

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Children and Young People's Services Corporate Parenting Panel
2.	Date:	20 th January 2015
3.	Title:	Virtual Head's Annual Report on the Education of Looked After Children
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Introduction

This report sets out statistics and developments in relation to the education of Looked After Children in Rotherham during the academic year 2013/14. It also includes current development plans.

Claire Sneath retired from the full-time post of Virtual Head on 31st August 2014. Lorraine Lichfield took up the post on 1st September 2014 alongside her role as strategic lead for vulnerable pupils. This additional role encompasses pupils for whom the Local Authority has a statutory duty to educate (under section 19) and matters relating to exclusions.

The role of Virtual Head was made statutory in May 2014 with revised statutory guidance being issued in July 2014. Key points from the guidance can be found in Appendix A.

6. Raising attainment and accelerating progress

Development of tracking systems and monitoring of pupil progress

Pupil progress and attainment monitoring has been developed using progress data for 2012/13 as a baseline. Teacher assessments are collected termly

Progress is monitored and analysed termly, over an academic year and between key stages.

During 2013/14 attainment was measured in levels and progress was measured in average point scores (APS). However, since September 2014 the government has removed the requirement to record in levels which will present challenges to schools but will also present a challenge to virtual school as schools could adopt widely differing systems.

Overcoming Barriers

A Raising Attainment Group of local authority officers has been established which is looking at barriers to attainment that exist within current local authority practices. Action plans are being developed to address these barriers that will form part of those services' wider action plans. Services involved include SEN, commissioning, social care, inclusion support and education welfare.

This group also looks at individual pupils who are experiencing significant difficulties to see if a collective solution can be identified.

Personal Education Plans

- PEPs are required for all Looked After Children and young people (0-18) – until now they have been provided for children of compulsory school age only with some development work on an Early Years PEP taking place
- The quality of PEPs continues to be variable
- Quality assurance mechanisms are currently being improved
- The number of PEPs completed within the required timeframe continues to be variable
- PEPs have been revised to incorporate latest guidance requirements but the format continues to be unwieldy for schools and social care
- Schools to be held more accountable through PEPs which now require more detailed progress information
- PEP guidance has been revised and re-issued
- A joint ePEP & data system has been identified which it is anticipated will be in place before next financial year. This system includes the opportunity to record pupil voice which will be a high priority.
- Termly progress will be reviewed with schools through the PEP system as per the latest statutory guidance.

Training

- Members of the Get Real Team have received training on safeguarding, progression guidance for pupils with SEN, expectations for pupil progress in all key stages, and specific training for identified team members such as Foundation Stage Leaders (Early Years Mentor) and English (teacher).
- A conference was held in June to help designated teachers, school staff and other practitioners in supporting pupils with attachment disorders/emotional difficulties. This event was attended by 86 delegates and was well received.
- The Virtual Head and the Get Real Team manager have been involved in a regional Peer Improvement group, and have attended regional Virtual Head meetings.
- The Get Real Team Manager was involved in the planning and organisation of a regional conference for designated teachers which was held in Doncaster in October 2014.
- Training has been provided for designated teachers, and network meetings have been re-started:

	Attendance at Meetings/Training 2013/14					
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Children's Centres	Non-School	Total
foster carer induction training	0	0	0	0	24	24
Network Meetings	20	6	6	0	0	32
PEP	3	3	1	2	7	16
Governor	11	2	0	0	0	13
Independent Visitor for LAC	0	0	0	0	7	7
	34	11	7	2	38	92

- PEP training has been delivered to:
 - primary and secondary SENCOs,
 - foster carers,
 - social workers (including an input on expectations re. pupil progress in all key stages),
 - chairs/vice chairs of governors and designated governors.

7. Pupil Performance Data

All 2014 performance data is **provisional** at the time of this report being written. Two data sets are held:

- These are DfE cohort figures (outcomes for pupils who have been continuously looked after for a period of 12 months up to 31st March)
- all pupils who were looked after at the time of the tests/assessments

Number of children at statutory school age cared for by Rotherham LA (July 2014)

Year Group	Age	Rotherham LA	OOA	Total
FS2 (Reception)	4-5	8	3	11
1	5-6	7	4	11
2	6-7	13	5	18
3	7-8	11	7	18
4	8-9	13	12	25
5	9-10	8	8	16
6	10-11	13	8	21
7	11-12	19	7	26
8	12-13	12	10	22
9	13-14	22	12	34
10	14-15	30	11	41
11	15-16	18	15	33
Total		174	102	276

	July 2014	%	July 2013	%
Boys	148	54		57
Girls	128	46		43
Total	276		258	

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The SEN register consists of pupils who are considered to require additional support of varying degrees: School Action, School Action Plus and those who require a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Year Group	number in cohort	School Action	School Action Plus	Statement	Total	% on SEN Register by Year Group
FS2 (Reception)	11	3	1	0	4	36%
1	11	0	1	1	2	18%
2	18	2	3	0	5	28%
3	18	1	5	3	9	50%
4	25	6	5	7	18	72%

5	16	5	6	2	13	81%
6	21	3	6	6	15	71%
7	26	2	8	6	16	62%
8	22	4	8	3	15	68%
9	34	9	11	10	30	88%
10	41	6	13	11	30	73%
11	33	2	16	9	27	82%
TOTAL	276	43 (16%)	83 (30%)	58 (21%)	184	67% of all LAC

	July 2014		July 2013		July 2012	
	LAC	All	LAC	All	LAC	All
% of pupils on SEN register*	67%	18.9%	64%	19.8%	71%	21.3%
% of pupils with SEN statement	21%	2.4%	22%	2.4%	34%	2.3%

*SEN register data are children who are A and P
All data is Reception to Y11

School data is from May Termly Census

Attendance Figures: Academic Year 2013/14

YEAR GROUP	Average attendance
FS2	96.6%
Y1	97.5%
Y2	96.7%
Y3	95.9%
Y4	96.8%
Y5	94.7%
Y6	98.4%
Y7	91.3%
Y8	90.1%
Y9	93.6%
Y10	85.2%
Y11	82.2%

Overall average attendance of the Virtual School – 92.49%

Issues impacting on attendance:

- Change of placement
- Adoption 'bonding' time
- Significant health issues
- Disengagement, particularly in Y10 and Y11

Pupils with less than 85% attendance

Primary	Secondary	Total
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DfE cohort 2013/14	3	15	18
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July 2014 cohort	4	23	27
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DfE cohort (Pupils in care 12 months+) – primary:

- 2 have serious medical conditions
- 1 moved to an adoptive placement out of Rotherham

DfE cohort (Pupils in care 12 months+) – secondary:

- Most of the 15 were Y10 and Y11 and educated out of Rotherham
- Some pupils had more than one change of placement during the year
- Some pupils had significant mental health issues which has led to low attendance and a lack of engagement with education

Exclusions

	2013/14
Total Fixed Term Exclusions	78
Total Permanent Exclusions	0
Total Permanent Exclusions Withdrawn	3
Total Exclusions	83
Total Pupils Excluded	26
Total Days lost to Exclusions	150.5

Part time timetables

Some pupils have had reduced timetables during 2013/14 for a variety of reasons, including reintegration following exclusion. These are monitored on a regular basis. The numbers have reduced over the course of the school year and there were 3 pupils on part time timetables as of 1st September 2014.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS cohort for 2013/14 consisted of 11 pupils (5 girls and 6 boys) when final assessments were made. This cohort had been larger at the start of the academic year, but some children moved on to adoption.

COM	COM	COM	PHY	PHY	PSE	PSE	PSE	LIT	LIT	MAT	MAT	UTW	UTW	UTW	EXP	EXP	
G01	G02	G03	G04	G05	G06	G07	G08	G09	G10	G11	G12	G13	G14	G15	G16	G17	
1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	B
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	B
1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	B
2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	B
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	B
2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	G

1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	G
1	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	G
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	G
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	G
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	G

Key:

COM – Communication and Language

PHY – Physical Development

PSE – Personal, Social and Emotional Development

LIT – Literacy

MAT – Mathematics

UTW – Understanding the World

EXP – Expressive Arts & Design

1 - Emerging level

2 - Expected level

3 - Exceeding level

Judgements are made about whether children have achieved 'A Good Level of Development' (GLD) (achieving 'expected' or 'exceeding' across all of the prime areas of Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal Social and Emotional Development and the specific areas of literacy and mathematics – a total of 12 areas). 17 assessments in total, including the specific areas of Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design are made across the Early Learning Goals.

Of the 11 pupils:

- Three reached a GLD, 2 boys and one girl (27%, compared with 21% in 2013, and the national average (provisional) of 60% for all pupils).
- Three pupils were very close to achieving a GLD; two missed by one area out of 17, another by 3 areas.
- 8 out of 11 pupils achieved emerging or exceeding in reading (73%), 5 in writing (45%) and 6 in number (55%).
- Two pupils were assessed as achieving 'exceeding' in the majority of areas; one in 14 out of 17 areas, the other in 11 out of 17.
- On the whole, boys performed better than the girls

SEN - 4 pupils are identified:

- one at School Action Plus, who has significant needs and has received support from our Early Years Mentor
- 3 at School Action, two of whom were recently taken into care. One pupil at School Action made significant progress and achieved a GLD.

Every private and voluntary setting has a LAC designated person, as do childminders.

An Early Years PEP has been developed, along with an Early Years Development Plan for 0 to 3 year olds. The latter will be launched in the near future.

Social workers are now involved in ensuring that 2 year olds are taking up their free place in early years settings. Only two LAC 2 year olds did not take up their free places during the Autumn Term 2014 due to imminent relocation plans.

Key Stage 1 (Year 1)

Phonic Screening Check

This screening test, which provides an assessment of children's phonic skills, is taken in June in Year 1. The pass mark for 2014 was 32, and the national average for all pupils was 74%. Rotherham's average for all pupils was 69%.

DfE cohort (Pupils in care 12 months+)

- 9 pupils – 5 girls and 4 boys
- 5 were educated in Rotherham schools, 4 out-of-authority
- SEN – 1 statemented pupil in a special school and one at School Action Plus (both disapplied from the test)

Outcomes

- Please see Appendix B for data
- 3 pupils achieved the pass rate of at least 32 marks (33%). Two of these were educated out-of-authority.
- Pupils disapplied or not reaching the pass mark will be tested in Year 2.

Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Cohort (pupils in care < 12 months)

- 18 pupils – 6 girls and 12 boys
- SEN – 0 with statements, 3 at School Action Plus, 2 at School Action
- 5 educated out-of-authority

DfE cohort (pupils in care 12 months+)

- 15 pupils - 5 girls and 10 boys
- SEN – 0 with statements, 1 at School Action Plus, 2 at School Action

The national expectation is that pupils achieve Level 2+ at the end of Y1 - ideally Level 2B rather than 2C.

Outcomes for DfE cohort

- Please see Appendix B for data
- Out of 18 pupils, only 6 had attended the same school over the last 2 years due to change of placements.

Reading

- Although the percentage of pupils at Level 2+ and Level 2B+ are well below the national average for all pupils, following an improvement in 2013, this cohort, on the whole, made good progress across Year 2. **The DfE cohort made an average of 4.6 Average Points Scores (APS).** Boys outperformed the girls at all levels.

Writing

- Although the percentage of pupils at Level 2+ and Level 2B+ are well below the national average for all pupils, following an improvement in 2013, this cohort, on the whole made good

progress across Year 2. **The DfE cohort made an average of 4.6 Average Points Scores (APS).** Boys outperformed the girls at all levels.

Mathematics

- Although the percentage of pupils at Level 2+ and Level 2B+ are well below the national average for all pupils, this cohort, on the whole made good progress across Year 2. **The DfE cohort made an average of 5.13 Average Points Scores (APS).** Boys outperformed the girls at all levels.

Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Cohort (pupils in care < 12 months)

- 21 pupils – 11 girls and 10 boys
- SEN - 6 pupils with statements, 6 at School Action Plus and 8 at School Action
- 12 educated in Rotherham schools, 9 out-of-authority
- 6 educated in special schools, or specialist provision.

DfE cohort (pupils in care 12 months+)

- 14 pupils - 5 girls and 9 boys
- SEN - 5 pupils with statements, 5 at School Action Plus and 1 at School Action
- 5 pupils in special schools, or specialist provision.
- 8 in Rotherham schools and 6 educated out-of-authority
- there are only 3 pupils in this cohort with no identified SEN

Attainment at Level 4+ - comparison with national averages and with 2013

Subject	Number of LAC pupils at 4+	DFE cohort	% All LAC 2013	% All LAC 2014	%DfE LAC 2013	%DfE LAC 2014	National 2013 All pupils	National 2013 LAC
Reading	10	6	60%	48%	64%	43%	86%	63%
Writing	7	3	50%	33%	43%	21%	83%	55%
Maths	6	4	60%	29%	64%	29%	85%	59%

Attainment at Level 5

Subject	Number of	DFE	% All LAC	% All LAC	%DfE LAC	%DfE LAC	National 2013 All	National 2013
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	pupils at L5	cohort	2013	2014	2013	2014	pupils	LAC
Reading	5	2	5%	24%	5%	14%	44%	NA
Writing	2	1	0%	9.5%	0%	7%	30%	NA
Maths	2	1	25%	9.5%	20%	7%	41%	NA

Outcomes at Level 5+ improved in 2014 for all LAC by 19% and 9.5% respectively in reading and writing, for all pupils in the cohort, but decreased in maths by 15.5%.

Expected Progress

The national expectation is that pupils will make 2 full national curriculum levels of progress from the end of KS1 to the end of Key Stage 2. For example, a child achieving Level 2 at the age of 7 would be expected to achieve at least a Level 4 by the age of 11. Schools are now expected to have greater proportions of pupils making 3 levels of progress.

Outcomes:

DfE cohort (pupils in care 12 months+)

- The following percentages include the outcomes of pupils below the level of the tests who were not entered. This relates to 6 pupils (43% of the cohort) - 5 with statements and educated in special schools and specialist provision, and one at SA+ with a statement for learning difficulties educated in an out-of-authority mainstream school.
- It is very likely that pupils on P levels (3) made 2 full P levels of progress across KS2, (expected progress in line with Progression Guidance for SEN) although it is difficult to ascertain as KS1 outcomes were assessed as W. Pupil progress in terms of P levels is not included in national figures.

Subject	2 levels +	3 levels +	4 levels	National Non-LAC 2013 2 levels+	National LAC 2013 2 levels+
Reading	7 - 50%	3 – 21%	2 – 14%	88%	77%
Writing	6 - 43%	2 – 14%	1 – 7%	92%	81%
Maths	5 – 36%	3 – 21%	1 – 7%	88%	74%

Cohort (pupils in care < 12 months)

NB These figures include one pupil who has no prior data at KS1 which has a negative impact on the outcomes.

Subject	2 levels +	3 levels +	4 levels	National 2013 2 levels+	National for LAC 2013 2 levels+
Reading	12 - 50%	5 – 24%	2 – 9.5%	88%	77%
Writing	10 - 48%	2 – 9.5%	1 – 4.7%	92%	81%
Maths	9 – 43%	2 – 9.5%	1 – 4.7%	88%	74%

DfE cohort (pupils in care 12 months+)

Progress outcomes KS1 to KS2

- Please see Appendix B for data on performance measures
- Two pupils achieved Level 5 (14%)
- 2 or more levels of progress – 7 pupils (50%).
- 3 or more levels of progress – 3 pupils (21%).
- 4 levels of progress – 2 pupils (14%)
- The boys slightly outperformed the girls - girls achieving L4+ 40%, boys 44%
- Pupils who entered care after March 31st last year and who will not be included in the DfE figures performed well at Level 5 in reading (43%) in spite of the significant changes associated with coming into care.

Writing

DfE cohort (pupils in care 12 months+)

Outcomes at Level 4+

- Please see Appendix B for data on performance measures
- No pupil achieved Level 5
- 2 or more levels of progress – 6 pupils (43%).
- 3 or more levels of progress – 2 pupils (14%).
- The girls outperformed the boys - girls achieving L4+ 40%, boys 11%

Mathematics

DfE cohort (pupils in care 12 months+)

Outcomes at Level 4+

- Please see Appendix B for data on performance measures
- One pupil achieved Level 5 (7%)
- 2 or more levels of progress – 5 pupils (36%).
- 3 or more levels of progress – 3 pupils (21%).
- The boys outperformed the girls – boys 33% level 4+, girls 20%

Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation

DfE cohort (pupils in care 12 months+)

- 14 pupils
- 6 pupils, mainly those with statements and educated in special schools, were not entered for the tests.
- Of those entered for the test (8 pupils), 2 pupils achieved Level 4+ (one at level 5) and 5 pupils achieved Level 3. Only one pupil received an outcome below level 3. If pupils not entered are included, 14% of pupils achieved L4+.

Of the 7 pupils who entered care more recently, 6 were entered for the test. (One pupil with a statement, educated in specialist provision did not take the tests). Of these pupils 3 achieved Level 4+ (one achieved level 5) and 2 achieved Level 3.

Combined Attainment

Combined attainment changed in 2013. In 2012 the outcomes related to the same child achieving L4+ in English and maths. The requirement is now that the same child will achieve L4+ in reading, writing and maths.

Key Stage 4 – GCSE Outcomes

DfE cohort (pupils in care 12 months+)

- 26 pupils – 15 girls and 11 boys
- 11 educated in Rotherham, 15 out-of-authority
- SEN – 6 pupils with statements, 13 at School Action Plus and 2 at School Action. 5 pupils are not on the SEN register.
- There is a very high proportion of pupils with SEN in this cohort (SEN register - 73%, compared with 64% in 2013). 3 pupils with statements (in special schools), were teacher assessed at Level 1, 2 and at P5 respectively at the end of KS4.
- There has been an increase in the number of pupils educated out-of-authority (58%) as opposed to Rotherham schools compared with 32% in 2013.
- Pupils in Rotherham schools performed better than those educated outside of the LA, although pupils educated out of area generally had a range of significant needs, including SEN and mental health problems leading to low attendance, changes in placements etc.

	5x A* - C	5x A*- C, inc E & M	A* - C E & M	5 x A* - G	5 x A*-G inc E&M	1x A* -G
Number of pupils	3	3	3	13	12	18
% of pupils	12%	12%	12%	50%	46%	69%
National 2013 – non LAC	80.3%	58%	58.8%			
National 2013 LAC	36.6%	15.3%	16.1%			

Outcomes at 5 A* - C, including English and maths, are slightly below the national average for LAC pupils (2013 figures - 2014 not yet available) but well below outcomes for non LAC pupils nationally. Outcomes are lower than in 2013, due to the particular nature of the cohort. A prediction

of 10% for 5 A* to C including English and maths was reported to Corporate Parenting Panel in November. However, actual outcomes (provisional) show an increase of 2% on this figure.

Comparison of outcomes – pupils educated in Rotherham, and those educated out-of-authority

	5x A* - C	5x A* - C, inc E & M	A* - C E & M	5 x A* - G	5 x A*-G inc E&M	1x A* -G
Number and % of pupils (Rotherham)	2 (15%)	2 (15%)	2 (15%)	8 (73%)	8 (73%)	9 (82%)
Number and % of pupils (OOA)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	5 (33%)	4 (27%)	9 (60%)

Expected progress KS2 to KS4

There are national expectations for progress in English and maths from the end of Key Stage 2 to the end of Key Stage 4. For example a pupil who achieved level 4 at KS2 would be expected to achieve a minimum of grade C in GCSEs.

Please see Appendix B for summary data on performance outcomes.

	Expected progress in English	Expected progress in maths
Pupils educated in Rotherham	55%	36%
Pupils educated OOA	13%	7%
All pupils	31%	19%

Progress in English was better than in maths (close to the national average for LAC 2013,) and progress in Rotherham schools was significantly better than in OOA schools. However, pupils placed outside of the LA were generally those with the most significant needs.

All post-16 data is held by Social Care.

8. Programmes delivered by the Get Real team to raise aspirations & provide enrichment

The Letterbox Club

This programme aims to provide educational support and high quality resources for Looked After Children and focuses on improving their educational outlook by sending, directly to their home address, a parcel of carefully selected items for them to use enjoy and keep. If the child moves placement (or returns to their birth family) during this time the parcel is sent to their new address until the end of the programme The parcels contain a variety of books fiction and non-fiction, books carefully chosen to capture interest and imagination along with maths activities and educational materials aimed at promoting reading and engagement with the carer in educational activities in the

home. The first parcel is sent out in May and then one each month with the last parcel being sent out in October.

- During 2013 - 17 children in years 3 and 4 and 12 children in years 5 and 6 were signed up to the Letterbox Club
- Currently in 2014 - 16 children in years 3 and 4 are signed up to the Letterbox Club and 14 children in years 5 and 6 are receiving their Letterbox Club Parcels until October 2014 as per the programme.

It is the intention to continue with Letterbox Club but the plan is to link it directly to PEPs and school targets. In future it will be funded through 'Pupil Premium Plus' funding.

'Aim for Life' Programme

This consists of 3 programmes per year for Looked After Children and Young People. The aim is to offer a programme that is **A**spirational **I**nspirational and **M**otivational. The programmes target Y6 transition children, plus Y9, Y10 and Y11 young people. The programme is developed and delivered in partnership with Rotherham Titans, both of the Sheffield Universities and also the Rotherham Colleges.

The feedback from the two days of the "Aim for Life" programme was very positive, both from the adults and the children. Both the college and the university were very welcoming and engaged with the children from start to finish. The feedback from the children was very positive - their highlights were the drama at RCAT and the University day where they saw what they could achieve. Some stated they would love to go to university.

Go Further, Go Higher

Six young people from Rotherham attended the Summer School in June 2014, organised and funded by Sheffield University and Sheffield Hallam University. The Rotherham group of students consisted of two Year 11 and four Year 10 students from Rotherham schools, one male student, and five female students were introduced to young people from three other local authorities.

The aim of the Go Further, Go Higher summer school event is to enable students to sample a range of exciting opportunities at both universities supported by The Get Real Team.

"The Universities recognise that young people in care may face barriers when thinking about and applying to University. The Universities aim is to demystify University by providing fun and exciting activities throughout the three day experience."

The Get Real Book Fair

The Get Real Book Fair is an annual event hosted by the Get Real Team. The Book Fair aim has been to promote the importance of literacy in improving outcomes, engagement with family learning and the enjoyment of reading and books.

It has been open to Rotherham's Looked After Children from the ages of 0 -16, carers and parents and also foster carers' own children. All children have been given vouchers that they exchange for books on the day. This has been funded through the Get Real Team budget.

124 children (from 5 months to 16 years) attended the Book Fair in 2013 and 102 children in 2014.

The Young Champions of Rotherham Awards

The Get Real Team organise, facilitate and secure sponsorship for the award ceremony, supporting the authority in its duty to recognise the achievement of children and young people looked after by RMBC.. The event is open to children of all ages, including care leavers. This event took place on 27th November 2013 at Hellaby Hall and was well attended and received.

Children and young people can be nominated for a host of different types of achievement that can include overcoming difficulties and showing resilience alongside other achievements such as academic, sporting and musical. Almost 120 young people received nominations in 2013 and all who attended enjoyed an excellent evening.

This is a bi-annual event and is next due to take place in 2015 (possibly during Corporate Parenting Week).

The Post 16 Awards

This is an annual event at the Town Hall, organised and facilitated by the Get Real Team, funded and supported by the Mayor, and attended by councillors and senior officers of the LA to celebrate achievement in the areas of education, employment and training of young people who are looked after, or have been looked after..

24 young people attended the event in 2013 and 26 in 2014.

Some award winners had successfully completed degrees with other achievements including completion of training courses, the gaining of employment or an apprenticeship, and completion of college courses.

The commitment, resilience and hard work of all of the young people receiving awards are impressive. This is a wonderful event, reflecting not only the fantastic achievements of the young people themselves, but also the commitment of everyone who has supported and encouraged them through 'corporate parenting' on their journey to success .

The Befriending Project

This project involved recruitment of Masters Social Work students from Sheffield University to work with our Year 11 pupils. As a result of support from a student social worker, and a high level of commitment from all involved, one of our Year 11 students in 2013 raised her grade in Health and Social Care from a Pass to a Merit, equivalent to two grade Bs, which has enabled her to start at college on a Level 3. She also raised her grade in English Literature to a C from an E. There are currently no social work students engaged with this project.

9. Finance

- 2014/15 - The Get Real Team is currently funded 54% from revenue with the remainder from DSG. The amount allocated this year in total is £330K. This figure does not include the salary of the Virtual Head.
- DSG funding demonstrates a strong shared commitment to Looked After Children across Rotherham.

10. Issues

- The quality of educational outcomes for Rotherham's Looked After Children is poor and lags behind both national LAC outcomes and all other pupils.
- Current data systems are not fit for purpose and are not cost-effective.
- Allocation and monitoring of 'Pupil Premium Plus' funding' needs streamlining and improving

- Assessment without levels will make it difficult to monitor progress across all schools
- It is more difficult to provide the same quality of support to children and young people placed some distance away from the LA as for children placed within, or close, to the LA.
- The Virtual School currently covers compulsory school age pupils but needs to cover the age range of at least 2-18. Additional funding will be required to achieve this.
- There is no clarity regarding the funding available for the financial year 2014/15 from either revenue or DSG.
- There are currently too many pupils out-of-authority in inadequate educational provision.
- The quality of PEPs is too variable with insufficient PEPs being completed
- Too many PEP targets are not aspirational enough
- Not enough schools are applying for the 'Pupil Premium Plus' funding (an update will be provided for next Corporate Parenting Panel).
- The current Get Real Team model is no longer appropriate for an agenda focussed on improving outcomes and closing the gap for all LAC (as confirmed by Ofsted and DLT)
- Commissioning arrangements need to be revised with regard to educational placements
- There are insufficient numbers of professionals accessing training
- The rising number of fixed-term and potential permanent exclusions for Looked After Children
- Chatham Villas needs to be vacated.

11. The Way Forward

- Please see Appendix C for the Virtual School 'developing excellence plan' 2014/15
- A strong, manageable and effective data system is required that can inform practice and drive improvement. An ePEP system has been identified that will eliminate many of the problems listed above and enable the Virtual School to focus on raising attainment.
- The Get Real Team has undergone a consultation process and will cease to exist by March 2015. The new Virtual School Rotherham will be developed using a 'caseload model' which reflects practice in some other authorities and which will focus resources on working in close partnership with schools.
- The Virtual Head is developing strong links with other authorities which is already reaping dividends in identifying best practice. The Virtual Head will be attending the Virtual Head Conference in Manchester on 15th January 2015.
- A commissioning group has been set up that will quality assure Individual Pupil Agreements with regard to education for those pupils placed out-of-authority. The membership of this group is commissioning, SEN, social care and the Virtual Head.
- The Virtual School needs to operate like any other school and an 'operational' governing body of the Virtual School is required that will be accountable to the Corporate Parenting Panel (official governing body). Please see Appendix D for the draft terms of reference of a Virtual School Steering Group that would perform this function. The principle of this group has been agreed by the Interim Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services and DLT. No discussion with the proposed membership has yet taken place.
- By May 2015 the Virtual School will operate from Riverside House.
- The Virtual School will take the lead on PEPs by September 2015.

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