

Virtual School Rotherham – Governing Body Minutes

1st November 2016 – Riverside House

Present:

Cllr Gordon Watson (CllrW)	Deputy Leader
Mel Meggs (MM)	Deputy Strategic Director, CYPS
Karen Borthwick (KB)	Assistant Director – Education & Skills
Lorraine Dale (LD)	Virtual Head
Andy Jessop (AJ)	Exec Primary Head – Rawmarsh Ashwood/ Thrybergh Primary
Pepe Di'Iasio (PD)	Head - Wales High School
Rebecca Hughes (RH)	Head - Milton School
Rebecca Wall	Senior Safeguarding Officer
Rachael McHaffie	Management Secretary (Minutes)

MINUTES

1. Apologies, welcome and introductions:

Vicky Woodrow (VW) Head - Rowan Pupil Referral Unit

CllrW welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and accepted as a true and accurate reflection of the discussions.

3. Virtual Head's Update Report (LD)

LD reported on the October update with some additional input resulting from the availability of more recent information:

Attendance and Exclusions

Attendance:

- The final attendance data for 15/16 was not available in advance of the VH Update Report.
- There are issues in some age groups (ie. KS4) which are unacceptable but not unusual for LAC.
- There is no confidence in the ability of the Capita data system to reflect up-to-date and accurate attendance information. There is no statutory duty on schools to provide the data in real time but the implementation of the new Welfare Call system should resolve the recording issue and will also enable out of authority children to be tracked.
- LD reported that the new system is working well and is highlighting some recording anomalies. It is also useful for being able to identify children who have moved authorities.
- The system also provides exclusion data which will be useful to initiate dialogues with parents, carers, social care and teaching staff.
- LD liaises with other Virtual Heads in the region but other authorities are not keen to share their data externally for comparison/ranking purposes. MM will raise data sharing at regional DCS meetings.
- The newly introduced national data system (Nexus) is able to benchmark and generate comparative data which will enable stronger data sharing over the next 12 months.

- The LA do not currently compare attendance data against mainstream schools but LD will look at this, it may highlight some positives?
- AJ indicated that the primary attendance figures looked positive.

Exclusions:

- The 15/16 data for the LA is currently incomplete which is due to schools not being obliged to provide the data in real time. The out of authority data is complete to the best of Virtual School's knowledge.
- The data compares against Rotherham peers.
- The number of days lost to education is increasing and is likely to rise further (once all the data is in) although the figures on 'forced' moves to avoid permanent exclusion are similar to those of last year.
- Placement breakdowns impact on exclusions. LD to assess if there are any patterns - this should inform the training offer, particularly with respect to 'attachment issues' and identify schools who do not engage.
- Attachment training has been well received so far.
- CAMHs involvement is now improving, but are still working from a low starting point.
- There has been a lack of clarity regarding the referral process for the Rotherham Therapeutic Team (formerly LAACST) for therapeutic support. Cabinet will be considering a proposal to expand this team in November. Placement stability is essential for reduced exclusions and improved outcomes.
- Carers of LAC in crisis as well as children receive support from the Therapeutic Team although more capacity is required, particularly for LAC.
- LD reported that some secondary schools respond well and work with VSR better than others. LD will use the data to backup dialogue around challenge and support through ePEPs.

Action: LD to acquire statistics on placement breakdowns/exclusions and highlight any patterns.

ePEP's:

- PEP data is included in the Social Care monthly dashboard. Clarity is required regarding this data in the dashboard – this includes the reporting of lower PEP figures for the month of August when schools are closed.
- The VSR data is impressive, considering the staffing issues.
- The quality assurance process has been strengthened and is highlighting where there is a lack of SMART targets.
- Inclusion Support Service have been commissioned to deliver training to the Designated Teachers' network meeting (8th Nov) on using Pivats to create small stepped SMART targets in relation to Social, Emotional and Mental Health issues.
- The Virtual School has been seeking foster carer email addresses so that carers can be set up on the ePEP system. Social care have recently provided a number of addresses. Virtual School will inform social care if there are still gaps.
- Currently 461 LAC and rising.
- The Virtual School and RW are concerned at the level of Social Worker participation in and attendance at the PEP meeting. Virtual School to record this in future and provide data to MM.
- Some substantial delay is being experienced in some schools not submitting the PEPs in a timely manner. KB asked that concerns in this area be escalated to her.
- LD working with Sarah Hunt on development training for all social Workers on all matters relating to LAC education

Actions:

- i. LD to make Sue Wilson aware of times of inactivity for data reporting.
- ii. Evidence of Social Workers not being involved in ePEP's to be sent to MM who will take up an issues with individual SW's.
- iii. MM to be invited to Designated Teachers network meeting.

Staffing:

- A replacement Post 16 Advocate post is to be submitted for DLT approval. A Business Support apprentice post has already been approved.
- Two members of the VSR team have been accepted onto the Rising Stars Programme (P.Douglas and D.Chedgoy)
- T.Hohn applied for the ADCS programme but was unsuccessful on this occasion but will re-apply next time.
- Liquid Logic went live 31.10.16 and staff need to be able to input as well as access the information.

Action: LD to contact Liquid Logic Team to discuss input permissions for staff.

Budget:

- £100K of LAC pupil premium funding was used for VSR last year which is within the conditions of the funding.
- It is proposed that the 16/17 funding for the Virtual School tea will come from the High Needs Block - this is subject to approval from Schools' Forum.

Action: LD to review if there is any link between poor performance in schools vs. the lack of LAC pupil premium spend.

Training:

- An extension range of courses has been developed and is offered to Foster Carers. The Virtual School believes this training should be mandatory relevant to the age of the children in their care.
- VSR need to be involved in foster carer pre-approval and induction training.
- Attachment Lead training has 11 participating schools plus VSR. A member of SLT and another member of staff are required to attend from each school.
- Rotherham are mirroring the Doncaster model for this training which also takes place elsewhere nationally.
- A Keyworker Network is to be established once the training is complete.

Other Updates:

- A LAC Educational Psychologist will start in post from 01.12.16 for a 2 year project relating to 'Attachment'. The LAC EP will look at other practice in Derbyshire, Sheffield and elsewhere to seek best practice. The purpose of this work is to support school (and care) placement stability.
- Impact of the project to reviewed. A forum to be created with schools to promote ongoing dialogue.

Actions:

- i. Next Update to include Pupil Premium.
- ii. Autumn term attendance data will be included in the update after next (due to termly attendance data not being available in time for the approval window for this update report next time).

4. PEP Process

- The PEP process is outlined on Page 2 of the 'Building Brighter Futures' document (dated 31st July 2016).
- The process has been dramatically improved; LAC Advocates liaise with schools and Social Workers to organise the ePEP meeting and the SW arrange with carers.
- RW raised concerns that some SW's are not present at ePEPs. SW's need to drive education and ensure the quality, even if this means that compliance suffers slightly.
- SW attendance to be monitored going forward rather than looking back historically. Also track meetings where child/young person don't attend.
- PEPs to be submitted by schools as soon after the PEP meeting as possible.
- VSR do not write the ePEPs, they drive them – LD signs them off and will quality assure them. The QA section at the end of the plan is completed to get an overall feel of the ePEP. Schools/SW to do the prep before the meeting to reduce delays.
- Ofsted Feedback - Ofsted looked at a sample of 19 children and found that the ePEP's weren't aspirational enough. This needs to be addressed for future ePEPs.
- Funding is done through the ePEP system and is attached to the SMART targets which are approved by the Virtual School. Designated Teachers need to ensure that the School Business Managers are aware of what the funding is for and is used accordingly.

Actions:

- i. LD to draft an email for MM to send to SW's to ensure they understand the Rotherham.
- ii. PEP process and attend PEP meetings.
- iii. LD to find out who can access the text box once pdf'd.

5. Report to Governors Template

- A sample template has been developed and sent to schools for feedback.

6. Virtual School SEF

- To be reviewed on the next agenda and will be circulated with the minutes.

7. AOB

- KB is working with Pete Douglas and Julia Morrison on a national development called 'Engagement in Education' primarily for LAC but will be useful for all children. KB will circulate the information.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- 4th January 2017 – Riverside House, Room 2, 4th Floor, Wing B: 2.00 – 3.30pm