

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD - 17 NOVEMBER 2014

Title of paper:	ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN IN CARE 2014		
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Alison Michalska	Wards affected: ALL	
Report author(s) and contact details:	Malcolm Wilson, Virtual School Head Teacher and Adviser for the Achievement of Vulnerable Groups		
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Daniel Sturok, Principal Analyst, Early Intervention Directorate		
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)			
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:			
Cutting unemployment by a quarter			<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour			<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre			<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down			<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport			<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing			<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs			<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events			<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities			<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):			
This report explains the recent trends in education attainment of Nottingham City Children in Care by analysis of their performance at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. It also provides a commentary on the context for these results and the barriers to achievement that children in care face. Finally, it summarises the interventions provided to improve attainment.			
Recommendation(s):			
1	<p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:</p> <p>(a) note and discuss The recent trends and current levels of educational attainment for Nottingham City's Children in Care (CiC);</p> <p>(b) note the proposed interventions to improve attainment and secure a narrowing of the gap between the performance of CiC and that of other pupils in the City schools and between City CiC and our statistical neighbours.</p>		

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To ensure that we identify any emerging trends in the achievement of Nottingham City Children in Care. In addition to discuss proposed interventions to improve

attainment and narrow the gap between the performance of CiC and that of other pupils in the City schools and between City CiC and our statistical neighbours.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 This report will consider the current attainment and trends at Key Stages 2 and 4. The key findings are that 2013 educational attainment outcomes for Nottingham's Children in Care are mixed. The Key Stage 2 results have improved over the last three cohorts and outcomes in Nottingham are higher across every measure. The Key Stage 4 results were down on the results in 2013. The proportion of pupils obtaining the headline 5+ A*-C passes including English and Maths in Nottingham was lower.

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.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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 Department for Education 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 2014). Since the establishment of the Virtual School, it has been working to develop practices aimed at raising attainment for individuals and groups (see 2.19 – effective intervention).

2.5 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. The majority of their special needs are related to behaviour and emotional and social difficulties. A significant percentage also have physical disabilities.

2.6 46% (146 pupils) of Nottingham City school aged children are educated within the City boundaries with a further 32% (98 pupils) educated in Nottinghamshire. 22% (69 pupils) are educated in other Local Authorities.

2.7 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.

- 2.8 Many of the Key Stage 2 pupils experienced more school changes than might ordinarily be expected. These multiple transitions are disruptive and affect academic progression.
- 2.9 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. It can be particularly difficult to find a school place for a CiC in Year 11 and CiC who move placement at this point may have a period of time out of school which further impedes their engagement and progress. They are also more likely to be educated in an alternative provision setting which does not offer GCSE courses.
- 2.10 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. The RISE project and Education Progress Grant funding requests for post 16 pupils provides evidence that several CiC are re-engaging with education and training beyond statutory school age.

Looked after children at Key Stage 2:

2.11 2014 attainment

According to DfE figures, Nottingham City had 18 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 2014 (there were two additional children, but both have been held back a year and so are excluded from these calculations.)

2.12 Of this KS2 CiC cohort:

- 50% (9 pupils) achieved level 4 or higher in Reading, Writing and Maths; the LA's provisional rate for all children for this measure in 2014 is 73%
- 67% (12 pupils) achieved level 4 or higher in Reading; the LA saw 83% of all children achieve level 4 or higher
- 61% (11 pupils) achieved level 4 or higher in Writing; the LA saw 80% of all children achieve level 4 or higher
- 67% (12 pupils) achieved Level 4 or higher in Maths; the LA saw 82% of all children achieve level 4 or higher
- 50% (9 pupils) achieved level 4 or higher in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling; the LA saw 71% of all children achieve level 4 or higher.

2.13 Compared to 2013 results the Maths, Reading, Writing and combined results were much higher and in every subject the numbers of pupils achieving expected levels were a lot higher than those of 2013. The L4+ GPS was 18% higher than 2013.

Looked After Young People at Key Stage 4:

2.14 2014 attainment

According to DfE figures, Nottingham City had 45 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 2014.

2.15 Of this KS4 CiC cohort:

- 7% (3 pupils) achieved 5+ A*-C including English and Maths; the LA's provisional rate for all children for this measure in 2014 is 43.3%. (A positive fact relating to these three pupils was that two achieved nine GCSEs and one achieved ten).
- 13% (6 pupils) achieved A*-C in English and Maths; the LA saw 45% of all pupils achieve this measure.
- 47% (21 pupils) achieved A*-G in English and Maths; the LA saw 85% of all pupils achieve this measure.
- 62% (28 pupils) achieved a pass in at least one qualification; the LA saw 96% of all children achieve this measure.

The changes made to the 2014 examination process represent such a substantial change to previous years that this year's KS4 results represent a break in the times series and as such cannot be compared to previous years results.

13 children had Fisher Family Trust (FFT) estimates giving a high (80 %+) chance of achieving 5+ A*-C grades, three children achieved this outcome, however five additional children were close (achieving either 4 grades A*-C or 4+ grades D-G).

12 children had FFT estimates giving a high (80 %+) chance of achieving 5+ A*-G grades, five children achieved this outcome with four additional children close to achieving this expectation (achieving 4 grades A* - G)

- 2.16 The KS4 examination process has seen substantial changes compared to previous years for all pupils; this has led to year on year comparisons with 2013 and previous years becoming more problematic. It may also adversely affect pupil performance against previous Fisher Family Trust estimates.
- 2.17 The fixed term exclusion rate for Nottingham City CiC is similar to the England rate and lower than statistical neighbours. A close partnership has been established with schools and alternative learning providers to ensure that the potential exclusion of Children in Care is only considered after a number of other measures. Any exclusion is closely monitored and alternative education for the student is provided where possible to minimise the disruption to education and care placements. The challenge is that absence for Year 10 and 11 CiC is higher than for other year groups, as are fixed term exclusion rates.
- 2.18 The overall attendance rate for CiC compared to England continues to be better. Overall absence rates dropped from the previous year 5.1% to 4.0% whilst

persistent absence dropped significantly from the 2012 rate. Since 2008 the overall attendance figure has increased from 93.9% to 96%.

	Overall Absence Rate		Percentage of LAC classified as Persistent Absentees	
	Nottingham	England	Nottingham	England
2007-08	6.1	6.4	11.7	9.3
2008-09	6.5	6.2	9.1	8.8
2009-10	4.5	5.8	4.4	7.8
2010-11	5.4	5.5	7.5	7.3
2011-12	5.1	4.7	7.6	6.1
2012-13	4.0	4.4	4.2	5.0

Effective Intervention

- 2.19 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 2014-15.
- 2.20 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 was reviewed in the spring term of 2014 and has been extended to include all school aged CiC regardless of where their placement is.
- 2.21 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.
- 2.22 A third year of additional 1:1 tuition was offered to Year 11 Children in Care and for a second year a similar offer was made for Year 6 pupils. Nearly twenty pupils benefited from this additional provision.
- 2.23 Education Progress Grant funding was available in 2013/14. The predominant use of this was for 1:1 tuition and therapeutic work with a stronger emphasis on educational activities and impact on educational achievement.
- 2.24 Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion rates have improved again since last year. 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. A new auditing and monitoring process is being introduced this year to ensure that the quality of planning for children's learning is aspirational and kept under consistent review.

- 2.25 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. The Virtual School represents the educational needs of CiC at every Placement Panel meeting.
- 2.26 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.
- 2.27 Letterbox Club, which provides mathematics materials as well as literacy resources, is purchased for CiC in Years 1, 3, 5 and 7.
- 2.28 We are in the process of increasing the capacity of the Virtual School to help challenge and support schools and education providers. We will soon have two new Education Support Officers to work alongside the existing team.
- 2.29 The Virtual School will soon have the support of a strong Governing Body.
- 2.30 This year we are introducing planning meetings with schools which will analyse how Pupil Premium Plus funding is being used and assess its impact on driving up standards. The Virtual School will retain an element of PP+ funding to fund centrally driven interventions.
- 2.31 Support and advice has been provided to a range of professionals through termly training network meetings for Designated Teachers. Training is also provided for new Designated Teachers, School Governors and new Social Workers.
- 2.32 The Virtual School held the first Year 11 Achievement Awards evening in 2014. The presentations and buffet took place in Loxley House. Pupils were joined by carers and family to celebrate their success.

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/VAT)

- 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 dis-establishment of one achievement consultant post has meant that the Virtual School has the opportunity to recruit two Education Support Officers, in so doing increasing the capacity of the team.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 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 EPG funding in this respect.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 There are no proposed changes to this service other than increasing its capacity to help ensure that all vulnerable Children in Care close the attainment gap with their peers. It would be valuable to look at the breakdown for this cohort and carry out an Equality Impact Assessment over the next few months as a measure of good practice.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

- 7.1 Information Management Team, Children in Care Provisional Results 2014

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

- 8.1 None