

Virtual School and College for children in care

Promoting the educational outcomes of children
looked after and previously looked after

Anwen Foy

*Executive Head Teacher Hampshire
and Isle of Wight*

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school>



Guide to acronyms used

VS – Virtual School

VSH – Virtual School Head Teacher

LAC – looked after children (also referred to as CIC children in care, CLA Children Looked After, and ‘care experienced children’)

PLAC – previously looked after children who are now adopted, subject to Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) or Child Arrangement Orders (CAO)

PEP – Personal Education Plan (statutory for each child in care)

KS – Key Stage

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage

RWM - (combined) Reading Writing and Maths

SfYC – Services for Young Children



What is a Virtual School?

A key focus is ensuring the views, wishes and ambitions of children in care are central to improving their educational experience and outcomes

Virtual Schools proactively work with others to create a culture of high expectation and aspiration around this group of children

The Virtual School Head and team discharge the LA's duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after and (since September 2018) previously looked after children (PLAC)

An LA team which monitors the attendance and progress of children looked after as if those children attended a single school

The team is led by a Virtual School Head Teacher (VSH)– a statutory role in every LA (England)

The VSH discharges the LA's Corporate Parent role as the educational advocate for children in care (as parents are for other children)



Hampshire Children looked after

- 1114 statutory school children
- 74% placed in Hampshire the remainder placed in other LAs
- Around 2/3 have SEN
- Around 50% have significant emotional/mental health needs

Making things happen

Ensure each child has access to quality education which meets their individual needs

Ensure children are not criticised for school absences, provide challenge and support

Challenge instances of drift and delay around access to school place, using powers of direction where needed

Understand and address barriers to school attendance, including working with schools to reduce fixed term exclusions

Ensure Pupil Premium Plus is used appropriately to support children's needs

Ensure each child has a current, high quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) which identifies their individual needs

Monitor the experience attendance, progress, educational outcomes and experiences of children in care



Equip Designated Teachers with the specialist knowledge, information and skills they need to advocate effectively for looked after children on roll of their school

Celebrate success, challenge the narrative, challenge stereotypes

Continuously learn from all the available research, data and information about the needs of the cohort and ways to further improve experiences and outcomes

Develop partnerships and deliver interventions to support the cohort's educational needs (including in the early years and post 16)

Provide training, support and challenge across the whole system for children around the education of children in care

Summary of end of Foundation and Key Stage and results for Hampshire children in care - primary

Years Foundation Stage Results - % Meeting Learning Goals Primary by Academic Year	Number of CiC in Year R eligible for EYFSP assessments	Good Level of Development		Key Stage 2 Percentage achieving Expected Level or above	Number of CiC in Year 6 eligible to sit KS2 tests	Expected Level or Above*						
		Expected or Exceeding in the 3 Prime Areas of Learning plus Literacy and Maths				Reading		Writing		Maths		RWM
		Num	%			Num	%	Num	%	Num	Num	
	31	11	35.5%	2016	57	23	40.4%	28	49.1%	22	38.6%	14
	24	10	41.7%	2017	50	19	38.0%	22	44.0%	19	38.0%	13
	35	17	48.6%	2018	81	36	44.4%	41	50.6%	38	46.9%	25
2018 national CLA			47%	2018 national CLA			51%		49%		47%	

Summary of end of KS results for Hampshire children in care - secondary

KS2 results (SFR 2019)	Number	% English and maths grades 9-5	% English and maths grades 9-4	Average attainment 8 score	Average progress 8 score
Hampshire CLA	108	7.4%	23.1%	22	-1.12
Statistical neighbour (SFR 2019)	448	10%	20.5%	19.2	-1.17
South east region CLA	730	7%	18.6%	18.7	-1.17
2018 national CLA	5130	7.8%	17.8%	18.9	-1.2

Hampshire Outcomes - KS4 - OC2 cohorts

Headline Figures

Summary by Academic Year

Academic Year	Number of CiC in Year 11 eligible for KS4 Assessment	Achieving standard																			
		Average Attainment 8 Score	Average Progress 8 Score	Achieved EBACC (9-4)		GCSE English and Maths A*-C or 9-4		GCSE English A*-C or 9-4		GCSE Maths A*-C or 9-4		Achieved EBACC (9-5)		GCSE English and Maths A*-C or 9-5		GCSE English A*-C or 9-5		GCSE Maths A*-C or 9-5		Sat Any Exam	
				Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%	Num	%
016	78	22.52	-1.20	1	1.3%	13	16.7%	19	24.4%	20	25.6%									64	82.1%
017	110	20.15	-1.04	2	1.8%	21	19.1%	34	30.9%	28	25.5%	2	1.8%	8	7.3%	17	15.5%	15	13.6%	88	80.0%
018	116	21.04	-0.76	5	4.3%	25	21.6%	37	31.9%	28	24.1%	3	2.6%	8	6.9%	25	21.6%	14	12.1%	97	83.6%

Current priorities

- Continue to improve quality and timeliness of PEPs
- Further reduce the percentage of children with at least one fixed term exclusion. Work with schools to develop alternatives to exclusion which support a child's thinking and learning. Within this:-
 - Involve care leavers in developing new ways of thinking amongst teachers which include an understanding of a child's previous experiences
- Develop and formalise the partnership with Services for Young Children (SfYC) to integrate approaches with the Virtual School and College as an 'all through' Virtual School provision.
- Building on existing links with Hampshire School Improvement SEN Inspector/Advisers, review and further refine support in place for children in care with SEN and emotional/mental health needs
- Identify and disseminate best practice
- Focus particularly on progress of individual children through Key Stages 1 and 2 through targeted work with School Improvement team.
- Continue to work with social workers and schools to mitigate impact of unavoidable placement or school moves on children's progress and outcomes, with a particular focus on developing understanding of reunification process and what this means for children.
- Together with the Virtual College team, support foster carers and social workers to provide the right support advice and guidance for young people in Key Stage 4 to succeed in their learning and future plans.
- Ensure each CLA receives bespoke careers advice and guidance which is flexible enough to withstand unexpected changes in their circumstances.



Future aspirations as currently recorded on PEPs...

author
Olympic show jumper
cardio thoracic surgeon
builder
army chef
maths professor
boxer
plasterer
foster carer
gymnastic coach
journalist
teacher
author
astronaut
politician
builder
engineer
social worker
beautician
barrister
Olympic swimmer
policeman
medicine
accountant - considering apprenticeship
personal trainer
zoo keeper

A message received in April from one of our care leavers

Dear all

Just wanted to let you know I won the nationwide competition for undergraduate of the year for engineering and construction. I've managed to bag myself a trophy, a £5k paid internship over the summers and an iPad! I got to eat caviar with celebrities Sir Trevor McDonald and Rachel Riley!

Thank you all so far helping me get here. I know my transition hasn't been without friction but I just wanted to let you know I'm so thankful and humbled for the amazing care system in the UK that has given me a platform to get here.

Kind regards,

Luke Collinson

