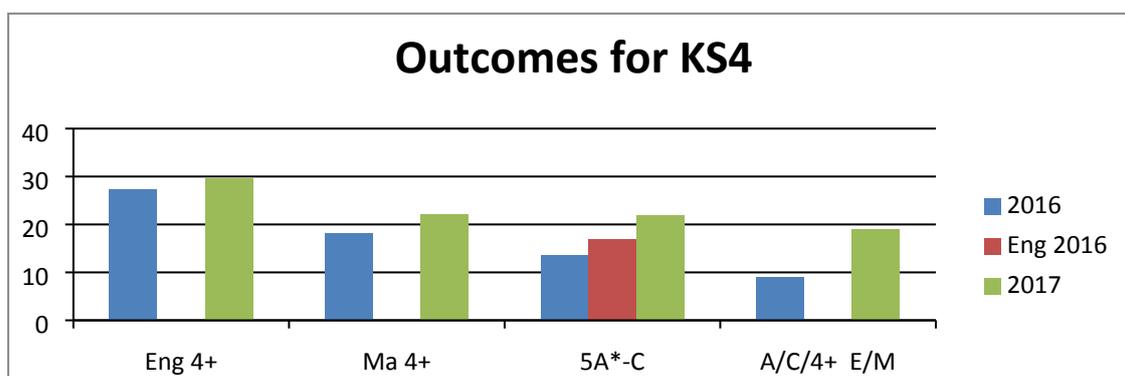
The number of pupils who gained Level 4 and above in maths and English was 5 while the number gaining 5 higher grade passes was 6.

Nature of school

Pupils within the cohort ended Y11 in a range of educational provisions. These are shown in the chart below which also shows the number of SEN pupils in each type. The overall level of SEN within the cohort was 41%, slightly lower than the level of SEN inY11 students in 2016.
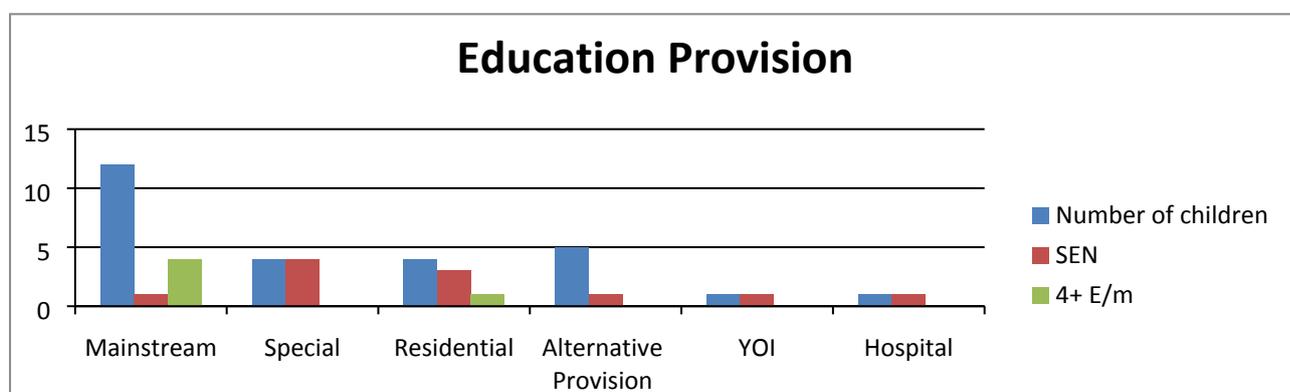
Five pupils ended Y11 receiving alternative provision. For three some this was a full time structured programme arranged which the pupils engaged with well and which has allowed them to gain some qualifications that will allow them to move onto their chosen next steps. For 2 children there were reviews and modifications made to the provision but engagement was low. One of these children had left care and become a care leaver while the other was placed with parent.

The pupils in the YOI and hospital during the exam period were engaged with education but did not gain qualifications.

Special Educational Needs

Twelve pupils in this group had an EHCP with none having a SFP. This was 42%, of the cohort, 9% higher than that of the 2016 and reflects the overall increase in SEN amongst the population.

The chart below shows the type of school attended by SEN children with only two completing Y11 in mainstream provision, with both of these having considerable time in resource provision within school. Five of these students moved provision during K4 – these are shown on the chart below. For one student this was a move from mainstream to alternative provision following a move from foster carers to return to parent when school could not meet his needs and the other four were unavoidable as children moved residential placements or were required to move to hospital or into custody. In all cases, arrangements were made for education to continue but this was based around self development and basic skills so that progress to more formal qualifications can be made in future.

All young people in Y11 were supported to ensure they had a clear progression plan for Y12 but this was especially important for SEN pupils, some of whom would be moving from residential care into other areas. The post-16 SEN advisors worked with the VS to review plans so that their EHCP could be revised and new provision named and at the end of July, places had been confirmed for all of these students.


Education for SEN pupils
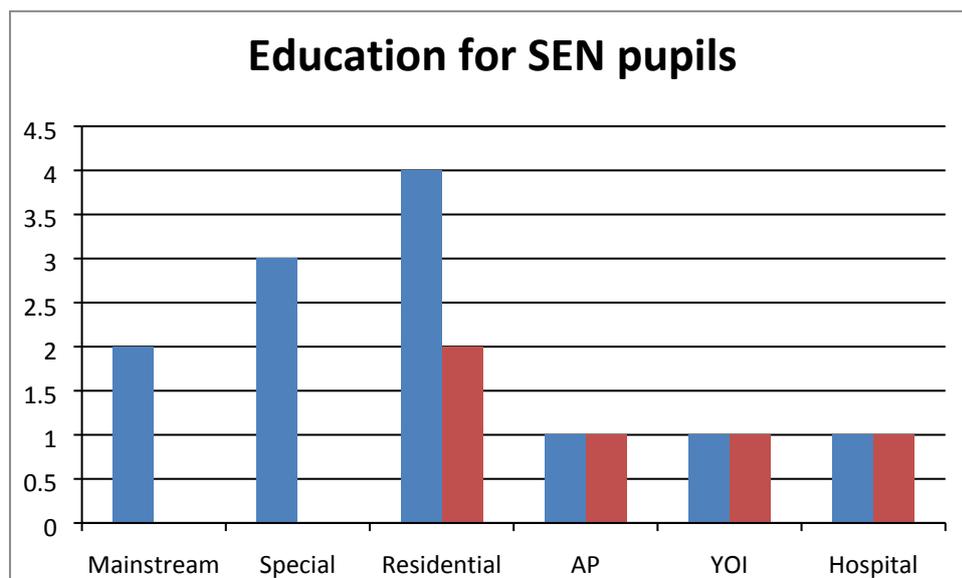
Progress

All schools are asked to provide information about the student's progress and predicted attainment at each PEP and also at the end of each term. Schools are encouraged to provide additional tuition and support as required and receive additional funding in order to do this.

In February a revisions session was held for students and carers to explore revision methods and to help in setting up a revision plan. Despite repeated contact with carers this was very poorly attended with just five young people although those there said they found it very helpful.

At the start of Y11 schools were asked to predict the highest likely outcomes for their students and these are shown in the chart below together with the number who met this prediction.

Progress vs targets

Bar chart showing Number, Met, and Not met for three categories:
- 5A*-C (equiv): Number 8, Met 6, Not met 2
- 5A*-G (equiv): Number 13, Met 8, Not met 5
- 1 A*-G: Number 3, Met 2, Not met 1
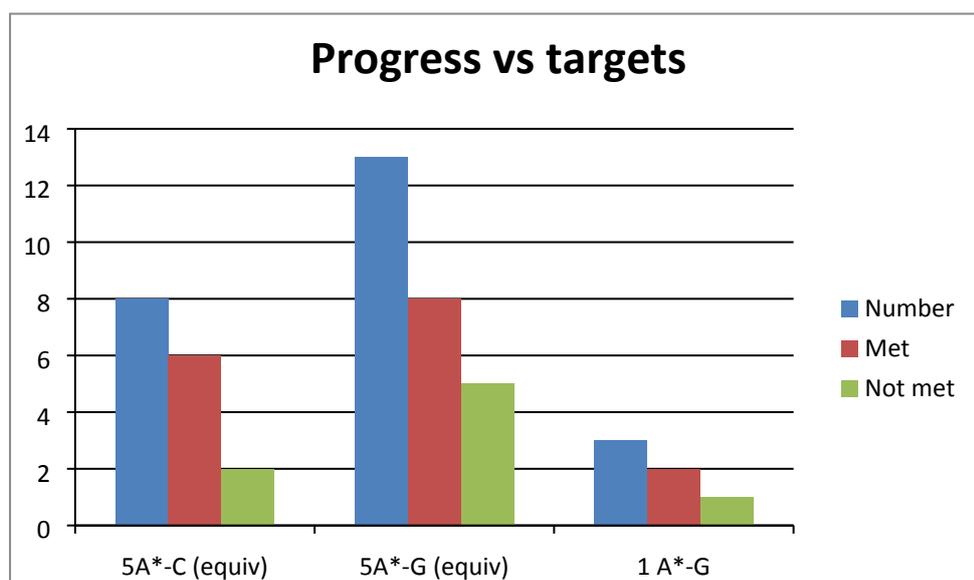
Two pupils who were predicted to gain at five or more higher level qualifications and did not do so. In one case the student gained four higher passes and the other was a pupil on a vocational programme where on only four entries were made, with good passes achieved in all. Likewise four of the pupils predicted to achieve five or more G+ (level 1) qualifications were on courses which only allowed them to be entered for less than five full GCSE qualifications although they were successful in other courses such as Entry Level or employability.

Scores at the end of Y6 suggested that eleven students had the potential to gain high passes in GCSEs but only six achieved this. All these children were offered additional support and tuition and five gained a mixture of results which included some C grades. Four had entered care since Y9 following difficult home lives and three had moved schools, all of which will have impacted on their progress.

Educational Experience and outcomes

The Virtual School works with schools and carers to promote high attendance at school or education provision and to reduce exclusions. The vast majority of Y11 had attendance above 90% and had no exclusions during their final year. The charts below show the relationships between attendance and exclusions and how well the students met their targets.

Attendance and outcomes


Exclusions and outcomes
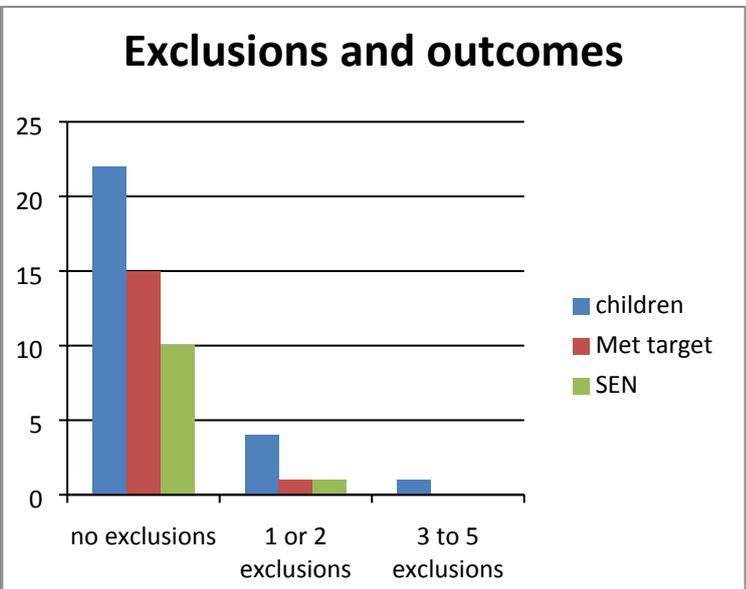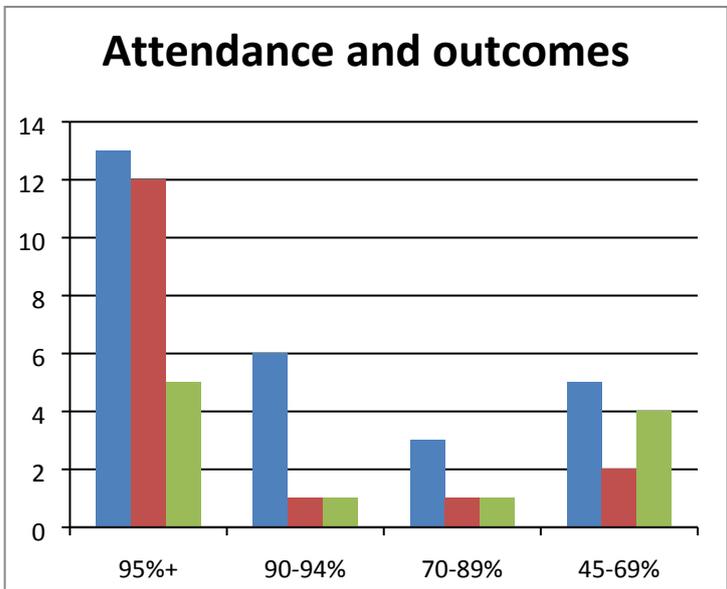
The child with 95%+ attendance who did not meet their target was at a special school and achieved 100% attendance but took a mixture of GCSE and other qualifications and so could not reach the target set at the start of the year.

The charts also show the number of children in each category with and EHCP. In some cases attendance was reduced due to pupils being on reduced timetables or moving between schools but for some it was a result of children not wishing to engage in their education plan although this was modified and adapted to be accessible. Three children in the lowest attendance group were in residential provision and another in custody.

Most children did not have any exclusions and were able to focus on their education. Schools were reluctant to exclude and did so only as a last resort in cases of aggression to other pupils or staff. The pupil who had five exclusions was supported by the school to have a modified programme of work experience and off-site learning. This provided a settled environment for the end of Y11 and although the pupil did not reach their target they gained an apprenticeship with the work placement and are now doing well.

Care Experience and outcomes

It is recognised that a child's care experience will have a significant impact on how they perform at school. High levels of anxiety about where and with whom they will be living, contact or lack of contact birth families or a low sense of self worth caused by years of abuse will all resilience and tenacity needed to meet the demands of GCSE exams. Despite this, with consistent support and adults who understand them, some children manage and succeed. The charts below show the outcomes and progress for children based on three factors which have been found significant although caution is needed before making any generalisations due to the small numbers involved.

Time in care and outcomes

Number of placements and outcomes

SDQ score and outcomes
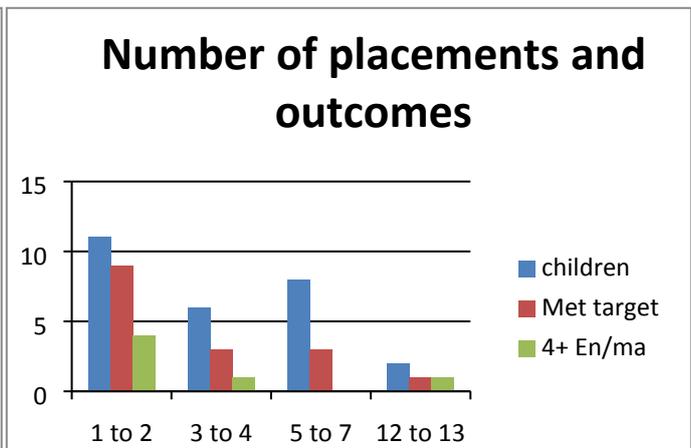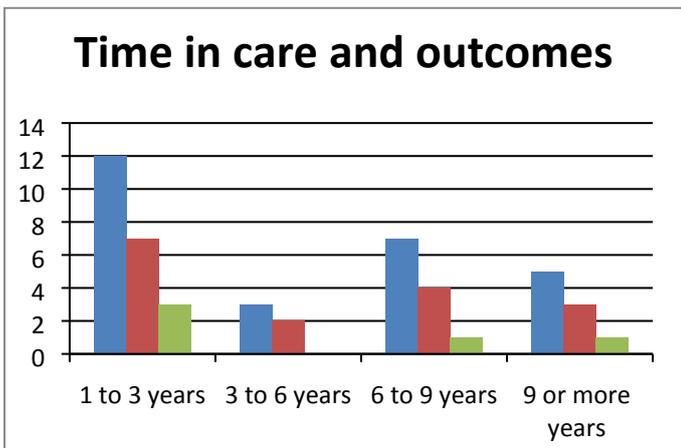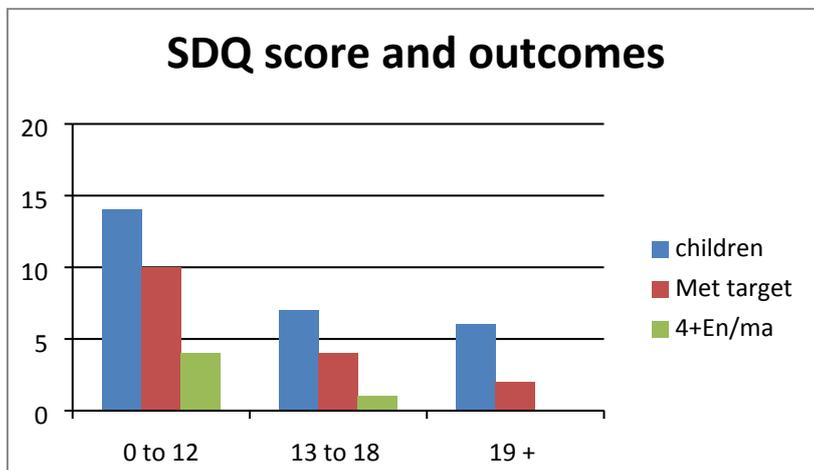
Although not statistically significant, this data suggests that the greatest influence was the number of placements. 82% of children with 1 or 2 placements met their targets but this fell to 50% for 3-4 placements and then 40% for those with 5 or more placements. The proportion of children meeting their targets was broadly similar regardless of length of time in care. The Strengths and d Difficulties Questionnaire also appears to be significant with the percentage of those reaching their targets falling from 71% to 57% to 33% for each of the scorer ranges.

Progression

All pupils were supported by their advisor to identify and plan for a suitable post-16 option. In some cases this was difficult as young people were moving areas but as of early October all except three were settled into education, training or self development activities with the three who were not engaged having intensive support from the Virtual School and Youth Support Service.

Actions 2017/18
- **Utilise tutor to give additional sessions where needed, especially for pupils on alternative programmes**
- **Develop rigorous tracking for pupils not in mainstream, ensuring that this includes mock exams and entry for qualifications which will support progress post-16**

5.5 Post-16

The Virtual School works with Social Care to provide support for all post-16 cared for and care leavers and will help and advise on any case but focusses primarily on young people in the two years after ending statutory school education. These would be in school years 12 and 13 and under the Raising of Participation Age are expected to be in education, employment, training, engagement or volunteering. Social Care lead on supporting and monitoring those above this age, i.e. young people who become 19, 20 and 21. From 2016 the DfE have started reporting activity using the same age groups for care leavers although this is only experimental as not all councils have full data or have submitted to the DfE.

Activity of Y12/13 at July 2107
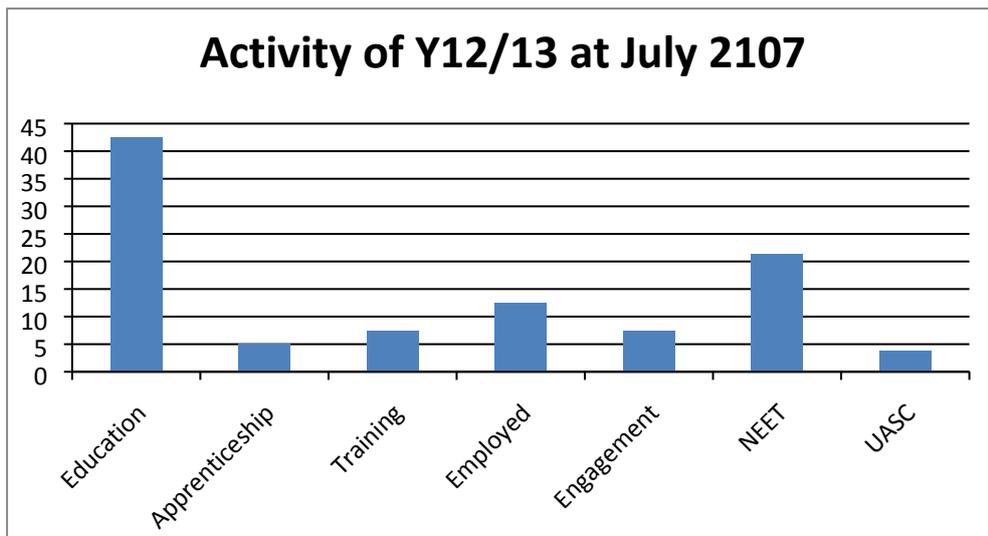
There is considerable flux within this cohort but the chart above shows the activity of Y12/13 as of the end of July.

Young people are supported wherever possible to continue in education and this year thirty four young people completed Y13. Support was available when requested and since April a post-16 tutor has been employed to provide help with coursework, exam preparation and getting into college. He has worked with eight NEET young people and has succeeded in helping five move from NEET into re-engagement programme including maths/English tuition. Support plans are still in place for the remaining young people and other who require additional support. The Cygnet programme which aims to develop employability and workskills has move from Work Force Development to the Virtual School since April 2017. A tender was drawn up and Total People were awarded the contract to start in April. 12 young people have been referred to the programme with 11 requesting the initial interview. Some have decided that they do not wish to continue or work with Total People and so 5 have continued to the next step. As a result of this feedback from young people the specification has been revised to allow more flexibility and this will operate from October in way which will focus more on work experience than centre based learning.

The chart below shows the outcomes of the young people who were in education in 2017.

Outcomes 2017
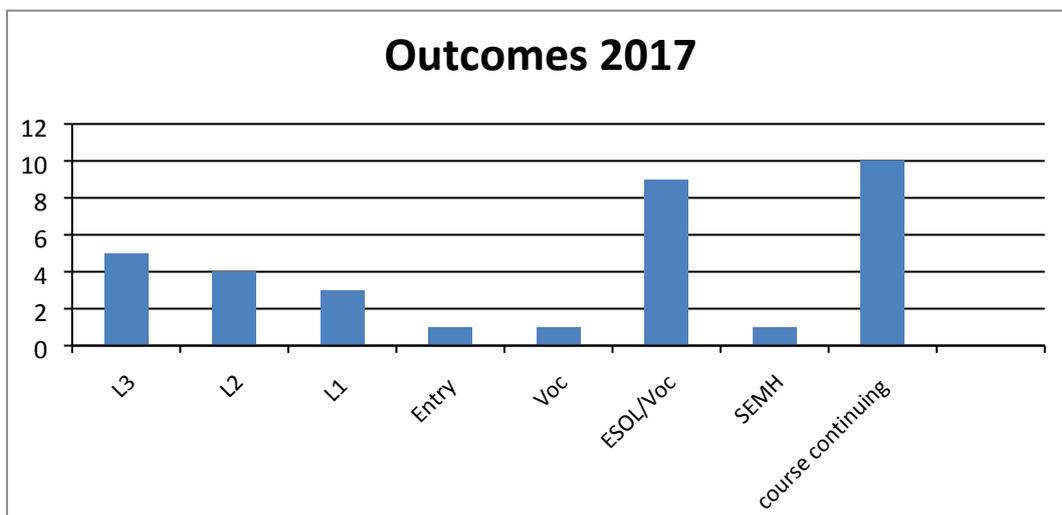
As a result of the closer working with through the 16+ multi-agency SPEED group, data collection and therefore monitoring has become more focussed. Since Jan 2017 data is collected separately for cared for and care leaver young people and

As the post-16 cohort vary each year the numbers undertaking each level or type of course differ between years. Most of the young people have chosen to study vocational based courses with only one undertaking Levels as their L3 option. This student had extensive support but was not able to complete all their exams and so gained only 1 pass but has identified a foundation course as the progression route for next year.

All other students on L3 courses achieved their qualifications and are now looking at options for employment with training or higher education. One of these students gained a Student of the Year Award. All students who gained Level 2 (L2) qualifications will progress to L3 courses with the exception of one student who has opted to complete another L2 in a different vocational area.

Many of the young people with SEN have completed L1, vocational or entry level courses and will progress into further formal or informal education settings.

Despite intensive support, three young people have left college this year. One moved to another college nearer to the new home but has not settled and so is now seeking employment while another has worked with the Cygnet programme and post-16 tutor to continue her GCSE studies to increase her grade from last year before starting a different course in September.

During the year seven asylum seeking young people have been supported. The Virtual School have developed a close link with colleges, particularly South Cheshire College, to ensure that all young people are able to join in with an appropriate ESOL course and have the additional support needed to be able to participate and gain from this. All except one of the young people on these courses have made good progress and will transfer to the next level in September. This includes one student who gained the Student of the Year Award for ESOL (English for Speakers of other languages) students. One young person left Cheshire East to live with relatives in London and has since left college and is proving difficult to engage. A member of the Virtual School has been seconded to Social Care to provide daily support to these young people to assist them in accessing education and integrating into their new lives. This is proving very successful and means that any emerging issues with education, health, housing etc. can be swiftly addressed.

Actions 2017/18
- **Monitor the impact of the post-16 tutor and revised Cygnet programme**
- **Establish targeted support programme for young people without good pass in English and maths**

6 Higher Educations

All young people are encouraged to consider university as an option and are invited to taster days and events. The uptake for these has been low for the care leaver specific event, possibly because young people do not wish to be singled out and would rather attend with their school visits.

The chart below shows the total number of young people in Higher Education and the number of starters. Although this has decreased over recent years the latest national data shows that Cheshire East has 10% of 19-21 year olds in HE compared with 6% in the North West and the whole of England.

The Virtual School will support young people with their applications and this year has provided funding where additional audition costs have been incurred.
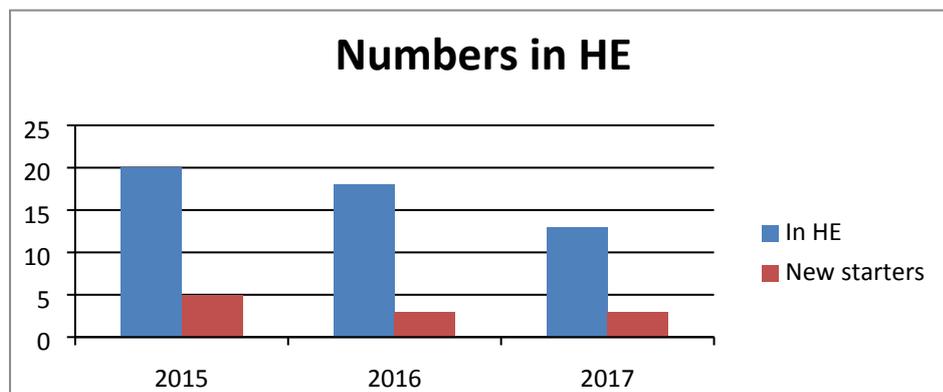

Actions 2017/18
- **Work with local universities to arrange bespoke visits in specific subject areas – initially art/media and health/social care**

7 Cared for children involved with Youth Offending Team (YOT)

The Youth Offending Education Advisor works 50% of her time within the Virtual School. AS well as a focus on cases which overlap with YOT she also has a small caseload of other cases.
The chart below shows the ages of these young people and the number of the young people in each group who have or had an EHCP, the proportions of which are much higher than those for the whole cared for population. For this reason the Advisor has made it a priority to build up links with the SEN team and to ensure that processes can be followed swiftly and effectively for any transitions for these young people.
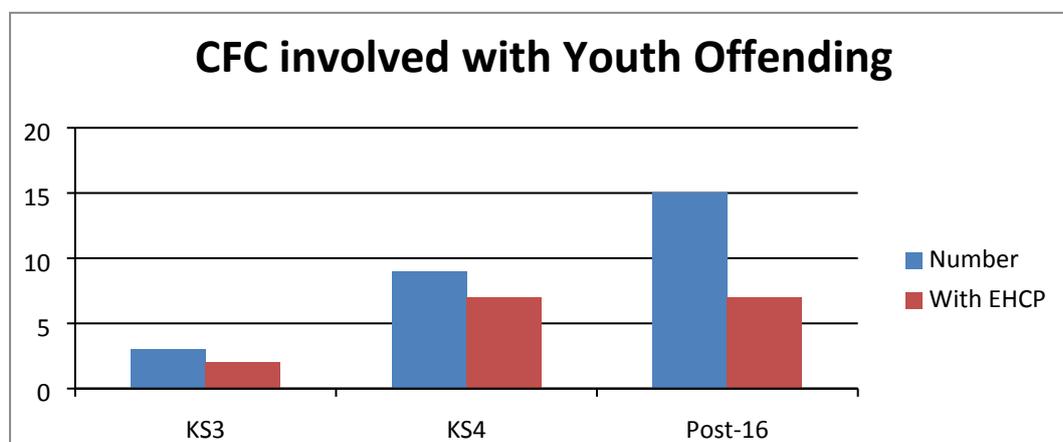
The table below shows the outcomes and activities of the young people age 16 and above in July 17 and also in Sept 17. The Virtual School and Youth Support work together for young people who are

NEET to try and re-engage them with positive activities. Tuition and Cygnet have been offered but these young people are looking for paid employment although they may not have the skills needed by employers. It is hoped that the revised Cygnet with a greater focus on work experience will be something that these young people will wish to take part in.

Age	Activity and outcomes July 17	Activity Sept 17
KS4	3 Alternative provision 2 Special School 2 Residential school/home 1 Hospital 1 Custody	2 special school 3 independent school 1 college 1 hospital 2 training
Post 16+	5 Employed 5 Training/education 5 NEET	3 employed 6 Training/education 3 NEET

Actions 2017/18
- **Youth Justice Service to provide quarterly data on engagement of pre and post-16**
- **Joint supervision of shared advisor**

8 Development Priorities for 2017-18

In addition to the specific actions included in the various sections of the report the Virtual School has identified the following priority areas and key actions to be addressed this year.

1. Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of Pupil Premium.
   Monitor requests and impact of Pupil Premium
   Increase targeted support and interventions for pupils in Y6, 11 and post-16

2. Identify and implement changes resulting from the Social Care Bill which includes Virtual School Headteacher to have responsibilities for previously looked after children as well as looked after and to promote mental health and attachment awareness in schools
   Summarise changes in draft statutory guidance and produce models for implementation and impact
   Evaluate models and make changes to staffing structure and use of funding

3. Monitor the impact of commissioned and front line services through engagement, progress and outcomes
   Work with procurement and commissioning to develop monitoring process for commissioned services
   Increase direct supervision of commissioned service and clarify expectations to be achieved

4. Develop a self- assessment tool for use with and by schools to improve their practice and support for cared for children

Identify schools where progress is below expected and use self-evaluation to plan for improvement
Share best practice where pupils achieve above expectations