

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Corporate Parenting Panel
2.	Date:	10 <sup>th</sup> April, 2014
3.	Title:	Update on the Work of the Get Real Team
4.	Directorate:	Safeguarding, Children and Families CYPS

### 5. Background

The Get Real Team was set up in 2000 following an inadequate inspection within the LA. Its aim was to provide support for the education of LAC; staffing consisted of teachers, mentors, a social worker and a Connexions adviser, led by a team manager. Over the years the team has been reduced in size even though the number of looked after children has increased.

The team is now known as the Virtual School / Get Real Team. Members of the team were reluctant to lose the 'Get Real' part of the title as the name was chosen many years ago by Looked After Children, and it was felt that a change of name may cause confusion with schools / young people.

### 6. Current structure of the Virtual School /GRT

- Virtual Headteacher – full time January to August (temporary)
- GRT Manager – full time
- GRT Deputy Manager – full time
- 1 Business Support Assistant – full time
- 1 Business Support Assistant – term time only
- 1 teacher supporting secondary pupils (24.5 hours per week)
- 1 Learning mentor ( EYFS) - 22 hours, term time only
- 1 Learning mentor ( Primary) - 18 hours, term time only
- 1 Learning mentor ( Primary) - 33 hours, term time only
- 1 Learning mentor ( Secondary) – full time

Up to October 2013 the team employed another secondary full time mentor, but she left to take up another post within the LA and has not been replaced due to financial constraints, even though the post is much needed.

### 7. The role of the Get Real Team

Prior to the appointment of the Virtual Headteacher the Get Real Team provided support for individual pupils who were experiencing difficulties with their education, either in terms of their social and emotional development or their academic progress. The teacher mainly provided one

to one tuition for English and mathematics for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The team mainly, but not exclusively, used a system of referrals from professionals working with the young person concerned, carrying out holistic assessments to ascertain the best way to provide support. The team also delivered effective training programmes and organised a range of very successful initiatives to support pupils' wider opportunities, self esteem and aspirations. The team have many case studies to show the impact of this work.

#### **8. Changes towards moving from a support team to a 'Virtual School'**

One of the most important functions of a Virtual School is to track and monitor pupil progress on a regular basis. Although previously data could be collected from the pupils' Personal Education Plans, this did not provide a termly update and sufficient information to make a judgement about pupil progress. The following systems are now in place:

- Schools are expected to respond to a termly request to provide information about pupil progress, using the appropriate proforma for the key stage. This includes details of current attainment in terms of sub levels, targets set for the end of this school year and the end of key stage; the school's views on the pupil's progress and how barriers are being overcome, and how the Pupil Premium is being used to support learning and progress.
- Current levels are entered for each pupil on the Virtual School spreadsheet, and progress is measured from the previous term (in average points scores). A judgement is made about whether the pupil is making good or better progress (coded green), expected progress (coded amber) or inadequate progress (coded red). Every attempt is made to obtain prior data from the previous key stage so that a judgement about progress over time can be made, but this is not possible in all cases.
- The team is now taking on more responsibility in terms of follow up and challenge where there is inadequate progress. The EYFS mentor has set up an EMAG (electronic mapping attainment grid) to track the progress of the EYFS cohort. The secondary teacher is monitoring the Y11 cohort and has started to look at the progress of Y10. One of the primary mentors has responsibility for monitoring Y6. All of the mentors have now had experience of contacting schools and completing the proformas created to follow up progress coded red.

In order to make informed judgements about pupil progress, members of the team have received training. The secondary teacher has attended LA training for expectations at Key Stages 3 and 4, the EYFS mentor has attended moderation training for the new EYFS Profile, and the whole team has received training on the Progression Guidance for SEN pupils, and expectations at Key Stages 1 and 2. This work is still in the early stages and all members of the team have worked hard to adapt to the changes. The monitoring of PEPs, and improving their quality and impact, is also an important role of the Virtual School. Recent developments have included working with the LA Performance and Quality team

to create a PEP process map, to look at where improvements can be made; creating updated PEP documents for Early Years (0 to 3 and 3 to 5), primary and secondary, ensuring that they are 'fit for purpose; creating a new document for recording the child/young person's views (developed in consultation with the LAC

- Council) and creating a quality assurance document to record strengths and areas for development which will be sent to the school and social worker. Initially the Virtual Headteacher will quality assure all PEPs; schools and designated teachers will be offered feedback and support where a quality document has not been produced.
- **Overcoming barriers** The GRT Manager continues to monitor attendance, part time timetables and exclusions. Detailed records are kept and he now has more capacity to follow up and provide challenge where there are concerns. The 'Raising Attainment of LAC' group will support this work (Please see report on Improving the Education of LAC placed outside of Rotherham )

## 5. Summary

The Get Real Team has made significant progress in becoming a 'Virtual School '. As yet it is early days and further developments need to be made.

## 6. Recommendations

- Continue to provide training for members of the VS/GRT
- Continue to extend their monitoring role, including follow up and challenge where there is underachievement, without losing vital individual support for pupils
- Use examples of good practice in other LAs to further develop the work of the team
- If possible, extend the capacity of the team. When the role of the Virtual Headteacher becomes statutory, the responsibility is likely to extend to include 0 to 25. Currently the VA/GRT focuses on pupils of statutory school age. This has obvious implications in terms of finance. In some LAs more teachers are employed. In addition, from April, the Virtual School will have responsibility for the distribution of the enhanced pupil premium and the monitoring of its use and impact. In some LAs an additional member of staff is being appointed to carry out some of this work.

**Contact Name : Claire Sneath, Virtual Headteacher for LAC**  
**Telephone 07500881654 .E mail [claire.sneath@rotherham.gov](mailto:claire.sneath@rotherham.gov).**