

## **Report of the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on November 8<sup>th</sup> 2017**

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### **Subject:**

**Annual Report of the Virtual School for Children Looked After**

### **Summary statement:**

This is the statutory annual report of the Virtual School Head and Virtual School for the City of Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council. This report highlights the work of the Virtual School; the Local Authority and partner agencies to improve outcomes for children in care from the early years up to targeted care leavers aged 25. The report covers progress and attainment at all key stages. The report also outlines the activity of the Virtual School Head Teacher, the Virtual School and the 2017 educational outcomes of children in care. It reflects on achievements and identifies areas of development to achieve the best outcomes for children in our care.

Data contained in this report, is for children who were in the care of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District council) for a year or more as at 31 March 2017.

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**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**  
**Children's Services**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This is the statutory annual report of the Virtual School Head and Virtual School (VS) for the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (CBMDC). This report highlights the work of the Virtual School; the Local Authority and partner agencies to improve outcomes for children in care from the early years up to targeted care leavers aged 25. The report covers progress and attainment at all key stages. It further covers destinations post 16 and, most importantly, how the voice of the child and young person is considered to influence practice.

## **2 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to outline the activity of the Virtual School Head Teacher, the Virtual School and the 2017 educational outcomes of children in care. It reflects on achievements and identifies areas of development to achieve the best outcomes for children in our care. Data contained in this report, is for children who were in the care of the CBMDC for a year or more as at 31 March 2017.

### **2.1 Contextual Information at a National and Local Level**

#### **Numbers in Care**

Nationally the number of looked after children has continued to rise; it has increased steadily over the last nine years. At 31 March 2017, there were 72,670 looked after children in England, an increase of 2,220 (3%) on 2016, and an increase of 4,600 on 2013. At 31 March 2017, 62 children per 10,000 of the population were looked after, up from 60 children per 10,000 in the previous four years. In the CBMDC there were 927 children looked after at 31 March 2017, which is a 9.3% increase on last year's number of 848.

2.2 In Bradford, the rate of looked after children per 10,000 population aged 0-17 is at 61% and this has been slowly decreasing since 2012 by effective management of the Looked After population. This compares favourably with statistical neighbours rate of 77.7%.

2.3 In the CBMDC there has been a 16% increase in the number of children becoming Looked After at 31 March. 351 children started to be looked after, which is an increase on last year's figure of 302. 281 ceased to be looked after compared to 331 last year. The proportion of 0-4 and 5-9 year olds becoming looked after has remained fairly stable over the last 3 years, however there has been a fall in the proportion of 10-15 year olds becoming looked after, 23% in 2017 compared to 30% in 2016. There has also been a

significant increase in the proportion of 16+ becoming looked after, an increase from 7% in 2016 to 14% in 2017. The increase appears to be due to a rise in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children starting to be looked after, given the increases are largely seen amongst those aged 16 and over, and amongst those with a primary category of need of 'absent parenting'.

## 2.4 Care Placements

Nationally, three-quarters of children looked after are placed with foster carers with the number of children in foster care has continued to rise in 2016. There were 51,850 children in foster placements at 31 March 2016, up from 50,030 in 2012. Of the looked after children who were in a foster placements, 62% were placed inside the council boundary and almost one in six (16%) were being fostered by a relative or friend. 320 children (1%) were in placements where the carer is also an approved adopter (fostering for adoption) or where they were subject to concurrent planning.

2.5 Ensuring Children Looked After (CLA) and young people are in stable placements is a key priority for CBMDC. At 31 March 2017, 69% of children and young people were in long term stable and secure placements. This compares favourably with the England average of 68%. Short term placement stability remains fairly stable; 9.8% of children and young people had 3 or more placements in the year compared to 9.5% last year. This compares favourably with the England average of 10%.

2.6 The numbers placed with CBMDC foster carers, is significant both for communication and the training of foster carers but also because of what research tells us.

2.7 One of the key findings in the November 2015 research 'The educational progress of looked after children in England: linking care and educational data' related to the time spent in care concluded that:

<b>Young people who have been in longer term care do better than those in need but not in care and better than those who have only been in short term care- so it appears that care may protect them educationally.</b>
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Children whose final placement was in foster or kinship care, did better at GCSEs than those in residential care or other types of placement. To some extent this reflected the length of the final placement – the longer the placement, the better the outcomes.

## 2.8 SEND and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

Nationally, 2.8% of the total pupil population of children have a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEND) or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Children in care are:

- 4 times more likely to have special educational needs than all children
- 10 times more likely to have a statement of educational need or an EHCP

2.9 Nationally, this equates to 9,630 children in care (27.3%). In 2015, 61% of children in care had a special educational need, compared to 50% of children in need and 15% of all children. When reviewing primary need, social, emotional and mental health was the most frequently for children in care.

2.10 Currently there are 596 CLA in years Reception to Year 11; 456 are in Bradford, 140 are out of authority. There are 286 young people within this age range in the care of CBMDC who have a SEND. Of these, 114 have a statement of SEND/EHCP (19.1%), 172 have SEN Support (28.8%).

## 2.11 The Role of the Virtual School

As Corporate Parents, the Virtual School and Virtual School Head have a leading role in promoting the educational achievement of children in its care. However, to successfully meet the aspirational targets we have set involves a collective responsibility between the local authority, partner agencies and all schools. Education that encourages high aspirations and individual achievements, with a minimum disruption, is central to improving immediate and long term outcomes for children in our care.

## 2.12 Structure

### Staff in the Virtual School from 01/09/2017

Name	Title
Ken Poucher	Virtual School Headteacher – VSH (.75) Lead Area Achievement Officer (.25)
Peter Gibbons	Deputy Headteacher Virtual School
Rita Kumar	Acting Deputy Headteacher Virtual School
Louise Coates-Black	Specialist Teacher for CLA
Caroline Dolan	Specialist Teacher for CLA
John Whittock	Specialist Teacher for CLA (8 hours per week)
Fiona Wood	Data Collection & Analyst Officer (p/t)

Joanne Henry	Data Collection & Analyst Officer (p/t)
Yvett Green	Data Collection & Analyst Officer (p/t)

## 2.13 What are the Virtual School's Priorities?

The Virtual School's priorities for improvement are directly linked to the targets included within the overarching 'Bradford Children and Young People and Families Plan'.

### **Outcomes**

- EYFS – increase the number of children achieving GLD (Good Level of Development)
- KS1 – Increase the numbers of children making or exceeding age related expectations and/or reaching targets in all four strands
- KS1 – Improving reading to impact on the phonics screening score
- KS2 - Increase the numbers of children making or exceeding age related expectations in reading and RWM (Reading/Writing/Maths) combined.
- KS3 – Ensure smooth transition from KS2 to KS3
- KS4 - Maintain the increase in the numbers of young people achieving both English and Maths combined at grade 4+ and increase the Attainment 8 and EBACC outcomes.

### **Leadership and Management**

- Further enhance and develop communications with schools and post 16 providers, settings and children
- To track and support the improvement of CLA progress using data analysis and precision intervention
- To improve the quality of practice through high quality PEPs (Personal Education Plan) and Pathway Plans effectively delivered and monitored.
- To keep an updated data base of the latest Ofsted outcomes and all the schools attended by Bradford and Out of Local Authority.
- To develop the role of key personnel linked to the Virtual School

### **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

- Develop social workers and foster carers knowledge and understanding of education to support learning
- Develop schools and designated teacher knowledge and understanding of developmental trauma through targeted training

### **Early Years**

- Improve the tracking of children in Early Years setting to evidence accelerated learning through using data analysis and precision intervention.
- Enhance the scrutiny of all children's learning and progress and a method of judging the quality of learning that will impact on KS1 outcomes.

### **Post 16**

- Improve systems to track progress, attendance and aspirations of post 16 CLA with the Leaving Care Team and wider teams.
- Develop additional employment training opportunities for CLA and care leavers
- Explore how further links can be made with further education (HE) institutions so CLA and care leavers are supported to find establishments that understand and work to meet the needs of CLA and care leavers.

### **Joint Working**

- To work closely with residential homes and settings to ensure multi-professional responses to education matters
- Consider the advisory and guidance role of the VS in relation to adoption (as per 2016 white paper)

## **2.14 Who does the Virtual School report to and how is it accountable?**

The Virtual School is structurally within 'Education, Employment and Skills' but is geographically situated within 'Children's Social Care' in order that it can support and work closely with the LAC Social Workers. The Virtual School self-evaluates against its own service plan, the local authority post OFSTED action plan and the over-arching local authority 'Bradford Children and Young People and Families Plan'. Reporting arrangements and challenge are provided through its own 'Management Committee' that includes: a head teacher; a social care service manager, Lead Officer for Child Protection and a foster carer. The Virtual School Head reports regularly to: the Deputy Director (Education, Employment & Skills); Deputy Director (Children's Social Care); Primary Strategic Lead, Management Committee and the LA Corporate Parenting Panel on performance and impact. Regular meetings are held between Virtual School staff and the Primary Strategic Lead within Education, Employment and Skills in the same way as head teachers of maintained schools are supported and challenged.

- 2.15 The Virtual School Head is also Lead Area Achievement Officer for Bradford South, the assigned Achievement Officer to a small number schools and the LA Moderation Manager for KS1 and KS2.

## 2.16 How does the Virtual School Ensure the Voice of Children and Young People Influences Practice?

The wishes and feelings of each pupil are captured on their PEP where there is a section to be completed by each child or young person. Children in care also have the opportunity to have their views captured through Viewpoint and also through the LAC review process. There are members from the Children in Care Council on the Corporate Parenting Panel

## 2.17 Who is on the Roll of the Virtual School?

### Numbers on Roll

Bradford Children Looked After for 12 months or more at 31 March 2017																		
Year Group	-4	-3	-2	-1	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Number	13	19	18	13	24	24	23	29	30	42	47	57	41	56	56	65	76	34
Total 667																		

**NB** Once a Young Person reaches the age of 18 they cease to have Child in Care status hence the lower numbers in the equivalent of year 13.

## 2.18 Number of pupils by phase and location, including numbers of pupils placed in and out of authority (OOA)

2016/17	Primary	Secondary	Total
Bradford CLA (5-16) (Reception to Year 11)	219	275	494
Educated in Bradford	170	196	366
Educated OOA	49	79	128
Mainstream in Bradford	159	154	313
Mainstream OOA	46	56	102
Other in Bradford	11	42	53
Other OOA	3	23	26

## 2.19 Overview of children by year group, gender, FSM6, DSEN & EAL, July 2017

### SEND

In 2017, out of the 494 children (R-11) who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months, 275 (55.1%), the national average being

57.3%. There were 110 pupils (22.5%) who had an EHCP or Statement of Special Educational Needs, nationally this was 27%.

### Primary

Year Group (Total)	Boys	Girls	FSM 6	EHCP	EAL
1	9	15	3	1	2
2	11	12	9	3	2
3	16	13	13	4	2
4	16	14	13	5	3
5	19	23	17	11	4
6	33	14	15	14	4
Total in Primary	104	91	70	38	14

### Secondary

Year Group (Total)	Boys	Girls	FSM6	EHCP	EAL
7	30	27	20	15	1
8	24	17	17	14	2
9	32	25	23	13	7
10	25	31	17	16	6
11	26	39	28	18	3
12	41	35	25	19	10
13	19	15	8	7	4
Total in Secondary	197	189	138	87	33

## 2.20 Identifying a Wider Cohort that the Virtual School Supports

Identifying the numbers in the care of CBMDC for a fixed period is not representative of the numbers supported by the Virtual School. There were 925 children in our care at the end of March 2017 and there were 1195 in our care at some point between April 2016 and the end of March 2017.

## 2.21 Those Adopted from Care

With specific reference to those who left care under an adoption order and who are of compulsory school age: The January 2017 school census figures indicated 925 children were attending schools in CBMDC. 42 children (15%) were adopted at 31 March 2017 this is a decrease on last year of 72 (21%) and is in line with the national average of 15%.

## 2.22 The Department for Education (DFE) have indicated that the numbers adopted from care are much higher than the census indicates. Adoptive parents may choose not to inform schools that their child is adopted from



care. In such cases the pupil premium plus payment for those adopted from care will not be claimed by schools on their census.

## 2.23 **Special Guardianship**

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, 34 children ceased to be CLA due to a Special Guardianship order and 2 children ceased to be CLA due to a Residents Order/Child Arrangement Order.

## 2.24 **How well have our Children and Young People Achieved?**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

% Good Level of Development	2014	2015	2016	2017
Bradford CLA	17%	27%	29%	50%
Bradford All	55%	62%	66%	67.6%
National All	60%	66%	69%	70.7%

There were 24 children in Reception who had been in the care of Bradford from 1 April 2016 until 31 March 2017. 18 of these were in Bradford Schools, 6 were out of authority.

- 2.25 Those that did not achieve the expected levels were mainly due to not achieving the standard in personal, social and emotional development, where this links directly with their emotional needs and the insecure attachment issues which in turn affects the prime area of communication, language and literacy (CLL). There are no national statistics for children in care at Foundation Stage, due to most LAs having very small (and therefore potentially identifiable) numbers.

Within this cohort of 24 pupils 1 had an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), 3 had SEN (Special Educational Needs) support, 2 were EAL (English as an Additional Language)..

## 2.26 **Key Stage 1**

### **Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in Phonics**

Achieving Phonics Standard (Year 1)	2014	2015	2016	2017
Bradford CLA	52%	71%	64%	63%
National CLA	53%	55%	61%	NYA
Bradford All	71%	75%	79%	80%
National All	74%	77%	81%	81%

In 2017 there were 24 CLA pupils in Year 1. Of the 19 results received 12 children (63%) have met the standard (32+),

### Key stage 1 results summary

		2016				2017			
		Nat	Bfd	Nat CLA	Bfd CLA	Nat	Bfd	Nat CLA	Bfd CLA
Reading	EXS	74%	69.6%	49.8%	57.7%	75.8%	71.6%	NYA	55.0%
	GDS	23.5%	17.8%	9.6%	3.8%	23.5%	17.8%	NYA	NYA
Writing	EXS	65.5%	63.6%	37.0%	42.3%	65.5%	63.6%	NYA	46.0%
	GDS	13.3%	11.0%	3.7%	0.0%	13.3%	11.0%	NYA	NYA
Maths	EXS	72.6%	70.1%	45.6%	42.3%	72.6%	70.1%	NYA	46.0%
	GDS	17.8%	14.3%	5.5%	0.0%	17.8%	14.3%	NYA	NYA
Science	EXS	81.8%	75.8%	58.1%	69.2%	81.8%	75.8%	NYA	NYA
RWM	EXS	60.3%	58.2%	32.3%	34.6%	60.3%	58.2%	NYA	46.0%
	GDS	8.9%	7.1%	2.0%	0.0%	8.9%	7.1%	NYA	NYA

### 2.27 Key Stage 2 Results summary

		2016				2017			
		Nat	Bfd	Nat CLA	Bfd CLA	Nat	Bfd	Nat CLA	Bfd CLA
Reading	EXS	66%	56%	41.0%	34.7%	71%	65.1%	NYA	37.0%
	GDS	19%	12.1%	6.7%	10.2%	25%	19.1%	NYA	NYA
GPS	EXS	72%	68.2%	43.7%	49.0%	77%	74.4%	NYA	43.0%
	GDS	23%	17.0%	7.1%	10.2%	31%	27.5%	NYA	NYA
Maths	EXS	70%	65.2%	41.0%	38.8%	75%	71.8%	NYA	39.0%
	GDS	17%	12.9%	3.7%	8.2%	23%	19.2%	NYA	NYA
Writing	EXS	74%	73.5%	45.7%	44.9%	76%	73.7%	NYA	34.0%
	GDS	17%	13.1%	3.4%	2.0%	18%	15.4%	NYA	NYA
RWM	EXS	53	45.7%	25.1%	16.3%	61%	56.0%	NYA	23.0%
	GDS	5	3.1%	0.7%	2.0%	9%	6.5%	NYA	NYA

### 2.28 Key Stage 4 Results Summary

The provisional KS4 results will be published by DfE in the Statistical First Release in late October 2017 and revised results will be published by DfE in the Statistical First Release and Secondary Performance Tables in January 2018.

	Attainment 8	Progress 8	Basics (%)	EBacc (%)
Bradford LAC	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
National LAC	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
Gap:	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA

	2017			
	Nat	Bfd	Nat CLA	Bfd CLA
Attainment 8	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
Progress 8	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
Basics	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
EBacc	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
Triple Science	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA
5+Inc E&M	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA

#### Ofsted feedback of a Bradford Secondary School (May 2017)

“Leaders work tirelessly to make sure that the welfare of pupils is on utmost priority. Excellent relationships have been established with other agencies and professionals including the VSHT for CLA. Due to these quality relationships, pupils including the most vulnerable and children who looked after by the LA, attend school regularly and are making strong progress.”

## 2.29 Key Stage 5 Achievements and Areas of Further Participation

### Key Stage 5 Outcomes 2017

- In 2016 the existing Key Stage 5 (KS5) performance table measures were replaced. Results are now published relating to four cohorts of students in each school or provider (where applicable): A level, academic, applied general and tech level.
- As a result of the changes to performance table measures and methodology, 2016 and 2017 results are not directly comparable with previous years. The KS5 outcomes will be included in the March report.

2.30 Since 2014, all young people are required to stay in some form of education until they are 18. In 2015 the DfE introduced new statutory guidance for the provision of careers guidance and inspiration in schools. This now requires schools to secure independent careers advice for students as well as providing a range of activities which help to prepare them for working life, including greater contact with employers, motivational speakers and

increased contact for pupils with further and higher education providers. Young people are becoming better informed about their options for post 16 learning and there is now a high take up of further education.

- 2.31 The Virtual School reviews post statutory school age PEPs to monitor the progress of all young people aged 16 -18, including those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) We work closely with Leaving Care and LEAP (Learning Employment Advice Preparation) who work with care leavers to access and engage them in a range of employment, education and training opportunities which may not have been possible previously. The post 16 PEPs are also an effective method of ensuring that young people are accessing the 16-19 bursary.

2.32 **How the Virtual School and Local Authority has Monitored, Supported, Challenged and Intervened to Improve the Educational Outcomes for Children in Care**

**The importance of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

- 2.33 PEP monitoring has been further strengthened this year with the Virtual School team now quality assuring 100% of completed PEPs and team managers checking draft PEPs. This decision has streamlined the process of completed PEPs being uploaded onto the data base Liquid Logic Computer System (LCS).
- 2.34 Social Workers are responsible for writing the PEP in preparation for CLA Reviews. However, the VS Team asks schools to lead on the identification of personalised targets linked to actions and expected outcome. Schools are required to show the progress that is being made by each pupil, particularly progress in reading, writing and mathematics. It has been noticeable in the last year that the quality of target setting from schools has been more relevant and in many cases more aspirational.
- 2.35 The completion rates of PEPs are reported weekly to the Deputy Director with team managers accountable to the Service Manager for performance for completion rates. The expectation is a 98% completion rate.
- 2.36 The Virtual School has written and distributed guidance on the completion of the PEP for the benefit of: social workers; designated teachers; foster carer and parents as well as other professionals. Advice is provided at an age appropriate level for children and young people. The Virtual School encourages children and young people to attend their PEP but acknowledges the most important factor is the child or young person's wishes and feelings are noted and influence decision making. The PEP guidance sets out

minimum requirements before a PEP should be finalised, this includes specific advice to social workers:

- PEP gives a range of parent/carer and professionals some insight into the child's developmental and educational needs.
- There is some evidence that future transitions are planned.
- If the child's development raises concerns there is evidence that the provision is implementing actions and working in partnership with carers and other services including some timescales, specific individuals and effective intervention strategies and working in partnership with carers and co-ordinating with other services.
- Provision is in place to meet identified learning needs.
- The child's voice is recorded and is considered alongside next steps and adult actions.
- All aspects of the PEP are completed.
- Next steps are appropriate and in line with the summary of learning, development and additional needs.
- Pupil Premium (where eligible) is evidenced and outcomes improved.
- Children's educational progress is in line with their end of year target and their current progress (data uploaded to Bradford Schools On-line)
- Includes SMART short term targets, including some monitoring of progress of each of the areas identified against developmental and educational needs
- All aspects of the PEP are completed in detail and is used/ viewed as a working/ evolving document.
- Success criteria shows some measurable impact on development.
- Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) (where eligible) is costed and evidenced towards the target.
- PEP review document completed in detail.

### **2.37 The Distribution and Impact of the Pupil Premium Plus**

The local authority is responsible for paying PPP to all Bradford schools, including Academies, and also to schools outside the authority that have Bradford CLA on roll. The Virtual School Headteacher determines the level of funding to be retained centrally and what proportion of PPP are to be delegated to schools. The Virtual School Head is accountable to the Deputy Director for Education, Employment and Skills for monitoring the impact of the grant. Since 1st April 2015 in agreement with Bradford Schools' Forum the Virtual School for Children Looked After has retained 25% of the Pupil Premium Plus (PPP).

### **2.38 The creation of the Virtual School through the retention of 25% of PPP+ has enabled the Virtual School staff to:**

- Attend PEP meetings in partnership with the allocated SW (Social Worker) and CW to ensure education remains at the heart of the PEP process
- Ensure a consistent and aligned PEP format across the district and its education providers
- Ensure VS attendance at the first PEP meeting as soon as a child comes into care and fulfil the LA duty to ensure a PEP is in place within the first 10 days of the child coming into care
- Create professional networks for Designated Teachers for LAC within central LA resources facilitated through regional networks and CPD events
- Ensure that every school has a link VS contact to facilitate and support meetings and enable the LA to provide a highly flexible and responsive resource to schools to support LAC pupils in their settings
- Monitor PPP+ spending and ensure it is used appropriately within the requirements of the grant and spent appropriately in relation to the child's needs
- Signpost schools to other agencies to ensure a coordinated and multi-professional approach
- Provide additional capacity to ensure representation of the VS team at wider forums within the LA eg Case Review Panel; Attendance and Foster Panel meetings etc.

2.39 The creation of a bank of VS Associates to support the educational and pastoral needs of CLA has:

- Enabled the Virtual School to provide a swift and rapid response to urgent matters and issues as they arise in relation to its Looked After Children Cohort
- Be pro-active in planning for the needs of its pupils
- Allocate associate staff to intervene to support the educational attainment of young people who may not be attending school or need a further individualised teaching and learning approach
- Close gaps in learning and impact on progress and attainment
- Minimise exclusions and add stability to the educational placement of the looked after child by offering consistency and familiarity in maintenance of adult relationships
- Add additional capacity to schools over and above its own school resources to support the needs of its looked after pupils.

2.40 Other key spending:

- Where schools have been able to demonstrate that additional funding is needed to support the CLA further to close gaps in learning, additional funding has been allocated on a need basis. This has been in addition to the £1400 PPP+ payment

- Provide 1:1 support through an adult prior to the EHCP plan
- Provide immediate funding to support the emotional and pastoral needs of children as soon as they come into care, short term care, low incidence care and those who are leaving care and on the edge of care
- Provide intervention eg Play Therapy for those young people who can't access CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) because they do not fulfil the criteria for the allocation of a CAMHS assessment
- Support the LA SEND team to support home tuition
- Celebrate the attainment and achievement of looked after children through an annual celebration event

2.41 From April 2014, maintained schools and non-maintained special schools also attracted PPP for children adopted from care, left care under a Special Guardianship Order or left care under a Residential Order on or after 14 October 1991. Schools receive these payments directly and the Virtual School monitors how this is spent through engagement in the PEP process and liaison with the Designated Teachers.

2.42 Early Years Pupil Premium was introduced in April 2015. This is to support closing the funding gap between the additional support disadvantaged children receive at age 2 and the additional support they then receive in school from the existing school-age pupil premium. Providers receive £300 per year, or £0.53 per child per hour, for each eligible child.

2.43 Post 16 CLA are eligible for a bursary of £1,200 if their course lasts for 30 weeks or more. The Leaving Care Service (LCS) is responsible for the administration and for monitoring the impact of this grant.

2.44 From April 2018 the Pupil Premium Plus Grant is being increased from its current rate, £1900 to £2300. The proportion retained by the Virtual School has been agreed with the School's Forum.

#### 2.45 **Training, Advice and Communication**

The Virtual School has a role to ensure that professionals working with children in care have the right knowledge, information and skills to enable them to fulfil their role in contributing to improving the educational outcomes of children in care. The Virtual School offers a termly central programme and bespoke continuing professional development (CPD) training to all schools, Designated Teachers, Governors and Social Care Services.

2.46 During the course of 2016/17 an overview of key training that was delivered to schools and educational settings includes:

- Attachment Theory/Aware Training
- Implementing a whole school approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD)
- Key Adult Training for staff working with pupils who are looked after
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Signs of Safety Briefings
- Using Reflective Language to Manage Interactions

2.47 Training is well attended by both primary and secondary school designated teachers and evaluations indicate consistently good feedback.

2.48 Members of the Virtual School have their own CPD requirements met through both in-house and external providers. CPD training attended over the year has been extensive and includes:

- Attachment Lead Training
- Signs of Safety Advanced Practitioner
- Key Adult Training BSS
- FASD Training
- Implementing a whole school approach to Emotional Well-Being
- Safeguarding Training
- EHCP Conversion Training
- CSE Training
- Working with Children in Public Care
- LAC and Care Leavers Conference 3/11/16
- VSHT Network
- NAVSH National Conference

#### 2.49 **Virtual School Associate Staff**

The role of the Virtual School Associate is to develop and deliver short term interventions in education placements with looked after pupils of all ages who are experiencing difficulties engaging in learning and/or who are at risk of permanent exclusion.

Many of our twenty-nine associates are deployed to actively promote inclusive practices and ensure the education, social, emotional and health development of Virtual School pupils is fully supported. All associates actively promote inclusive practice within the classroom setting to ensure acceptance of all children. Virtual School associate staff add additional capacity to schools over and above its own school resources to support the needs of its children looked after. Feedback from all schools and settings has been 100% positive about the impact of the Associates' work with the young people.



#### Impact statements from schools:

“X was a great asset to have in X's class to help her settle in quickly. She found out about school routines and policies and ensured that she was a role model for X and supported her in learning and following them. Initially she went outside at breaks and lunchtimes to ensure that X was making friends and not on her own. Within lessons X was very intuitive to what was happening for X.”

“X supported staff within our nursery and X; a child with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. X's calm and quite manner helped X to access areas of provision in a supportive way. Through the support of X and the Virtual School, staff we were able to apply their knowledge and expertise to develop well-structured routines and a time table which fully supported X's emerging needs. The Virtual School have been very supportive to school and we have been able to call on their expertise and advice.”

#### **2.50 Head teachers/Senior Leadership**

The Virtual School Team communicate regularly with school senior leadership teams (SLT) when individual CLA are at high risk of disengagement and/or exclusion. This role involves VS advocacy on behalf of the CLA in question, strong challenge for the individual to remain in mainstream education with support in accordance with their needs, offers of VS support and resources, and on-going monitoring. The VSH/DH gets directly involved in such high risk cases, reminding schools of their statutory duties to support our CLA and usually drawing on any evidence re attachment or FASD issues that may be fuelling challenging behaviour that is affecting the CLA's ability to stay in school.

#### **2.51 Governors**

The VSH has established links with Governor Services and has delivered governor training as part of their training package. A further three sessions are planned for 2017/18 and. The governor service is also the advisor and clerk to the VSH on the best mode of governance for the VS.

#### **2.52 Social Workers**

The VS have very strong relationships with social workers. The VS team is sited geographically with the social workers to ensure and there is daily contact between the VS and social workers in relation to a number of CLA in need of education support. Social workers are encouraged to alert the VS of any CLA who come into care to avoid delay in ensuring an up to date PEP is completed.

## **2.53 Independent Reviewing Officers**

The VSH and SW's are in regular contact regarding individual CLA. The VS have worked with the IRO team on the quality of PEPs. The VSH attends strategic meetings led by the Deputy Director where the lead IRO is in attendance. The VS team advise IRO's of any educational concerns and ensure that there is a completed PEP within the last 6 months supporting the 6 monthly LAC review.

## **2.54 Carers**

The VS supports carers in the following ways:

- Day to day contact re queries and concerns.
- Through PEP meetings.
- Training – a number of foster carer education sessions including supporting CLA with specific educational needs e.g. literacy and numeracy are planned and will be delivered by the end of 2018.
- Carers are supported to access appropriate schools for the CLA and encouraged to advocate on the CLA behalf through delegated authority.

## **2.55 Other Services**

The VS has very strong working relationships with a range of other Council Services, and continues to develop these relationships and those with services outside the authority, supporting and challenging officers in their role as the corporate parent. Equally, the VS is highly dependent upon the expertise of these services to support our work by ensuring our CLA are getting the best support needed. These services include, SEN, Behaviour Support Service, Educational Psychology, Admissions & Attendance Service, Connexions, School Improvement, CiCC, other Virtual Schools, alternative educational providers, post 16 providers, the YOT.

## **2.56 How good is the Attendance of Children in our Care?**

The attendance rate of all children in care attending Bradford maintained schools was 96.1%. The overall attendance rate for those of primary school age was 96.8%% and 95.5% for those of secondary age. Attendance for those placed outside of Bradford's boundaries was also strong at 96.9%.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of CBMBC CLA	880	880	845	925
Attendance of CBMDC CLA	95.9%	96.0%	96.0%	96.1%

National CLA	96.1%	96.0%	96.1%	NYA
CBMDC All Pupils	95.8%	95.11%	95.13%	NYA
PA CBMDC CLA	11.9%	8.8%	9.8%	NYA
PA CBMDC All Pupils	2.6%	4.68%	12.47%	NYA
PA National	8.9%	9.0%	9.1%	NYA

## **2.57 Attendance Strategy Group Meetings**

The Virtual School Attendance Strategy Group meets half-termly to monitor the attendance of CLA pupils. The pupils identified and discussed are the lowest LAC attendees whose attendance falls below 20% on a cumulative basis. These forums enable the attendance issues to be identified in relation to poor attendance for the pupils thereby enabling a co-ordinated response and actions to be taken undertaken to address this.

## **2.58 Securing Timely Admissions and Supporting Transitions**

### **Timely admissions**

In securing timely admissions the Virtual School follows the School Admissions Code relating to looked after children and works closely with Bradford's Admissions Team. All schools have oversubscription criteria for each relevant age group and the highest priority is given to looked after children and previously looked after children.

## **2.59 Supporting transitions**

The Virtual School works pro-actively with schools to support pupils transferring from primary to secondary school. The Virtual School provides the respective secondary schools with details about future Y7 admissions relating to children who are looked after. This information supports existing arrangements in the preparation of a robust transition plan between the respective primary and secondary school. Schools are required to call a review before the Easter break with the respective secondary school where information can be exchanged and transition plans can be drawn up. The Transition Plan is the joint responsibility of primary schools and the receiving secondary school. The continued involvement of the Virtual School, post transfer is re-negotiated as part of the transition planning process.

2.60 The Virtual School supports care for post 16 care leavers by:

- Ensuring a PEP is maintained as part of the preparation and review of the pathway plan and builds on the young person's educational progress
- Ensuring each pathway plan review helps the young person to prepare for when he or she ceases to be CLA
- Maintaining links with further education and higher education institutions; Connexions Teams and Apprenticeship providers
- Ensuring each eligible care leaver knows about the Bursary Fund

## 2.61 **Strategies to Support Full Time Provision**

The Virtual School promotes a range of strategies to support full time provision essentially within the context of individual PEP meetings. An overview of key strategies includes:

- Access to a nursery or high quality early years provision which is appropriate to the child's age (for example .pre-school playgroups) and meets his/her identified developmental needs
- On-going catch-up support for those who have fallen behind with school work for example 1:1 tuition outside of school hours and study support.
- Provision of immediate suitable education when a child is not in school
- (e.g. because of temporary or permanent exclusion) The Virtual School facilitates this through Virtual School Associate intervention, school partnerships to ensure stability is maintained in education for the CLA.
- School attendance – monitoring the attendance of CLA and providing swiftly intervention as required to address any issues
- Transition support need where needed, such as when a child begins to attend a new school or returns to school

## 2.62 **Reducing Exclusions**

The Virtual School works closely with schools in being especially sensitive to exclusions where children looked after are on roll. Many schools have reviewed their practice to make use of an alternative to exclusion and make exclusion a last resort. An example of this practice may include internal exclusion which enables the child to continue to learn but may withdraw the pupil from the benefits of social interaction with peers for a fixed period of time.

2.63 To support schools to avoid exclusion where it has concerns about behaviour, the Virtual School works closely with key professionals and schools to instigate a pro-active approach such as:

- Consider what additional assessment and support (such as additional help for the classroom teacher, one-to-one therapeutic work or a suitable alternative placement or funding through the PP+ needs to be put in place to address the needs not to exclude)
- Make any additional arrangements to support the child's on-going education in the event of an exclusion

## 2.64 Avoiding Permanent Exclusions

Nationally, fixed term exclusions are more than five times as likely for Children in Care than for all children. Children in Care are also more likely to have a fixed term exclusion than Children in Need (one and a half times the rate). Nationally, 1 in 10 Children in Care had at least one fixed period of exclusion in 2015, up very slightly from 10.25% the year previously.

2.65 In the CBMDC to avoid a permanent exclusion, schools are asked to avoid excluding any CLA and maintain a full-time offer of learning to the pupil from the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the fixed term exclusion. The Virtual School works closely with social workers and carers to ensure that the correct procedures are followed. There have been occasions where a permanent exclusion has been considered but either a head teacher has reconsidered the options available to them or a decision has been rescinded before governors have met. In some cases the outcome has meant a change of school or educational provision. There has been one permanent exclusion for a CLA pupil since 2011 (due to an incident which involved a significant breach of the school's behaviour policy).

2.66 Fixed term exclusions from 1st September 2016 to the 26th July 2017 (full academic year) are shown below. This data does not include CBMDC children in care attending schools outside of the area. In a small number of cases Virtual School staff have supported these cases that have presented some of the most challenging circumstance for the team.

Primary	Boys	Girls
	Number Excluded	Number Excluded
CBMDC	6	0
Other LA	0	0
Total	6	0

Secondary	Boys	Girls
	Number Excluded	Number Excluded
CBMDC	17	5
Other LA	1	1
Total	18	6

## **2.67 Intervention Projects**

The Imagination Library has been funded for a two year period for children in care aged two, three and four. This year the number of children supported on the CLA database has been almost 200 – in November 2017, 198 will receive a free book. Bradford Council's Virtual School have been supportive and keen on the benefits of the scheme and have paid for the 4-year-olds' books using pupil premium.

2.68 Termly CPD for school based staff which enables the Virtual School to maintain an authoritative voice on the learning needs of CLA and how they can be best met

- Intervention as required in supporting training for social workers to understand schools and school staff to understand social work and the needs of CLA
- Create 'Attachment Aware' schools which enables the raising of awareness of the physiological and psychological effects of early trauma and loss on attachment and resilience and maintaining relationships with peers and adults
- Lead on termly 'Attendance Strategy' Meetings in partnership with key professionals
- Broker commissioned services through Bradford MDC for Educational Psychologist Support, Therapy and Behaviour Support Services
- Intervention to support the school and needs of a CLA through targeted Associate support/deployment
- Provide Musical Tuition for CLA in residential homes
- Challenge and support PEP meetings in educational settings and intervene to ensure PEPs reflect academic attainment and targets

## **2.69 How is the success of children and young people celebrated?**

### **Awards Ceremony**

The Virtual School holds an annual Education Achievement Awards Ceremony for its looked after children. The awards ceremony celebrates the educational achievements of Bradford CLA and awards are presented on the following criteria:

- Actual examination/test results
- Improvement between Key Stage tests or assessments
- Progress
- Effort

2.70 This is a high profile event attended by the Bradford's Lord Mayor and senior Council members.

**3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

None.

**4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

None.

**5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

None.

**6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

None.

**7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

**7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

**7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

**7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

**7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

**7.6 TRADE UNION**

**7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

**7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)**

**8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None.

**9. OPTIONS**

None.

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**10.1** That Members note the contents of the report.

**11. APPENDICES**

APPENDIX 1 - Summary

**12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.



# **APPENDIX 1**

## **Summary**

In September 2016 following a restructure, the Virtual School moved from 'Children's Social Care' to 'Education, Employment and Skills' with the Virtual School Headteacher's (VSH) role forming part of one of the Lead Area Achievement Officer's portfolio on a 0.8 basis but still maintaining a very close working relationship with Children's Social Care and other service areas. The Virtual School Team has been strengthened and expanded since 2014 and now includes: a Deputy Head Teacher, an acting Deputy Headteacher and three specialist teachers (one part time), a team of specialist 'associates' who are used on a casual basis to provide immediate support for children and young people in schools or other placements. The number of associates has been increased for the start of the autumn term 2017 as a result of the impact seen over the last year and feedback from schools. This increase in the capacity of the service has resulted in increased time being spent on providing direct support for individual children through greater contact with social workers, schools, 'associates', carers and the individual child.

Around one sixth of Children Looked After (CLA) received, where necessary, intensive specialist teacher support to facilitate Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings, new into care PEP's, support for in-year school transfers, provision of further educational support such as tuition, one to one support sessions and attendance at team around the child (TAC) and CLA review meetings.

For reporting purposes, both to the Department of Education (DFE) and internally, the progress and performance of children in the care of City of Bradford Council is based on those who have been in care continuously for a minimum period of 12 months. This executive summary covers the achievements for those aged seven (Key Stage 1), aged eleven (Key Stage 2) and sixteen (Key Stage 4).

### **Key Stage 1**

At the end of KS1 there were 23 children in the cohort who had been in care 12 months or more. 53% of the children were working at the expected standard in mathematics; 70% in reading, 48% in writing with 38% attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. National figures are not yet available for children in care for 2017.

### **Key Stage 2**

At the end of March there were 47 children in the cohort who had been in care 12 months or more. Out of the 47 in the cohort 39% of the children were working at the expected standard in mathematics, 37% of the children were working at the expected standard in reading, 43% of the children were working at the expected standard in GPS; 34% of the children were working at the expected standard in

writing. 23% of the children in the cohort achieved RWM combined. National figures are not yet available for children in care for 2017

#### **Key Stage 4**

Overall there were 65 pupils in the cohort. Including all 65 in the cohort, 7 pupils (10.8%) achieved 5 A\*-C (L4+) at GCSE including English and mathematics, this included 1 pupil with SEN. 10 (15.3%) pupils got 5 good (grade C – L4) GCSE passes. No national or time series comparisons are available currently.

#### **Attendance and Exclusions**

The attendance rate of all children in care attending Bradford maintained schools was 96.1%. The overall attendance rate for those of primary school age was 96.8%% and 95.5% for those of secondary age. Attendance for those placed outside of Bradford's boundaries was also strong at 96.9%. There has been one permanent exclusion of children and young people in our care since 2012. A total of 17 children and young people attending schools in Bradford were fixed term excluded in the last academic year. This equates to 3.5% of our children in care population.

#### **Celebrating success**

The Virtual School once again held its Annual Education Awards. These awards celebrate the achievements of Bradford CLA and young people and are given on the basis of examination results; improvement between key stages or assessments; progress and effort.

108 CLA attended with their teachers, carers and/or social workers and received awards. All ages and stages (Y1-Y13) were represented. Once again it was good for the young people to be given their awards by the Lord Mayor and supported by other Council Members

#### **Numbers of Children Looked After**

There were 925 children in our care at the end of March 2017 and there were 1195 in our care at some point between April 2016 and the end of March 2017. In 2017, there were 494 children from Reception (age 4) to Year 11 (age 16) who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months.

Currently there are 596 CLA in year's reception to year 11; 456 are in Bradford, 140 are out of authority. There are 286 young people within this age range in the care of CBMDC who have a SEND. Of these, 114 have a statement of SEND/EHCP (19.1%), 172 have SEN Support (28.8%).