

## CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REPORT

June 2012

<b>Title of paper:</b>	<b>Attainment of Children in Care in 2011</b>	
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	Gill Ellis, Director Ian Curryer, Corporate Director	<b>Wards affected: ALL</b>
<b>Contact Officer(s) and contact details:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lorna Beedham, Adviser for the Achievement of Vulnerable Groups</li> </ul>	
<b>Other officers who have provided input:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	
<b>Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:</b>		
World Class Nottingham		
Work in Nottingham		
Safer Nottingham		
Neighbourhood Nottingham		
Family Nottingham		✓
Healthy Nottingham		✓
Serving Nottingham Better		
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):</b>		
<p>This report explains the recent trends in education attainment of children in care by analysis of their performance at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. It provides a commentary on the context for these results and the barriers to achievement children in care face. Finally, it summarises the interventions now underway to improve attainment.</p>		
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		
1	<p>It is recommended that the Board note and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recent trends and current levels of educational attainment for Nottingham City's children in care;</li> </ul>	
2	<p>The proposed interventions to improve attainment and secure a narrowing of the gap between CiC performance and that of other pupils in City schools.</p>	

### 1 **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Absolute attainment outcomes of Nottingham City's children in care (CiC) are low compared to non-CiC City pupils. This is replicated nationally and in part will reflect the troubled lives many of these children lead. Higher special education needs (school action plus and statemented) are over-represented in CiC cohorts, especially at Key Stage 4. This makes attainment of benchmark educational standards particularly challenging.

- 1.2 This report will now consider the detail of current attainment and trends at Key Stages 2 and 4. It should be remembered when considering the data that numbers in the CiC cohort groups are very low and the individual performance of one child (or the removal of several children from a cohort group) can have a disproportionate effect on percentages; it is prudent, wherever possible, to look at numbers **and** percentages.
- 1.3 **a. Context**  
Achievement levels are low, but it is worth reflecting on the make up of these cohorts whilst considering effective actions to increase the rate of improvement.
- 1.4 The Virtual School has a responsibility to monitor the achievement of all school age children in care (over 300 pupils) and not just those who are included in DfE statistics at the end of Key Stages. The Virtual School had only been in place for one year when the above cohorts sat their assessments. Since then it has developed practices aimed at raising attainment for individuals and groups (see Section2 – effective intervention)
- 1.5 Tracking data indicates that the majority of CiC made at least satisfactory progress across their education. Many of those who performed below national expectations at Key Stage 4 had performed below national expectations at previous Key Stages. A higher proportion of CiC have special needs than the total school population, some requiring specialist provision. These pupils make good progress but perform significantly below nationally expected outcomes. At Key Stage 2, 14% (2 pupils) had statements of special needs and 42.8% (6 pupils) were at school action plus or higher on the special educational needs register. The majority of their special needs related to behaviour and emotional and social difficulties. In Year 11, 7 young people (14.5%) had statements of special needs and over 50% were at school action plus or higher.
- 1.6 Three quarters of the Year 11 children entered care at secondary school with two thirds (65.9%) from Year 9 upwards which is almost twice the percentage of 2010 (38%). For many of them the challenges associated with being placed in care had to be dealt with at the same time as starting or undertaking their GCSE studies.
- 1.7 The trauma involved with coming into care cannot be underestimated. For many young people the reasons for coming into care are disturbing and damaging. They have to adjust to a different home environment, may lose contact with family and friends and may also have to change schools.
- 1.8 Whilst the majority of children at Key Stage 2 had been in care for several years many experienced changes of school over their educational experience. 90% (9 pupils) attended 2 or more schools with 42.9% (6 pupils) attending 3 or more schools. These multiple transitions are disruptive and affect academic progression.
- 1.9 For those entering care in Key Stage 4 a move of school can have a significant impact upon their outcomes. It can result in missed assessments/modules/units and changes of examination boards which all impact on the individual's chance of success, let alone the social and emotional trauma experienced. Although statutory guidelines state that CiC should not move placement during Years 10 and 11 because of the impact on provision and the resulting outcomes this is not always possible. Although almost half the Year 11 had one placement over the 2 year period of Key Stage 4, over half did not with nearly 34% having 3 or more placements.
- 1.10 Some children in care in Key Stages 3 and 4 find a school environment increasingly challenging and require alternative provision to maintain their engagement. This often

results in qualifications that are not GCSE equivalent but can lead onto apprenticeships and college places that prove successful.

### ***b. Looked after children at Key Stage 2 :***

#### **2011 attainment**

- 1.11 Results were suppressed (not published) in 2011 for English and combined results. It is not unusual for figures to be suppressed with the low numbers of pupils involved but it does suggest that very few pupils achieved the age related Level 4.
- 1.12 The City's own data records that 14 children were looked after at the time of the 2011 key stage 2 assessment tests. Of these:
- 36% (5 pupils) achieved Level 4 or above in the English test
  - 50% (7 pupils) achieved Level 4 or above in the Mathematics test
  - 29% (4 pupils) achieved Level 4 in both subjects
- 1.13 2011 saw a drop in English results by 14% (2 pupils) on 2010. Prior to this the English results had annually been similar to those in mathematics. The drop in the English results in 2011 impacted on the combined percentage of children attaining level 4 in both subjects which has also seen a drop in 2011. However, in mathematics the 2011 results maintained the trend seen over the past 5 years and was 2% **above** national outcomes.
- 1.14 The 2011 English results were significantly below the average attainment over 5 years (-16.4%) but mathematics was +1.6% above the average attainment over 5 years.
- 1.15 Nationally 50% of children in care achieved a Level 4 in English, 48% in mathematics and 40% in both English and mathematics. The statistical neighbours group (SNG) performance closely mirrored the national picture; therefore in 2011 Nottingham City was outperformed by peers, especially in relation to Key Stage 2 English attainment.

### ***c. Looked After Young People at Key Stage 4***

#### **2011 attainment**

- 1.16 Results were suppressed in 2011. It is not unusual for figures to be suppressed with the low numbers of pupils involved but it does suggest that very few pupils achieved the expected GCSE or equivalent benchmarks.
- 1.17 Nottingham City had 28 children in care who were eligible to sit Key Stage 4 (GCSE) based on those who were aged 15 at the start of the academic year (31<sup>st</sup> August) and had been in care for 1 year at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.
- 7% (2 pupils) achieved level 2 (5+A\*-C grades at GCSE) including English and Maths.
  - 7% (2 pupils ) achieved level 2 (5+A\*-C grades)
  - 25% (7 pupils ) achieved level 1 (5+A\*-G grades)
  - 42.9% (12 pupils) achieved at least one pass
- 1.18 The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 including English and mathematics in 2011

was an improvement on the percentage in 2010 (6.4%). The number and percentage gaining level 2 not including English and mathematics was lower than in 2010 (17%).

- 1.19 The results compared to the 5 year average in Level 2 5A\*-C outcomes, although not as high as for CiC in England, is positive at +1.5%. The result compared to the 5 year average for at least 1 A\*-G qualification is +4%. Because the requirement for Level 2 including English and mathematics has not been in place for 5 years there is no 5 year average but the results are in line with the 3 year average.
- 1.20 Nationally 31.2% of children in care achieved 5 or more GCSEs A\*-C grades, 12.2% achieved 5 grades A\*-C including English and mathematics and 13.4% achieved an A\*-C in both English and mathematics. Of the SNG 2 other local authorities had suppressed figures but from the data available 37% of eligible CiC achieved at least 5 or more GCSEs at Grade A\*-C.
- 1.21 Attendance and exclusion rates of Nottingham City CiC are favourable compared to national outcomes and its SNG authorities. The challenge is that absence for Year 10 and 11 CiC is higher than for other year groups, as are fixed term exclusion rates.

## 2.1 **Effective Intervention**

It is clear that a sustained effort will be needed to make a meaningful impact on the educational attainment of Nottingham's looked after children and young people. The following actions are directed at securing improvement, some have begun and others are planned for the academic year 2012-13.

- 2.2
  - The installation of an IT system for recording PEP, PEA, attainment and attendance information is almost complete. This will allow better tracking and analysis of data and store in one place information on the educational experience of children in care.
- 2.3
  - A scoping exercise is being undertaken to identify high quality tutoring provision for children in care in the City and surrounding area for those awaiting school places or requiring additional support to improve their attainment.
- 2.4
  - In Spring 2012 additional 1:1 tuition was offered to Year 10 and 11 children in care. 46 pupils benefited from this provision and reports are expected in by the end of June indicating the programme's impact on outcomes for pupils. If the Virtual School budget allows, a similar provision will be made available to educational establishments in Autumn 2012 for Years 10/11 pupils and a similar provision in Spring 2013 for Years 5/6 pupils.
- 2.5
  - PEA funding is available for 2012/13 and designated teachers and social workers are encouraged to complete PEA applications for those who are underachieving to ensure additional support is provided through either additional tuition or the purchase of ICT study equipment.
- 2.6
  - Study packs were distributed to Yr10/11 pupils to assist with their revision for exams and a successful study skills session offered. A similar resource pack and study skills session will be provided in Spring 2013. A homework club is also being planned for Year 9-11 pupils from November 2012.
- 2.7
  - Activities are provided to engage young people through sport and the creative

arts:

In Spring 2011 - 6 young people (yrs 9-11) achieved a nationally recognised Sports Leadership Award (4 at Level 1 and 2 at Level 2);

In Autumn 2012 Yr8/9 pupils and their foster families will be offered a creative arts project:

In August 2012 Yr4-6 pupils will be offered an Artsmark 5 day creative arts project.

2.8

- Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion rates have improved significantly. The focus is now the quality of the education section of the PEP to ensure it identifies the actions to be taken to improve literacy and numeracy skills of children in care.

2.9

- Closer working relationships have been developed between the virtual school and social care colleagues especially regarding the educational considerations required when arranging the placement of CiC.

2.10

- Welfare Call is commissioned to collect attendance and exclusion data on all CiC placed external to the Local Authority. In 2012/13 this has been extended to include CiC in City academies and schools that do not use the Local Authority's electronic transfer of attendance information system.

2.11

- A named officer in the Admissions team for CiC has sped up the admission process for the majority of children in care, including those placed in other local authorities.

2.12

- Letterbox Club was extended to include Year 7 pupils in 2011-12 which now provides mathematics materials as well as literacy resources for year 3, 5 and 7 children in care. This has been purchased for 2012-13.

2.13

- Over 2012-13 the Virtual Headteacher will liaise with her equivalents in the Local Authority's statistical neighbours to identify provision and contributory factors that have resulted in improved outcomes for their Children in Care.

### **3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 There are no further options to those detailed in the report

### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)**

4.1 There are implications for the Virtual School budget, funded through DSG, regarding the payment of 1:1 tuition costs (£66000 if all Yr5, 6,10 and11 pupils accessed it) and other activities for children in care. Because the Virtual School is part of the Achievement of Vulnerable Groups Team, the budget is impacted upon by schools choosing to become academies and the budget is reduced accordingly.

4.2 As much of the work of the Virtual School is about enabling schools to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and supporting social workers with the identification of good quality educational provision for children in care the opportunities to sell services are limited. This means that the ethnic minority achievement team, also within the Vulnerable Groups Service, is required to raise enough income to provide the financial resources to maintain staffing levels and fund activities for the children. The EMAG

team has been reduced by 2 consultants in 2011 so the capacity available to sell services is reduced.

**5 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)**

- 5.1 As the Serving Vulnerable Groups' budget diminishes as schools become academies and if schools decide not to de-delegate its funding source there may be staffing implications in the future as the budget may not be able to sustain staffing and pupil activities.

**6 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

- 6.1 None

**7 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

- 7.1 Insight and Improvement Service Attainment Report 2011