Corporate Parenting Board – April 2017

Title of paper:	Educational Attainment of Children in Care

Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman – Director, Children's Integrated Services	**Wards affected:** All

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Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	

Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:	
Strategic Regeneration and Development	☐
Schools	☒
Planning and Housing	☐
Community Services	☐
Energy, Sustainability and Customer	☐
Jobs, Growth and Transport	☐
Adults, Health and Community Sector	☐
Children, Early Intervention and Early Years	☒
Leisure and Culture	☐
Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration	☐

Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):
This report provides an update of the work of the Nottingham City Virtual School and provides details of attainment in the 2015-16 academic year.

Recommendation(s):	
1	Note and discuss the recent trends and current levels of educational attainment for Nottingham City's Children in Care (CiC) in comparison to the performance of all children and CIC nationally.
2	Note the current work and interventions of the Virtual School to promote and support the educational achievement of Nottingham City looked after children.

1   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1   To ensure that we identify any emerging trends in the achievement of Nottingham City Children in Care, and to be aware of the interventions taking place to improve attainment and narrow the gap between the performance of CiC and that of other pupils and the performance of Nottingham City CiC and those of our statistical neighbours.

2   BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1. This report will consider the attainment of all looked after children in Key Stage 2 and 4 during the academic year 2015-16.

2.2. The Virtual School is currently working on developing a system and process to analyse attainment of looked after children termly, based on teacher's termly assessments, this work is still in progress. The ambition is to interpret, analyse and compare results of teacher termly assessments for looked after children; this will enable us to consider and report on trajectory performance thus targeting our interventions to improve attainment and progress.

2.3. The Virtual School has a responsibility to monitor, promote and support the education achievement and experience of all school age Children in Care; currently there are approximately 400 pupils on roll.

The Virtual School Roll

2.4. Currently the Virtual School has on its roll 402 children of statutory school age, 181 of these children are receiving education within Nottingham City, 215 are receiving education outside the Nottingham City boundaries and 6 of these are without a school place. It is important to note this number fluctuates as a result of the number of admissions and discharges of children in care.

2.5. Of the 402 looked after children currently on roll at the Nottingham City Virtual School, 78 are on roll at schools judged by Ofsted as 'outstanding', 230 in schools judged 'good', 60 in schools judged as 'requiring improvement' and 24 in schools judged 'inadequate', the remaining children (10) are either without a school place or are on roll at a school that has not yet been subject to an inspection (schools converted to academies for example).

2.6. The Virtual School prioritises schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' for looked after children in need of a new school place, for the majority of the cases where our LAC are attending a school judged 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate', this judgment was made subsequently, after the child was placed.

2.7. There is no statutory requirement to include post-16 and early years Looked After Children (LAC) on our roll, although we do have a duty to promote the educational achievement of these cohorts. It was recently decided to include this cohort on roll, as doing so will enable us to effectively fulfil our duties to promote their educational achievement. Currently records for this cohort are being held on a spreadsheet and are being tracked and monitored by an assigned lead in the Virtual School, a strategy will be developed to consider the arrangements and processes to effectively monitor, track and support this cohort of LAC.

Attainment and progress of looked after children

2.8.   Key stage 1 attainment 2015-16:

In the 2015-16 academic year the Key Stage 1 LAC cohort consisted of 27 pupils, of which 19 had been in care for at least 12 months at 31st March 2016. Attainment in 2015-16 for NCC LAC in Key Stage 1 is well below average for non-disadvantaged pupils and below average for all pupils.

*NCC LAC eligible cohort total	ARE Reading %	ARE writing %	ARE Maths %
19	47%	26%	32%
Non-Disadvantage			
	78%	70%	77%
All Pupils			
	74%	65%	73%
LAC Nationally			
	51%	38%	46%

2.9.   Key stage 2 attainment 2015-16:

In the 2015-16 academic year the Key Stage 2 LAC cohort consisted of 33 pupils, of which 26 had been in care for at least 12 months at 31st March 2016. However 3 of this 26 were disapplied, leaving a total of 23 pupils. At Key Stage 2 attainment for Nottingham City LAC was above the national average for LAC pupils nationally in every measure, however below the national average for all pupils non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

*NCC LAC eligible cohort total	ARE Reading, Writing and Maths combined %	ARE reading %	ARE writing %	ARE Maths %	ARE Spelling, punctuation and grammar
23	48%	52%	60%	65%	47%
Non-Disadvantage					
	60%	72%	78%	75%	79%
All Pupils					
	53%	66%	74%	70%	72%
LAC Nationally					
	26%	41%	47%	43%	44%

2.10. Key stage 4 attainment 2015-16

The percentage of LAC children achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C in 2015-16 and the percentage achieving A*-C in English and Maths was lower than the national average for non-disadvantaged and all pupils. However, GCSE attainment in 2015-16 was slightly higher than in the previous year. Although there has been an increase in the percentage of

Nottingham City LAC achieving grades A*-C GCSE, attainment is still below national averages for all pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils.

	5plus GCSEs A*-C %		English and Maths GCSE A*-C %		Achieved a qualification	Did not achieve any qualification
*NCC eligible cohort	14-15	15-16	14-15	15-16	77%	18%
	6%	9%	12%	14%		
Non-Disadvantage	59%		65%		98%	2%
All Pupils	45%		59%		97%	3%

2.11. Pupils progress rates between KS1 and 2 are below the national average but above the national floor standard, and for maths, reading and writing are not significantly different from national.

2.12. NCER have developed a CLA project to enable better and quicker access to nationally available data for LAC pupils, which Nottingham City Council and the Virtual School now have access to. Approx. 142 local authorities have signed up to the project including ourselves, so this year we will be able to report the national attainment figures at Key Stage 4 for looked after children.

Attendance and exclusion of looked after children

2.13. In the 2015-16 academic year the attendance rate for compulsory school age looked after children on roll at the Virtual School was 89.7%, below government expectations of 96%. In order to proactively support and encourage full attendance the Virtual School will agree a process for regularly tracking attendance rates to enable us to intervene as soon as non-attendance is identified.

2.14. In the 2015-16 academic year 52 of the 449 looked after children on roll at the Virtual School received at least 1 fixed-term exclusion and a total of 125 fixed-term exclusions were made, 1 child was permanently excluded.

2.15. Whenever the Virtual School is made aware of possible exclusions of a looked after child, a member of the Virtual School team will make contact and attend meetings with the placement school to offer advice and alternative solutions to exclusion. The Virtual School is reliant on placement schools informing us when they are intending to exclude or immediately after exclusion has taken place, otherwise we are dependent on receiving exclusion information from the Fair Access team and through Welfare Call.

2.16. In order to consider ways in which to prevent and reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions of looked after children we plan to:
- Understand the reasons for exclusions
- Encourage schools to report possible exclusions prior to them being issued, to obtain advice and support from the Virtual School.
- Agree a set of actions once exclusion data is received from the Fair Access team, for those exclusions on the list that we weren't previously aware of.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

2.17. Currently the Nottingham City Virtual School monitors and records PEP completion for children of statutory school age (5-16). Currently we do not monitor and record PEPs for post-16 is currently in the same way as compulsory school aged children; we have recently developed a spreadsheet for recording and tracking post-16 LAC, the spreadsheet details the total number of 16 and 17 year olds on roll for whom a PEP is required and the number of these completed to date.

2.18 As of week ending February 3rd 2017 approximately 68% of our looked after children have a completed PEP that is in date, for the other 32% the PEP is either out of date (21%) or has never been completed/received (11%). PEP completion is not monitored nationally; individual local authorities report PEP compliance to their local Corporate Parenting Boards, but this is not captured centrally so we are unable to make a comparison of PEP completion nationally.

2.19. In 2016 a small number of PEPs were quality assured, however, the Virtual School will establish a systematic process for the quality assurance of completed PEPS and develop a toolkit that underpins and supports this process.

2.20. A review of the arrangements in place to support PEP completion is required, the Virtual School will then develop a strategy which maps the support and resources that will be made available each academic year commencing Sept 17.

Pupil Premium Plus (PPP)

2.21. Schools are required to apply to the Virtual School for Pupil Premium Plus funding each term (Spring, Summer and Autumn); indicating how they intend to use the funding and its intended impact on the educational outcomes and experiences of each looked after child.

2.22. A dedicated Business Support Administrator completes all the administrative tasks in respect to Pupil Premium Plus payments to schools, this consists of sending all schools the standard letter and application encouraging them to apply for the funding, maintaining records of all PPP payments made and collating applications to be reviewed and scrutinised by senior members of the Virtual School Team.

2.23. On receipt of applications for Pupil Premium Plus funding they are scrutinised by the Achievement Consultants, Service Manager and the Virtual School Head to ensure the planned interventions being funded are appropriate and relevant to the educational needs of that looked after child and as described in that child's PEP.

2.24. The Nottingham City Virtual School does not currently operate a process for the pooling of PPP funding and have no arrangements for planned retention of this funding; instead all schools are encouraged to apply for the full amount.

2.25. Historically, not all schools have applied for the PPP fund and there are occasions when a child is no longer looked after, resulting in funds being available towards the end of the financial year. To ensure PPP is utilised to promote the educational achievement and experiences of looked after children, available funding not allocated

is used to fund targeted and additional activities to enhance and improve the education of LAC. Decisions to fund targeted educational activities over and above the PPP allocation are currently made in partnership with schools, social workers, the Virtual School Service Manager and the Virtual School Head teacher. A written arrangement and process for the allocation of additional PPP funding is required to ensure a consistent and fair approach.

3   OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   None.

4   FINANCE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

4.1   The staff team and services provided by the Virtual School is funded through Dedicated Schools Grant, funding approved by the Schools Forum. Each year the Virtual School is required to report its work and activities to the schools Forum in order for funding to be agreed; there are therefore implications to the Virtual School budget in that it is subject to agreed funding from Schools Forum each year.

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.

5   LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT 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   STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)

6.1   There are no proposed changes to this service other than increasing our capacity and reviewing our work to ensure we are effectively fulfilling our duty to promote and support the educational achievement of all our Children in Care.

7   EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1   Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No   ☒
An EIA is not required because:

(Please explain why an EIA is not necessary)
Not required as the report does not contain financial proposals or decisions.

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

8.1   None.

9   PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

9.1   None.