AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee	**Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Date of Committee	**8 December 2010**
Report Title	**The Education of Children in Care in Warwickshire**
Summary	The paper includes a profile of the numbers of children in care served by the Virtual School, data about performance and attendance, data on the reduction of permanent exclusions in the looked after population, the barriers to learning for children in care, and interventions put in place to support achievement and attainment.
For further information please contact:	Anne Hawker Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children in Care Tel: 01926 743029 annehawker@warwickshire.gov.uk
Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]	No
Background papers	

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN: Details to be specified

Other Committees	☐	……………………………………………………..
Local Member(s)	☐	……………………………………………………..
Other Elected Members	☒	CYP&F O&S Chair and Vice Chair Cllr June Tandy Cllr John Ross
		CYP&F O&S Spokespersons Cllr Peter Balaam *"comments incorporated into the report"*

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Cllr Carolyn Robbins

Cabinet Member	[X]	For information: Cllr Heather Timms
Other Cabinet Members consulted	[ ]	……………………………………………..
Chief Executive	[ ]	……………………………………………..
Legal	[X]	Fay Ford "*No comments - My view is that the attached report is entirely sensible and uncontroversial. It consists of figures and statistics in relation to the education of Children in Warwickshire and an overall report on performance. There are certainly no legal issues*".
Finance	[ ]	……………………………………………..
Other Strategic Directors	[ ]	……………………………………………..
District Councils	[ ]	……………………………………………..
Health Authority	[ ]	……………………………………………..
Police	[ ]	……………………………………………..
Other Bodies/Individuals	[X]	Jane Pollard, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

FINAL DECISION   **YES/NO**

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS: Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee	[ ]	……………………………………………..
To Council	[ ]	……………………………………………..
To Cabinet	[ ]	……………………………………………..
To an O & S Committee	[ ]	……………………………………………..
To an Area Committee	[ ]	……………………………………………..
Further Consultation	[ ]	………………………………………………

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Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 8 December 2010

The Education of Children in Care in Warwickshire

Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

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Recommendation:

That the report from the Virtual School on the education of looked after children is considered and the actions taken by the school to support achievement and attainment are supported by the committee as corporate parents for the pupils and students of the Virtual School.

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1.   Introduction

1.1   **The Profile of Warwickshire Virtual School**
The Virtual School has a statutory responsibility to promote the achievement and attainment of children in care age 3-25, if remaining in education, whether in the care of Warwickshire or other authorities. Therefore the number on roll of the Virtual School is **858**. This includes Warwickshire students educated out of area as well as those from other authorities, educated in Warwickshire.
There are significantly more children in care in the North of the County, however this can also reflect the numbers of foster carers living there.

OOA= out of area, OLA- from other Las
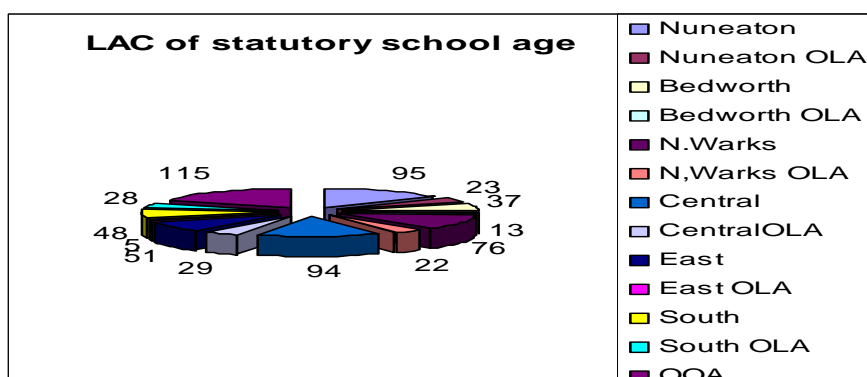
1.2   **The Virtual School Roll by Year Group in October 2010**

Virtual School Roll by year group	
pre-school, nursery,	33
year 1	16
year 2	30
year 3	24
year 4	32
year 5	36
year 6	44
year 7	36
year 8	36
year 9	70
year 10	70
year 11	85
post 16 + care leavers	372
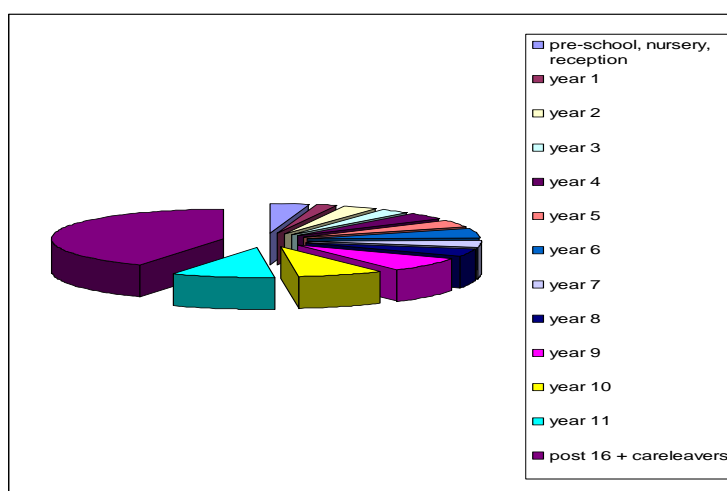
44% of children in the care of Warwickshire are in years 9, 10 and 11
In October 2010 there were 77 unaccompanied asylum seekers in the care of Warwickshire.

General Information about Children in Care
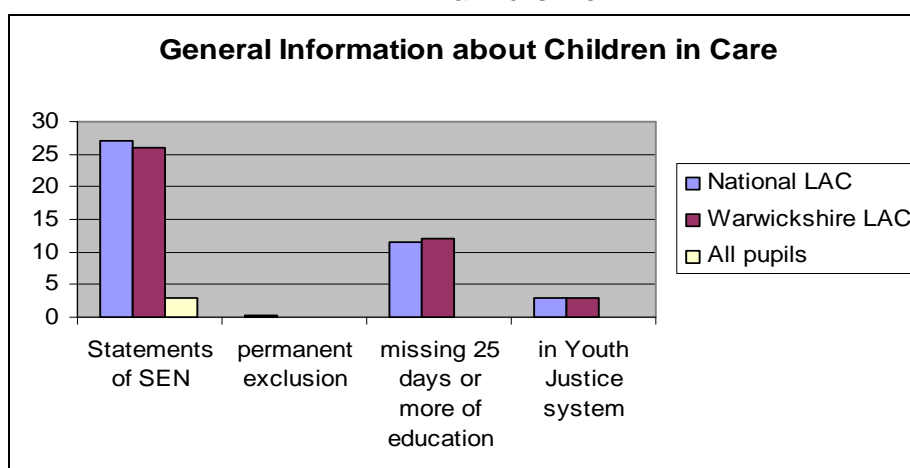
In 2007/8 there were 9 permanent exclusions of children in care in Warwickshire
In 2009-10, this reduced to 1 (see **Appendix A** for more detail)

The overall figure for attendance in 2009-10, for children in care is 92%
The figure for all Warwickshire schools is 92.7% (see **Appendix A** for more detail)

1.3   **The Achievement and Attainment of Children in Care**
      Key Stage 2
      The target set for 2010, based on pupils' individual Fischer Family Trust data, was 33% of pupils achieving level 4 in English and 33% achieving level 4 in Maths.
      The actual % of pupils achieving level 4 or above was 38% in both subjects, indicating performance above expectations.
      The Virtual School has contributed through the provision of private tuition, Volunteer Reading help, individual support through the qualified teacher Area Leads, and the letterbox scheme which provided age appropriate reading materials for targeted pupils. Area leads challenge progress for individual pupils in both mainstream and special schools. However, it is recognised that there is still much to do at KS2 to support pupils in reaching national expectations and closing the gap.

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KS2 level 4 in English and Maths
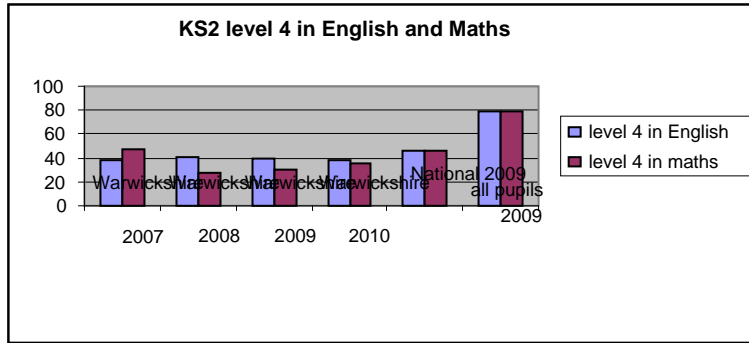
1.4 Key Stage 4

Until 2008, the performance of children in care was judged against the 5A*-C GCSE target. Since then, the target has changed to the nationally recognised gold standard of 5A*-C including English and Maths.

In 2010, 2 students achieved 5A*-C including English and Maths which was lower than in 2009 and was disappointing. When the results were analysed against the available Fischer Family trust data for individual students, of those in Warwickshire schools only 5 of the cohort were estimated at having a 50% chance of achieving 5A*-C including English and Maths.

11 students achieved 5A*-C or equivalent which represents 20% of the cohort. This performance is in line with the PSA target set for 2011 and is higher than the national figure of 15% in 2009. However, the gap continues to widen and priority action next year will target the achievement of high quality grades in both English and Math.
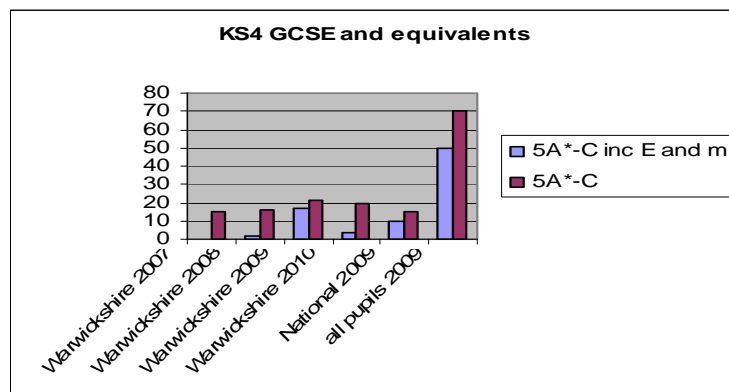
18 students achieved above their Fischer Family Trust estimates.

It is extremely difficult for the unaccompanied asylum seeking students to achieve grade Cs in both English and Maths.

The % of pupils achieving 5A*-C including English and Maths (minus the unaccompanied asylum seekers) = 6% (2/35).

The % of pupils achieving 5A*-C (minus the unaccompanied asylum seekers) = 23% or 8/35.

The role of the Virtual School at Key Stage 4 has been to make regular contacts with schools and foster carers to monitor the progress of individual students against targets. As a result, the Virtual school has identified and implemented interventions such as Wider Key Skills course, individual tuition, alternative education opportunities and counselling. The Wider Key Skills course has been a particular success resulting in 29 students achieving the equivalent of at least 1 grade B and mostly 2 grade Bs at GCSE.

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1.5   **The Barriers to Learning Experienced by Children and Young People in Care**
        It is well documented that the harm experienced by many children and young people
        at the hands of their parents will affect them for the whole of their lives and impact
        upon their ability to learn. Predominantly the children and young people in care come
        from disadvantaged groups and would be less likely to succeed than the general
        population even with positive parenting. Many of the pupils and students will have a
        well established pattern of poor performance and attendance at school before they
        come into the system and the older they are when they come in to the system the
        greater the likelihood that not even the most intensive work and support educationally
        will positively impact upon their life chances. 44% of the students in the Virtual School
        are in years 9,10 and 11. These pupils and students are likely to experience at least
        some of the barrier to learning listed below:

        * Placement moves.
        * Unnecessary moves of school or out of school for prolonged periods.
        * Relationship difficulties with peers leading to bullying, racism and harassment.
        * Lack of trust in adults because of previous life experience leading to attachment
          difficulties.
        * Lack of trust in adults who could advocate for their needs.
        * Low self esteem acting as a barrier to enjoyment of schooling and educational
          success.
        * Inconsistency in education and care planning and lack of clarity about roles and
          responsibilities amongst professionals.
        * Lack of emphasis on education by carers and social workers.
        * Lower expectations from schools.
        * Lack of understanding about the issues surrounding children in care.
        * Too many exclusions of children in care.
        * Special educational needs are not identified or addressed.

        The staff of the Virtual School work constantly with partners to remove these barriers
        to learning and enable pupils and students in care to achieve their full potential.

1.6   **Work of the Virtual School**
        There is strong evidence that the Virtual School for Children in Care is having a
        positive impact on raising standards. However the performance of these young
        people still lags well below that of their peers. Schools use value added data to
        estimate likely pupil attainment at the end of Year 11. Most of the Looked After pupils
        in Year 11 in 2010 achieved their targets. 20 Year 11 pupils in care exceeded their
        estimates.

        The Virtual School tracks the progress of all pupils in care and intervenes to support
        schools where progress is not as good as expected. The Head of the Virtual School
        also intervenes to prevent Children in Care being excluded from school as happened
        too often in the past.

1.7   **Some of the Successful Interventions used in the Last Year to Improve
        Attainment -   Key stage 2**
        * One to one tuition. The Virtual School extended the government scheme by
          providing additional tuition over and above the 10 provided by the 1:1 scheme in
          English and Maths.
        * It worked in partnership with the County 1:1 coordinator to run a summer camp for
          year 6 students to support their literacy and numeracy.
        * The Virtual School has provided literacy support through the Volunteer Reading
          Help charity. The charity provides a volunteer to work individually with 3 children
          for 20 minutes, twice a week, using literacy games and reading materials geared
          around the child's specific interests.

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- The Virtual School has provided additional reading materials through the Letterbox scheme.

1.8 **Key Stage 4**
- Individual tuition has been provided to bolster sessions provided by the 1:1 Scheme as well as to support a variety of subjects from Science, ICT, English as an additional language, History and Geography.
- 30 students from Years 9 -11 took part in a 9 day FunKey Skills course during the Easter and Summer Holidays. All have achieved the equivalent of either 1 grade B at GCSE or 2 ¼ grade B in Wider Key Skills.
- In partnership with Trinity School in Leamington, 9 students attended an IT course and all passed at the equivalent of grade B.
- The Virtual School runs a club for unaccompanied asylum seekers in Leamington to support their English skills and to help with homework. There has also been an animation project running in tandem, again to support their English skills.
- The Virtual School trained a group of social workers and carers to be verifiers for ASDAN qualifications so that they can accredit the activities in which the young people take part.
- Training has been provided for carers on how to support their young people through education.
- The Virtual School ran an awards ceremony at Warwick University to celebrate achievement and attainment of Children in Care and to raise aspirations both amongst the pupils but also amongst their carers.

MARION DAVIS
Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families
Saltisford Office Park, Ansell Way, Warwick

24 November 2010

Overview and Scrutiny Report on the Education of Children in Care

Evidence to support the Impact of the Virtual School on Outcomes for Children in Care in Warwickshire

1. **Exclusions**
In 2007/8 there were 9 permanent exclusions of children in care in Warwickshire
As a result, the Virtual School took the lead in the development of the Strategy of intensive support for students in care in Warwickshire. The aim of the strategy was an outcome of zero permanent exclusions for children in care and was worked in partnership with the Early Intervention Service. The strategy reduced permanent exclusion to 4 in 2008/9 and to 1 in 2009/10. In 2009/10, the Virtual School prevented over 10 permanent exclusions of pupils and students in the care of Warwickshire.
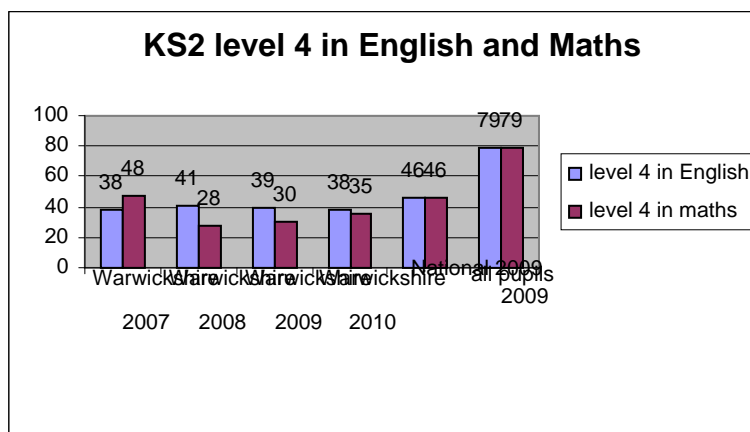
2. **Attendance**
The overall figure for attendance in 2009-10, for children in care is 92%. The Warwickshire figure for all schools is 92.7%, therefore performance is in line with local and national expectations. The role of the Virtual School has been to work with schools to closely monitor attendance, to support foster carers and social workers with appropriate training, emphasising the importance of consistent attendance, and targeted work with individual children. To this end, the Virtual School has maintained a level of attendance for its pupils and students in line with local and national indicators.

3. **KS2 Achievement and Attainment**
Here is the key stage 2 profile for 2009-10:
- There were 23 year 6 Warwickshire students in Warwickshire schools;
- There were 3 Warwickshire students educated in schools out of authority;
- There were 5 students from other authorities educated in Warwickshire schools;
- Therefore 31 students were supported in year 6 during 2009-10 but only Warwickshire children count towards national statistics;
- Of the above, 5 came into care during year 6;
- 10 pupils had a statement of special educational need. At 38% of the cohort this is considerably higher than the national profile in 2009 which stood at 26%.

The target set for 2010, based on pupils' individual Fischer Family Trust data, was 33% of pupils achieving level 4 in English and 33% achieving level 4 in maths. The actual % of pupils achieving level 4 or above was 38% in both subjects, indicating performance above expectations.

The Virtual School has contributed through the provision of private tuition, Volunteer Reading help, individual support through the qualified teacher Area Leads, and the letterbox scheme which provided age appropriate reading materials for targeted pupils. Area leads challenge progress for individual pupils in both mainstream and special schools. However, it is recognised that there is still much to do at KS2 to support pupils in reaching national expectations and to close the gap.

4. **KS4 Achievement and Attainment**
   Until 2008, the performance of children in care was judged on the 5A*- C GCSE target. Since then, the target has changed to the nationally recognised gold standard of 5A*- C including English and Maths.
   This is the profile of Key Stage 4 students in 2009-10:
   - There were 35 year 11 Warwickshire students in Warwickshire schools + 2 students out of age group;
   - There were 21 Warwickshire students educated in schools out of authority;
   - There were 13 students from other authorities educated in Warwickshire schools;
   - Therefore 71 students were supported by the Virtual School in year 11 during 2009-10;
   - There were 58 Warwickshire students in year 11 during 2009 – 10, 2 students studying out of year;
   - Of these, 9 of 56 came into care during year 11;
   - 21 were unaccompanied asylum seekers, 15 of whom arrived during Key Stage 4;
   - 12 pupils out of 56 had a statement of special educational need, which represents 21%.
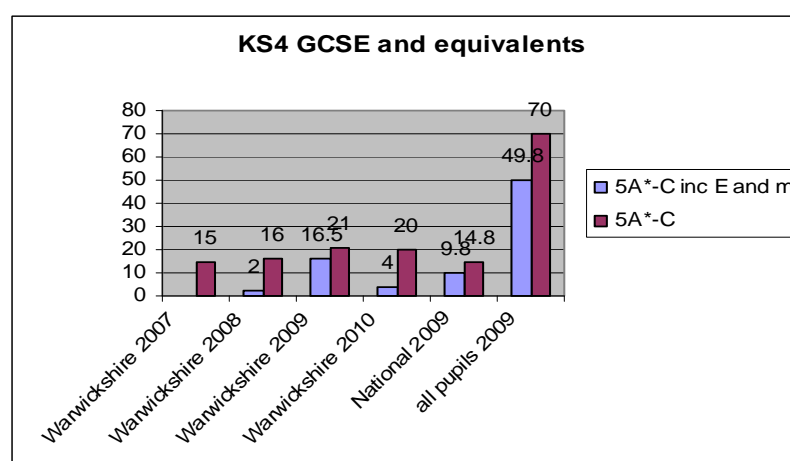
KS4 GCSE and equivalents

In 2010, 2 students achieved 5A*-C including English and Maths which was lower than in 2009 and was disappointing. When the results were analysed against the available Fischer Family trust data for individual students, of those in Warwickshire schools only 5 of the cohort were estimated at having a 50% chance of achieving 5A*-C including English and Maths.

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5. **NEETS**

The Area Leads of the Virtual School focus strongly on positive destinations for students during year 11. This strategy is successful and shows positive outcomes with a November 2010 figure of 89% of students in care, who were in the year 11 cohort in 2009/10, in education, employment or training. Of the remaining 11%, one student is serving a custodial sentence, one is refusing support and 4 students are NEET and are looking for employment or training. Support from the Virtual School continues for the 11% and there are plans to support a pre-employment course in Spring 2011.

6. **Higher Education**

There are currently 5 students attending university and 2 studying HND courses. These students have been supported throughout their careers so far by the Virtual School, which will support students who wish to engage in education to the age of 25.