



Corporate Parenting Board

23 February 2016

Report title

Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) Report 2014/15

Cabinet member with lead responsibility

Councillor Val Gibson
Children and Families

Wards affected

All

Accountable director

Emma Bennett – Service Director for Children and Young People

Originating service

Looked after Children

Accountable employee(s)

| | |
|-------------------|--|
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Report to be/has been considered by

Education Board Meeting 5 February
2016

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Consider the enclosed report outlining outcomes for the Virtual School for Looked after Children in 2014/15

Recommendations for noting:

The Corporate Parenting Board is asked to note:

The continued improvements in educational outcomes for Looked after Children and identification of priorities for future development.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To report on the work of the Virtual School for Looked after Children (LAC) over the 2014/15 academic year and to highlight successes, learning points and areas for further development

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The role of the Virtual School Head (VSH) for LAC is to be the lead officer responsible for improving educational outcomes for this vulnerable group, ensuring that the local authority effectively discharges its statutory duty to close the attainment gap between LAC and their peers. The VSH role itself became statutory in 2014 and the annual report of the VSH is now a document required by Ofsted during their inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. As such this report summarises the Local Authority's progress in its key responsibility to promote improved outcomes for the children in its care, and its care leavers.

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

All details are included in the body of the Virtual School Head's report which is included as an appendix to this report.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report
[NM/16022016/P]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.
[TS/16022016/V]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 A full impact analysis should be undertaken on this report, however further data and reporting capability is required in order for this to be completed. The VSH is working with colleagues in Business Intelligence on this and a full assessment will be completed as soon as the necessary data has been collected.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 All of the proposed developments can be made within existing resources

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 LAC ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN – January 2016 Update: attached

Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) Report 2014/15

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the educational outcomes of children in the care of Wolverhampton for the 2014/15 academic year.
- 1.2 The report outlines the various ways in which the COPE (Corporate Parenting & Education) Team and Virtual School Head (VSH) have worked to raise the achievement of LAC in 2014/15, and outlines plans for further development in key areas as detailed in the LAC Attainment Improvement Plan.
- 1.3 This report also seeks to inform knowledge and understanding in a number of areas pertinent to the achievement of LAC.

2.0 Cohort Information.

- 2.1 At 1 December 2015, there are:
 - 456 pupils in the Virtual School; reception to year 11
 - 204 (44.74%) are placed in Wolverhampton & 252 (55.26%) out-of-city

- 256 (56.14%) attend primary schools and 200 (43.86%) attend secondary
- 53 (11.62%) attend Special Schools
- 7 (1.54%) attend Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)
- There are 16 different ethnic groups – 29.61% are of other than white British origin
- 350 (76.75%) are recorded as having English as their first language, although there are 86 with no language recorded (18.86%)
- 150 (32.90%) are eligible for free school meals
- 54 (11.85%) have Statements of Special Educational Need
- There are 282 children placed in Wolverhampton who are looked-after by other local authorities

3.0 School Ofsted Ratings

- 3.1 Statutory guidance states that LAC should attend schools that are rated as either good or outstanding by Ofsted.¹
- 3.2 179 looked-after pupils who are educated in Wolverhampton attend a good or better school. 199 LAC who are educated outside Wolverhampton attend a good or better school.
- 3.3 This equates to over 80% of LAC attending schools rated as good or outstanding. 79% of LAC attend schools in Wolverhampton which are rated as good or outstanding, which is a huge improvement on 2013/14 (54%).
- 3.4 Our intention is to place LAC in the best schools available to them. However it is sometimes appropriate for a pupil to remain in a school rated as less than good or outstanding by Ofsted, for reasons such as placement stability, quality of the Designated Teacher for LAC, or the strength of the pastoral support provided by the school. These factors can be particularly valuable to the happiness and success of a looked-after child in school. In such cases, an informed assessment is made in the best interests of the child.

4.0 Education Support

- 4.1 The COPE (Corporate Parenting & Education) Team are committed to improving educational outcomes for Wolverhampton's LAC through a combination of direct, advisory and strategic work with Looked after Children, schools, social workers, carers and other stakeholders. COPE has continued to build its capacity to support Looked after

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

Children in 2014/15, utilising pupil premium funding and continuing to strengthen its partnerships with key stakeholders.

- 4.2 Managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH) for LAC, the Education part of this multi-disciplinary team consist of one full-time Teacher Advisor, 2.5 full time equivalent (FTE) Education Support Officers, one 0.5 FTE Data Officer and a full-time clerical officer together with the VSH. COPE also benefit from the support of two senior Education Psychologists (0.9 FTE) and a Counselling Psychologist (0.6FTE), as well as strong links with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and other key agencies.
- 4.3 In 2014/15 COPE have increased the level of direct study support that they provide for LAC in schools. The team has placed a particular focus on certain priority areas, as highlighted in the VSH's 2015 Annual Report, such as literacy at Key Stage 1. Pupil Premium has funded additional training for COPE in specific learning interventions, significantly improving the team's capacity to raise progress and attainment. These interventions include *Catch-up Literacy* and the *Turnabout Programme*, an intensive intervention (3 weekly sessions) which helps younger pupils to overcome barriers and develop their own strategies for learning and meta-cognition. COPE (alongside the Education Psychology service) were also trained to deliver *Emotion Coaching*, a strategy for supporting teachers to meet the needs of pupils with attachment or trauma-related difficulties. Early indications of the outcomes of this training are very positive; a foster carer provided excellent feedback on one young person who is receiving the Turnabout intervention from COPE:

...his foster carer is amazed by the difference she has seen in his understanding and concentration. She states that S has built a really positive rapport with J and he enjoys the sessions with her.

- 4.4 The activities of the Educational Psychologists and Counselling Psychologist working within the COPE Team are varied and include:
- **Consultation** with Social Workers, teachers and other stakeholders
 - **Assessment** of LAC, both in-city and out
 - **Interventions** relating to learning, social, emotional and mental health needs
 - **Training** for professionals and carers
 - Attending **multi-agency meetings** where their specialist input is required. These include Pillars of Parenting consultation meetings
 - Supervision and **reflective practice and solution focussed cases meetings**.
- 4.5 As part of the drive to improve the attainment of LAC in Wolverhampton schools at Key Stage 4, the VSH has also employed two Assistant Education Psychologists (.8FTE) in 2015, funded by the Pupil Premium Grant. These colleagues support LAC in year 11 who attend Wolverhampton schools and have the potential to achieve good GCSEs but are at risk of underachieving. These "borderline" pupils are receiving extra support with

coursework, revision, exam preparation etc, and additional training is also being offered to foster carers in supporting their children's education.

- 4.6 COPE's psychologists have also invested in additional assessment tools in 2015 such as the BAS (British Ability Scale), BERS (Behavioural & Emotional Rating Scale) and CAS (Children's Aggression Scale), enabling the team to provide a wide range of assessments - not only of children's additional needs but also, crucially, of their *strengths*.
- 4.7 As well as the Assistant Education Psychologists, pupil premium has funded a 0.5 FTE Employment, Education & Training (EET) Officer post. The EET post is being amalgamated with an existing 0.5 FTE position to create a full-time role, providing a stronger focus on the progress and achievement of LAC between years 11 and 13, as well as continuing to support Wolverhampton's Care Leavers in Employment, Education and Training (EET).
- 4.8 The table below (4.10) shows how the VSH has managed the **Pupil Premium Grant** for Looked after Children in 2014/15. The majority of the pupil premium grant is allocated to schools in termly instalments, and its use is monitored via the PEP process and through COPE's auditing of PEPs and daily work with schools. COPE and the VSH provide challenge and support to schools to ensure that the use of each Looked-after pupil's funding is clearly linked to their individualised learning targets. This funding is generally used to provide additional learning support such as 1:1 and small group tuition, specialised input from learning mentors or teaching assistants and specialised equipment or training and, in some cases educational trips and ICT equipment. The provision of laptops and other ICT equipment is something that COPE support, where deemed appropriate. However we monitor this area particularly closely due to the danger of inappropriate use and the difficulty in making a clear link with improved educational outcomes.²
- 4.9 The remaining pupil premium funding is retained by the Virtual School Head to fund specific interventions and training to raise the achievement of LAC. These are targeted at specific areas of need, such as literacy at primary school level, GCSE attainment (see above), early intervention and training for Designated Teachers, as outlined in the table below:
- 4.10 The table below shows the Pupil Premium Spend for 2014/15:

² Interestingly, recent research showed that "Resources (e.g. computers, broadband, books) in foster placements do not emerge as a key issue in the lower progress of looked after pupils, with the important exception of some kinship carers."
http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2015/11/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenOverviewReport_Nov2015.pdf

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Planned spend | |
| Allocation to schools (£1550 x 500 LAC) | 775000 |
| Volunteer Reading Programme | 8000 |
| Additional EPS Support | 49000 |
| Designated Teachers & Virtual Schools Training | 8000 |
| Additional / emergency support | 53000 |
| 16-18 EET post (.5) | 15000 |
| | |
| Total | 908000 |

5.0 Academic Outcomes - Introduction

- 5.1 This report summarises the educational outcomes of children in the care of Wolverhampton for the 2014/15 academic year. The report considers outcomes at all key stages, and compares attainment for LAC educated in Wolverhampton schools with those educated outside the city, and between LAC and their peers.
- 5.2 After close scrutiny and working in partnership with the School Improvement team, the Virtual Head's view is that there were some inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the attainment data that was reported in previous years. For example, scrutiny of the Department for Education (DfE) Statistical First Release (SFR), containing national statistics for Looked after Children, suggests that attainment for in-city schools has been reported to the DfE as the results for *all* LAC, in some cases. As a result of this, a considerable amount of work has gone into cleansing current and historical LAC attainment data in the preparation of this report, and the VSH is confident that the report contains data that is much more accurate and comprehensive than in previous years.
- 5.3 National Curriculum Levels & Average Point Scores (APS)

Recent changes to the national curriculum mean that academic attainment was reported in national curriculum levels for the last time in 2015.³ Each level is related to an average point score, which is the average number of points scored by the cohort in that particular assessment. APSs are generally seen as the more accurate measure of attainment overall, as they enable us to see smaller incremental changes than key stage levels, and also give a sense of how many pupils are exceeding expectations, rather than just how many have achieved a certain level. Average point scores are included in this report for Key Stages 1 and 2, as well as key stage levels.

- 5.4 The table below shows illustrates how APS relate to National Curriculum levels. 15 points is therefore the expected level for KS1, and 27 points is the KS2 benchmark:

³ Schools are now able to develop their own individualised systems for measuring and tracking attainment, which will present obvious challenges for the maintenance of Virtual School data in 2016 and beyond. Future Virtual School reporting will be based on schools' indication of whether pupils are below, at or above the expected levels of attainment and progress, and the PEP form has been updated to reflect this change.

| End of Key stage Level | National Curriculum Level | Average Point Score |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| | W | 3 |
| | 1c | 7 |
| | 1b | 9 |
| | 1a | 11 |
| | 2c | 13 |
| KS1 Benchmark | 2b | 15 |
| | 2a | 17 |
| | 3c | 19 |
| | 3b | 21 |
| | 3a | 23 |
| | 4c | 25 |
| KS2 Benchmark | 4b | 27 |
| | 4a | 29 |
| | 5c | 31 |
| | 5b | 33 |

6.0 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- 6.1 EYFS has its own specific set of indicators, rather than national curriculum levels and APS as described above. The table below summarises outcomes for LAC attending early years settings in Wolverhampton in 2015. The results show a dip when compared with 2014; however they are significantly higher than in 2013. The introduction of the Early Years PEP and Pupil Premium in 2015 should continue to improve outcomes for future cohorts.

| EYFSP - LAC | % of LAC assessed at a "good level of development" in reading, writing and numbers | |
|-------------|--|----|
| 11 Pupils | 2013 | 13 |
| 26 Pupils | 2014 | 42 |
| 21 Pupils | 2015 | 33 |

7.0 Key Stage 1 (KS1)

- 7.1 The tables below summarise outcomes for LAC in Wolverhampton schools at the end of KS1, both in national curriculum levels and average point scores. 2015 levels show a significant improvement on 2014. Although writing is still the weakest area it is also the most improved.

% of LAC achieving at least the expected level at KS1 in Wolverhampton Schools

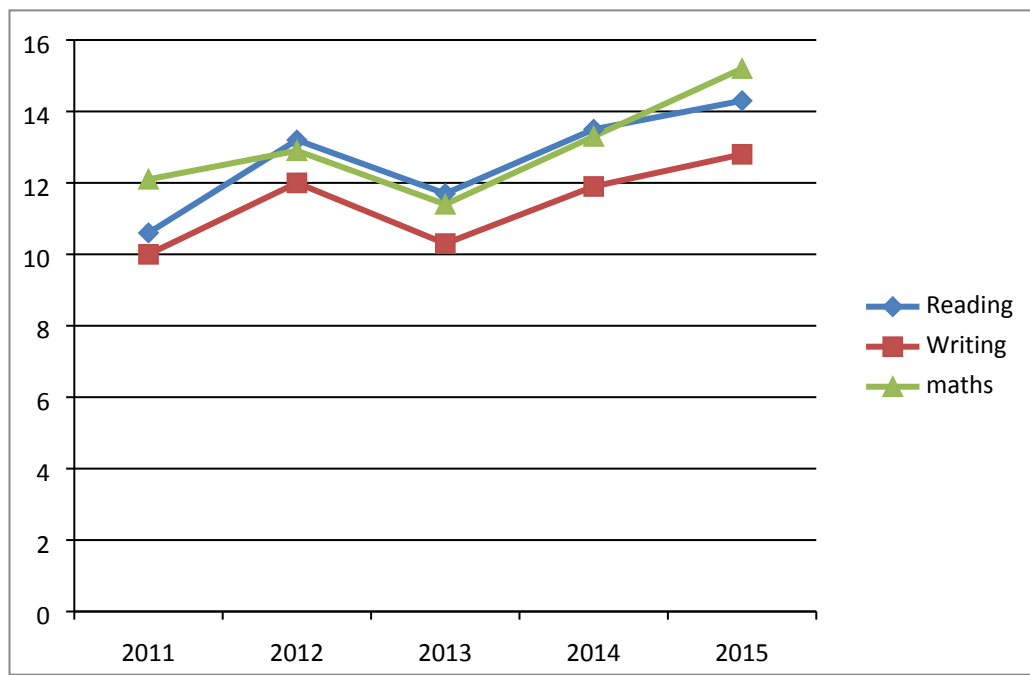
| Assessment Year | Number eligible to sit Key Stage 1 tasks and tests | Maths% | Reading% | Writing% |
|-----------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 2014 | 25 | 73 | 73 | 62 |
| 2015 | 11 | 82 | 82 | 73 |

Average Point Scores (APS) at KS1 for LAC in Wolverhampton Schools

| Key Stage 1 average point score in reading, writing and maths | | |
|---|-----------|------|
| 2011 | 25 pupils | 10.9 |
| 2012 | 27 pupils | 12.7 |
| 2013 | 19 pupils | 11.1 |
| 2014 | 30 pupils | 12.9 |
| 2015 | 11 pupils | 14.1 |

| Key stage 1 average point score by subject | | | | |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|-------|
| | | reading | writing | maths |
| 2011 | 25 pupils | 10.6 | 10.0 | 12.1 |
| 2012 | 27 pupils | 13.2 | 12.0 | 12.9 |
| 2013 | 19 pupils | 11.7 | 10.3 | 11.4 |
| 2014 | 30 pupils | 13.5 | 11.9 | 13.3 |
| 2015 | 11 pupils | 14.3 | 12.8 | 15.2 |

Average point scores across all core subjects at KS1 – LAC in Wolverhampton schools



7.2 KS1 levels are likely to be significantly higher than the national averages for LAC in 2015. National data for 2015 has not yet been published, but as a guideline, in 2014 the Department for Education reported that 71% of LAC at KS1 achieved the expected level in reading, 61% in writing and 72% in maths. Wolverhampton's in-city LAC are clearly above these levels.

- 7.3 Average point scores for KS1 in Wolverhampton schools show a clear improvement over recent years, and the best ever results for all subjects in 2015. All pupils in the in-city cohort achieved the expected level in maths at KS1 (the first time that this has been achieved for a whole cohort), while reading is also broadly within the expected range.
- 7.4 These improvements are likely to result from a numbers of factors, including (1) the improvements in primary school performance in Wolverhampton over the last couple of years (2) the impact of Pupil Premium funding and (3) increasingly focussed and skilled learning support from the COPE team.
- 7.5 The tables below show the academic results in key stage levels and APS for LAC in out-of-city schools in 2015, then finally, results overall for the whole KS1 cohort - both in and outside Wolverhampton:

% of LAC educated outside Wolverhampton achieving at least the expected level at KS1

| Assessment Year | Number eligible to sit Key Stage 1 tasks and tests | Maths% | Reading% | Writing% |
|-----------------|--|--------|----------|----------|
| 2015 | 21 | 52 | 57 | 52 |

Average Point Scores (APS) for LAC educated outside Wolverhampton at KS1

| Key stage 1 | average point score by subject | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| | | reading | writing | maths |
| 2015 | 21 pupils | 13.1 | 12.5 | 12.8 |

Overall % (all LAC) achieving at least the expected level at KS1

| Assessment Year | Number eligible to sit Key Stage 1 tasks and tests | Maths% | Reading% | Writing% |
|-----------------|--|--------|----------|----------|
| 2015 | 32 | 61% | 64% | 58% |

Overall APS (all LAC) at KS1

| Key stage 1 | average point score by subject | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| | | reading | writing | maths |
| 2015 | 32 pupils | 13.6 | 12.6 | 13.7 |

- 7.6 At Key Stage 1, the in-city cohort have clearly achieved higher average levels than those educated outside Wolverhampton. The out-of-city cohort was also significantly larger than the in-city in 2015. A detailed analysis will be completed in early 2016 on the

characteristics of this cohort and why the out-of-city pupils have apparently underachieved, when compared with in-city LAC.

8.0 Key Stage 2 (KS2)

8.1 The tables below summarise outcomes for LAC in Wolverhampton schools at the end of Key Stage 2 (year 6 – age 11):

% of LAC in Wolverhampton schools achieving at least the expected level (NC level 4) at Key Stage 2

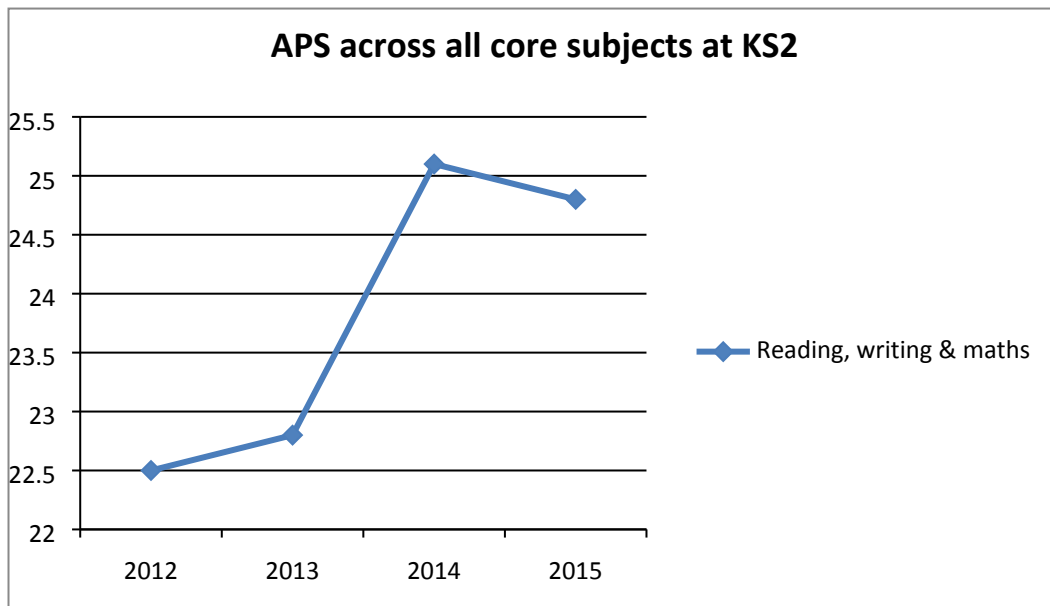
| Assessment Year | Number eligible to sit Key Stage 2 tasks and tests | Maths% | Reading% | Writing% |
|-----------------|--|--------|----------|----------|
| 2012 | 20 | 66 | 60 | 39 |
| 2013 | 20 | 67 | 66 | 50 |
| 2014 | 25 | 74 | 78 | 81 |
| 2015 | 24 | 63 | 71 | 58 |

5.11 Average Point Scores (APS) for LAC Wolverhampton schools at KS2

| Key Stage 2 | average point score | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| | | reading | writing | maths |
| 16 pupils | 2012 | 22.9 | 22.5 | 22.1 |
| 19 pupils | 2013 | 23.5 | 22.1 | 23.5 |
| 20 pupils | 2014 | 26.4 | 23.8 | 25.2 |
| 24 pupils | 2015 | 25.5 | 23.25 | 25.5 |

| Key Stage 2 | average point score in reading writing and maths | |
|-------------|--|------|
| 16 pupils | 2012 | 22.5 |
| 19 pupils | 2013 | 22.8 |
| 20 pupils | 2014 | 25.1 |
| 24 pupils | 2015 | 24.8 |

Average Point Scores at KS2 for LAC in Wolverhampton schools – all core subjects



8.2 While attainment at KS2 has dipped overall between 2014 and 2015, KS2 levels were exceptionally high in 2014, and 2015 clearly shows a general improvement in all subjects with the exception of maths.

8.2 Again, the more granular measure of average point scores shows a clearer overall improvement at KS2 for Looked after pupils in Wolverhampton, with only a slight dip in 2015 when compared to the very high levels of 2014.

8.3 The tables below illustrate outcomes for LAC in out-of-city schools, and then for the whole cohort, at Key Stage 2:

% of LAC in out-of-city schools achieving at least the expected levels at KS2

| Assessment Year | Number eligible to sit Key Stage 2 tasks and tests | Maths% | Reading% | Writing% |
|-----------------|--|--------|----------|----------|
| 2014 | | 70 | 74 | 61 |
| 2015 | 11 | 55 | 55 | 40 |

Average Point Scores for LAC in out-of-city schools at KS2

| Key stage 2 | average point score by subject | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| | | reading | writing | maths |
| 2015 | 11 pupils | 24.3 | 21.5 | 24.8 |

% of all LAC achieving at least the expected level at Key Stage 2 (NC Level 4)

| Assessment Year | Number eligible to sit Key Stage 2 tasks and tests | Maths% | Reading% | Writing% |
|-----------------|--|--------|----------|----------|
|-----------------|--|--------|----------|----------|

| | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| 2014 | | 72 | 76 | 78 |
| 2015 | 37 | 60 | 65 | 52 |

Average Point Scores for all LAC at KS2

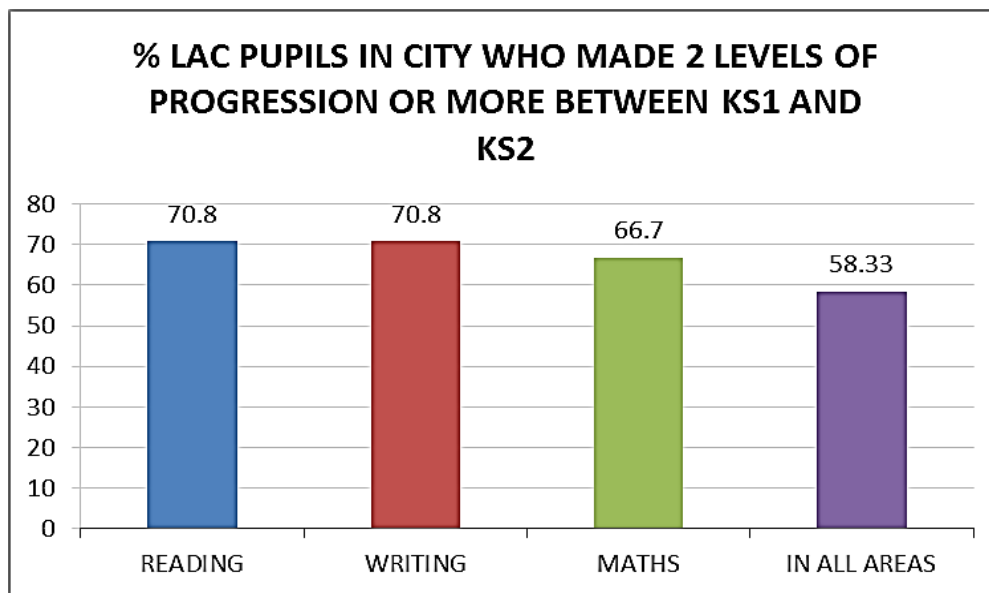
| Key stage 2 average point score by subject | | | | |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|-------|
| | | reading | writing | maths |
| 2015 | 35 pupils | 22.4 | 25.1 | 24.6 |

- 8.4 KS2 results have dipped in 2015 for out-of-city LAC, and for the whole cohort, when compared with 2014. However it is likely that recent changes to assessment arrangements and methods have contributed to an *apparent* drop in attainment for some pupils, which does not represent the true picture, and that we will start to see this trend rectified in 2016 and beyond. It must also be recognised that an uneven performance profile is inevitable with relatively small cohorts.
- 8.5 A detailed analysis of the performance of both cohorts has begun to ascertain why in-city LAC clearly outperform those placed outside Wolverhampton at key stages 1 and 2 (and why the trend is reversed at KS4).
- 8.6 The tables below illustrate the % of LAC in Wolverhampton schools who have made the **expected level of progress** (two levels) between the end of Key Stage 1 and beginning of KS2. Progress is fairly consistent throughout the three areas and 58% of children have made at least two levels of progress in all areas. This indicates that the majority of children have made two levels of progress in at least one area.

| Key stage 2 – % LAC pupils making 2 or more levels of progress | | |
|--|--|-----|
| Reading | | |
| 2011 | | 75 |
| 2012 | | 81 |
| 2013 | | 63 |
| 2014 | | 100 |
| 2015 | | 71 |
| Key stage 2 - % LAC pupils making 2 or more levels of progress | | |
| Writing | | |
| 2011 | | 80 |
| 2012 | | 88 |
| 2013 | | 63 |
| 2014 | | 95 |
| 2015 | | 71 |

Key stage 2 - % LAC pupils making 2 or more levels of progress in maths

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| 2011 | 50 |
| 2012 | 63 |
| 2013 | 68 |
| 2014 | 95 |
| 2015 | 67 |



8.7 The following table shows the same progress measure for out-of-city pupils:

Key Stage 1 to Key stage 2 LAC - % OOC pupils making 2 or more levels of progress in 2015

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Reading | 64 |
| Writing | 91 |
| Maths | 73 |

- 8.8 Results show inconsistency throughout the three areas with strong results in writing but much poorer results in reading. 54% of the out-of-city cohort made at least two levels of progress in all core subjects. This indicates that the majority of children have made two levels of progress in at least one area.
- 8.9 Progress levels for the out-of-city cohort are better than those for LAC in Wolverhampton schools in maths and writing, though lower in reading. Conversely, however, 58% of LAC in Wolverhampton schools made the expected level of progress in all three core subjects, compared to 55% for LAC placed out-of-city.

8.10 The outturn for the whole KS2 cohort – those making expected levels of progress, both in-city and out – is 57%. Progress at KS2 has generally improved in recent years, through the profile is erratic. Again, however, such fluctuations are inevitable with relatively small cohorts.

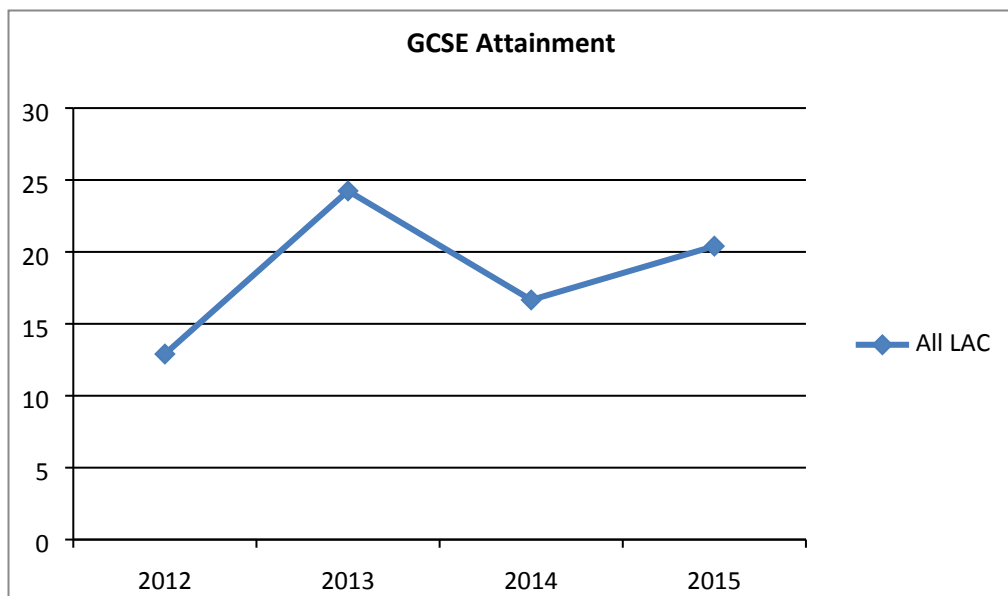
9.0 Key Stage 4 (KS4)

9.1 Due to the fluctuating nature of the KS4 cohort and the importance placed on GCSE outcomes, this report only considers the GCSE performance of LAC in year 11 who were in care for at least a year between 30 April 2014 and 1 March 2015.

9.2 GCSE performance in 2015 shows a clear improvement on all previous years except one, with over 20.4% of eligible LAC (as described above) achieving 5+ GCSE at grades A*-C, including English and maths, as outlined in the table below:

% of Eligible LAC achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English & maths

| Assessment Year | % LAC placed in-city | % LAC placed out-of-city | % All LAC combined |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 2012 | N/K | N/K | 13 |
| 2013 | N/K | N/K | 24 |
| 2014 | 21 | 12 | 17 |
| 2015 | 9 | 28 | 20 |

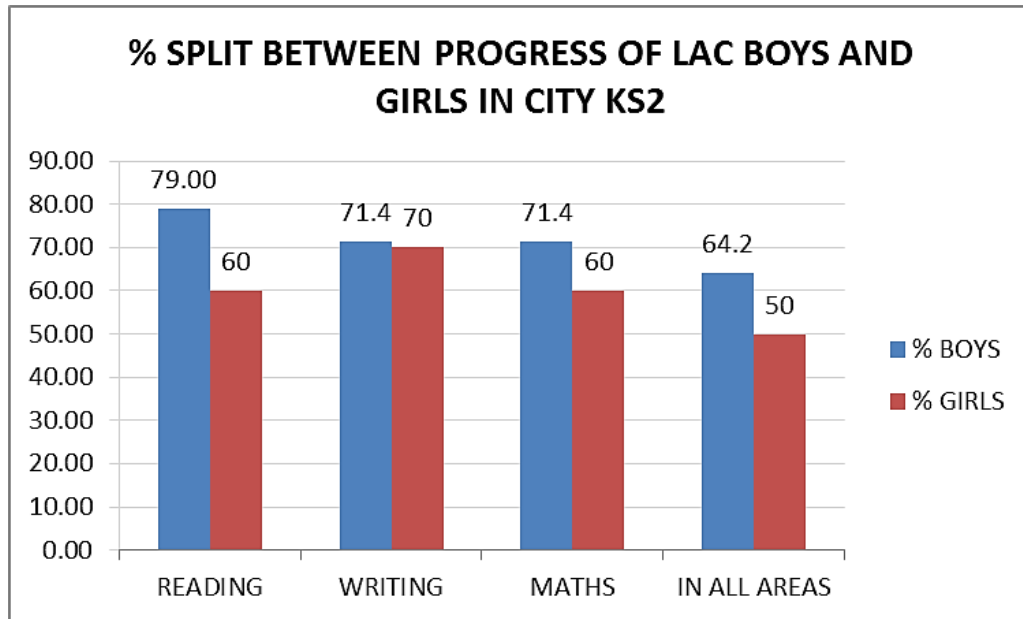


9.3 There has been a general improvement in attainment at Key Stage 4 since 2011. This is against the national trend, both for LAC and for all pupils, national KS4 results having dropped for both groups in 2014 due to the introduction of more challenging examination

and reporting arrangements. Yet the performance of Wolverhampton's LAC has continued on a generally upward trajectory.

- 9.4 National data on 2015 outcomes for LAC has not been published yet. However the national average for this outcome was 12% in 2014. Therefore 20% is likely to be well above the national and regional average for LAC in 2015.
- 9.5 The KS4 cohort was a very large one in 2015 with a high number of pupils (particularly those placed in Wolverhampton) educated in special schools and Pupil Referral Units and/or alternative provision - approximately 40%. This is the likely reason for the weaker results for in-city pupils, and it closely reflects recent research which links type of school with academic outcomes for LAC⁴.
- 9.6 However there is much work to do if we are to continue, and increase, the improvement in attainment at Key Stage 4. The dip in performance of LAC in Wolverhampton schools in 2015 (at KS4) must be addressed, so the Virtual School Head is targeting this area with additional resources as explained in section 4.
- 10.0 **Comparing the academic outcomes of girls and boys**
- 10.1 The Business Intelligence Team have supported the VSH with additional analysis of 2015 outcomes, by cross-referencing attainment with certain cohort characteristics to give a more detailed picture of the progress of Looked after Children.
- 10.2 The following chart compares the levels of progress of boys and girls at KS2 who were educated in Wolverhampton schools. Figures relate to the % of pupils making the expected rate of 2 or more levels of progress. Boys made up just over 60% of the cohort:

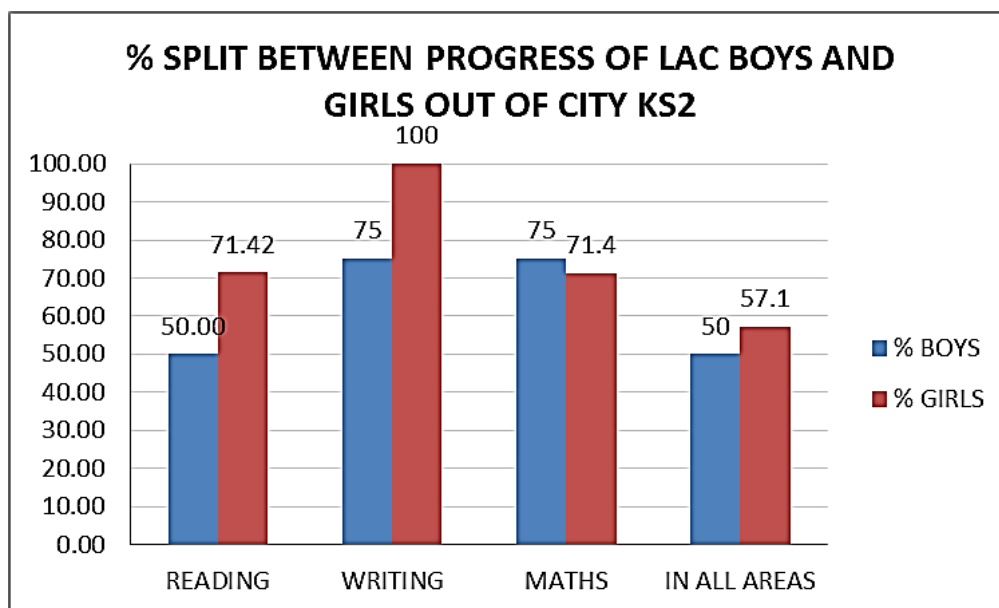
⁴“Almost 40% of the looked after children (in recent research by the Rees Centre – 2013 cohort) went to non-mainstream schools (such as pupil referral units and alternative provision) at KS4 and, controlling for other factors, their educational attainments were far lower than the 60% who go to mainstream school.” http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenOverviewReport_Nov2015.pdf



10.3 Boys have made more progress than girls in the above cohort; however they have a higher quota of children meaning any outliers are easier to average out.

10.4 Interestingly, when looking at the % of year 6 pupils who are at level 5, therefore exceeding the expected level (not represented on the graph), boys tend to outperform girls with a higher % in both reading and maths, though girls have a slightly higher % in writing

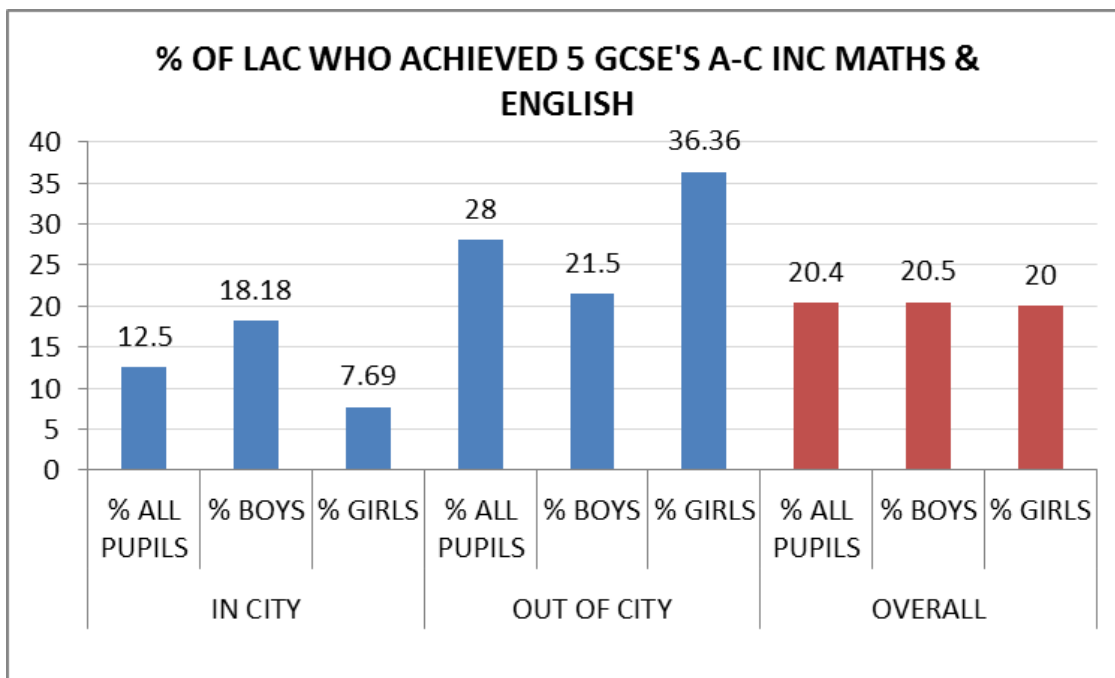
10.5 The following graph illustrates the same comparison in progression at KS2, but for pupils educated outside Wolverhampton where, by contrast, girls made up 64% of the cohort:

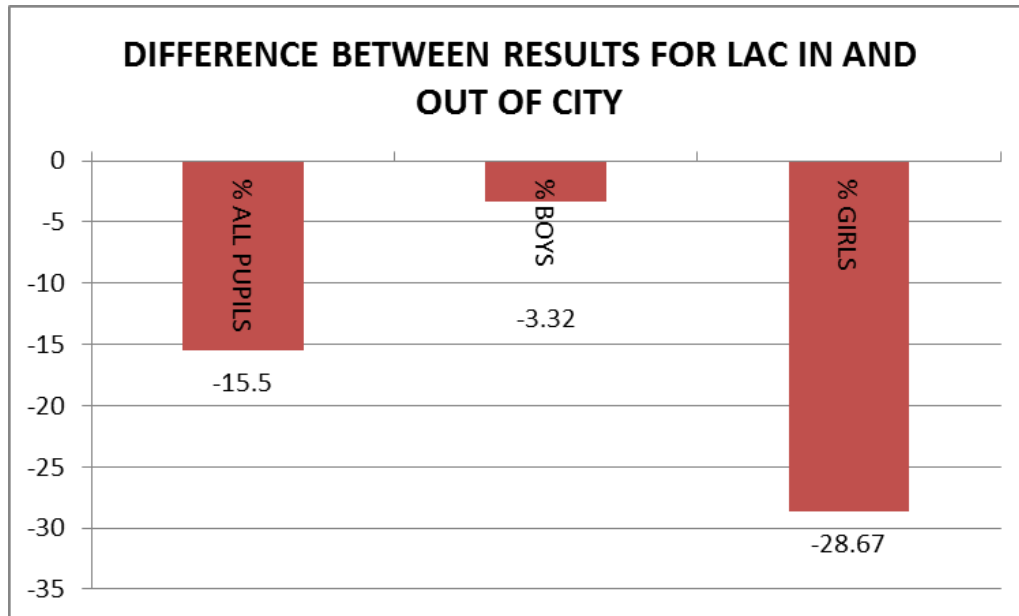


10.6 The out-of-city cohort reverses the trend for in-city LAC at KS2.

10.7

- 10.7 Looking again at pupils who achieved level 5 (not on the graph); an impressive 42.8% of girls achieved that level but no boys. A higher % of girls achieved level 5 in reading although no pupils of either gender achieved level 5 in writing at KS2. Again, the group with the higher representation have performed better, though in this case it is the girls.
- 10.8 Progress is more inconsistent for out-of city pupils than for those placed in-city at KS2, reflecting their generally lower attainment. No out-of-city pupils of either gender achieved level 5 in all areas (6.25% achieved this in Wolverhampton schools). This would indicate that the pupils placed outside Wolverhampton had a lower starting point, academically, than those educated in-city. The gap is also greater for boys, whose progress drops more significantly when they are placed outside Wolverhampton, according to these findings.
- 10.9 A detailed case-by-case analysis of the two cohorts will be completed as a result of these initial findings, to ascertain exactly why out-of-city pupils (and especially boys) are apparently underperforming at primary school level.
- 10.10 The following table illustrates the same comparison in attainment at KS4:





- 10.11 Despite a very similar performance when looking at the whole cohort, there is a vast difference between the outcomes for boys and girls, when comparing in-city with out-of-city GCSE results. Results for Boys are similar in and out of the city with only a 3% difference. The difference in the girls' cohort is stark however, with attainment being almost 30% poorer for girls in Wolverhampton schools, compared with girls placed out-of-city. It is this difference which results in such a wide gap between the GCSE results for in-city and out-of-city LAC at Key Stage 4.
- 10.12 However the low results for girls educated in Wolverhampton is in stark contrast to the performance of girls outside the city, where one in three pupils achieved 5 good GCSEs including Maths and English. This is the highest percentage of any split of results, and much higher than the 15.5% difference for all pupils at KS4.
- 10.13 The above comparisons have been included in this report because (1) they show clear and interesting trends and (2) these and other pupil characteristics will be considered in a detailed analysis in early 2016 of why some LAC cohorts achieve more highly than others.
- 11.0 Comparing the academic outcomes of LAC with their peers**
- 11.1 Wolverhampton's schools and local authority teams work extremely hard to support all of the city's pupils and there is compelling evidence for the continued improvement in our school standards, particularly at primary level.
- 11.2 However if we compare the 2015 attainment of LAC in Wolverhampton schools with that of 2012, then cross-reference this progression with that of *all* Wolverhampton pupils over the same period, we can see that attainment has improved at a significantly faster rate for Looked after Children over the last 4 years:

EYFS (2013-2015 only)

- The % of LAC in early years who were assessed as at a “good level of development” in reading, writing and numbers increased from 13% to 33%. For all pupils the improvement was from 52% to 61%.

Key Stage 1

- APS in all core subjects has improved by 1.4 points for LAC and 0.7 points for all pupils.
- % of LAC achieving the expected level in all core subjects has increased by between 9% and 11%. The improvement is between 0% and 1% for all pupils (the latter comparison could only be made between 2014 and 2015)

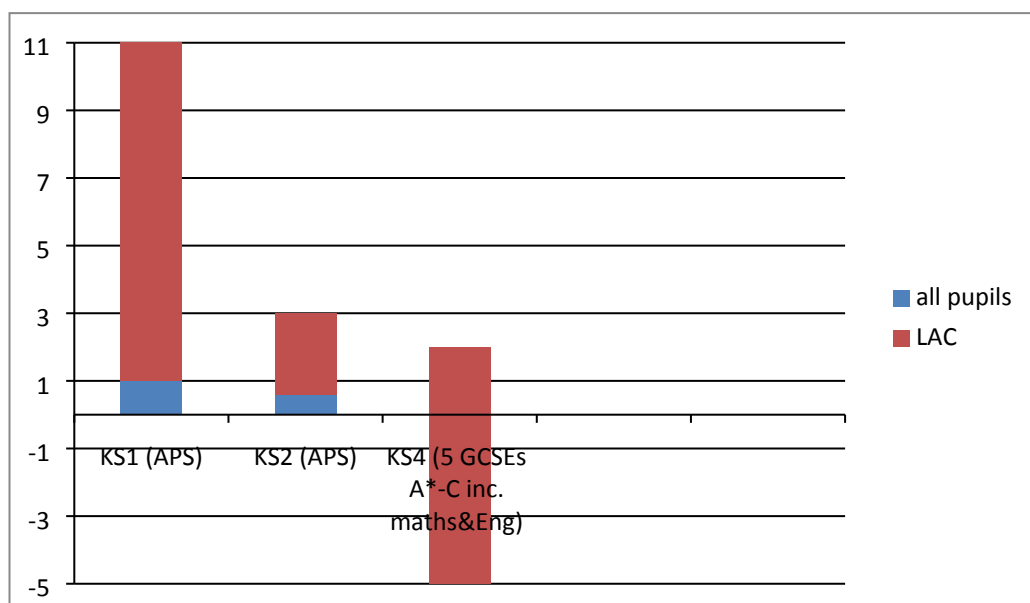
Key Stage 2

- APS in all core subjects has increased by 2.4 points for LAC and by 0.6 points for all pupils.
- % of LAC achieving the expected level in each core subject has increased by 9% in reading, 19% in writing and decreased by 3% in maths. The improvement for all pupils was 3%, 6% and 4% respectively.

Key Stage 4

- % of LAC achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and maths, improved by 7%. The equivalent % for all pupils dropped by 5% over the same period (this is broadly in line with the national picture and clearly attributable to changes in arrangements for assessment and reporting in 2014).

Improvement in attainment at key assessment stages between 2012 & 2015: comparison between LAC and all pupils in Wolverhampton schools



11.3 There is currently not enough accurate historical attainment data on LAC placed outside Wolverhampton to make a meaningful comparison with their peers. However the in-city cohort generally constitutes about two thirds of the whole cohort of LAC, making this data a very strong indicator that Wolverhampton is narrowing the attainment gap for Looked after Children.

12.0 School Attendance

12.1 School attendance is very high for the majority of looked-after pupils. The average attendance of pupils placed outside Wolverhampton, based on data returns from schools as requested by COPE, was 97% in 2014/15. The attendance outturn for pupils educated in Wolverhampton schools was 92%. This is about 1% less than 2014

12.2 The table below illustrates levels of persistent low attendance - the small minority of pupils whose attendance was less than 85% in 2014/15:

| Wolverhampton LAC with < 85% attendance for the 2014/15 academic year | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| | No with < 85% attendance | Total no of students | percentage with < 85% attendance | | No with < 85% attendance | Total no of students | percentage with < 85% attendance | |
| Autumn | 29 | 288 | 10.07% | | 1 | 230 | 0.43% | |
| Spring | 37 | 263 | 14.07% | | 4 | 230 | 1.74% | |
| Summer | 35 | 275 | 12.73% | | 3 | 226 | 1.32% | |
| | In City | | | | Out of City | | | |
| | Rolling % 12.23% | | | | Rolling % 1.17% | | | |
| | No with < 85% attendance | Total no of students | percentage with < 85% attendance | | No with < 85% attendance | Total no of students | percentage with < 85% attendance | |
| | 30 | 518 | 5.80% | | 41 | 493 | 8.32% | |
| | 38 | 501 | 7.58% | | | | | |
| | Combined | | | | Rolling % 7.21% | | | |

12.3 Generally, persistent low attendance has improved slightly since 213/14 (when it was 7.59% overall) and attendance for pupils placed outside Wolverhampton has improved (2.48% in 2013/14). However the attendance of in-city pupils shows a small decrease from 11.43% in 2013/14, and is still unacceptably high.

- 12.4 Recent research has revealed that, for every 5% of possible school sessions missed due to unauthorised school absences, young people in care scored over two grades less at GCSE⁵. A correlation can be drawn, therefore, between the higher levels of persistent low attendance and the poorer GCSE performance of LAC in Wolverhampton schools, as compared with those placed outside Wolverhampton.
- 12.5 A high number of these persistent low-attendees also had high levels of need, particularly in terms of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and experienced disruptions to their schooling (linked, in some cases, to changes to care placement) as a result of these issues. It is therefore critical that schools in Wolverhampton are properly trained and enabled to support the needs of pupils with high levels of need, and that access to specialist provision is made available for LAC without delay when it is required. Working with schools and providers, COPE provide strong challenge and support in this area on a daily basis. The Virtual Head's view, however, is that more quality alternative / specialist provision for LAC is still required in Wolverhampton, and the VSH is working with all key stakeholders to explore the possibilities for this as a matter of urgency.

13.0 Inclusion

- 13.1 There were 67 recorded temporary exclusions for LAC in Wolverhampton schools in 2014/15 - one less than in 2013/14. 28 pupils experienced 1 or more temporary exclusion. The most common reasons for exclusion were physical assault, verbal abuse / threatening behaviour and persistent disruption.
- 13.2 Just over 50% of temporary exclusions were from special schools and Pupil Referral Units. The remainder were all from 9 schools in total, some of these schools being responsible for several exclusions. However in most cases this was because the same pupil had been excluded a number of times.
- 13.4 14 pupils experienced more than 1 exclusion in 2014/15, and these pupils experienced 52 exclusions between them. Therefore half of the total number of pupils who experienced exclusion in 2014/15 accounted for 78% of the total instances of exclusion from school.
- 13.5 The statistics above indicate that a small minority of Looked-after pupils (about 6% of the cohort at the time) are experiencing the vast majority of exclusions from Wolverhampton schools. The Virtual School Head, therefore, recommends that Wolverhampton adopts a policy of arranging an urgent PEP review as soon as a looked-after pupil has received more than one exclusion from school in an academic year. The focus of the meeting will be to address the pupil's difficulties in school and to identify SMART actions to avoid any further disruptions.

⁵ http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenKeyMessages_Nov2015.pdf

- 13.6 1 pupil was permanently excluded in 2014/15, which was from a Wolverhampton primary school. The school had previously made a referral to the Pupil Referral Unit for support, and the pupil was awaiting a start date (he is now attending a special school in Wolverhampton). While such an instance is the exception to the rule, it underlines how critical it is that access to specialist education support, where needed, is arranged for LAC *as a matter of the greatest urgency*. LAC should not be sitting on waiting lists for PRU/special school support. This is reflected in the new Model School Policy for Looked after Children (see appendix 1), which the VSH is encouraging all schools in Wolverhampton to adopt.
- 13.7 10 Looked-after pupils attend alternative provision (7 of these attend or are linked to a Pupil Referral Unit) and 7 have less than 25 hours provision, at the start of November 2015. The pupils with less than 25 hours provision are generally complex, with high levels of need which tend to result in instability of education provision. For example, 2 of the 7 LAC with part-time provision are prohibited from contact with other children under the age of 16 due to their bail conditions. In cases such as these, home tuition and other tailored packages of support are arranged, and all of these pupils have a clear plan to increase their provision to full time as soon as possible. COPE and the Virtual School Head are monitoring these arrangements and helping to progress the pupils toward full-time, appropriate provision as a matter of priority.
- 13.8 COPE and the Virtual Head help to ensure that appropriate education is provided for all LAC without drift or delay. We have challenged and avoided several school exclusions, working with schools to create packages of support and to find suitable alternatives to exclusion, and successfully represented LAC at admissions appeals panels. Wolverhampton has not had to use its powers of direction for any Looked after pupils in 2014/15.

14.0 School Transition & Stability

- 14.1 Recent research shows that young people in care who changed school in Years 10 or 11 scored over five grades less than those who did not⁶. COPE and the VSH work closely with social workers, schools and carers to maintain existing school placements for LAC, wherever possible and appropriate. When a change of school is the best option, COPE help to ensure a successful transition through in-class support, mentoring and close partnership working with all key agencies.
- 14.2 Social workers are expected to consult the Virtual School Head prior to any change of school for a Looked after Child. This requirement is now embedded in the placement request process on Carefirst, helping to enable early intervention and advice from the

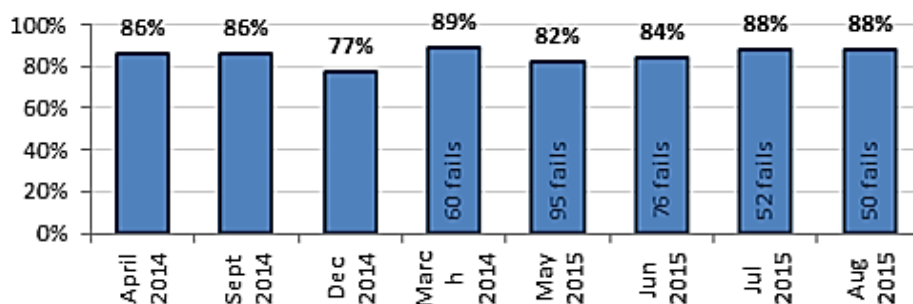
⁶ http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EducationalProgressLookedAfterChildrenKeyMessages_Nov2015.pdf

VSH where required. There is still work to be done, however, to improve practice to the point where this consultation takes place, in a timely manner, in all cases. The VSH is working closely with the Carefirst team and with senior managers in social care to ensure that this happens.

- 14.3 The transition from primary to secondary school can be extremely difficult for many Looked after Children. COPE ensure that all LAC are supported with a successful transition through 1:1 meetings with year 6 LAC and their teachers, before & after secondary induction sessions, as well as helping to ensure that Looked-after pupils are given their preferred choice of secondary school. This is followed up with additional meetings in the new Secondary school. Out-of city LAC are given additional information and support where required.
- 14.4 COPE have supported numerous LAC who have moved schools due to a change of care placement or other reasons, ensuring a successful transition through in-class support, mentoring and close partnership working with all key agencies.
- 14.5 The Virtual Head works with VSHs in other local authorities to ensure that quality transition arrangements are in place, both for Wolverhampton LAC placed out-of-city and LAC placed in Wolverhampton by other authorities.

15.0 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

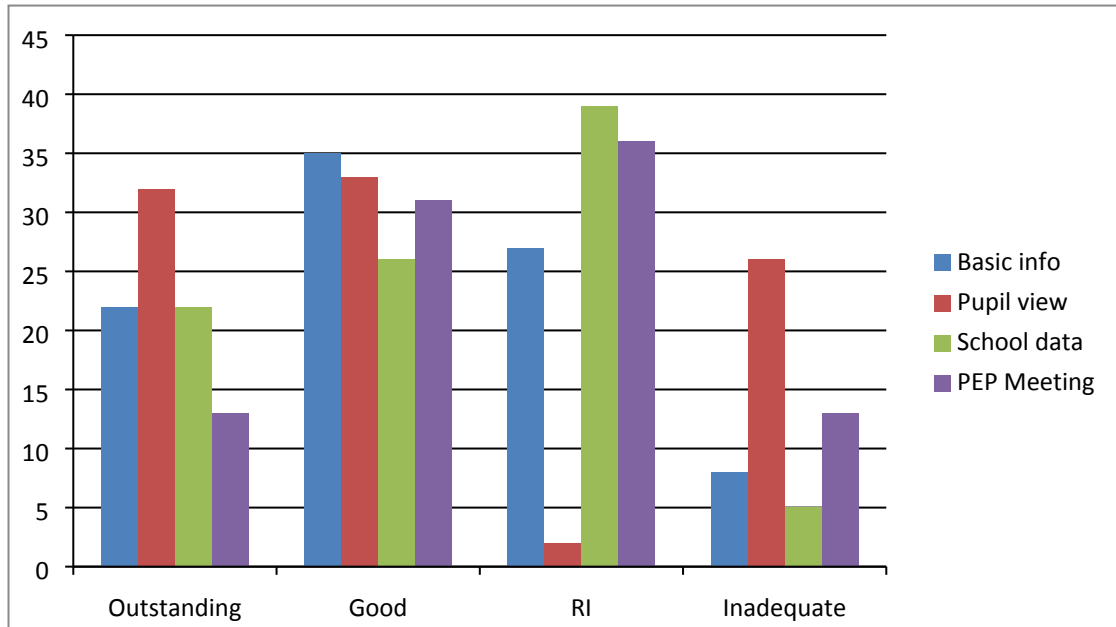
- 15.1 The table below shows the % of PEPs completed within statutory timescales in 2014/15:



- 15.2 The outturn for 2014/15 (April 2014 – March 2015) was 89%. The figure at August 2015 was 88%. As a comparative snapshot, the % of PEPs completed within statutory timescales at December 2014 (reported in the 2013/14 VSH annual report) was 75%. We can be confident, therefore, that a high proportion of PEPs are completed within timescale and that this figure is generally rising.
- 15.3 A new addition in 2015 has been the 16+ Personal Education Plan, which is now in place for all LAC in years 12 and 13. Completion rate of these is currently at around 50%.

Work is on-going between the Virtual Head and Transitions Team to improve performance in this area, and the VSH is confident that performance will improve to a rate comparable to that of the regular PEP in 2015/16.

- 15.4 A dedicated PEP form for LAC at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has also been introduced in 2015. Performance data is not yet available on this but has been requested. The Virtual head is currently briefing social care teams on the proper completion of the EYFS PEP.
- 15.5 A new initiative in 2015 has been COPE's specific focus on monitoring and improving the *quality* of PEPs. COPE are now auditing 50 Personal Education Plans for quality every month - one for a different child each time. The aim is that after 10 months 500 PEPs will have been audited (at least one for every LAC between reception and year 11).
- 15.6 The VSH completed a report on the first complete batch of audits (150 over the summer term, 2015). In future this will be a termly report to be forwarded to Wolverhampton schools and relevant senior managers. The first report in 2015 highlighted that, in terms of overall quality of the PEPs audited:
- 5% were outstanding
 - 28% were good
 - 26% were requiring improvement
 - 41% were inadequate
 -
- 15.7 The 4 key elements of the PEP are:
1. basic information (pupil, child, carer, social worker details)
 2. the pupil's views on their educational progress
 3. Specific educational data provided by the school – attainment, attendance etc.
 4. The PEP meeting itself, including the setting of individualised learning targets for the pupil
 - 5.
- 15.8 An analysis of the quality of each key element, using only PEPs that were available to view and which were up-to-date (if not, a PEP was judged as inadequate) revealed that the PEP meeting itself is the weakest element, with the greatest number of PEPs that were judged as either RI or inadequate, and the fewest number of outstanding judgements:



15.9 There is clearly an urgent need to improve the quality of Personal Education Plans, particularly with reference to the quality of the meeting and therefore the final plan itself. The Virtual Head is currently forming a working group, including Designated Teachers and Senior Social Work Managers, to address this priority. However work already in progress to address this issue includes:

- The VSH is currently developing an e-training module on improving PEP quality, in partnership with Workforce development, and delivering face-to-face training on Quality Personal Education Planning to all NQSWs. The aim is that completion of this training will be made mandatory for social workers, IROs and Wolverhampton foster carers. It will also be made available to Designated Teachers, and will be online in early 2016. The VSH has recently delivered training to the LAC Transitions Team on the 16+ PEP and will be delivering PEP training to foster carers in February 2016
- Each completed PEP audit is forwarded to the relevant social worker and, if required, their manager. From 2016 Designated Teachers will receive copies of completed audits. Results will also be recorded in the child's Carefirst record and copied to the IRO to enable further scrutiny of PEP quality
- COPE are addressing this issue with schools at every opportunity. The first PEP audit report has been discussed at the Wolverhampton Designated Teachers' Forum and forwarded to all Designated Teachers. This, along with subsequent reports, will be discussed further at the School Standards Head Teachers' briefing in 2016
- Work is currently underway on the development of a fully electronic PEP which will be designed in such a way as to facilitate satisfactory completion of the document at all stages. This is an area of priority for the VSH in 2016.

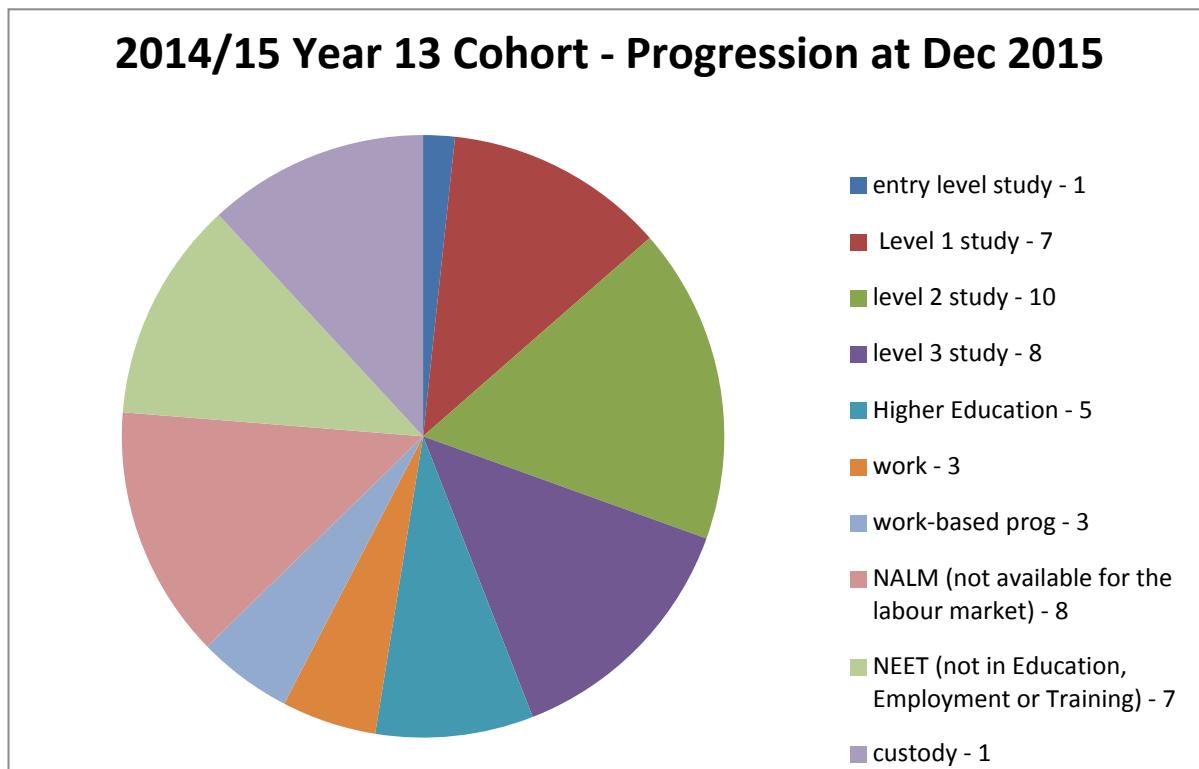
16.0 Further & Higher Education

16.1 The 2014/15 year 13 cohort (53 young people including both LAC and Care Leavers) achieved the following qualifications:

| Level of Qualification | Male students | Female students | Total |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|
| Entry level | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Level 1 | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| Level 2 | 6 | 7 | 13 |
| Level 3 (A-level equivalent) | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| A-level (1 or more) | 1 | 2 | 3 |

16.2 Of this cohort, 14 young people achieved no qualifications. However several of these are either still studying for their qualifications or engaged in work or a work-based programme. 7 have special educational needs.

16.3 The current progression of LAC / Care Leavers who were in year 13 in 2014/15 is as follows:



16.4 26% of this cohort achieved A-level or equivalent qualifications in 2015, while only 13% are currently classed as NEET. The VSH is working closely with LAC Transitions and other key partners to improve these outcomes further, as outlined in 2015/16 EET Action Plan and 2015/16 Attainment Improvement Plan.

- 16.5 Wolverhampton has 12 Care Leavers at university, at November 2015. 1 additional care leaver is starting in January 2016 (on a Leap / access course), 3 have deferred their applications to 2016. It is anticipated that 7 Care Leavers will enter university in 2016 (excluding the 1 Jan start)
- 16.6 By Year of Entry: 7 Care Leavers entered HE in 2015. 3 Care Leavers entered HE in in 2014, 2 in 2013 and 1 in 2010 (who completed a degree in 2014).
- 16.7 It can be seen that the number of Care Leavers entering higher education has been rising steadily since 2010. The number seems to have reached a peak at 7 at the moment (with another 7 expected in 2016). However COPE and the VSH are working hard with the LAC Transitions Team and other key stakeholders to improve access to further education (FE) and higher education (HE) for LAC and Care Leavers:
- The *Aspire2Uni* project is a partnership between Wolverhampton University, Virtual Schools in Wolverhampton, Walsall and Sandwell, and the Creating Chances Trust. There are two elements to this project:
 1. A selected cohort of LAC currently in year 7 and 8 are offered additional support throughout their secondary education, including access to an undergraduate learning mentor employed by the university, to support their educational aspirations. The Creating Chances Trust are also offering high-quality, bespoke work experiences opportunities
 2. Additional events are held at the university for specific year groups, and their carers – workshops, visits, subject tasters etc. Three events were held in the summer term 2015.
 - 3.
 - A full-time EET Co-ordinator is being recruited, partly-funded with Pupil Premium, to sit within the LAC Transitions Team. This position is currently being held by Helen Woodvine on an acting basis. This is enabling closer tracking and support for year 11 destinations and closer monitoring of the progress of post-16 LAC in further education or training. It is expected that this will have a positive impact on the numbers eventually entering university, as well as EET figures generally.
 - A 16+ learning support agreement (see Appendix 2), which was agreed to be adopted by all West Midlands Virtual Heads, is being established with key local FE providers. The EET Co-ordinator is driving this forward; Wolverhampton College have already agreed to sign up to this.
 - LAC Transitions and COPE deliver quarterly training quarterly training to foster carers around further / higher education and raising aspirations. Aspire2Uni held a 'carers & enablers' day at Wolverhampton University in the summer term 2015.
 - The 16+ PEP is enabling better monitoring and support for post-16 achievement and progression.

- ICT Services are working in partnership with the LAC Service to develop improved, and safely monitored, access to ICT devices and internet for post-16 LAC and Care Leavers.
- An improved offer of work experience and apprenticeship / traineeship opportunities for LAC and Care Leavers is being developed as part of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan, driven by a dedicated EET Action Group which is focussing on improving performance in this area for LAC and care Leavers.

16.8 The removal of the Student Maintenance Grant is a new financial challenge which is likely to impact on the numbers of Care Leavers willing or able to access HE. The current maintenance grant is £3,387.00 per annum, and the 2016 cohort will be the first effected. At the moment the only obvious alternative will be a Student Finance Maintenance Loan which is currently £4,813.00 per annum (£7,315.00 in London). To replace the maintenance grant for the expected 2016 cohort alone would cost the authority £71,127 over three years (excluding London-based study), based on the expected 7 starters in 2016.

17.0 Participation

17.1 Wolverhampton has a very strong, and continually developing, Children in care Council (CiCC). The CiCC benefits from close links with the Youth Council and with elected members and is actively involved in Participation at a regional and national level, enabling the CiCC to act as a real force for change and the improvement of services.

17.2 Wolverhampton's Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan was driven by consultation with our Looked after young people and care Leavers. Education, Employment and Training is the first of the four key areas of the strategy, with young people having identified the following priorities under the EET section:

- Help young people to make achievements.
- Encourage young people to be involved in making choices about school.
- Maximise access to work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for LAC and Care Leavers

17.3 The 2014/15 Virtual School Headteacher Report will be discussed with the CiCC in early 2016, and their response will be shared with the Corporate Parenting Panel to assist with the panel's regulatory function, and to inform future developments

17.4 The 2015 LAC Awards Ceremony, *the I-Awards*, saw over 300 young people receive recognition for their successes throughout 2014/15. Educational success (the *Intellectual* award, presented by the Headteacher of the Royal School, Wolverhampton) was a key award category alongside other achievements. COPE and the VSH led on the organisation of this very successful evening.

18.0 Training & Strategic Development

- 18.1 The Virtual Head has a statutory duty related to the training of all key partners and the development of strong working partnerships to promote the education of Looked after Children.
- 18.2 The VSH organised a training conference on Attachment & Trauma for Designated teachers in February 2015. A follow-up will take place in January 2016, which will help to prepare for our Emotion Coaching workshops for schools in the spring term 2016. Feedback from the 2015 conference was very positive, as in the responses to the following feedback question for example:

- How fully were the learning objectives met (37 responses)?

Fully 70%

Mostly 30%

Partly --

Not at all –

Comments from delegates included:

Amazing Balanced Professional

Unique experience. The delivery was second to none.

Very good training - I really enjoyed the day and found it very interesting.

- 18.3 In addition to the above, COPE delivered the following training sessions in 2014/15:

- A termly Designated Teachers' Forum
- Three Headteachers briefings
- Eight education training sessions for foster carers
- Two training sessions for Chairs of Governors in schools
- Three training sessions on PEPs for social workers
- Various education briefings to social care teams and IROs

- 18.4 The Designated Teachers' Forum attracts between 30 and 40 attendees on average. This has continued the very positive growth in attendance since 2014 and highlights the increasingly strong partnership between COPE and schools.

- 18.5 Policies and procedures have continued to be updated and strengthened to support the educational progress of LAC in 2014/15, including a new policy on minimising disruption to school placements and a policy on the use of boarding schools for LAC and CIN/CP. The Virtual School Head is promoting a new Model School Policy with Wolverhampton schools (Appendix 1) with the expectation that all Wolverhampton schools will sign up to

the policy in 2016. The VSH is also promoting Post-16 Learner Support Agreement for LAC / Care Leavers, a regional initiative developed in 2014/15 by the West Midlands Virtual School Heads Network (Appendix 2). Wolverhampton College have already signed up to this agreement and the VSH expects that all local FE / training providers will sign up to it.

- 18.6 As Chair of the West Midlands Virtual School Head's Network (VSHN) from 2013 to 2015 the VSH led on the delivery of a regional conference for Virtual School teams in 2015. The event was very well-attended, with every local authority in the region represented. A key outcome of the day was the creation of a development plan for the West Midlands VSHN in 2015/16.
- 18.7 The Virtual School Head has continued his ongoing work with Ofsted in 2014/15, alongside other members of the regional and national VSHN. Termly meetings have been held with leading HMI to increase inspectors' knowledge and understanding of the LAC cohort. Partly as a result of this, the West Midlands Ofsted team identified LAC as one of their key priority areas for 2015/16, which is leading to an increased focus on LAC in school inspections. Ofsted are now starting to focus on the commitment of schools to supporting their looked-after and pupils, including attendance at relevant training such as that delivered by virtual school teams, and there is clear evidence that these factors are influencing their judgements on schools related to safeguarding.
- 18.7 Improved partnership working with Standards and the School Improvement team in particular is enabling the VSH to provide closer scrutiny and stronger support for schools in Wolverhampton. Strong links with other management teams across services for children and young people are enabling COPE and the VSH to function effectively as a 'bridge' between education and social care and to provide good quality training and advice where it is most needed.

19.0 Conclusion

- 19.1 This report illustrates that the educational achievement of LAC continues to generally improve in 2015, with clear improvement at KS1 and KS4 and average point scores showing a consistent rise year-on-year. There will always be fluctuations in performance with relatively small cohorts of pupils. However the important point is to be able to see a generally upward trajectory and a gradual narrowing of the gap between LAC and their peers. This is what we are seeing in Wolverhampton, which underlines the strength of the commitment of the council, and its partners, to the children in its care.
- 19.2 At the same time, however, the gap is not narrowing as quickly as we would like. Performance comparisons between LAC educated inside Wolverhampton, and those placed outside, points to the need for a continued strengthening of the support for LAC in our own primary and secondary schools. This will be a key area of priority for COPE in 2016 and a detailed analysis will be completed to support this. Other areas of focus will include improving the quality of PEPs, continuing to develop support at early years and

post-16 and ensuring a more joined-up approach to placement planning in some cases. Data cleansing has been a critical part of the journey that has led to the completion of this report and further work needs to be done, both locally and nationally, to improve the dataset as noted previously. As Corporate Parents we will also need to consider how best to promote care leavers' access to further and higher education following the removal of the student maintenance grant; a financial challenge which could significantly disadvantage Care Leavers in 2016 and beyond.

- 19.3 It should also be pointed out that simple comparisons of academic levels do not allow for a fair or helpful representation of the progress of this complex and fluid cohort. This has been highlighted in recent research, and in a recently published paper by ADCS, NCER and the National Virtual School Heads Network, which calls for a more subtle and comprehensive set of data and analyses which cross-reference academic progress with time spent in care and other influential factors.⁷
- 19.5 It must be recognised, however, that there is a great deal to celebrate regarding the achievements of LAC in Wolverhampton. The improvement in GCSE results, which are likely to be well above the national average for LAC in 2015, is one of the outcomes which highlight the considerable strength of Wolverhampton's Virtual School. The significantly increased % of LAC attending schools which are rated as good or better indicates both improvement in the quality of our schools and the prioritisation given to Looked after Children. We look forward to 2016 and beyond with excitement, optimism and confidence in our continued drive to improve the life chances of Looked after Children.

⁷ <http://www.adcs.org.uk/care/article/the-educational-achievement-of-children-in-care>

Appendix 1

WOLVERHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL MODEL SCHOOL POLICY ON PROMOTING THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

1. INTRODUCTION

(INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL OR ACADEMY) believes that, as Corporate Parents and in partnership with key stakeholders, we have a legal, moral and professional duty to safeguard and promote the education of Looked after Children (LAC).

The terms 'looked-after children' and 'children in care' include children placed by a local authority with family members, foster carers or in a residential care home. They also include those placed in care through a care order under section 31 of the Children Act. 1989 or by a voluntary agreement with the child's parents under section 20 of the Act. The terms can also be used to refer to children entered into police protection and those involved in the youth justice system.

We know that a secure and successful education is a major factor in improving the life chances of LAC and Care Leavers. However we recognise that, nationally, pupils in care have significantly underachieved compared with their peers. We intend, through this policy, to work toward closing that achievement gap. We promote the inclusion, well-being and achievement of looked after children in our school. In pursuance of this we will hold ourselves and our partners to account by asking the question, *'Would this be good enough for my child?'*

2. Background legislation

This policy is based on the following legislation:

1. *Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 ("the Act") and The Designated Teacher (Looked-after Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009.*
2. *The Local Authority statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children – see link below.*
3. *The Children and Families Act 2014, which requires every local authority in England to appoint an officer to make sure that its duty is properly discharged - referred to as the Virtual School Head.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

3. How will the impact of the policy be evidenced?

The impact of the policy will be seen through improvements in the following key outcomes for Looked after children:

- ✓ Reduction or zero rate in school exclusions
- ✓ Improved school attendance
- ✓ Improved attainment at statutory assessment stages
- ✓ Improved and maintained rates of progress and attainment
- ✓ Improved quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- ✓ The views of children & young people (as recorded in PEPs and captured through the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and wider consultation
- ✓ Ultimately, an increase in LAC and Care Leavers aged 16+ who are in Education, Employment & Training (EET) and numbers of Care Leavers accessing higher education (HE)

4. Partnership working

We will work together with key local authority departments including the Virtual School Head (VSH) and Corporate Parenting & Education (COPE) team, along with education providers and other relevant agencies, to enable the best possible outcomes for Looked after pupils through flexible and proactive partnership working.

5. The Governing Body

The governing body will:

- Ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for LAC and that (s)he is enabled to carry out his/her responsibilities in line with statutory guidance (see link below)
- Support the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the progress of LAC is prioritised and supported in line with statutory responsibilities
- Nominate a governor for Looked after Children. The nominated governor will take a leading responsibility for the challenge and support of the school in raising achievement for LAC pupils and attend relevant training. The Nominated Governor should have a termly meeting with the Designated Teacher, with a clear agenda, to address school improvement issues related to LAC. They will also ensure that an annual report (as a minimum) is provided to the governing body by the Designated Teacher - see Appendix for suggested report template. The nominated governor will present this report to the wider governing body in partnership with the designated teacher.

6. The Senior Leadership Team

The Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that LAC are prioritised in school policy & procedure and in the allocation of resources, in line with Ofsted and DfE guidance, to ensure that LAC access the best of what the school has to offer
- Ensure that LAC are given top priority in school admissions, in line with national statutory guidance and the Wolverhampton Admissions policy. However, we must ensure that the provision is right for the child and, if there are issues, school will meet with social care the Virtual School Head (VSH)/COPE and other key partners as appropriate, to resolve these issues

- Consider every possible alternative to a temporary or permanent exclusion, in line with national, local and school admissions policies, due to the disproportionate effect that exclusion can have on Looked after Children. Instead, we will work together proactively with all key partners including the local authority, using every resource in our control (including alternative provision where appropriate), to solve problems.
- Avoid resorting to unofficial exclusions to resolve behavioural or other issues
- In the event of a serious issue, which might otherwise lead to permanent exclusion, the child may be placed on a fixed-term exclusion and an emergency review of the PEP and other relevant plans / provision will be called and attended by key personnel, e.g. the child's carer, social worker and (where appropriate) representatives from COPE, 5-18 Early Help Service and/or Youth Offending Team, to resolve the issue
- If we feel that we are unable to meet the child's needs, we will work with external agencies to ensure that any special educational needs, including social emotional and mental health needs, are assessed in accordance with the SEN/D Code of Practice (2015). This should include, where appropriate, referral for a statutory education, health and care needs assessment
- On occasion, by shared agreement and in the best interests of the child, a managed move to another provision may be considered in order to avoid a permanent exclusion.
- Where a modified timetable may be in the best interests of the child, this will firstly be discussed and (if appropriate) agreed in a review of the Personal Education Plan, thereby taking into account the views of the child, carer and social worker
- Take a proactive approach to sourcing the DfE-recommended first day provision for fixed term exclusion for LAC, in view of the additional pressures that exclusion can put on care placements
- Be aware that looked after children are more likely to have special educational needs than most, work proactively to identify any SEN affecting Looked after Children, and make appropriate provision in accordance with the SEN/D Code of Practice (2015)
- Ensure that LAC have an appropriate, 25-hour offer of education, other than for a fixed period which has been agreed with carer and social worker as being in the child's best interests (such as part of a transition plan) and recorded / reviewed in the PEP
- Make our school "attachment aware" and fully able to meet each child's learning, health & wellbeing needs, by ensuring that key staff keep up-to-date with relevant policy and legislation and attend relevant training, such as that provided by the Virtual School Head (VSH) / COPE. We will ensure that key staff are aware of statutory guidance in this area (see link below).

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413368/Promoting_the_health_and_well-being_of_looked-after_children.pdf

7. The Designated Teacher

We will have a Designated Teacher for LAC, who is a member of the senior leadership team and is therefore able to affect changes in policy and procedure where appropriate. The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for all children in this school who are in care, ensuring that their voice is heard and acted upon

- Ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis and in line with school safeguarding and information-sharing protocols.
- Maintain an up to date record of all Looked after Children who are on the school roll
- Be a central point of contact, working with any previous educational settings to ensure a smooth induction and transition into school
- Liaise with the child, carer & social worker to ensure that a high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed and reviewed within statutory timescales (and more often if necessary) with SMART targets to support accelerated progress
- Ensure that Pupil Premium and other allocated funding is used in the most appropriate way to support each Looked after Child's individual learning targets, as agreed in their PEP meeting with the child's carer, social worker and (where appropriate / necessary) VSH/COPE representative - see the following link for further information:
<https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-virtual-school-heads-responsibilities>
- Contribute to LAC reviews, SEND reviews and other meetings as required & appropriate
- Fulfil school safeguarding protocols, be alert to any child protection issues, and know what action to take.
- Inform the child's carer and social worker when a child in care is absent from school without notification or excluded
- Attend relevant training on safeguarding and Looked after Children, keep up to date with relevant legislation & guidance and cascade to school staff as appropriate (see links in sections 2 & 6 of this policy)
- Provide in-school training for school staff around attachment, trauma and recovery and its implications for behaviour management.
- Provide support and CPD to staff, with a knowledge of the emotional impact that who are looked after can have on trusted adults, including their class-based staff.
- Provide the Virtual School Head / COPE Team with termly data on the performance, attendance and attainment of Wolverhampton LAC
- Meet with the Nominated Governor or Chair of Governors termly and report to the Governing Body annually, as a minimum, on the performance of their Looked after pupils, without naming individual children
- Ensure well planned and informed transitions when a child changes school, with timely information sharing.
- Ensure that the statutory guidance on the role of the Designated Teacher is embedded within practice

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/269764/role_and_responsibilities_of_the_designated_teacher_for_looked_after_children.pdf

8. All School Staff

All school staff will:

- Ensure a safe & secure environment in which vulnerable pupils are able to flourish and grow and high aspirations are encouraged
- Seek advice from designated teacher regarding induction, own CPD and any interventions, classroom environment adaptations etc.
- Be sensitive to the needs of LAC, including confidentiality issues
- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care

9. Arrangements for Review

This policy will be reviewed as to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.

Signed

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Headteacher | |
| Chair of governors | |
| Virtual School Head | |
| Date | |

Appendix to the Model School Policy:

The Designated Teacher's Annual Report to the Governing Body

on the Progress and Support of Looked after Children (LAC) in School

Purpose of Report

This report fulfils the statutory duty for the Designated Teacher for LAC to provide an (at least) annual report to the governing body, outlining the progress of the school's Looked-after pupils, and the support that is provided for them

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of areas for discussion and should be used to inform a termly discussion between the Designated Teacher and Nominated Governor for LAC, or Chair of Governors, as well as a template for the annual report.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| This Report Covers (Term & Year): | |
| Name of School | |
| Name of Designated Teacher for LAC | |

| | | | | |
|--|-------|----------------------|------------------|---|
| Name of Nominated Governor for LAC (or Chair of Governors) | | | | |
| Designated Teacher's position within the staffing structure | | | | |
| What training has the designated Teacher and/or other school staff received relating to LAC and vulnerable pupils in the last year? | | | | |
| How many LAC attend the school, and how many of these are Looked after by Wolverhampton City Council? | | | | |
| How many have a statement of SEN or EHCP, and for what type of need? How many have identified SEN, but do not have a statement / EHCP? | | | | |
| Do all LAC have up to date, high quality Personal Education Plans (PEPs)? If not, please provide reason / comment | | | | |
| What is the current attainment of each LAC? Please do not use names and add rows as needed | Child | English | Maths | Is this below, at or above expected levels? |
| | 1 | | | |
| | 2 | | | |
| | 3 | | | |
| Are these pupils making expected (or better) levels of progress, and if not, what actions are in place to address this? | Child | Expected Progress +? | Reason / Comment | |
| | 1 | | | |
| | 2 | | | |
| | 3 | | | |
| Is attendance less than 95% for any of these pupils? If so, please give reason / comment and current actions to addresses this. | | | | |
| Are any of these pupils following modified or part-time timetables? If so, please add reasons / comment and plans in place to extend their provision to full-time | | | | |
| Have any LAC pupils had fixed-term or permanent exclusions? If yes, what has been done to | | | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| support reintegration and prevent further exclusion? | |
| Which other agencies has school worked with to support these children (including, but not limited to, local authority stakeholders)? | |
| How is the school using its Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) allocation to support LAC? | |
| Any other information? | |

Appendix 2

[Logos of VSS/LAs supporting to add]

Post 16 Young People in Care and Care Leaver Learner Support Partnership Agreement – West Midlands

Purpose of the agreement

- This agreement addresses the significant challenges Young People in Care and Care Leavers face as a result of the circumstances that brought them into care and the experiences they may have within the care system.
- No one partner can provide the full range of support that young people need.
- This agreement therefore expresses our commitment, as partners, to ensuring that Young People in Care and Care Leavers achieve the best possible outcomes in Post 16 education and training.

Our Principles and shared practice:

- We are prepared to be challenged by the question: 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- Our young people will be safe and feel safe in education and training and we will ensure they are listened to.
- We will work together to solve problems
- We will develop and help shape education and training that meets the needs of all our young people.
- We will ensure young people receive: impartial, information, advice and guidance [IAG] that gets them into the right provision; the support to stay there; advice and support when they move on.
- We will ensure information is shared openly and with due regard for safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection and in line with the purposes and ethos of this agreement.

Social Care will:

Before the end of Year 11 ensure each young person has a 'key worker' [social worker, personal adviser [cf Care Panning regulations], foster carer, residential worker or other appropriate adult] with the authority and commitment to take the role of 'best parent' in supporting this agreement.

NB social care must inform the provider promptly if the key worker changes.

The social care key worker's will:

Before the young person starts with a provider:

- Obtain the young person's consent to share safeguarding information with providers wherever possible
NB Safeguarding may require that information is shared without consent
- Ensure that the provider's designated person knows their name contact details and any other key contacts
- Complete an education plan [part of the Pathway Plan], which must cover safeguarding issues, with the young person and the provider before [preferably May-July] they start provision, or, if this is not possible, within thirty days of them starting.

Once the young person is in provision:

- Meet to review the education plan at the provision at least six monthly or more often if there are problems
- Listen to young people's views and act on them appropriately

- Attend consultation events/ 'parents' evenings'
- Contact the provider and engage with other relevant professionals, if there are problems, or extra support is needed e.g. because accommodation arrangements are changing and call extra meetings as appropriate
- Respond rapidly to an emergency – within 24 hours as a maximum
- Provide the necessary support with accommodation, transport, finance and health so the young person can engage with their education, employment or training

Education or Training Provider will:

- Have a 'designated person' who will be a first and direct phone, or email point of contact for young people in care and care leavers, carers, social care, careers, so they get individual and personal attention
- Notify partners if the designated person changes.
- Provide pre and post entry visits
- Advise and guide young people about all aspects of the provision and its services and ensure young people receive any financial or other support to which they are entitled
- Listen to young people's views act on them appropriately
- Identify young people in care and care leavers, via a tick box on application forms and other post application checks.
- Complete an education plan, which must cover safeguarding issues, with the young person and the key worker before [preferably May-July] they start provision, or, if this is not possible, within thirty days of them starting.
- Meet to review the education plan at the provision at least six monthly, or more often if there are problems
- Ensure each young person has a mentor or equivalent who is introduced to them and who:
 - Provides support and advocacy for the young person
 - Is able to meet with the key worker and others to support the young person's learning and education plan.
- If there is a risk that the young person may not be able to stay at the provision, including any temporary suspension or fixed term exclusion:
 - inform the key worker by phone and email on the day it occurs
 - call a professionals' meeting as appropriate to attempt to resolve issues
- Not permanently exclude or terminate the young person's course without meeting with the key worker. NB1 The young person may be suspended/fixed term excluded pending the outcome of this meeting. NB2 The meeting allows time to plan for alternatives, cover safeguarding issues etc.
- Ensure employers actively partnered with support this agreement.
- Ensure, impartial careers information, advice and guidance is provided.
- Track individual learner: attendance; retention; outcomes; achievement; progression and value added data and share with the young person's Virtual School and aggregated data for all young people in care and care leavers with partners to this agreement.

Virtual School

The Virtual School for Children in Care and Care Leavers carries the local authority corporate parenting responsibility to promote the education of their children in care and care leavers wherever they are placed.

The Virtual School will:

- Provide the strategic support and challenge to ensure that the terms of the Learner Support Partnership Agreement are upheld by all signatories for their young people
- Promote and publicise the Learner Support Agreement with their Local Authority partners: social care, Director of Children's Services, elected members, other work based learning providers, commissioners etc.

- Work with other Virtual Schools to provide support and challenge as appropriate e.g. for a young person from another LA who is placed in local provision. The local Virtual School will not take over the responsibility of the 'home' local authority [local authority to which the young person is or was in care].
- Ensure young people have access to high quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance
- Ensure young people have a high quality Personal Education Plan which contains plans for Post 16 education and which is maintained in an appropriate form Post 16 [e.g. via Pathway Plan or separate education plan]
- Track young people in Post 16 education, employment and training so issues are followed up promptly
- Ensure that there is Internet based information – e.g. through a Virtual School website – about the Learner Support Agreement

Learner Support Partnership Agreement Implementation

- A formal meeting is held between the Virtual School [who will have obtained the agreement of social care to support the agreement] and principal or vice principal or director of the provider, at which the agreement is signed.
- Each party is responsible for publicising and promoting the agreement within their own organisations.
- Each Virtual School is also responsible for tracking and supporting its own young people and challenging signatories and services in its Local Authority to ensure issues are resolved and support provided.

Review of Learner Support Partnership Agreement

- The agreement will be reviewed annually:
 1. **With each provider by a Virtual Head** [by agreement, this may not be the Virtual Head from the local authority in which the provider is situated]

The data shared will be for the full academic year prior to the review

| | Young people in care and care leavers at provider in Y12 and Y13 [from any LA] | Total or percentage for all learners at the provider |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Total number of young people | | |
| Average attendance % | | |
| Retention % | | |
| Achievement [completing] % | | |
| Progress [to ETE] % | | |

2. **By Virtual Heads who support the agreement** through the West Midlands Virtual Heads Regional Association

The data shared will be for the full academic year prior to the review from each participating LA

| | Young people in care and care leavers in Y12 and Y13 <u>LA1</u> | Young people in care and care leavers in Y12 and Y13 <u>LA2</u> | <u>LA3 etc</u> | West Midlands Average for all Y12 and 13 |
|------------------------------|---|---|----------------|--|
| Total number of young people | | | | |
| Average attendance % | | | | |
| Retention % | | | | |
| Achievement [completing] % | | | | |
| Progress [to ETE] % | | | | |

- In addition the reviews will describe
 - Key positives [e.g. success of individuals]

- Key challenges [e.g. issues with multi agency working, progression]

Provider details and signature

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Provider Name | |
| Name of signatory to this agreement | |
| Email address | |
| Role of signatory to this agreement | |
| Signature | |
| Name of designated tutor | |
| Designated tutor email | |
| Designated tutor phone | |
| Head of Virtual School - name* | |
| Head of Virtual School signature | |
| Head of Virtual School email | |

*The Head of Virtual School ensures that social care support this agreemen