

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REPORT – July 2013

Title of paper:	Attainment of Children in Care in 2012	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Candida Brudenell, Acting Corporate Director	Wards affected: ALL
Contact Officer(s) and contact details:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lorna Beedham, Virtual School Head Teacher and Adviser for the Achievement of Vulnerable Groups 	
Other officers who have provided input:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Allcock, Insight and Analysis, NCC 	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
World Class Nottingham		
Work in Nottingham		
Safer Nottingham		
Neighbourhood Nottingham		
Family Nottingham		✓
Healthy Nottingham		✓
Serving Nottingham Better		
Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):		
<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 provided to improve attainment.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	<p>It is recommended that the Board note and discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recent trends and current levels of educational attainment for Nottingham City's children in care (CiC); 	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed interventions to improve attainment and secure a narrowing of the gap between the performance of CiC and that of other pupils in City schools and between City CiC and statistical neighbours. 	

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 statement) 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 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 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 350 pupils) and not just those who are included in DfE statistics at the end of Key Stages (those in care for at least one year since March 31st of the year that the exams are being sat – in this case March 31st 2012). The Virtual School had only been in place for two years when the above cohorts sat their assessments. Since its creation it has been working to develop practices aimed at raising attainment for individuals and groups (see Section 2 – effective intervention).

1.5 Tracking data indicates that the majority of CiC made at least expected progress between Key Stage One and Two but progress was slow between Key Stage Three and Four. Many of those who performed below national expectations at Key Stage Four had performed below national expectations at previous Key Stages. However, of those who had been in care for more than 12 months with Key Stage 2 results recorded on the DfE Key to Success (20) 5 should have gained Grades A*-C in English and 4 in mathematics.

1.6 A higher proportion of CiC have special needs than the total school population, some requiring specialist provision. These pupils often make good progress but perform significantly below nationally expected outcomes.

SEN Level	CiC KS2 (29 pupils)	CiC KS4 (36 pupils)
SA+ and higher	24% (7 pupils)	45% (16 pupils)
Statement	17% (5 pupils)	17% (6 pupils)

The majority of their special needs related to behaviour and emotional and social difficulties.

1.7 54% (189 pupils) of Nottingham City school aged children are educated within the City boundaries with a further 24% (85 pupils) educated in Nottinghamshire. 13% (47 pupils) are educated in other East Midlands LAs and 9% (31 pupils) are educated in LAs beyond the East Midlands region.

1.8 Two thirds of the Year 11 children entered care at secondary school with half from Year 9 upwards which is more than in 2010 (38%) but less than 2011 (65.9%). For these pupils the challenges associated with being placed in care had to be dealt with at the

same time as starting or undertaking their GCSE studies.

1.9 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.

1.10 55% of pupils at Key Stage 2 had been in care for over three years. Many experienced more school changes than might ordinarily be expected.

29 children in Year 6	No of schools (total)	No of schools (KS2)
2+	86% (25 pupils)	66% (19 pupils)
3+	69% (20 pupils)	41% (12 pupils)
4+	41% (12 pupils) – 2x8 schools	21% (6 pupils)

These multiple transitions are disruptive and affect academic progression.

1.11 Since coming into care (ranging from 1 month to 10 years) the majority of pupils have also experienced multiple placements.

	No of placements (total)	No of placements (KS2)
2+	69% (20 pupils)	59% (17 pupils)
3+	55% (16 pupils)	41% (12 pupils)
4+	41% (12 pupils) – 1x10, 1x9 placements	21% (6 pupils) – 1x7 placements

1.12 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.

1.13 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. The RISE project and PEA requests for post 16 pupils provides evidence that several CiC are re-engaging with education and training beyond statutory school age.

1.14 ***Looked after children at Key Stage 2 : 2012 attainment***

According to DfE figures, Nottingham City had 20 young people in care who were eligible to sit Key Stage 2 assessments based on those who were aged 10 at the start of the academic year (31st August) and had been in care for 1 year at 31st March 2012.

1.15 Of these:

- 55% (11 pupils) achieved Level 4 or above in the English test compared to 81% for all Nottingham pupils

- 45% (9 pupils) achieved Level 4 or above in the Mathematics test compared to 81% for all Nottingham pupils
- 40% (8 pupils) achieved Level 4 in both subjects compared to 75% for all Nottingham pupils

In England:

- 1.16
- 60% achieved Level 4 or above in the English test compared to 50% in 2011
 - 56% achieved Level 4 or above in the Mathematics test compared to 48% in 2011
 - 50% achieved Level 4 in both subjects compared to 40% in 2011

- 1.17
- Compared to 2011 results the English and combined results were much higher and in both cases the numbers of pupils achieving expected levels were double those of 2011. Although the mathematics percentage was 5% lower than in 2011 2 more pupils achieved Level 4 or above than in 2011.

Looked After Young People at Key Stage 4

- 1.18
- 2012 attainment**

Nottingham City had 31 young people 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 (31st August) and had been in care for 1 year at 31st March 2012.

1.19

	Nottingham City CiC	England CiC
Level 2 (5+A*-C) inc English & mathematics	0%	14.6%
Level 2 (5+A*-C)	36.7% (11 pupils)	36.8%
A*-C in English and mathematics	0%	15.1%

- 1.20
- The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 including English and mathematics in 2012 was significantly below that of the previous 2 years. However, 50% (15 pupils) achieved Level 1 (5+A*-G) and 97% (30 pupils) achieved at least one pass which is a significant increase on previous years. Despite this Nottingham City is still underperforming compared to its statistical neighbours.

Comparing CiC outcomes to those of all children in Nottingham City Schools the results are:

1.21

	Nottingham City CiC	All pupils (Nott City)
5A*-C including English & mathematics	0%	50%
5+A*-G	65%	92.5%
At least 1 qualification	97%	98.7%

The fixed term exclusion rate for Nottingham City CiC is similar to the England rate and lower than statistical neighbours.

1.22 The attendance rate for CiC compared to all Nottingham children was higher in 2011/12 at 94.9% compared to 94.1%. However, the national rate of attendance for CiC was higher at 95.3%. Overall absence rates dropped from the previous year whilst persistent absence (15 pupils) remained similar to the 2011 rate. 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 continued 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 2013-14.

2.2 The collection of termly attainment and daily attendance information. This allows better tracking and analysis of data and keeps in one place information on the educational experience of children in care. Welfare Call is commissioned to collect attendance and exclusion data on all CiC placed external to the Local Authority and those in City academies and schools that do not use the Local Authority's electronic transfer of attendance information system. This is presently under review and may be extended to include all school aged CiC regardless of where their placement is.

2.3 The availability of Fischer Family Trust (FFT) data is now enabling the Virtual School to identify pupils who are no longer on track to achieve their expected outcomes. These pupils will be monitored closely in 2013/14 and work with designated teachers undertaken to identify interventions and support required.

2.4 Two tutoring agencies have been commissioned to provide high quality teaching for NCC children across the country and other LA CIC placed in the City awaiting school places. This is already ensuring young people are not without education.

2.5 A second year of additional 1:1 tuition was offered to Year 10 and 11 children in care and for the first time a similar offer was made for Years 5 and 6 pupils. Over 100 pupils benefited from this provision and reports are expected in by the end of June indicating the programme's impact on outcomes for pupils.

2.6 PEA funding was available in 2012/13. The predominant use of this was for 1:1 tuition and IT equipment. In 2013/14 a new Education Progress Grant is available with a stronger emphasis on educational activities and impact on educational achievement.

2.7 A functional skills course in mathematics was offered through Notts County which a few Year 10 and 11 pupils attended.

2.8 Activities are provided to engage young people through sport and the creative arts: The nationally recognised Sports Leadership Award (4 at Level 1 and 2) has been offered to Year 9-11 pupils again through Notts County. In August 2013 Yr5 & 6 pupils

will be offered a 4 day transition programme to help prepare for a move to secondary school

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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, which provides mathematics materials as well as literacy resources, is purchased for CiC in Years 3, 5 and 7.
- 2.13 The Virtual School has carried out research to analyse why Nottingham City's statistical neighbours are achieving higher outcomes for their CiC than NCC to enable good practice to be identified and practices adopted that bring improvement.

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 staffing structure of the Virtual School and the activities it can provide to support children in care in education. The resignation of one achievement consultant has meant that the Virtual School has the opportunity to reconsider its structure in light of its research regarding statistical neighbours.
- 4.2 The Virtual School is part of the Achievement of Vulnerable Groups Team and the budget is impacted upon by schools choosing to become academies and the budget is reduced accordingly.
- 4.3 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. Previously, the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) Team supported the Virtual School by providing income and salary savings to fund Virtual School activities. With the expected developments as a result of the recent changes to the Children and Families Directorate and School Forum decisions regarding funding, the income generated by the EMA team will be required to pay for salaries of those team members and not Virtual School activities. The use of PEA funding is under consideration by the Head of Service Children in Care with a stronger focus on supporting a wider educational programme of activities, emotional health and well being to the cohort to

include those who have been adopted. Change to the PEA funding timescales will be determined after consultation with the Children in Care Council.

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

- 5.1 There may be implications in the future regarding educational activities provided by the Virtual School as the budget may not be able to sustain staffing and pupil activities with the increase in school academisation and consequent reductions in DSG funding. There may be a role for PEA funding in this respect.

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 2012