

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

22nd January 2014

1.0 This is the annual report of the Headteacher of Warwickshire's Virtual School for Looked after Children. The report contains details of educational outcomes of Warwickshire's looked after children together with details of how the Virtual School has worked with partners to support their education. In section 3, the report summarises key developments that are currently taking place.

2.0 Pupil Outcomes

Although the report relates to activities of the Virtual School in 2013, the pupil outcomes were those gained by young people in years 6 and 11 during academic year 2012/13.

2.1 Exam Results 2012/13

Year 11

In 2012/13, the year 11 cohort, supported by the virtual school was 80, 69 of whom were students in the care of Warwickshire.

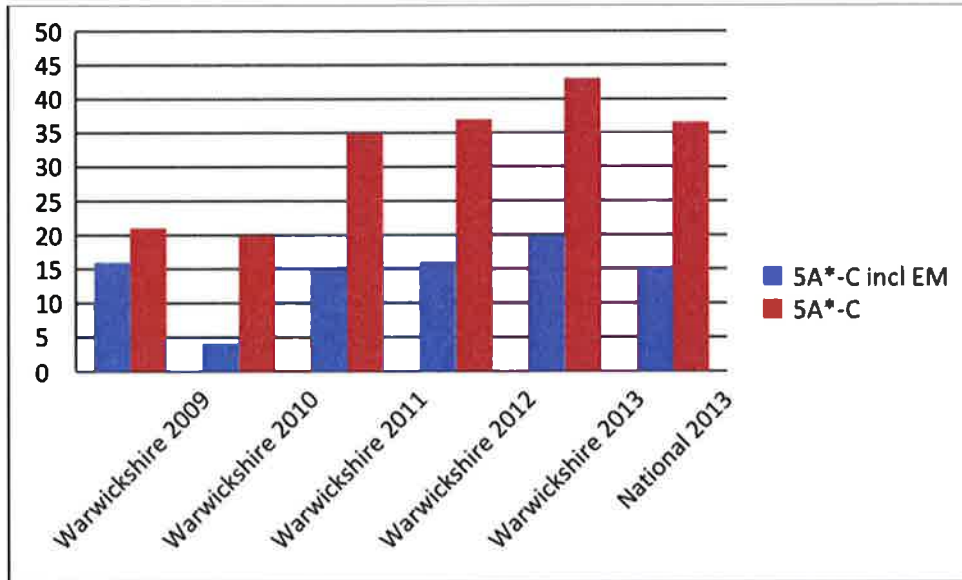
Of the 69 in the care of Warwickshire:

- 22 had statements of special educational needs and a further 19 were on the special needs register at school
- 9 students were unaccompanied asylum seekers
- 56 students were in care continuously for a year as of 31st March 2013.

Outcomes for the statistical cohort (used to measure performance nationally)

Statistical group of 56	SEN Statements	SEN register	UAS	5A*-C inc E & MA	5 A*-C	5 A*-G	1A*-C	1A*-G	Any qual.
Total	20	16	8	11	13	31	26	38	43
%	36	29	14	20	43	55	46	68	77

Warwickshire Year 11 Outcomes – Statistical Group



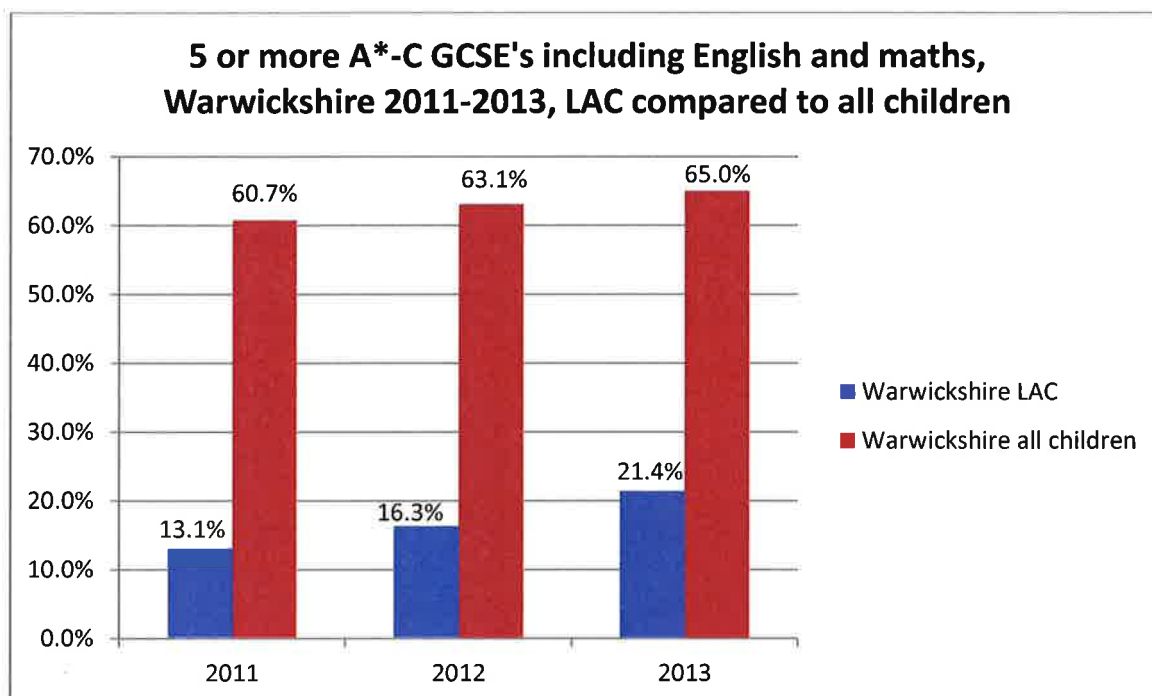
Comparison with Statistical Neighbours

The figure for 5 A*-C grades including En & Ma (20%) are higher than our (10) statistical neighbours (average 15.3%). The figure for 5 A*-C is higher (43%) than 9 of the 10 statistical neighbours - only Staffordshire (46.3%) is higher. The average for statistical neighbours is 33.1%.

Narrowing the Gap

The gap between the outcomes of Warwickshire Children in Care and their peers is getting narrower but it is still too wide.

5 or more A*-C GCSE's including English and maths, Warwickshire 2011-2013, LAC compared to all children			
	2011	2012	2013
Warwickshire LAC	13.1%	16.3%	21.4%
Warwickshire all children	60.7%	63.1%	65.0%
Difference	47.6%	46.8%	43.6%



Year 6

Of the statistical cohort of 23, 3 have statements of special educational needs and a further 5 are on school action plus. For both categories of need, the proportions are much lower than for other cohorts in Warwickshire (proportion of LAC with statement in Warks = 30%):

Attainment	Warks (stat. neighbours/England)
Level 4+ Reading	71% (60/63)
Level 4+ Writing	79% (52/55)
Level 4+ Spelling Punctuation & Grammar	54% (49/45)
Level 4 + maths	71% (57/59)

2.2 Exclusions/Pupils not receiving an appropriate education

In 2012/13 there were no permanent exclusions of Looked after Children, (so far there have been 2 permanent exclusions in 2013/14, one from River House School and one from St. Andrew's Benn C of E Primary School).

On 20th January there were 8 young people not being educated. One of these is "missing", 3 are waiting for a new school having recently moved and four are refusing to attend because of mental health/emotional issues.

3.0 Other work of the Virtual School

3.1 PEP support

PEP completion was monitored in November 2013

Social Care Team	No of LAC in Yr R-11	PEPS completed/book ed	PEPs not in date	%	OOB NOT IN DATE
Leamington	46	44	2	96	0
Warwick/Kenilworth	33	30	3	91	1
Stratford/Southam	50	36	14	72	12
Rugby	73	68	5	93	5
Nuneaton	124	121	3	98	0
Bedworth	53	40	13	75	12
North Warks	44	43	1	98	1
ASP	10	8	2	80	1
IDS	12	9	3	75	3
Total	445	399	46	90%	35

Currently the virtual school has no arrangements to conduct systematic monitoring of PEP quality. This issue is under review and will be addressed in the Virtual School Development Plan (see below).

3.2 Monitoring of use of Pupil Premium

The use of pupil premium by schools to support looked after children is monitored by Area Leads. All schools are asked for supporting information termly. This is supplemented by the evidence gathered at PEP and other meetings. In 2012/13 there was no escalation of a challenge by the Virtual School to a school regarding its use of the pupil premium. Given the increase in funding (see below) and the remit of the Virtual School to become enshrined in law through the Children & Families Bill, this issue will need to be reviewed and will be addressed in the Virtual School Development Plan.

3.3 Training

In 2013 training was provided to social workers in Rugby and Bedworth. Training has also been given to colleagues from Youth Justice and the Education Psychology Service. Some Barnardos carers have also been trained. There has also been a considerable amount of ad hoc training of colleagues carried out by Area Leads locally.

The Virtual School intends to offer a package of support to colleagues in 2014 which will form part of the Virtual School Development Plan.

3.4 Other Initiatives

STEM project (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)

The Virtual School is represented on the LAC Progression Group, a sub-group of the Coventry and Warwickshire HEaT Partnership. This group has been successful in bidding for funding from the STEM Innovation Programme for a project aimed at improving the engagement and outcomes of LAC and Care Leavers in STEM-related courses in KS4 and Post-16.

The project, which will run until March 2015, will involve pairing the young people with mentors who work in STEM related industries or who are studying STEM in HE. This will create an opportunity for the young people to experience aspects of STEM which link to careers in which they have shown an interest; helping them see the educational routes they could follow to achieve their goals and inspiring them to achieve their potential. It may involve 1-1 tuition, visits and/or work shadowing, as appropriate.

The project is being led by the LACES team in Coventry working in partnership with the Virtual School. There are places for 5-10 Warwickshire learners in current Years 9 or 10. The aim is for sustainability, as it is hoped to enable schools to take ownership of and extend the activities into the future with a range of students.

Music Project

This project is supported by the County Music Service. It is for 20 children (2 groups of 10, one KS2 and one KS3/4) to work with musicians, over a period of 10 sessions, to develop the skills, confidence, and self-esteem to take part in a Grand Finale/Performance. The KS2 group is based at Stockingford and the secondary group are at Shaftesbury Alternative Provision at Keresley. It is hoped the experience will have a positive impact on the children's attainment across the curriculum. The project has to have a 'Legacy Element' so that the host schools/provisions will be able to repeat the experience for other students. Each participant will receive a memory stick that records their achievements and the final performance.

Tiffin Club

The Tiffin Club (the name given to Warwickshire Corporate Parents Association) is similar to a school's PTA. It became a registered charity in 2013 and has successfully raised thousands of pounds to provide extra help to young people.

The Tiffin club has supported the Virtual School Awards Evening and has provided mentors for several young people. There are also plans to offer one-to-one support to individual children and provide specialist help to children with particular talents

and abilities.

4.0 Virtual School Developments

4.1 Children & Families Bill

Extracts from a DFE announcement in October 2013:

“Children in care have previously attracted pupil premium funding at the same rate as children from low-income families, but in future they will attract a higher rate of funding - the pupil premium plus. From April next year, children in care will attract £1,900 additional funding per pupil, more than double the £900 awarded in 2013 to 2014.

In addition, this support will now reach more children. At the moment, children in care attract the pupil premium if they have been looked after for 6 months or more, but in future they will be funded from their first day in care

Through the Children and Families Bill, the government is also making it mandatory for every council to have a ‘virtual school head’ - an individual who champions the education of children in care and acts as their overarching head.

Today’s announcement includes plans to extend the role of the virtual school head to work with schools to manage the pupil premium plus and ensure that the money is spent on securing the best educational support and services for children in care. For example, this could include specialist tuition for musically gifted children or one-to-one catch-up sessions.

For the first time, children adopted from care and those who leave care under a special guardianship order or residence order will also attract the pupil premium plus.

The pupil premium is just one of a series of measures the government has introduced to help children in care achieve at school and get on in life:

- the National College for Teaching and Leadership is improving its training programme for school governors to improve the attainment of looked-after children and to work more closely with virtual school heads
- we are providing all looked after young people and care leavers aged 16 to 19 who stay in full-time education with a £1,200 bursary to help with the costs of their studies
- all 2-year-olds in care are now eligible for 15 hours a week early education”.

4.2 Virtual School Budget

In October 2013 it was announced that the Virtual School would lose all funding though the post of Virtual School Head would remain. Subsequently and in the light of the new legislation, the Learning & Achievement Business Group are seeking to find savings from elsewhere and continue to fund a Virtual School Team.

Nevertheless, efficiencies and improvements will be considered to align the work of the Virtual School with the statutory guidance shortly to be published and the support needs of colleagues in People Group and others.

4.3 Virtual School Development Plan

Planned improvements to the work of the team are being collated in the Virtual School Development Plan. This is shortly to be drafted and will be shared with members of the Virtual School Steering Group.

Steve Pendleton

January 21st 2014

