

Leadership & Management

VS Governing Body

Virtual School Governing Body held their first meeting on 5 April where terms of reference, constitution, code of conduct, declaration of interest & withdrawal of meetings, election of roles & responsibilities, promoting the education of Looked After Children, SIP, SEF, VS HT report, success & barriers and training needs were discussed.

Our second meeting was held on 6 July where the following was be discussed; Declaration of interest & withdrawals of meetings, School Improvement Plan, data, and dates of meeting for next year. These will be held on a termly basis. The main focus of the meeting was the new revised Virtual School Improvement Plan.

We are in the process of appointing a Clerk and we are hopeful that this post will be in place for the new academic year.

Professional Development & Training

Social Care Training

Social worker's Induction training was held on 4 July at County Hall. These sessions are for Social Workers to understand the Educational Process for Looked After Children, and how to work together with the Virtual School to support our Young People. The priority target audience for this training is Looked After Children Teams, Children with Disabilities Teams, Fostering Social Work Teams, and Residential Managers.

This was a disappointing turn out, four attended, 1 of which didn't have any Looked After Children on their case load, so therefore didn't stay. There were 7 representatives from Babcock and 3 from social care. The feedback from those who attended was very positive, really engaging and asked lots of questions. They were provided with a pack of comprehensive information, including all the information they need to know on whom to contact in the Virtual School. The team will be running another session next week and then a need to review training will be required depending on numbers.

Learning outcomes:

- To understand the role of the Virtual School for Looked After Children.
- To be familiar with the structure of the Core Virtual School and the Wider Virtual School Team.
- Know-how and who to contact within the Core Team and Wider Virtual School Team.
- To understand the statutory requirements of PEP's and the importance of ePEP.

Course Overview:

- Introduction to Virtual School
- Personal education plans and ePEP
- Pupil premium plus
- Alternative provision
- School admissions School Attendance

- Exclusions and Hard to Place
- Careers Advice and Guidance
- Future of the Virtual School
- Q & A

Future training dates:

- 7 September 2017, 3-5pm at Prime House (Babcock)
- 10 January 2018, 12-2pm at County Hall
- 24 April 2018, 10-12noon at Prime House (Babcock)

Attachment Aware Schools

The Virtual School invited schools across the county to participate in Phase One of a planned programme of training to develop a 'whole-school approach' to becoming an effective attachment-aware school.

An attachment-aware school is a place where the most vulnerable children can recover from trauma and develop resilience, where educational gaps are narrowed and where all children can thrive and fulfil their potential.

In Worcestershire, the Virtual School's plan is to involve ten schools in the initial phase of a project which aims to take a mix of schools and help them to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.

This cohort of schools will make up the Worcestershire AAS Phase One group of schools. In Phase One of the project commitment will be required from the leadership and management team to ensure that a 'whole-school approach' is adopted. This is crucial to the success of becoming an effective attachment-aware school.

There will be an expectation that each school opting in to Phase One of the project will identify the lead team that will be made up of key members of staff.

The lead team will be involved in the consultancy inputs working alongside the KCA associate trainer and consultant prior to each of the follow up inputs that will make up Phase One of the AAS project.

There will be around three lead staff per school identified, but in the case of smaller primary schools this could be reduced to two lead staff members.

As part of this phase of the project schools will be conducting their own Action Research (AR) plans and implementing changes that they identify as important to their specific settings.

Currently five schools have committed to the programme;

- Aspire Academy
- Tenbury High School
- Bayton Primary School
- St Oswald's Primary School
- The Chase

We are awaiting confirmation and dates from three schools;

- Offmore Primary
- Bishop Perowne
- Charford Primary

Virtual School Head is in the process of contacting schools to ensure we have a full AAS cohort.

Attachment Training

Every school in Worcestershire have received funding to organise their own Attachment Training by a qualified and suitable trainer, for all their staff in their School. This is a mandatory request and will be overseen by the Virtual School.

Teaching & Learning

Literacy & Numeracy Carer Workshop

In conjunction with Virtual School and Rivers Teaching School Alliance, a series of informal, friendly but very informative workshops on how to support Looked After Children in English, Maths and Phonics were held in the Spring term. Lots of practical, fun ideas and games were used to support your child's learning.

Carers found the workshops enjoyable and very worthwhile;

"Small groups, so easy to participate "
"Finding out about the new terminology "
"Making learning fun"
"Talking about the methods used today"
"How teaching has changed"
"Provided us with apps to help"

Some Carers felt that a list of terminology and more time for each workshop would be beneficial. Virtual School will liaise with Carers and ensure they have the information they require in preparing them and their children for the next academic year.

Next Educational workshop for Carers will be held at Arrow Vale Visitor Centre, Redditch and the focus will be Special Educational Needs support and guidance for Carers.

Fresh Air Project

On Friday 16 June, Fresh Air Team and pupils of the first cohort invited Carers and School Staff to an Open Morning. This was well attended and feedback was extremely positive. We had a tour of the school where Carers and staff had the opportunity to participate in some of the activities (climbing, bush craft, archery & skiing) that our young people have experienced over the 12 week period.

Evaluations and impact of the project are currently being gathered from pupils, Carers and schools.

Cohort 2 is due to start their programme on Friday 7 July. This cohort consists of 12 Middle School pupils in Years 5, 6 & 7. This will be funded by Virtual School.

NEET Prevention Programme

Building on the very successful NEET Prevention Programme '*Get Ahead for Yr11 'Red RoNIs'*', Worcestershire County Council has now secured funding for every Looked After Child, currently in Yr10. This will allow them to have intensive IAG and mentoring support in the hope of preventing them from becoming NEET Post-16.

The personalised programme consists of a weekly Mentoring/IAG support, practical support in completing application forms for future destinations, attending taster sessions at employers, careers open days and where appropriate interviews, as well as access to five Skill Building Days, led by local employers throughout Yr11. The programme will be **free** for our Looked After Children as part of our corporate parenting role.

In order to meet the needs of the programme, staff will be spending 30 hours of contact with the young person.

All Schools were contacted to ensure our full cohort of Looked After Children will participate in this programme starting this term.

Mentor Link

All Schools in Worcestershire have been offered the opportunity of a mentoring service that will provide Looked After Children with one to one support from a safely and professionally recruited mentor. This service will provide long term mentoring to pupils identified as likely to benefit from individual support. The mentoring will aim to improve their self- esteem, relationships and engagement in learning and additionally supporting schools' pastoral provision for schools.

The Virtual School are working with Mentor Link and have engaged their services to deliver this project. This will provide long term support, motivation and guidance to our Looked After Children. Their fully trained staff will carefully match the referred pupils to one of their mentors and arrange the weekly (hourly) sessions.

This service will be funded by the PP+ Grant. There are currently 28 pupils working with Mentor Link ranging from Years 4-9.

Attainment & Progress

KS2 Results were released on 4 July. Babcock is in the process of gathering this data for our Looked after Children alongside KS1 & KS4 when released. A report will be provided for the next Corporate Parenting Board in the Autumn Term.

Virtual School Improvement Plan 2017/18 to be presented at the next Corporate Parenting Board

Update from Babcock Prime**Improving Education Outcomes**

Since November 2016, Babcock Prime has used its' comprehensive database to systematically collect, collate and interrogate a range of information including the attainment and progress of every individual Looked After Child (LAC) within 'In County' settings. Prior to this, strategic information about education outcomes was either retrospective by key stage or taken from individual PEPS, which was labour intensive and sometimes inaccurate.

The impact of this data base has been significant as underperformance by setting or individual, can now be identified earlier and acted upon.

This effective data process has now been extended to Looked After Children placed in 'Out of County' (OOC) settings for Key Stages 1- 4. There are around 100 (Year 1 to Year 11) children placed in OOC settings. Babcock staff have contacted every school and setting both by telephone and email asking for specific information about attainment and progress.

Further telephone contact and follow up emails have been made where returns were not been submitted within requested timeframes. By beginning of September all data will be collected for all our Looked After Children.

Placement information can also be out of date in a minority of cases and currently Babcock is waiting for updated placement information on 9 children. Analysis of these returns has already begun and once completed, will become the basis for further work and performance reporting. Where potential underperformance has been identified, follow up contact can be made with OOC schools and settings, to raise concerns and questions about provision.

Arrangements have been made to collect results in the national tests for all LAC (individual pupil external examination data for KS1, 2 & 4) before the start of the autumn term. This will enable the early identification of underperformance and for immediate contact and follow up with high priority schools at the beginning of September 2017.

Babcock Prime's School Improvement Team uses their termly Prime Inclusion Meetings and termly Pupil Premium Network meetings to raise the profile of education issues for Looked After Children. The Personal Education Plan Coordinators (PEPCos) have attended these network meetings to promote their role and the implementation of the new ePEP system. There are regular meetings between School Improvement and the Virtual School Team to determine how Pupil Premium Plus can be best used to ensure impact on attainment and progress and to identify any schools or settings where there is underperformance. The Early Years Cluster meetings also raise awareness with providers on a range of matters relating to the youngest Looked After Children.

This sustained focus will allow Pupil Premium leaders and SENCos/Inclusion Leaders, from all key stages, to gain regular updates and share effective practice. For example, increasing familiarity with the key features of new e-PEPs; ensuring connections with Designated Teachers in their own school setting are strong; enabling senior leaders to develop their understanding of the School Improvement team's advocacy role for Looked After Children.

Working in partnership

Babcock Prime provide regular 'drop in' education advice sessions at Wildwood and the PEPCos have run workshop training for social workers and foster carers. Induction training for new social workers will now include a dedicated session on education matters including information about how social care colleagues can access advice and support from the broader virtual school network within Babcock Prime. Two education sessions have been arranged for July and a supporting information leaflet for has been written specifically for social workers.

The implementation of the new ePEP has been a priority for the Virtual School Team who have visited many settings and schools to promote the use and value of the ePEP system. Alternative

providers have been a particular focus for these visits. ePEP Training for Designated Teachers has taken place with an annual cycle of training organised for the next academic year. The introduction of this new online system has generally been well received by schools but a programme of training will need to continue for schools and social care colleagues so that there can be a strong whole system response. Despite the introduction of this new system the percentage of 'In County' PEPs issued within statutory time frames remains high.

The School Admissions Team now follow up on 'In Year' mainstream admission applications for Looked After Children who are changing schools both within and out of county. Once the Admissions Team receive a copy of the school place application made by the social worker they actively pursue progress with the application to ensure that Looked After Children remain on track with their learning supported by a swift transfer process between schools.

The Education Welfare Officer responsible for Looked After Children attendance, tracks attendance for all Looked After Children. Last academic year eleven Individual attendance Plans were put in place for those with attendance below 90%. The EWO monitors the plans every other week and works alongside social care colleagues and settings, to help overcome any barriers to good attendance. The attendance of children within children's homes is checked on a weekly basis and this tracking process continues with attendance plans produced using reporting from the ePEP process. However, the information provided by different settings can vary and therefore attendance recording for those students on part time timetables or educated off site, will be a particular focus.

The Babcock Careers, Advice and Guidance Team (CIAG) offers individual careers advice for all Looked after Children from Year 9, either within their own school or elsewhere by arrangement. The Team work closely with the PEPCOs to respond to individual concerns or cases where additional support is needed. The team leader attended a recent Social Care 'Drop In' session and a Foster Carer Workshop which has helped publicise the support available for all Looked After Children considering their exam and career options. The CIAG team track Looked After Children into Post 16 settings and work closely with WCC teams to ensure the early identification of vulnerable students who are most at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Challenges include keeping track of young people moving in and out of care and particularly those who are 'Out of County' as the information available is sometimes not up to date.

The Babcock Virtual School Helpline, Contact Inbox and Website are frequently used by schools, carers and colleagues from Social Care. The website hosts a range of information and reports over 300 'hits' per month.

The Education Coordinator acts as 'first point of contact' for enquire relating to individual cases. Contacts are mostly from schools, social workers and foster carers both within and outside Worcestershire and Babcock's response ranges from information sharing to intervention at school level or casework. In May alone, the Babcock Virtual School Education Coordinator dealt with 95 individual referrals most of which were for Children placed 'Out of County'. Where appropriate, the expertise across different Babcock Prime teams is called upon to support individual children but there is also a formal escalation process in place so that cases causing the most concern can be reviewed in more detail or referred to the Virtual School Headteacher for intervention.

Educational Acronyms

SIP – School Improvement Plan
SEF – School Evaluation Form
CIAG - Careers, Advice and Guidance Team
CME – Children Missing in Education
EHE – Elective Home Education
PEP – Personal Education Plan
SEND - Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
SENCO - Special Educational Needs Coordinator
EHCP – Education Health Care Plan
UPN – Unique Pupil Number
NCY - National Curriculum Year
KS – Key Stage
ELG – Early Learning Goals
EAL - English as an Additional Language
CME – Child Missing Education
EHE - Elective Home Education
CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
NEF – National Education Fund
EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage
MAM – Multi-Agency Meeting
TAC – Team Around the Child
PSP – Pupil Support Plan
IEP – Individual Education Plan
PP+ - Pupil Premium Plus
IRO – Independent Review Officer
EP – Educational Psychologist
HMI – Her Majesty Inspector
Ofsted - The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SENDIASS - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service