HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Panel:	Corporate Parenting Board
Date:	5 July 2023
Title:	Hampshire Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report 2021-2022
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. This report provides an overview of the Virtual School's work and focus during the academic year 2021-2022, together with an analysis of educational outcomes, where published, for Hampshire's cohort of children in care. It sets out the priorities for securing improved individual and cohort progress, educational experiences, and outcomes for children in the care of Hampshire.

Recommendations

2. That the Virtual School's priorities are agreed to secure further improvements to the educational outcomes of Hampshire's children in care.

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to outline and analyse the end of key stage achievement of all children and young people, from early years to 18 in the care of Hampshire County Council (academic year 2021-22). It sets out the priorities for improving the effectiveness and impact of the Virtual School so that, together with schools, settings, and post-16 providers, we secure greater individual and cohort progress, better educational experiences, and better outcomes for Hampshire's children in care.

Contextual Information

4. The Virtual School sits within the Education and Inclusion Branch but works closely with the Children and Families branch of Hampshire Children's Services Department (CSD) and the Access, Resources and Business Development Branch, in relation to data, information, and admissions.

5. The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for the Virtual Schools in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Close working relationships are nurtured

with all other services, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Early Years Advisory Team, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology, Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service, Hampshire Futures, and wider health services.

6. The Virtual School in Hampshire is small in relation to the size of cohort. Therefore, ensuring that all teams prioritise this group of children and the building of capacity across schools and the wider children's workforce is a key component in our strategy to improve educational outcomes.

7. Accurate information is maintained as to how children in our care are progressing in their education. The Virtual School intervenes when a child or young person in Hampshire's care is not achieving as well as they can. We provide training and information for schools, foster carers, and social workers. Furthermore, the Virtual School ensures resources, including the pupil premium plus, are distributed effectively and monitors the impact on the educational experiences and achievements of children in care.

Finance
Pupil Premium Plus

8. In line with the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance, the Virtual School publish a policy document which makes clear the expectations and arrangements in place around pupil premium plus for children looked after. Pupil Premium Plus and funding | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)

9. For transparency, the Virtual School Head also reports specifically to Schools' Forum on the use and impact of pupil premium plus. Arrangements for distributing the pupil premium plus grant are reviewed annually.

Summary of performance for the academic year 2020-21
Attainment and progress of cohorts by chronological age

10. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, most exams, tests and assessments resumed in the academic year 2021/22. Pupils included in the 2021/22 KS2 and KS4 school performance data may have experienced varying levels of disruption to their schooling due to the pandemic. It is recommended that the KS2/KS4/KS5 data be used with caution. Performance data for 2022 should not be directly compared with 2019 and earlier.

11. The following analysis refers to children in care in the 'OC2' or 'published' cohort during 2021-22 academic year. That is children who have been in care for a year or more as of 31st March 2022.

12. There may be some differences between the internal local authority and verified KS4 dataset, due to rounding and some unmatched data where not all children's results have been included. Where this is the case, it is clearly indicated on the datasets used.

Outcome for Hampshire's children in care
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) results

13. Standards in the EYFS are assessed during the final year of this Key Stage, in the first year of statutory education in schools. This is measured by the proportion of pupils that have reached a good level of development (GLD). In 2019, there was an improvement in outcomes across all measures. In 2022, GLD is just below national figures as indicated by NEXUS data. In this cohort, three children have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and ten children are on Special Educational Needs (SEN) support which is a higher percentage than in previous years.

EYFSP - OC2

Exam Year	Area	Total Cohort	GLD	
			No	%
2018	HCC	35	18	51.4%
	National CLA	950	440	46.3%
2019	HCC	33	17	51.5%
	National CLA	1110	540	48.6%
2022	HCC	30	11	39.3%
	National CLA	1240	500	40.3%

14. It should be noted, however, that the year-on-year GLD data cannot be used for comparison to 2022. This is due to the new statutory framework and outcomes as part of the Early Years Reforms 2021. The Early Learning Goals used to calculate GLD are not the same as those in previous years, therefore cannot be compared for the purposes of identifying trends. Additionally, due to Covid-19, any results should not be directly compared. Hampshire CLA are below those of National CLA for 2022 and improving outcomes is a focus for the Virtual School.

15. The Virtual School agreed a service level agreement with Services for Young Children (SfYC) to ensure expertise and support is provided to this cohort. A dedicated Education Adviser for Early Years leads our strategy and approach and works with a group of specialist advisory teachers to provide termly meetings and support work, including visits to schools and settings, moderation of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and transition work.

16. There has been an increased focus on close working with the Inclusion and Advisory Teams and Admissions to ensure that information is shared on applications in a timely way and that good schools are identified. Support provided in schools was reviewed so that priority focus could be given to specific Private, Voluntary, Independent (PVI) settings.

Key stage 1 and key stage 2 performance

17. The two years following EYFS are deemed to be Key Stage 1 (KS1).

KS1 – OC2

Exam Year	Area	Total Cohort	RWM	
			EXS+	%
2018	HCC	42	13	31.0%
	National CLA	1540	570	37.0%
2019	HCC	44	16	36.4%
	National CLA	1630	610	37.4%
2022	HCC	53	14	26.4%
	National CLA	1720	510	29.7%

18. KS1 results are disappointing across the board both nationally and locally. There were 6 children with an EHCP in this cohort which is higher than previous years and none of these children achieved the expected standard.

19. The Government's preferred performance measure for KS2 is the proportion of children that have reached age-related expectations (ARE) in each of reading, writing and mathematics (RWM) combined.

20. In 2020 and 2021, no assessment data was collected or published at KS2 because of the impact of the pandemic. In 2022, although data has been collected by the DfE there are no published performance tables at KS2 on an individual school basis.

21. As identified in the previous VSH annual report, one impact of the current curriculum and assessment methods in place is that there are parts of the curriculum that many children in care, due to the turbulence in their lives, have simply not had time to learn securely by the end of the key stage. This implies that their final scores may reflect the lack of time they have had to learn the content rather than their capabilities.

KS2 – OC2

Exam Year	Area	Total Cohort	RWM	
			EXS+	%
2018	HCC	77	23	29.9%
	National CLA	2770	970	35.0%
2019	HCC	68	19	27.9%
	National CLA	3040	1100	36.2%
2022	HCC	64	12	18.8%
	National CLA	2810	880	31.3%

22. Results are below National figures again this year. Within this cohort, the percentage of children with an EHCP and SEN support achieving RWM was higher than those in 2019 which is pleasing as there is a County focus on SEN Support, through our School Improvement Service. Virtual Schools will continue to focus on raising attainment through targeted work.

Key stage 4 performance

23. Secondary school performance measures and their associated GCSE courses have undergone unprecedented change between 2016, with new, harder GCSE courses being introduced year on year until the final year of change in 2019. The end of that process of change should have meant that from 2019, year on year comparisons could be carried out with validity.

24. However, due to the pandemic, in 2020, GCSE exams were not taken by students; instead, they were awarded Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs), based on what their teachers expected that they would have achieved had they taken their final exams. These grades, when aggregated nationally, showed an increase relative to 2019.

25. In 2021, still during the pandemic, a system of teacher assessment was adopted nationally that led to the award of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). Once again, there was an increase relative to 2020. Although there was much discussion about the fairness of this system and unwarranted grade inflation, many schools reported that the system of continuous assessment had favoured students who traditionally may not have fared so well under the terminal exam method of assessment. It was notable that this positive effect was more pronounced in the cohort of students experiencing vulnerability.

26. In the face of a situation where grades had increased over the two pandemic years, Ofqual (the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation), the non-ministerial government department that regulates qualifications, exams and tests in England, announced that in 2022, the approach examination boards would take to grading would reflect a midpoint between summer 2019 and 2021. They stated that it would be more meaningful to make comparisons with 2019 results, because this is when exams were last taken. However, when making this comparison, note should be made that results in summer 2022 will be higher than when summer exams were last taken in 2019, but lower than in 2021, when grades were awarded by teacher assessment.

Exam Year	Area	Attainment 8		Progress 8		9-5 inc
		Cohort	A8	Cohort	P8	En and Maths
2018	HCC	81	27.5	74	-0.79	
	National	3400	24.5	3400	-0.94	
2019	HCC	89	22.6	82	-1.17	

	National	3720	25.0	3720	-0.97	
2022	HCC	107	20.3	107	-1.33	13.1%
	National	3980	25.9	3980	-1.06	14.0%

27. For 2022, the A8 figure less than the National CLA. The P8 score is also below National CLA which is disappointing.

28. Of the 107 children who had been looked after continually for at least 12 months, 14 children (13.1%) achieved English and maths at grades 9-5.

29. Of these 107 pupils, 40 had been in care for five years or more. This is lower than the previous cohort where 65 had been in care for five years of more in 2021. Length of time in care is a known factor which impacts on educational outcomes (University of Oxford 2013).

30. The remaining 67 pupils entered the care system during their secondary school years and 22 of the 67 entered care in Key Stage 4. The time preceding this is likely to have been chaotic and unstable, with significant risk of gaps in learning.

31. The 'Strength and Difficulties' questionnaire (SDQ) is used with every looked after child as an indicator of need, with an 'abnormal' score indicating a significant level of need. 17 of the 107 children had 'abnormal 'scores.

32. In terms of special educational needs, in the overall cohort in Year 11, there were 44 children with EHCPs and an additional two at the assessment stage in May. Of the 44, 20 were in other local authority areas. There were 23 children placed in special schools. In the OC2 cohort, 26 (24.3%) had an EHCP.

33. In the OC2 Year 11 cohort, the designations were as follows:

ASD	MLD	PD	SEMH	SLD	Not known
2	6	1	14	1	2

34. In terms of school placement stability, 20 children experienced a change of school during Year 11, slightly less than the previous year although improved care placement stability suggests school changes were more planned and supported. However, none of these children achieved the 'basics' measure, although two children achieved a level 4 in maths. The reduction in school changes in key stage four remains a priority for the Virtual School and our local authority partners.

35. There were four Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in the 2021-22 OC2 cohort. No child in this cohort achieved the 'basics' measure although two sat an exam and one child achieved an English GCSE (9-4).

Attendance

36. The DfE published data 'Outcomes for CIN (including CLA) for the 2021 reporting year, sets out the published data for children in care for 12 months as of 31st March 2021, the OC2 cohort. For Hampshire's children in care, the overall absence rate for 2021-22 was 8.9% whilst the equivalent national figure was 9.1%. The persistent absence rate for Hampshire's children in care was 31.5% with the equivalent national figure at 32.1%.

37. The impact of Covid on attendance of our children and on the reliability and accuracy of data and recording to provide a narrative is significant. For the previous year with data available (2019), the cohort was 759 and the overall absence rate was 5.6% and persistent absence was 13.2%.

38. The Virtual School will continue to monitor and track attendance carefully to ensure that we target children and young people who are at risk of persistence absence. This is especially important in the context of supporting our most vulnerable students who are still struggling to transition back into school following the pandemic.

Exclusion

39. Two Hampshire CLA were permanently excluded in 2021 – 22 whilst in care which is the same as 2020-21.

40. In relation to exclusions, the DfE's 'Outcomes for CIN (including CLA) sets out published data for CLA 12 months as of 31 March 2021.

41. For Hampshire's school age CLA, attending HCC & OOC schools 2021-22, there were 1452 children in the cohort and there were 574 suspensions which is 39.53%.

42. For the previous year with data available (2020-21), the cohort was 1414, the fixed term exclusion rate was 27.72%, although the academic year had a shortened Spring term and reduced attendance due to the Covid lockdowns.

43. The reduction in fixed term exclusions will remain a key priority for the Virtual School this academic year.

Consultation and Equalities

44. Consultation, not applicable.

45. The work of the Virtual School impacts positively on Hampshire's children in care.

Our aspirations for children and young people looked after

46. The Virtual School and Virtual School Head have a lead role in promoting the educational achievement of children in its care. However, to meet our aspirational targets, we require all schools, the local authority and partner agencies to share the responsibility and to prioritise their needs as corporate parents.

47. Education that encourages high aspirations and individual achievements, with minimum disruption and maximum stability, is central to improving short and long-term outcomes for children in our care. This is strongly reflected in our joint work across schools and services.

48. In line with DfE statutory guidance for local authorities, our aspiration is that all children and young people attend a good or outstanding school which meets their individual needs and have good school attendance.
We want every child in care to:
   - Enjoy their education and become positive and resilient learners who know their own strengths and talents.
   - Benefit from the protective factor of being in care and make improved progress and achieve better educational outcomes once they feel stable and secure.
   - Be prioritised by schools and services in line with the collective corporate parent duty.
   - Receive the same support from their foster carers as they would from any good parent.
   - Have a voice that positively impacts on the services they receive.
   - Have stability in their care and education placements.
   - Receive good advice and guidance to ensure they can progress into further education, employment, and training and, when appropriate, university.
   - Know that their achievement and successes will be celebrated.

Reporting arrangements and accountability

49. The Virtual School self-evaluates against the overarching Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). It is expected that key priorities are also identified by Hampshire Corporate Parenting Board which scrutinises the work of the Virtual School and holds it to account. The Virtual School Head reports annually to departmental management teams across both Education and Inclusion and Children and Families branches, with regular updates and reports through the year, including within the Inclusion Management Team.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

50. The Virtual School uses an internal (non-commercial) Personal Education Plan (PEP) template which has been developed over time. The process is managed by the Virtual School team in collaboration with social care and school-based colleagues. The current PEP format is set up to draw relevant data into Virtual School datasets so we can fulfil our duty to monitor the

attainment and progress of our children in care. It is a requirement for this data to be presented to Ofsted during an inspection of Children's Services.

51. Despite joint work with designated teachers and social workers to improve the percentage of PEPs completed and submitted to the Virtual School, the return rate fell in 2021-22 to 60.9%. This was disappointing however it is recognised that although the rate is low, PEPs are completed by schools and social workers but not always returned to Virtual School due to the complexity of the system and the fact it is completed and passed on by more than one person.

52. As a Virtual School, we recognise the priority need to improve the compliance and quality of the PEP process, as it is a key tool to drive forward progress for our children and young people.

53. The Virtual School are working with Transformational Practice Team to review the current PEP system to move to an electronic PEP system.

54. The Virtual School does not have the capacity to routinely attend or contribute directly to all PEP meetings of statutory school age children. The quality assurance and audit process is therefore key to fulfilling our duty to raise standards and is delivered dynamically through 'Corporate Parent' visits and by regular themed audits. In this financial year, the VSH has strengthened the relationship with HIAS and commissioned more dedicated time to enable more PEP auditing and feedback to schools to be undertaken as part of 'Corporate Parent' visits.

55. The Virtual School uses a PEP audit tool developed in line with expectations from statutory guidance and best practice from other local authorities. In relation to school age children, the Virtual School currently undertakes a retrospective termly audit of around 10% of PEPs returned. The Virtual School identify a specific focus for the PEP audit drawing on themes and concerns that may arise from data analysis, training and operational casework.

56. The focus for the spring and summer term 2022 audit in Hampshire was the transition of pupils in reception classes, year 1 and year 7. The audit found evidence of some high-quality work to promote the education and well-being of children. In most cases the child's voice was the strongest part of the PEP, however many young people identify a subject area where they needed support, and this was not often reflected in the targets or linked to pupil premium spend. In most plans, there was evidence of a good knowledge of the child's care needs and educational progress. The most prominent finding of the PEP audit was that the quality of target setting and action planning was not consistent. The child's voice, the carer's voice and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) score feature rarely in the detail of target setting and action planning. On a small number of documents, targets and actions appear to contradict the understanding that

should have been derived from the child's voice, the carer's voice and the SDQ. This is an area that needs strengthening in a number of PEPs.

57. The key findings and themes in the PEP audits are used by the Virtual School to inform our practice, planning and priorities in several ways. We use it to inform the content and focus of our training programme for designated teachers, social workers and foster carers.

58. In 2021-22 we held additional training for designated teachers on writing an effective PEP in view of the variable quality of some of the target setting identified in the 2020-21 audits. In addition, we enhanced our PEP toolkit training to ensure classroom/subject teachers were included to sharpen action planning in core subjects and provided an additional session on use of the EYPP (early years PP+) in view of inconsistency in action planning for this cohort.

59. The Virtual School is small in relation to the size of the cohort. Therefore, building capacity across schools and strengthening the role of the designated teacher is central to our strategy to improve educational outcomes. A key component is the high quality of our guidance and training on PEPs delivered to designated teachers, foster carers and social workers.

60. The Virtual School has developed a comprehensive PEP Toolkit which helps schools to identify and understand children's unmet needs and areas of difficulty. As well as supporting needs analysis, it offers practical guidance on strategies and interventions to raise attainment. This innovative tool was identified by Ofsted as enabling key professionals to understand the reasons for lower attainment.

61. We continue to strengthen the breadth and quality of our training offer on Moodle, including for out of county schools.

62. The improvement of PEP compliance and quality remains a priority for the Virtual School.

Previously looked after children (PLAC)

63. Previously looked after children are those who are no longer looked after by a local authority in England because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship (SGO) or child arrangement (CAO) order.

64. DfE statutory guidance requires Virtual Schools to promote the educational achievement of this group of children by providing advice and guidance to those with parental responsibility as well as to schools and services as part of their statutory duty. The DfE provides a time limited grant to support this work and our activities have focused on building capacity and developing an information and resource base which will be stainable once the funding has ceased.

65. In Hampshire, the grant has been used to fund a specialist Education Officer focusing on providing advice, guidance and support to previously looked after children. The post holder has built a wide network of local and regional partners, including Adopt South and Hampshire's Fostering and Adoption Team, and has successfully developed the offer to schools and parents jointly across the region.

66. The Virtual School has developed an Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC) and our exemplary practice in this area has been recognised by both the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH) and the Rees Centre (Department of Education).

67. Whilst there is no requirement, or capacity, to provide direct casework, inevitably this has been part of the work, with the post holder supporting a range of queries from parents expressing concerns around individual children, and has proactively signposted them to appropriate services, such as SEN, school transport and the Inclusion Support Service. These queries have also helped shape the resources and information that are being offered centrally to parents via the Virtual School website and Moodle. This has contributed to a constant flow of information and helped to reduce frustration whilst parents seek the help they need for their children.

Post-16 The Virtual College

68. The Virtual College is the post-16 arm of the Virtual School and supports our care experienced young people on their post-16 journeys. Introduced in 2018, the Virtual College ensures that looked-after young people have access to high quality, post 16 education, employment and training. Specialist post 16 advisers deliver advice, guidance and face-to-face support for young people as they transition from Year 11 onwards, raising their aspirations and attainment, creating new opportunities and enabling progression into 'good jobs'.

69. As part of the Children's Services post 16 Careers and Participation team, the Virtual College is fully integrated into the wider RPA (Raising Participation Age) statutory functions supporting all young people to participate successfully in formal education and training in year 12 and 13.

70. All young people in England are required to participate in formal education or training until their 18th birthday, under Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) legislation. Hampshire County Council has a statutory duty to support young people aged 16 and 17 (and up to 25 for those with Special Educational Needs).

71. The Council is held to account by the Department for Education (DfE) for its performance against this duty, including the proportion of young people in education, employment and training (EET) or not (NEET); and the proportion of young people whose activity is unknown.

72. As part of the Council's corporate parent role, there are additional duties for the Virtual School to support the participation and educational achievement of looked-after children and young people from pre-school up to age 18. Support for post 16 (AY12-13) is delivered through the Virtual College managed by Hampshire Futures.

73. The Virtual College model uses a robust and wide-ranging dataset to target resources effectively and provides a dedicated 'Education Participation Adviser' to each young person in Hampshire, to support and enable effective transition from year 11, monitor and track their progress and to ensure they sustain their post 16 placement. An update on educational achievement of looked-after young people, post 16, participating in formal education and training programmes in academic year 2021-22 is provided below.

74. The participation rate in post 16 education and training for looked-after young people has increased since the introduction of the Virtual College support through specialist advisers, prioritised at key stages of the academic year.

75. Intended destinations in year 11 are identified earlier and college applications are submitted ahead of the overall cohort (by the end of February each year). The September Guarantee (statutory duty on LAs to ensure a guaranteed place in education Year 12-13) is also secured earlier for young people being supported by the Virtual College team. **Table 1** below shows Hampshire September Guarantee performance in 2022, comparing Virtual College with overall cohorts.

76. In Hampshire, the percentage of looked-after young people securing an offer of a place in post 16 education is higher (97.9%) than the overall cohort (97.1%).

Table 1: Virtual College RPA compliant offers in comparison to wider cohort (Source: November MI CCIS Submission to DfE)			
HCC	**Yr 11**	**Yr 12**	**Combined**
Virtual College Cohort	94	89	183
Positive Offer	94	89	97.9%
Negative/No offer	0	10	
Hampshire Cohort	14,155	14,927	
Positive Offer	13,915	14,328	97.1%
Negative Offer	240	599	

(NB Hampshire Final figures subject to confirmation expected March 2023)

77. September Guarantee performance for the overall cohort in Hampshire is significantly above national (95.5%) and regional (93.2%) averages (most recent published figures are for 2021).

78. **Table 2** below shows the Hampshire participation in education, employment and training for the Virtual College cohort at the end of AY2021-22, including three-year trend and comparison with national average.

Table 2: Looked-after participation in education, employment and training (EET) (Source: NCCIS June 2022 LA Tables)					
	HCC				
Destination	June 20	June 21	June 22		England
EET Total	83.4%	84.4%	88.5%		80.1%
NEET	15.0%	14.4%	10.1%		17%
Not Known	1.6%	1.2%	1.4%		2.9%
Combined NEET and Unknown	16.6%	15.6%	11.5%		19.9%

79. Participation of looked-after young people in post 16 education and training is increasing in Hampshire. All measures are above national averages and NEET/Unknown is lower than the national figure.

80. Where appropriate to the young person, Virtual College advisers are supporting access to alternative options, for example, three successful placements in 2022 with the Office for National Statistics as part of the government's Care Leaver Covenant.

81. In August 2022 the Virtual College cohorts (Yr12/13 resident cohort) was 205 young people in Hampshire, an increase of over 11% on the previous year.

82. **Table 3** below shows FE data for AY2021-22 for the Hampshire Virtual College cohort. Information has been provided by schools and colleges from Hampshire and neighbouring local authorities.

Table 3: Hampshire Virtual College FE achievement data AY2021-22			
Virtual College	2020-21	2021-22	Change %
Cohort	184	205	+11.4%
FE	114	133	+2.92%
Completed/Passed	71	67	-16.47%

Withdrawn	12	30	+12.03%

83. There were 133 young people from the Virtual College cohort who attended college courses in AY2021-22. This represents a 2.92% increase compared to AY2020-21.

84. There were 67 young people who completed college courses and 30 young people who withdrew from education. In addition, two young people withdrew from college and successfully completed an RPA compliant work-based learning provision. This represents a 16.47% decrease in the number of successful completions and a 12.03% increase in the proportion of young people who withdrew or did not complete qualifications from college courses.

85. The Virtual College have continued to monitor and support the 30 young people who withdrew/did not completed their college course of those, 11 progressed into employment no training, 9 withdrew due to poor mental health, 8 re-engaged with working towards provision i.e., STEP and 2 withdrew due to pregnancy.

86. There are prominent trends within the early leaver cohort, these can be summarised in to 4 categories: poor mental health, not meeting attendance/behavioural expectations, placement stability/move, change of ambition.

87. Across all levels, 36 young people remain on their programme of study and are expected to complete courses in AY2021-22, including 21 young people on 2-year courses. **Table 4** below shows the breakdown of qualification levels.

Table 4: Hampshire Virtual College breakdown of qualifications AY2021 /22				
Qualification	**Complete/ Pass**	**Withdrawn/ Not Passed**	**Total**	**Ongoing**
Entry Level	14	4	18	2
Level 1	14	6	20	0
Level 2	21	9	30	3
Level 3 Vocational	7	7	14	22
Level 3 Academic	6	4	10	12
GCSE	2	0	2	0
ESOL	3	0	3	0
TOTAL	**67**	**30**	**97**	**36**
	69.08%	30.92%	100%	

88. For AY2021/22, of students on level 3 courses, just over one third followed an academic A-level course route with just under two thirds of students following a level 3 vocational/ technical route.

89. Four Year 13 students successfully progressed to Higher Education in AY2021-22, with an additional two deferred places for AY2022-23. University destinations include:
   - Psychology & Counselling at Bournemouth University
   - Business and Marketing at University of Westminster
   - Law at University of Westminster
   - Circus Arts at The National Centre for Circus Arts

90. The Virtual College has enhanced the level of resource for looked-after children and young people, utilising Virtual School funding and external grants such as the European Social Fund to enable an increased level of support. More can be done to increase the reach of the Virtual College, through the Virtual School and local college partnerships to further improve Year 11 transition and post 16 PEP support (including the extended responsibility to children with a social worker).

91. The Virtual School collects an update from Hampshire and neighbouring local authority colleges annually around their specific offer for children in care, so this is visible to young people and their carers as they make their post 16 choices. The 2022 edition of 'What's Next' is now available online http://documents.hants.gov.uk/cic-virtual-college/cic-virtual-college-what-next.pdf

The Virtual School's approach to improving educational outcomes

92. There are several factors which impact on the educational outcomes of children in care. A study by the Rees Centre, The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data (2015) noted that, controlling for all factors, there are several which consistently contribute to low educational outcomes of young people in care in secondary schools. These include the length of time children are in care, the number of changes in placement (with each additional change in placement after age 11 associated with one third of a grade less at GCSE) and the number of school changes (with young people who change school in key stage 4 scoring over five grades less than those who did not). School absence and exclusion are also significant factors as are placement and school type with young people in residential settings, special schools or pupil referral units scoring lower than those with similar characteristics in mainstream schools.

93. The Virtual School ensures that these factors inform the practice and priorities of their work as outlined in this report. We place significant focus on ensuring, through training, that designated teachers and schools have a better understanding of children's social, emotional and mental health

needs to ensure they can be supported to remain in the best mainstream schools wherever possible.

94. The quality of bespoke training and support for designated teachers in their statutory role has contributed significantly to the capacity and expertise that exists in our schools in meeting the needs of care experienced children. An ambitious attachment and trauma aware schools programme commenced in April 2019, led by the Virtual School following co-construction with schools and local authority services. The Hampshire programme is part of the Alex Timpson national programme of attachment aware schools and is being externally evaluated by the Rees Centre at the University of Oxford. There are 78 schools who have completed the ATAS Programme and a further cohort will begin during this academic year.

95. The Virtual School is continuing to provide support through termly network meetings and bespoke school support where appropriate. The Virtual School has also responded to training needs identified by schools and commission Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology Service where needed for specific inputs. The emphasis going forward is on designated teachers disseminating their knowledge and expertise widely within their school community through training, development, and peer support. It is expected that approaches, such as emotional coaching will be shared with key members of staff to promote a whole school ethos. As a result, designated teachers can influence what happens in the classroom in real time, supporting colleagues to co-regulate with children who struggle with their emotions, which may de-escalate situations which could result in sanctions, such as a fixed-term exclusion. We will continue to develop our virtual offer to designated teachers and increase those accessing the Virtual School Moodle.

96. The Virtual School is collaborating with colleagues across Hampshire to develop our online training offer for social workers, foster carers and residential workers.

97. The partnership with the Advisory Teacher Team within the Early Years Advisory Team (EYAT) has been strengthened, as a result of our specialist Education Adviser in the Virtual school working in partnership to drive a joint approach, targeting intervention at those children most vulnerable at point of transition into year R. We hope this will continue to build professional knowledge across settings and schools, around the impact of attachment and trauma on our youngest children and how to best meet their development needs.

98. We monitor attendance and exclusion data for all our children in care to identify young people at risk of non-engagement and to ensure appropriate assessment, intervention and support packages are in place in a timely way where needed.

99. The Virtual School works closely with social work colleagues and managers to ensure that, where placement moves are essential, school moves are avoided especially in the final years of schooling to maintain school stability. Wherever possible and appropriate, children have continued at their school whilst care placement changes have taken place. This work is underpinned by the Virtual School's protocol around school provision. https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school/guidance

100. We also ensure that our children and young people are prioritised to attend schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding'. We ensure that the network around children focus on progress over time in recognition that many children take longer to make significant progress.

101. The progress of children in care does, of course, show much variation, which suggests that interventions do need to be tailored to the characteristics and experience of individual children and should be reflected in the needs analysis and actions plans in their PEPS. It is important to remember that children in care will also experience multiple factors simultaneously and will feel the impact of these vulnerabilities in individual ways. It is evident that a number of children enter care during their secondary school years, so important that our schools can identify and address gaps in a timely way.

102. The Virtual School will continue to work with a range of teams and services to explore what good corporate parenting looks like in different contexts, raising awareness, developing the evidence base of good practice, and developing increased accountability around the statutory duty, so children in care are consistently prioritised.

103. During 2021-22 and beyond, the Hampshire Virtual School and College will consolidate its approach as an 'all through' integrated service with a view to ensuring consistency of approach and promoting collaborative working to improve educational experiences and outcomes.

Conclusion

104. The Virtual School remains committed to removing the inequality in educational outcomes between children in care and the wider population of children. This means working in partnership with the whole system for children across schools, education and inclusion and social care, returning constantly to the question for us as corporate parents – '*Would this be good enough for my child?'*

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents **The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

Document	Location
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:
- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionally low.