



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Virtual School

Annual Report

Academic Year 2014/2015

Wokingham Borough Council has pledged to provide excellent education for all children and young people in its care.

The Virtual School supports the delivery of this pledge through ensuring ambition, aspiration and achievement are at the heart of the educational careers and experiences of all such vulnerable children and young people.

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1: Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy 2015-2017 sets out the priorities and pledges of Wokingham Borough's Corporate Parenting Board and the statutory framework this operates within. The quality of education forms a key element of this and steers the priorities of the Virtual School.

Priorities for 2015 – 2017:

1. To ensure the strength and effectiveness of the role of the Corporate Parenting Board thus its impact on the Corporate Parenting function of the Council as a whole
2. To strengthen the voice of children in care and care leavers in planning, reviewing and decision making
3. To consolidate progress and continue to improve the timeliness of permanency for children in care across the range of permanent options
4. To improve provision for care leavers in Wokingham
5. To improve educational outcomes for children in care and care leavers in Wokingham (see below)
6. To improve health provision for children in care and care leavers in Wokingham

Pledges to Children in Care:

1. Give you a home where you belong
2. Make sure you get an excellent Education (see below)
3. Help you have a Healthy lifestyle
4. To ensure you have fun
5. Listen to and value your opinions
6. Help and support you on the road to adulthood and:

Pledges to Care Leavers:

1. To respect and honour your identity
2. To believe in you
3. To listen to you
4. To inform you
5. To support you
6. To find you a home
7. To be a lifelong champion

Priority 5: To improve educational outcomes for children in care and care leavers in Wokingham

Pledge 2: Make sure you get an excellent Education

Whilst Priority 5 and Pledge 2 identify the focus and commitment on securing the best educational experiences and outcomes for the children and young people in our care the work of the Virtual School contributes to the delivery of all priorities and pledges.

2: Wokingham Context

The number of children in care in Wokingham has remained relatively stable for the past few years with the highest number being 86 as at March 2013, and the lowest being 72 as at March 2012. At the end of the last academic year – July 2015 - we had a total of 69 in care.

27 of the 69 were female with 42 male, the majority of whom fell within the 11-16 and 16+ age groups. This is in keeping with the trends for Wokingham Borough Council over recent years as evidenced in Corporate Parenting Board reporting.

Children in care: Rate per 10,000 Children				
<u>Area</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Wokingham	21.0	20.0	24.0	20.0
SE Region	46.0	47.0	47.0	48.0
Statistical neighbours	37.9	37.8	37.9	39.4
England	58.0	59.0	60.0	60.0

Wokingham has a consistently lower population of children in care when measured against regional, statistical and national benchmarks. This comparative data is not yet available for 2015 but with our number of 69 at the end of this academic year being within our previous range the trend of lower numbers is set to continue.

3: Wokingham Virtual School

Wokingham Virtual School Development and Delivery 2014/2015

3.1: Virtual School Structure

As part of Wokingham's commitment to the improvement of outcomes for all children and young people in its care the redevelopment of the Virtual School was undertaken and the new school launched in April 2015. Staffing indicated below comprises LA officers and school staff organised to enhance impact of their "day jobs" in school improvement and children's social care, and replicate roles in schools.



The structure is designed to ensure that expertise is available across all phases and types of schools in order to ensure that our children and young people receive the best possible support within their schools. We are able to engage with all schools and settings from a point of knowledge and understanding about their particular responsibilities and this facilitates positive working relationships and effective support and challenge as required.

3.2: Management Board

The quality assurance of the Virtual School operation is overseen by a Management Board with representation from a broad group of people with relevant expertise and experience. Again this reflects the position of a school with its governing body.

Board Membership:

- Debbie Scriven: Former Charitable Trustee and accountant
- Gareth Marr: Experienced in Adoption
- Ian Pittock: WBC Councillor – Deputy Lead Member for Children’s Services and representative of Corporate Parenting Board
- Dave Whiting: Experienced Secondary School Governor and chair
- TBC:
 - Care Leaver Representative
 - Foster Care Representative
 - Health Care Representative
 - Elevate Representative
 - Designated LAC Teacher Representative

Invitations have been sent out to potential candidates to fill these vacancies in time for the next meeting in November 2015.

The termly meetings are supported and facilitated by members of the Virtual School Leadership team with representation also from the Children’s Services Leadership Team – Alan Stubbersfield, Assistant Director for Learning and Achievement.

3.3: Operational Links

The Virtual School has established operational and reporting links with key management groups within the Borough. These include the Children’s Services Leadership team, the Corporate Parenting Board, the Local Children’s Safeguarding Board, the Primary and Secondary Safeguarding Groups, the Joint CICES management group, the CIC Education management group and the Designated LAC

Teacher support group. These links and shared membership enable the Virtual School to ensure that each child on roll receives the best possible support and that effective monitoring and sharing of information and best practice raises standards and expectations of outcomes.

3.4: Wider links

In order to be ambitious and successful for the children and young people in our care it is crucial to be as ambitious for the quality and effectiveness of the Virtual School. To this end we have participated in the South East Regional Network for Virtual Schools and meetings with HMI and Ofsted, focusing on best practice and have contributed to the work of the ADCS/DfE Virtual School Working Party. These wider links have provided information and advice on best practice which we have incorporated into the operation of our Virtual School.

3.5: School Development Plan

The first priority for the re-launched Virtual School was to construct a School Development Plan to outline developmental and service priorities for the next three years. This plan has shaped the development activities for the new Virtual School and outlines the key actions across all phases for the next three years.

The key priorities reflect national guidance:

- “Closing the attainment and progress gap between looked after children and their peers and creating a culture of high aspirations for them is a top priority. We must ensure that the educational attainment of these children is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare.”

(‘Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities’ DfE 2014)

The plan is reviewed through the half termly School Leadership Team meetings with a report on progress to both the CSLT and Management Board.

4: Virtual School Roll

From the outset it was intended that the Wokingham Virtual School would cater for a broad range of vulnerable children and young people as all such groups would benefit from the focused approach and attention such a school can offer.

The key priority groups on the current school roll are as follows:

- Children in Care
- Looked After Children
- Care Leavers
- Special Guardianship Orders
- Permanence Adoption

Additional targeted groups to be included in 2015-16 include:

- Children Missing Education
- Elective Home Education
- Free School Meals cohorts
- Children on a Child Protection Plan

The number of pupils on the Virtual School roll is maintained as a live data report with data amended as changes occur. Systems are in place to ensure that immediate notification is given of new children coming into the system so that the Virtual School Head can check on placement and action the 10 working day education planning.

At the end of last academic year the CIC/LAC cohort consisted of 69 children and young people: 27 were female with 42 male, the majority of whom fell within the 11-16 and 16+age groups.

Age	Number
Early Years	5
Primary	12
11-16	42
16+	10
TOTAL	69

School Roll as of 31st July 2015:

School Roll Category	Number
CIC	71
LAC	32
Care Leavers	35
SGO	2
Adoption	7
Total: 147	

5: School Placements

Management and overview of school placements

5.1: Quality:

Key to the quality of educational outcomes for children and young people is the quality of the setting in which they are placed. As part of the Virtual School activity every setting is reviewed in terms of recent Ofsted inspection reports and placement made into good or better schools. Where a school under inspection drops below this grade then a review of placement is undertaken along with a visit by the appropriate member of the leadership team to review improvement plans and ensure the pupil placed is receiving the best support possible. Should a school fail to make rapid improvement then a change of provision is actioned. This quality assurance process is in place in relation to the 3 RI schools below.

Placement grades as at July 2015:

Grade	Number
Outstanding	20
Good	34
Requires improvement	3
Unsatisfactory	0
Not applicable	4

5.2: Stability:

Research from the REED Foundation and Oxford University clearly evidences the requirement to maintain stability of school placements in order to achieve the best outcomes especially at KS4 and we work to achieve this stability.

CIC/LAC pupils attending number of schools during academic year 2014/2015:

1	2	3	4+
59	4	1	0

5.3: Types of Setting:

CIC/LAC pupil placements within Wokingham

Early Years	Primary	Secondary	FE	Special	AP
1	4	11	0	6	2

CICLAC pupil placements out of borough

Early Years	Primary	Secondary	FE	Special	AP
0	3	14	5	12	6

Total pupil numbers placed in residential

Phase	In Borough	Out of Borough
Early Years	0	0
Primary	0	0
Secondary	0	2
FE	0	0
Special	0	9
Totals	0	11

Total numbers NEET: 2 students that were NEET as of the 31st July 2015 have now started college placements.

6: Personal Education Plans

6.1: PEPs

During the academic year 2014-15, there have been 99 CIC/LAC children and young people between the ages of 0-18. 38 children came into the care system during the academic year, 25 of these required a PEP detailing education targets and progress. 9 were on roll for less than 10 days and 4 were below the start age. In total, 30 children came off our roll during the year by virtue of age or change in circumstance.

Depending on when the child came into care and their age, all children and young people between the ages of 2 years 10 months and 18 years have had a minimum of one PEP review meeting this academic year, attended by a member of the Virtual School Leadership Team. The specific expertise of the staff member was matched to the stage, ability and needs of the child to add best possible value to the PEP meeting, ensuring the targets were robust, progress was accurately reported and next steps transition discussions were appropriate.

Stage	Cohort number	% PEPs completed from eligible cohort		
		Autumn	Spring	Summer
EYFS	1	None	100%	100%
Primary	7	16.7%	100%	100%
Secondary	25	47.8%	88.5%	100%
Post-16	5	66.7%	75.0%	100%
Special	18	37.5%	100%	100%
Alternative Provision	8	14.3%	85.7%	85.7%

83% of children and young people have had two or more PEP meetings. 37.5% of children had an autumn term PEP, 67% had a spring term PEP and 97% had a summer term PEP, indicating improvements with the re-launch. In the majority of cases, this has enabled the child or young person's progress to be monitored against targets and for timely interventions to be arranged as required. In a minority of cases, where the education placement has broken down, these meetings have provided the opportunity for discussion about suitable alternative arrangements.

6.2: Pupil Premium

Following Wokingham Borough Council's decision in 2014 to delegate the allocated pupil premium grant in full by three instalments, this arrangement was honoured again this year and the appropriate spending of these funds formed an integral part of the PEP meeting. Examples of the range of activities this funding has supported this year are: additional 1 to 1 tuition in a range of subjects, individual mentoring, therapies, extra-curricular activities and specific items to support learning. All schools are required to demonstrate the impact of this funding on raising achievement and to record this impact on the PEP documents, to enable the virtual school to account for this funding.

7: Tuition

7.1: Tuition:

A key strategy to improving the educational outcomes and achievements for our pupils is the provision of tuition support in order to maximise their learning. These opportunities are identified through PEP planning and allocated according to need.

13 students have been in receipt of additional tuition during 2014/2015. Subjects include English, Maths, Science and French.

Music tuition is offered to all pupils and supported through Berkshire Maestros. In 2014/2015 12 pupils took up this option.

For 2015/2016 the Virtual School will be encouraging improved up-take of this offer.

7.2: Extra-curricular activities:

To support and deliver on the 'fun' and experience pledge made to our pupils all are encouraged and supported to take part in additional activities both in and out of school. Such activities are again discussed and identified through the PEP process and resources allocated to support if required. Examples of such activities this year have included membership of professional youth drama group, participation in school trips and holidays.

8: Resources

8.1: Literacy

To support children in their literacy development and to assist in fostering a love of reading, the Virtual School has continued to subscribe to the national Letterbox Book Club. Every child from year one to eight inclusive has received a pack of ability related books every month over the period May to October. Evaluation of the scheme suggests that whilst some of the children appreciated receiving the books to support their personal reading and reading with/to their carers, the more able readers did not find the material so engaging. This will be reviewed.

Total number of students receiving books : **30**

8.2: ICT

Having access to suitable ICT to support learning is a crucial element to improved learning outcomes. It is also common practice for all children and young people to have access to such technology. Hence the Virtual School ensures that all those requiring such kit have the correct standard of ICT equipment to meet their needs. Such allocations are identified and reviewed through the PEP process and replacement considered after three years in order to maintain quality standards of resourcing to meet the growing demands of education as the pupils' progress. Such support is also reviewed for those moving on to college where a higher specification may be required for their courses. One such case this year has been the requirement for ICT to support a student in accessing a higher level science degree course.

In 2014/2015 a total of 30 laptops were purchased with 27 currently allocated.

During this year it became evident that the ICT support system would be improved by moving to a system where CIC and care leavers are provided with a choice of mobile technology devices including small, medium and large laptops, tablets/iPads and convertible devices. The system for this was set up in the summer 2015 and a leaflet including a range of devices has been distributed. Early signs are that this more flexible approach has been well received.

9: Attendance

The attendance for CIC/LAC attending Wokingham schools was as follows:

Range	Number	Percentage
100%	0	0%
98%-99%	5	21%
95%-97%	6	25%
92%-94%	4	17%
85%-89%	5	21%
80%-83%	2	8%
Summary		
92%-99%	16	63%
80%-89%	7	29%
Low attenders		
33%	1	4%
2%	1	4%

4 pupils (16.7%) have attendance below 85% and are therefore classed as persistent absentees (PA).

The dedicated EWO for the Virtual School is monitoring attendance for all CIC/LAC.

10: Exclusions

Data from the EWS team evidences the following fixed term exclusions for 2014/2015:

Fixed Term Exclusions			
Pupil	Number of exclusions	Total Days	Reasons
1	1	1	Persistent disruptive behaviour
2	1	2.5	Physical assault on an adult
3	1	1	Verbal abuse/threaten adult
4	3	1.5	Persistent disruptive behaviour x 2 Physical assault on an adult
5	4	8.5	Damage Persistent disruptive behaviour x 3
6	1	0.5	Persistent disruptive behaviour
6 pupils	11 exclusions	15 days	

On further analysis pupils 1 and 5 were excluded from their secondary school placements, pupils 2, 4 and 6 were excluded from their special school placements, pupil 3 was excluded from a primary school.

There were no permanent exclusions for CIC/LAC.

11: Pupil Performance, Progress and Achievement

The following table shows the trend in performance over the past five years

Indicator	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	No of pupils	No in cohort								
KS1 L2c and above in Maths and Eng	1	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	0
KS2 L4c and above in Maths and Eng	4	8	1	1	2	5	3	4	2	5
KS3 L6c and above in Ma,En,Sc	1	4	0	3	1	7	2	8	1	4
GCSE 5 A-Cs	2	11	2	9	1	9	1	7	5	10

More detailed analysis in terms of expected progress indicates the following:

There were no KS1 (age 11) pupils in this cohort.

Key Stage 2

	number	%	boys	girls	SEN	EAL
students making expected progress in English:	3	60%	2	1	3	0
students making expected progress in Maths:	4	80%	3	1	4	0
No of students in cohort	5		3	2	5	0

Three of the five pupils met their targets and can be considered to have made expected progress in both mathematics and English (reading and writing); a further pupil met this performance measure in mathematics but missed the target in English. One of the pupils was entered for GCSE maths at age 11 and achieved a D grade which significantly exceeds the national benchmark. The pupil who did not meet national expectation in either English (reading and writing) or mathematics, narrowly missed her target by one sub level in each case.

Key Stage 3

	number	%	Boys	Girls	SEN	EAL
students making expected progress in English:	3	75%	0	3	1	0
students making expected progress in Maths:	3	75%	1	2	1	0
students making expected progress in Science:	1	25%	0	1	0	0
No of students in cohort	4		1	3	2	0

Although no national tests are required at the end of Key Stage 3, teacher assessment indicated that only one of the four pupils in the KS3 cohort met national expectation of level 6 in all three core subjects. Progress during KS3 was variable across the three subjects with only two pupils making expected or better than expected progress in all three subjects. At KS3, two sub levels of progress per annum which equates to six sub levels or 2 full levels during the key stage is the national expectation.

Key stage 4

3 pupils are excluded from this data set as they became CIC/LAC in July/August 2015 by which time their formal education had finished and their examinations had been taken. This gave an adjusted cohort size of 10.(numbers in bold below)

	number	%	Boys	girls	SEN	EAL
students making expected progress in English:	7 10	70% 77%	5 8	2 2	3 4	2 3
students making expected progress in Maths:	7 8	70 61%	5 6	2 2	3 4	1 1
5A*-C EM	5 5	50% 38%	3 3	2 2	1 1	1 1
5A*-G	6 8	60% 61%	4 6	2 2	1 2	1 2
No of students in cohort	10 13		8 11	2 2	4 5	1 3

The KS4 cohort of ten were entered for a variety of GCSEs and other vocational qualifications and five of these pupils achieved five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Of the remaining five, one pupil was not entered for any formal qualifications and is currently educated through hospital school. A second pupil who had disengaged from the formal education structure was receiving alternative provision where he completed a range of AQA practical skills modules, but he did not do any formal qualification in English or mathematics. A third pupil, educated in a residential special school, was working on p scales (ie below National Curriculum level 1) and met his targets, based on teacher assessment. The fourth pupil was working at entry level and made expected progress in both English and mathematics. The final pupil made expected progress in English, achieved 5A*-G but significantly underperformed relative to targets.

Post-16

Nine young people were CIC/LAC during the 2014-5 academic year. They were educated in seven different settings. All nine students had personalised education programmes and made positive progress relative to their targets. Seven of the nine students achieved accredited qualifications.

One student was following an AS/A2 programme and completed year 12 with 4 AS levels at grades ABBC. Eight of the nine students did not already have C grades in English and mathematics at GCSE. Five students improved on their English outcome and three students improved on their mathematics outcome from KS4.

A further two students became CICALAC after the end of the summer term.

More detailed information of pupils' progress gathered from PEP review meetings is being collated for the Corporate Parenting Board. The overall picture from this is complex, reflecting the range of issues affecting the young people in question. However the strong indication is that schools know their looked after pupils well, designated teachers fulfil their role effectively, and the pupils make progress relative to their starting positions.

12: Next Steps

The Virtual School for Wokingham was relaunched in April 2015 and has already made significant strides forward in improving the effectiveness and support to the children and young people placed on roll. However, there is a need for continuous review and improvement in order to ensure we provide the best service for the children and young people in our care.

For the next year this will include the following:

- Appointment of permanent full-time Virtual School Headteacher
- Appointment of permanent full-time Education Coordinator
- Additional resource to support the data and information management – 1 day per week
- Implementation of ePEP – electronic record of PEP reviews
- Service Development Plan – delivery of the targets set for 2015/2016
- Detailed monitoring of the continuing progress of care leavers
- Virtual School Conference scheduled for the 8th October 2015 – bringing Children’s Services leaders, Virtual School Leadership Team, Virtual School Management Board, Social Care teams and Designated LAC teachers together to focus on best working practices, attachment theory and adoption

This report evidences the full support and commitment to the improvement of outcomes for all children and young people in the care of Wokingham Borough Council. The investment and development of the new Virtual School is already making a difference and we are eager to see the impact over the first full academic year.

Kathy Roberts.

Interim Executive Head Teacher.

Jay Blundell

Interim Virtual Head Teacher.

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