



<b>To:</b>	<b>EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD</b>
<b>Date :</b>	25 October 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Bob Berry, Interim Assistant Executive Director, Learning
<b>Subject :</b>	<b>TAMESIDE VIRTUAL SCHOOL REPORT FROM THE HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16</b>
<b>Report Summary :</b>	This report details the work of the Virtual School for the school year 2015/16
<b>Recommendations :</b>	That members note the contents of the report and receive further updates as appropriate.
<b>Links to Sustainable Community Strategy :</b>	The report supports three elements of the Community Strategy - Prosperous, Learning and Supportive Tameside.
<b>Policy Implications :</b>	There are none arising from this report.
<b>Financial Implications : (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
<b>Legal Implications : (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	The Council has a statutory duty of care in relation to children in care as 'corporate parent'. This report provides an update on performance and an opportunity to consider any resources or further actions required.
<b>Risk Management :</b>	There are significant reputational risks to the Council if it does not meet its statutory responsibilities.
<b>Access to Information :</b>	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Catherine Moseley, Head of Access and Inclusion.  Telephone: 0161 342 3302  e-mail: <a href="mailto:catherine.moseley@tameside.gov.uk">catherine.moseley@tameside.gov.uk</a>

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report is a summative document on the work and impact of Tameside Virtual School in the 2015/16 school year.

## **2 MONITORING**

- 2.1 Analysis of Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion has been conducted on a termly basis with a report being written annually<sup>1</sup>. Following the introduction of new PEP documents for 3-16 year olds, we are now able to identify the spending of Pupil Premium funding and there have been incidents when schools have been challenged regarding this. The development of a separate post-16 PEP is currently underway following consultation last year with our Children in Care representatives. It was very clear from their feedback that they wanted more detailed feedback on current performance levels and the opportunity to have more detailed individual feedback on how to improve.
- 2.2 Schools are also now required to state the level of progress and attainment of the child. Whilst this retains an element of subjectivity (and varied consistency in moving away from National Curriculum levels), it does enable us to better gauge individual schools' expectations and, again, challenge as necessary.
- 2.3 The moderation of the new PEPs has proved very beneficial. In the autumn term, school designated teachers were invited to take part. This was found to be a very useful training exercise and saw a consequent improvement for those schools that took part. For the summer, Phil and Deb moderated a significant sample from across the borough with feedback being provided to schools – both positive and negative.
- 2.4 We have continued to meet on a regular basis to discuss the progress and attainment of all LAC in order to prioritise future planning and provision. A further development has been the separation of monitoring meetings so that post-16 is separated from the 5-16 year olds. There has been greater sharing of information across different departments. Post-16 is now hosted by Tameside College (as the provider for our largest group) and attended by our post-16 social care team. 5-16 meetings are now attended by representatives from careers, inclusion / SEN, health and education welfare.
- 2.5 We have just completed our first year of monitoring attendance of our LAC outside of the borough. This has been helpful, but has not thrown up any 'surprises' in that we were already aware of any youngsters where there were significant issues. The progress of monitoring internal attendance continues to be more problematic because of IT issues, but we collate attendance information from PEPs.
- 2.6 The concept of a Solution Circle was trialled in 2015/16. We held three meetings, but did not feel there was adequate support to have an impact on school practice.
- 2.7 The latest data shows our % attending 'good and better' schools has risen to 76%. This is because we provide both advice to carers/social workers and then screen applications to secondary schools when they are first submitted. It is also because we have placed a number of LAC at good schools that were awaiting inspection and we were completely happy with the provision at the time of the child being enrolled (the schools have since been inspected and received 'good' judgements. We work closely with school performance and standards and have placed an embargo on children transferring to schools graded 'good' when we had clear evidence of concerns / declining standards. 41 LAC attend schools judged to be RI. These are closely monitored. 9 of these attend secondary schools where there has been a significant recent rise in attainment. In all of these schools, we

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A. 2016 PEP Analysis

have recent evidence of LAC achieving good outcomes (and better). 8 LAC attend schools deemed to be 'inadequate'. 5 of these are in Tameside secondary schools and 2 are in an out-of-borough secondary. All are in Year 9 or higher and it was not felt right to move their school place. In the case of a local school that has just been placed in special measures, one of our highest achieving LAC attended Year 11 there in 2016 and the two other students are also high achievers with ambitious aspirations. The two Virtual School staff have attended PEPs for all these LAC in the last school year to ensure that we are happy with the provision. The Head of Virtual School has previously undertaken lesson observations and other monitoring activities as part of the school performance team and this has provided an effective insight into the provision at individual schools. One child was moved from an outstanding school to one requiring improvement in 2016. This was debated long and hard and there were very specific reasons as to why this happened. The change in admissions criteria for local faith schools so that all LAC, rather than LAC 'of the faith' being the first priority is also a very positive move for our young people in care.

- 2.8 In the summer term, the attendance was monitored of those students whose details we were able to access via IT.

Of those monitored in schools inside the Borough:

- 6.9% had attendance below 85% and 1.5% below 50%
- 73.8% had over 95% attendance, of which, 19.2% had 100% attendance.

Of those monitored in schools outside of the Borough:

- 7.9% had attendance below 85% and none below 50%
- 73% had over 95% attendance, of which, 14.3% had 100% attendance.

- 2.9 No children who were currently looked-after in the Borough have been permanently excluded since September 2014. This has been due to the monitoring of exclusions through working with schools and headteachers so that potential problems are flagged early (we still need to improve the formal monitoring of fixed term exclusions through more timely access to attendance data). It has enabled us to act proactively. In particular, 2015/16 has seen the redistribution of Pupil Premium funding to enable support to be put in place in schools where individual children demonstrate signs of more extreme trauma and clearly need statutory assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Approximately £80K of Pupil Premium funding was devolved in this way, with a roughly equal split between primary and secondary schools. Where youngsters struggle most, it can still be in cases where schools are largely reacting to their behaviour instead of concentrating on identifying and meeting needs.

- 2.10 Currently, we have 2 students where changes of placements have disrupted education, 2 are awaiting a re-designation of school from Inclusion, 3 are accessing alternative provision via the Pupil Referral Service (PRS retains responsibility), 3 are accessing alternative provision via mainstream schools (schools retain responsibility), 5 are refusing to access education adequately (3 with EHCPs in independent provision, 1 with complex care issues and 1 in residential care). 1 young person is in secure accommodation and another is in a therapeutic provision. 2 young people are currently without adequate provision for education. This is because a special school has been consulted with and has said they cannot meet the needs of one. A further placement is being sought by the Inclusion Team as part of the child's EHCP. In the case of the second, reduced provision is in place while we seek a joint care and education provision that will take the young person through to the age of 18/19.

### **3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 Bespoke training on attachment issues and de-escalation has continued to be delivered in schools and, for the first time, at Tameside College. Training has also been delivered to

new Designated Teachers, social workers and a new session has been delivered twice to different groups of foster carers. The latter have requested an update on educational issues and this will be introduced in 2016/17 to accompany the significant changes taking place currently in education. Social work training has incorporated new ways of assessing attainment and progress and key questions to ask during PEPs. The guidance based on statutory expectations has been updated for 2016/17, has been distributed to all schools and will be shared at all training sessions.

- 3.2 The appendices distributed with summary statutory guidance<sup>2</sup> remain important in communicating the culture and ethos we expect and need for LAC in our schools. In 2016/17, one focus will need to be strengthening the provision of information on-line to ensure greater equality of access.
- 3.3 A university information evening was held in the summer term. This was following an unsuccessful attempt to hold a similar event the previous year and a request from our young people to 'try again'! This time we targeted particular young people from Years 6 – 12, communicated directly with young people and carers and held the meeting outside of the school day. Over 20 people attended and Manchester Metropolitan University provided the presentation.

## 4 ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS

- 4.1 KS4 outcomes in 2016 remained positive compared with the national data from 2015. All LAC have been analysed in terms of making expected progress. For the purpose of this analysis, the indicators used have been; evidence of making expected progress across the Key Stages OR meeting national expectations for age in the latest end of Key Stage data OR being assessed by schools as making good or better progress. In a small number of cases, there is evidence of children being assessed by schools as making good progress when this is not supported by end of Key Stage tests. This enables us to have evidenced-based conversations with schools. A number of LAC have made good progress where there have been significant shifts in engagement in education, without yet having data to demonstrate the impact of this. This data is evidence through our regular monitoring meetings where LAC are given 'RAG' ratings to assess needs.

Year	% making expected / satisfactory progress 2015	% making expected / satisfactory progress 2016
2	87	71
3	79	64
4	45	64
5	60	65
6	71	79
7	68	81
8	77	59
9	63	60
10	67	44
11	49	45
Total	65	64

- 4.2 Bearing in mind the volatility of analysing small numbers of LAC in each cohort, there appears to be little significant difference in the last two years. However, there is an extremely strong correlation between those not making expected progress and those on the monitored 'RAG' rating. This suggests that the work of different LA agencies is well-

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<sup>2</sup> See Attachment

targeted at those children needing it most. Of those children identified as underachieving, 14 have EHCPs for learning / social / emotional reasons, 5 are currently progressing through the statutory assessment process and 16 are in residential care / education.

- 4.3 Reports have been compiled on progress and attainment at KS1, 2 and 4. Initially, I expressed concern that attainment at KS4 would be weaker than in the previous year, although I was always confident it would still be at or above national (which is no consolation really as that is far too low). Ultimately achievement at Level 2 would appear to be in line with the previous year and above the national figure again (data remains unvalidated).
- 4.4 Of the 41 LAC in Year 11, 22% achieved 5+A\*-C grades including maths and English, 51% achieved 5+ A\*-G grades. However, as there were only 23 students in this cohort who were in mainstream schools, this data represents 39% achieving 5+ A\*-C grades and 91% achieving 5+ A\*-G grades.
- 4.5 One student in mainstream was hospitalised during Year 11 and clinical advice was for her not to be placed under pressure during her recovery. (As this was a bright student, we have worked with Tameside College to ensure she progresses directly to L2 courses, despite not having qualifications this year. She has attended our University Information Evening and her aspirations remain high.)
- 4.6 One young person came into care late in Year 10 and 3 were placed in care in Year 11. Therefore 18 have attended mainstream schools and been in care for the whole of Key Stage 4. A particularly successful student who came into care in Year 10 with school attendance of well under 50% has achieved 5 C+ grades including maths and English and is very enthusiastic about his college place this September. I feel very certain this young person would not have attended school regularly or achieved at this level without the support of his foster placement (his carer is really proud of him). Another young person who asked to stay in care in Year 11, and is in a residential home, has now achieved 5 high grades including maths and English. He had a place on a level 2 course, but is now eligible for level 3!
- 4.7 In terms of progress, 9 students made expected progress or better in maths and 13 in English. Again, if this is seen as a % of those students in mainstream schools, this represents 39% and 57% respectively. The raw data shows an increase in English of 3% and a stable figure in maths from 2015. These figures are below national indicators when including all LAC, however this will be higher in the DFE data as those children without prior attainment data will be omitted from the calculation. Our records suggest that 6 students do not have KS2 levels, which will see maths be just below national data and English slightly higher.
- 4.8 LAC in special schools continued to make at least good progress, as evidenced by PEPs and annual reviews, but attainment at level 1 remains an issue for our young people when there are multiple changes in placement or extended periods of emotional disturbance.
- 4.9 At KS2, 8/25 children achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. However, it is more interesting to note that, although 12-13 children achieved expected standards in each of these, 19/25 achieved the expected standard in at least one area. This gives a clear indication that children need to have targeted support to address this. This figure is also close to the figure in the table that shows where schools are assessing children as making expected progress. Information has been produced and will be distributed to social workers for these children on how to address these issues directly at PEP meetings in 2016/17.

## **5. IMPACT OF VIRTUAL SCHOOL**

- 5.1 Deb and Sarah were directly involved in identifying and planning changes in school for 24+ students. Reasons for changes of school included; changes in residential placement, confirmation of long-term foster placements, strategic moves to improve school provision, implementation of EHCP and moves to avoid school exclusion. Of 8 moves that avoided permanent exclusions, 7 remain in the school they moved to and the eighth had a very successful school year, but the care placement broke down.
- 5.2 Sarah worked with Welsh Education to ensure additional support was provided when a LAC's school changed the teaching language to Welsh – he is learning fast and teaching the rest of the family!
- 5.3 10 students were assigned additional Pupil Premium from Virtual School funding to maintain school places in the face of escalating social / emotional issues. Of these, 3 have since been awarded EHCPs, one had additional support during a mid-year transition and is improved in school despite care issues. None have been permanently excluded. Two have had significant reductions in fixed term exclusions (one is the first of three siblings to maintain their place in mainstream school). One has ceased self-harming and has made a very successful transition to secondary school.
- 5.4 Pupil Premium funding has been used to support fostering agency tutors deliver individual tuition in two cases where our LAC have been out-of-area and there has been significant delay in the LA naming a school.
- 5.5 Sarah or Deb led the move to statutory assessment for 14 young people, working with schools to collate applications, attending SEN panels with schools and working directly with social workers to identify school placements. Only one application has been rejected on the basis that the school did not meet the funding threshold to proceed.
- 5.6 Training has been planned / delivered on attachment issues and meeting the needs of vulnerable children in a number of schools, but in 7 schools specifically to train staff to meet the needs of specific children. This has contributed to the successful transition, adoption or more specific support of these children.
- 5.7 Deb or Sarah have advocated for changes in care placement of ten young people very directly (in one case, providing photographic evidence of home conditions). No decisions have been taken at Placement Monitoring Panel to move young people against the wishes of the Virtual School representative and there have been clear cases of decisions being made to pursue more costly options in the interests of children.
- 5.8 More generic impact has been through developing relationships with young people in order to promote engagement in school, advising foster carers on the rights of LAC and responding to requests from social workers and carers to attend PEP meetings on a short-term / longer term basis. Training and moderation have also seen an improvement in the quality of PEPs (this is more noticeable in the Borough where it is still easier to make a positive impact).
- 5.9 There has been an increased involvement beyond the age of 16. Sarah has specifically impacted on the ongoing provision for students with EHCPs / Statements and the Virtual School has extended contacts with sixth form colleges with a named member of staff at Ashton Sixth Form, Tameside and Manchester. Lists are now shared at the end of the summer break to ensure all students receive their entitlement to the student bursary. A number of enquiries from social workers and carers are also responded to and Virtual School staff have attended a range of post-16 PEPs in the last year, especially when a student is at risk of underachievement.

- 5.10 There was a clear problem at the end of the last academic year with a lack of funding to support students progressing to Level 2 and 3 courses where access to laptops was going to be vital. This year, funding from the final term has been ring-fenced for IT funding (unless already delegated to additional revision and exam preparation).

## **6 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- 6.1 Progression is monitored by Positive Steps and Vicky Ford meets with Virtual School staff at monitoring meetings across the year. The latest data (updated every November) is as follows:

FE – 57% (63%)  
School sixth form / sixth form college – 19% (5%)  
Training – 6% (2%)  
Apprenticeship – 0% (2%)  
Employed with training – 6%  
Employed without training – 2%  
NEET but available – 4%  
NEET but not available – 4% (5%)

- 6.2 The figures in brackets show interim data where we are clear about destinations for 2016. The decrease in sixth form college could be partially explained by the opening of a new facility at Clarendon College in September 2015. All destinations for LAC attending mainstream schools in 2015/16 are included in the 2016 data. We are awaiting updates from Positive Steps and social care on the remaining young people.

## **7 KEY DEVELOPMENTS REQUIRED**

- 7.1 Introduction of new post-16 PEP documents, improved online presence to share information relating to LAC, development of better access to therapeutic support through the training of play therapists across the Borough, embedding of post-16 monitoring and extension of training to personal advisers, Increased capacity to support through the review of Pupil Premium and creation of a designated case worker for LAC with SEN and additional Educational Psychologist time for LAC.

# APPENDIX A

## 2016 PEP Analysis

Please note that this data shows those PEP documents returned to the PEP co-ordinator, NOT the number actually completed. We know of some PEP meetings that have taken place, but the relevant paperwork has not been returned. This was highlighted in a newsletter to Designated Teachers and Headteachers in January 2016. In particular, Pupil Premium Plus funding is not being paid to schools unless paperwork has been received. This does appear to be having a positive impact on the return rate of PEPs. In the autumn of 2014, the return rate had been 39%. There has clearly been significant improvement since then.

The overall return rate of 76% in the past two terms may be a fair measure, given the national requirement of 2 PEP meetings per year. The higher rate of 84% of 'in borough' completion may reflect the greater effectiveness of communication with our own schools. We are all too aware that different LAs have different systems for schools to use and this can be confusing. We particularly need to monitor the completion of PEPs in independent, external provision where we do not provide Pupil Premium Plus funding. This reduces the leverage we have. The additional change that we have made in requiring schools to initiate the PEP may also be affecting external data where their 'home' LA does not expect this. We may have to review our own processes in order to improve external independent return rates.

Although not shown here, it was very positive that Year 7 PEPs for Tameside schools showed a return rate approaching 100%. As PEPs after transition are still initiated by social workers, this suggests they continue to fulfil this responsibility well. However, all social workers should continue to check that PEPs for their children are being initiated by schools and ensure they are considered during review and planning meetings.

It should be noted that the return rate for secondary schools in Tameside was affected by the long term absence of Designated Teachers in two schools. Again, schools have been reminded about the statutory requirement for PEPs and the need to make alternative arrangements in the event of staff absence.