

20 December 2016		ITEM: 10
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Educational Attainments of Children Looked After		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: All	
Report of: Keeley Pullen – Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After		
Accountable Head of Service: Roger Edwardson, Interim Strategic Leader School Improvement, Learning and Skills		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Services		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

Raising achievement in all areas of education for our Children Looked After [CLA] remains a key priority for Thurrock Council. The Virtual School monitors and supports the educational progress and outcomes for CLA irrespective of where they are placed, in or out of borough. The Virtual School is responsible for pupils aged between 3 years and 18 years and this includes those who have left care during an academic year.

This report will include the provisional outcomes for all pupils in the Virtual School cohort for the academic year 2015-2016 irrespective of their length of time in care. The Department for Education provides data in the Spring of 2017 which details the attainment of those who were in care continuously for 12 months or more.

A new curriculum was introduced in 2014 and new assessment procedures were introduced in 2015 which have resulted in national curriculum levels being removed and varying methods of assessment are now used by schools. The testing regime has changed for Key Stage 1 and 2 and this is now more rigorous and challenging. This has led to a significant fall nationally in results this year and has made comparisons for previous years' irrelevant.

Our Children Looked After face varying challenges on a daily basis and their resilience, attendance and progress made whilst in care should be recognised and praised. The Portfolio Holders for Education and Children's Social Care recognise that significant improvements in outcomes need to be achieved for this group and have asked for a review to be undertaken which will better articulate the high ambition that the council has for Children Looked After and the need to raise the current low level of expectations.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the provisional outcomes of the summer 2016 tests and examinations and commends the pupils, their schools and parents/carers on their achievements.**
- 1.2 That the Committee recognises that data can't be compared to previous years due to a change in curriculum and assessments [particularly at Key Stage 1 and 2].**
- 1.3 That the Committee recognises that the cohorts of pupils are small and that this should be considered when comparing year on year data.**
- 1.4 That the Committee recognises that the length of time in care can affect the progress and outcomes of the pupils.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The target for Thurrock Children Looked After is for them to be improving year on year and to meet the expected standards. The target is to close the attainment gap between CLA and non-CLA and to be above national outcomes for all CLA.

- 2.1.1 The year groups to be reported are outlined as follows:

Early Years – Foundation Stage

Year 1 (6 year old)

KS1 (7 year old)

KS2 (11 year old)

KS4 (16 year old)

- 2.1.2 In 2016, KS1 assessments are no longer reported as levels and cannot be compared to previous years. National Curriculum levels have been replaced by National Standards in the interim Teacher Assessment Frameworks, which are only to be used in 2016 and 2017. The results are still based on teacher assessments and for the first time this year include a combined reading, writing and maths measure. Grammar, punctuation and spelling assessments were not included this year due to an error at Standards and Testing Agency.
- 2.1.3 In 2016, the new more challenging national curriculum, which was introduced in 2014, was assessed by new tests and interim frameworks for teacher assessment. KS2 results are no longer reported as levels: each pupil receives their test results as a scaled score and teacher assessments based on the standards in the interim framework. Progress data will be released by the DfE in December.

2.1.4 2016 GCSE results show a significant improvement on last year. However, attainment is still below the national average. This reports attempts to detail progress and attainment which is beyond the raw data results. The document titled 'The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data' recommends that the outcomes for CLA particularly in Key Stage 4 are not merely confined to obtaining and comparing them against the standard national measures due to the nature of this cohort and the factors which affect their performance.

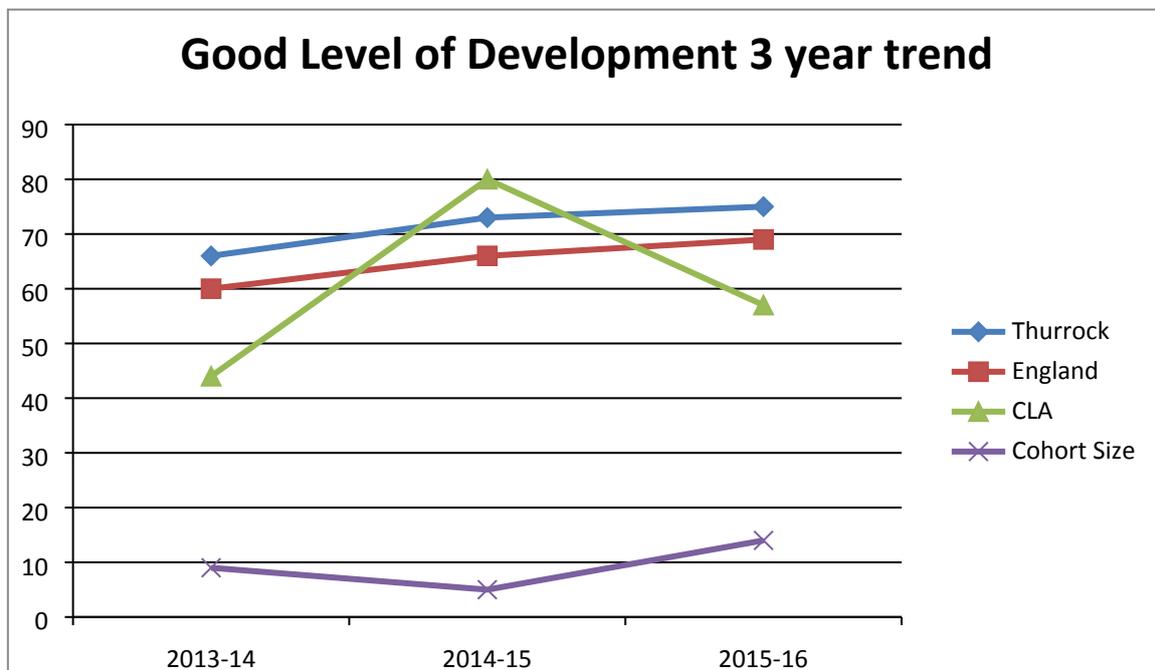
3. Attainment for Children Looked After:

3.1 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS age 5)

3.1.1 The Good Level of Development (GLD) measure is awarded at the end of EYFS when a pupil has achieved at least the expected level in the entire prime areas of learning and in literacy and mathematics.

3.1.2 The GLD has fluctuated significantly over a 3 year period and this demonstrates the uniqueness and small size of each cohort. The size of each cohort shows that each child's result is worth a significant percentage amount.

3.1.3 The diagram below illustrates the performance of Thurrock CLA against national and Thurrock non-CLA pupils. The Department for Education does not provide national data comparisons for Children Looked After in the area of a Good Level of Development.



3.1.4 To reach the percentage of children making a good level of development, each child is assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals; whether she/he

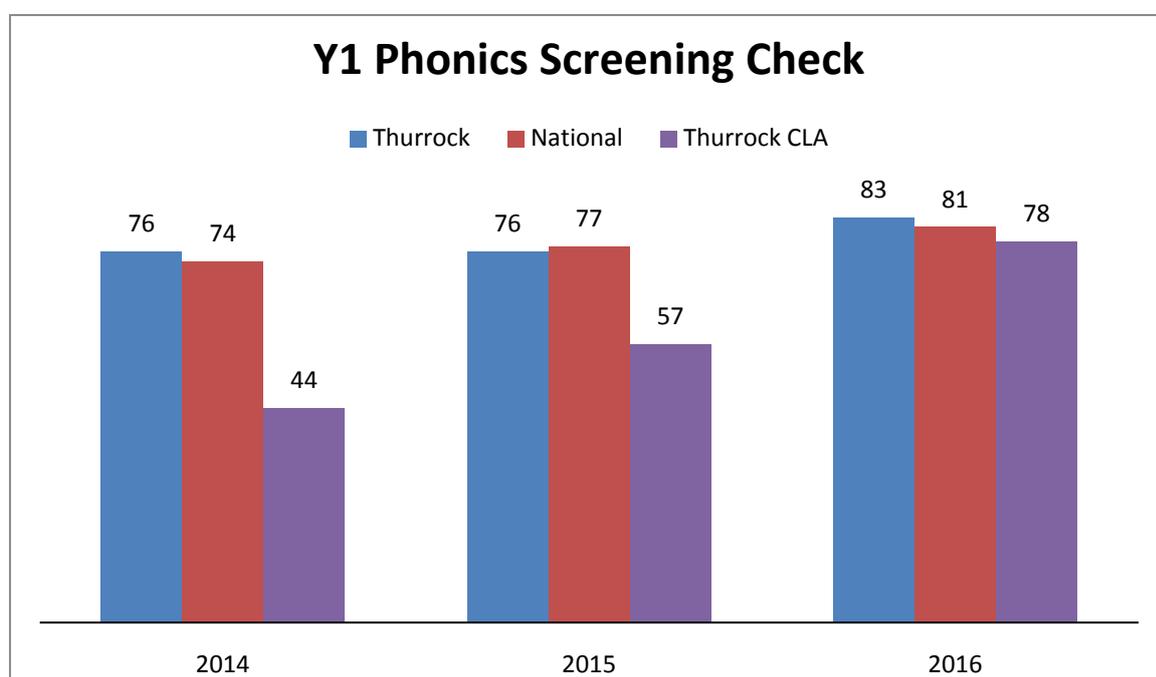
meets the level, has not yet reached the level or exceeded it and points are awarded accordingly in a range between 17 to 51. If a child meets every Early Learning Goal, she/he will receive at least 34 points.

- 3.1.5 The provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA demonstrates a fluctuating but maintenance of an upward trend of attainment. The previous year saw that 4 out of 5 pupils achieved GLD whereas this year, 8 pupils out of 14 achieved this.
- 3.1.6 Although 15/16 data indicates that there is a dramatic decrease in attainment from the academic year 14/15, more pupils achieved GLD than in the previous year. The cohort size has increased significantly compared to the previous year from 5 pupils to 14. Of this year's cohort, 8 pupils [57%] attended a Thurrock school.
- 3.1.7 Contextually the profile of this year's cohort differs from that of the previous year. Of the 2015/16 cohort, 8 pupils [57%] had been in care for less than a year prior to the end of the Reception year. The remaining 6 pupils [43%] had been in care for more than a year, although 4 [67%] out of the 6 pupils stopped being looked after in the autumn term 2015 of their reception year due to SGO or adoption arrangements. A total of 7 pupils [50%] left care during the academic year 15/16. This demonstrates the effective work of the social care teams in finding permanent placements or for positive reunifications with birth families. Of the 6 pupils who had been in care for more than 1 year, 3 [50%] reached the expected standard of a GLD.
- 3.1.8 The academic profile of the 2015/16 cohort saw that 40% of the cohort was applicable for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities [SEND] classification with one of these pupils already having an Education Health Care Plan [EHCP] on entry to school. Pupils with SEND have specific learning needs and require extra support. Therefore, 40% of the cohort were working significantly below the national average according to development matters which assessed their learning at below their chronological age. In addition, these pupils had a larger gap to close in order to meet a Good Level of Development. They were provided with additional support in their schools through group and individual support interventions. It aided them in their progress and enabled them to catch up with their peers to make expected progress across the year, even if they did not meet the expected standards.
- 3.1.9 In terms of monitoring and progress this was through the Personal Education Plans [PEPs] for each pupil. These took place every term that the child was looked after and detailed the learning and development for every pupil and specific targets were set to enable them to make progress. Pupils made progress across the year by achieving their targets and by the Virtual School holding schools to account for the quality of teaching and support they provided and by the use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus funding. All pupils

in this cohort made at least expected progress across the academic year from their on entry starting points.

3.2 Year 1 Phonics (age 6)

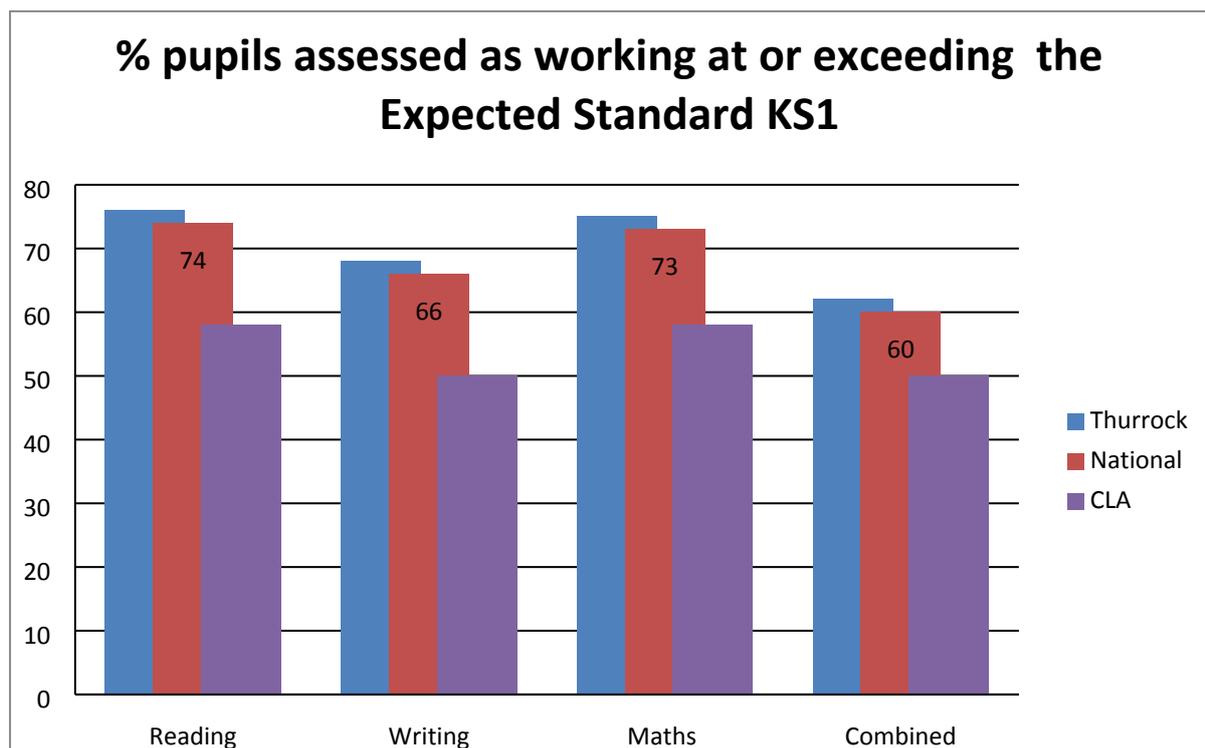
3.2.1 The year 1 phonics screening check is undertaken in June by all year 1 pupils and those pupils in year 2 who did not achieve age related expectations whilst in year 1. The percentage of children who reached the expected standard has risen by 21 percentage points; the national average has risen by 4 percentage points. The data for 2015 was based upon a cohort of 7 pupils, 4 [57%] of whom passed. In 2016 there were 9 year 1 pupils in the cohort and 7 pupils [78%] passed the screen. The gap between CLA and non-CLA is closing rapidly.



3.3 Key Stage 1 (age 7, year 2)

3.3.1 In 2016 KS1 assessments are no longer reported as levels and cannot be compared to previous years. National Curriculum levels have been replaced by National Standards in the interim Teacher Assessment Frameworks, which are only to be used in 2016 and 2017. The results are still based on teacher assessments and for the first time this year include a combined reading, writing and maths measure. Grammar, punctuation and spelling assessments were not included this year due to an error at Standards and Testing Agency.

3.3.2 In the graph below, it is possible to see how Children Looked After performed against National and Thurrock non-CLA. The table does not include National CLA performance data as this is not available at the time of this report.



3.3.3 The above data is based upon a cohort size of 12 pupils. This is a very small data set for comparison. Analysis of this data indicates that CLA have performed less well than their non-CLA peers nationally and Thurrock non-CLA pupils. What is difficult to gauge is a comparison with those who are looked after nationally due to lack of data.

3.3.4 Contextual data for the cohort shows that 7 [58%] of the 12 pupils were in an out of borough school. 4 [80%] pupils out of the 5 who achieved the combined score in reading, writing and maths attended a Thurrock school. This would indicate that those who did well attended a Thurrock school. This may well reflect the effective school improvement structures employed by Thurrock Council School's Improvement team as well as the strong relationships that the Virtual School Head has with Thurrock Head teachers who share the commitment for raising standards for all children in the borough.

3.3.5 The Virtual School maintains the same tracking and monitoring systems for all pupils irrespective of placement. The Personal Education Plan procedures are the same and the expectations and accountability measures are the same. Pupils across the year made expected progress based upon their individual targets and prior attainment.

3.3.6 In terms of prior attainment, only 50% of the cohort obtained a good level of development at the end of their reception year two years prior to the Key Stage 1 assessments. This would suggest that the rate of attainment and progress for these pupils has remained consistent across key stage 1. These

pupils would have needed to make accelerated progress in that time to be able to reach the expected standard. 1 pupil [20%] out of the 5 who did not reach GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage reached the expected standard at KS1.

3.3.7 The length of time in care varied for this cohort. Length of time in care is shown in the table below:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 12]	Met expected standard [% of those in this period]
2015	4 pupils [33%]	3 pupils [75%]
2014	2 pupils [17%]	1 pupil [50%]
2013	3 pupils [25%]	2 pupils [67%]
2012	3 pupils [25%]	0

3.3.8 The data in the table above would suggest that the length of time in care has not impacted on this group in terms of attainment. It is worth noting that, of the 3 pupils who have been in care the longest, they have significant SEND and emotional needs. These 3 pupils have also had the most placement instability due to these needs, including changes of carers and schools. However, during this current academic year 16/17, there has been greater stability for these children in terms of placement and schooling. It is hoped that this will continue.

3.3.9 Of the 12 pupils in the cohort, 5 pupils [42%] had SEND with 1 attending a specialist residential placement who has an EHCP. A further 2 pupils are currently undergoing the EHCP process due to learning and social emotional needs.

3.4 Key Stage 2 (age 11, year 6)

3.4.1 In 2016, the new more challenging national curriculum, which was introduced in 2014, was assessed by new tests and interim frameworks for teacher assessment. KS2 results are no longer reported as levels: each pupil receives their test results as a scaled score and teacher assessments based on the standards in the interim framework.

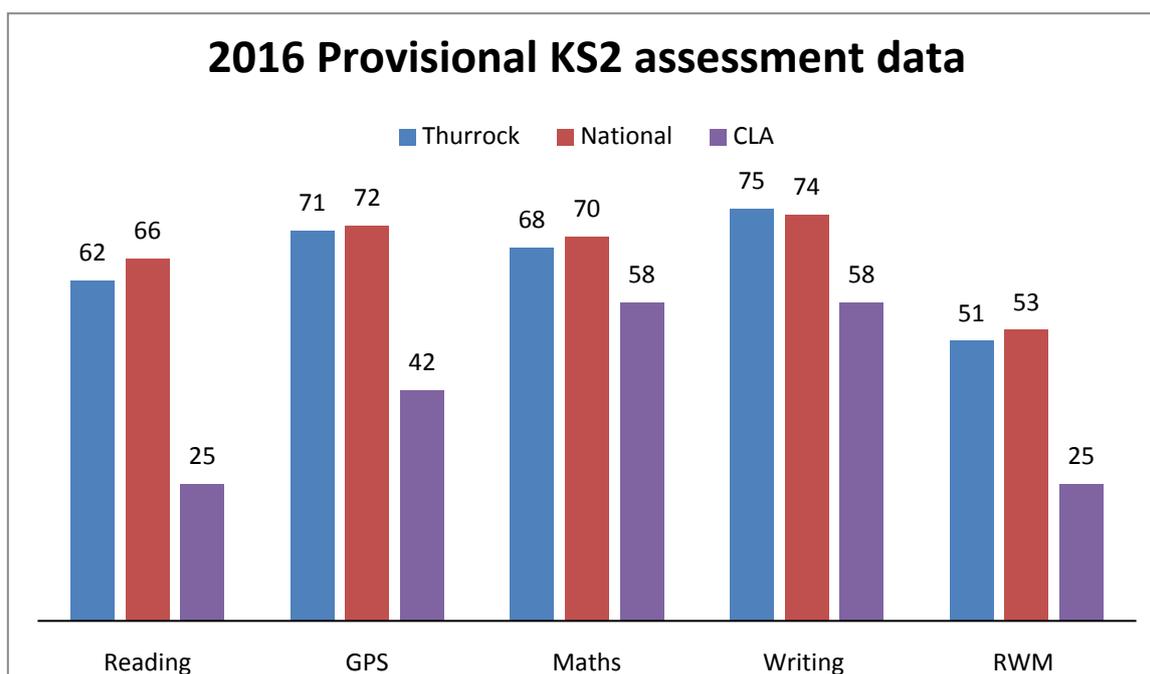
3.4.2 The expected standard in the tests is a scaled score of 100 or above. Attainment nationally in the tests is highest in grammar, punctuation and

spelling (GPS) at 72% and lowest in reading at 66%. At 74%, attainment in the writing teacher assessment is higher than in any of the test subjects.

3.4.3 Last year, to achieve a level 4 (the previous expected standard) pupils would have needed to get 46 per cent in their maths tests and 36 per cent in reading. This year, under the new, tougher standards, those percentages have increased to 54.5 per cent for maths, and 42 per cent for reading. GPS has remained the same at 61 per cent.

3.4.4 The cohort size for the Key Stage 2 SATS was 12 pupils. There were a further 2 pupils who attend special independent schools who do not take part in SATS testing, Therefore the decision has been made to dis-apply them from the reporting requirements. The data provided is based upon attainment for those pupils who took the tests.

3.4.5 For Thurrock CLA, reading was 25% [3 pupils], GPS was 42% [5 pupils], in maths 58% [7 pupils] and in writing was 58% [7pupils]. The graph below illustrates the comparisons with non-CLA nationally and all pupils in Thurrock. Nationally CLA statistical comparisons are not available at the time of this report due to the time of publication of the Statistical First Release.



3.4.6 Children Looked After were 10% below all Thurrock children in maths and 17% below in writing. The biggest area for development based upon this data would be reading. The reading test was particularly difficult at a national level this year and this is reflected by the decline in data nationally. Historically Thurrock CLA perform well in reading at the end of KS2 tests. However, the 2016 test proved to be too difficult for them. The subject matter of the reading

test involved family experiences as well as the type of life experiences which our CLA have not yet had. The depth of reading skills required were also extensive and required a level of maturity, knowledge and higher level reading skills which was not yet possible for some of the pupils in this cohort.

- 3.4.7 The Virtual School uses part of their budget to fund Letterbox Clubs. This scheme provides each Thurrock CLA from Year 2 to Year 6 with sets of books and educational games delivered to their house 6 months every year between May and October and a special Christmas package in December. The intention of this scheme is to raise the profile of reading as a pleasurable pass time and to foster a love of books within their placements. The implementation of this scheme is currently under review in terms of impact and how it could be used more effectively.
- 3.4.8 Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this cohort of pupils. All pupils had a termly PEP attended by a member of the Virtual School. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress. Some pupils who did not meet the standard in one or more subjects had still made excellent progress and were working within the curriculum bands for their year group; however, they did not perform in the harder tests.
- 3.4.9 A particular success story for this year group should be noted for one pupil who made 3 years' worth of progress in 1 academic year. In year 5 the EHCP process had started due to this pupil being at least 2 years behind his peers in all subjects. There were many concerns regarding learning, development and social and emotional difficulties. However, this pupil met the expected standard in all subjects except reading where he narrowly missed the 100 score by scoring 98. An EHCP is not necessary due to his amazing efforts and the support received from his school, his carers and the Virtual School. He has successfully transitioned into year 7.
- 3.4.10 Prior attainment at Key Stage 1 for this cohort was extremely low with only 3 pupils [25%] reaching level 2B in reading, 2 pupils [17%] reaching 2B in writing and 4 pupils [33%] achieving 2B in maths. Progress measures from the Department for Education will be published later this academic year so a better analysis of progress can be provided. However, this prior data would suggest that pupils were not expected to reach the required standard at Key Stage 4 as 75% of the cohort were below national average previously. This progress measure would suggest that although pupils did not meet the expected standards, their rate of progress was good.
- 3.4.11 The Year 6 cohort contained 5 pupils [42%] out of the 12 entered for SATS with SEND. As mentioned above, pupils with SEND have additional learning and/or emotional needs which affect their learning and this affected their attainment within the harder tests.

3.4.12 The length of time in care varied for this cohort between 2007 and 2015. The table below illustrates this:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 12]	Met expected standard RWM [% of those in this period]
2015	3 pupils [25%]	0
2014	2 pupils [17%]	0
2013	2 pupils [17%]	0
2012	4 pupils [33%]	2 pupils [50%]
2007	1 pupil [8%]	1 pupil [100%]

3.4.13 The length of time in care has had a positive influence on those obtaining the required standard. It is worth noting that of these, 2 of the 3 pupils achieved the expected levels at the end of KS1 too.

4 GCSE KS4 (age 16) - Indicative results

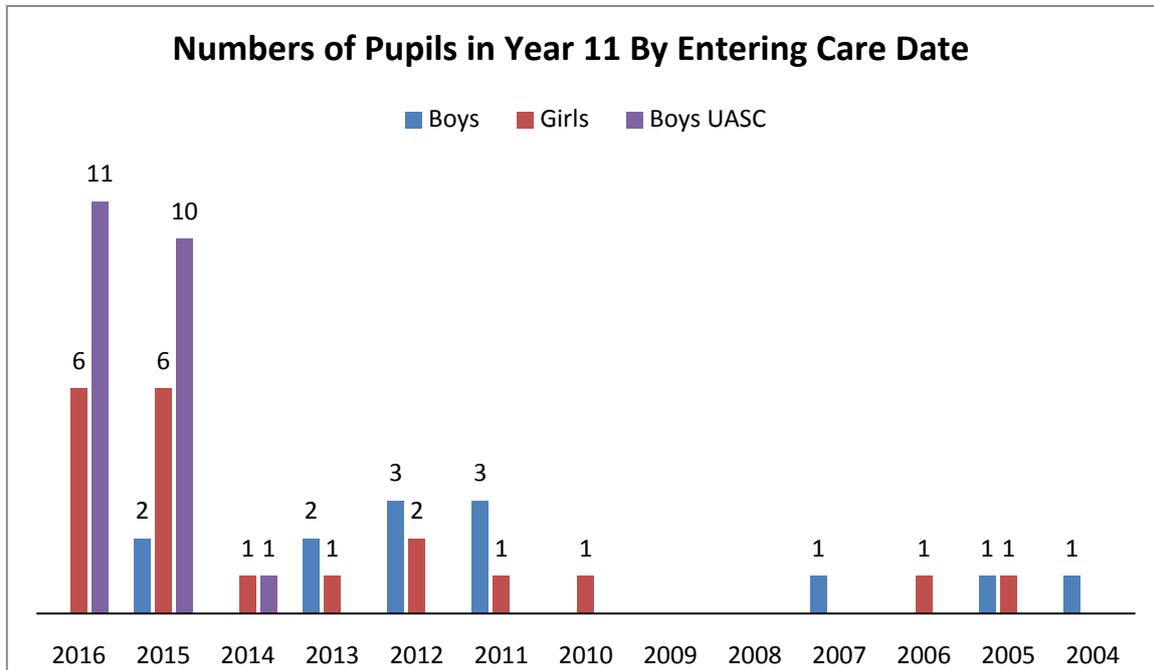
4.1 Provisional results for Thurrock CLA show an improvement from last year and the gap against national CLA is starting to close. The data provided for this report will contain information for the whole of the Year 11 cohort that the Virtual School was responsible for in the academic year 2015-2016 irrespective of when the young person came into care. This report will first detail a range of information for this cohort to provide a context for reporting and analysis.

4.2 At the beginning of the academic year there were 39 pupils in Year 11, by the end there were 55. The table below shows the period when various pupils in Year 11 became looked after. Potentially the length of time in care will affect educational outcomes.

4.3 When adolescents come into care during this time it is usually unplanned and in an emergency situation. This makes it extremely difficult for placements and education to be found in parallel. In the vast majority of cases when a young person is without education, it is extremely difficult to provide them with a school place. Schools are reluctant take a Year 11 pupil into their school citing the reason that they are not able to match their GCSE modules. This is even more difficult for those who have no English language.

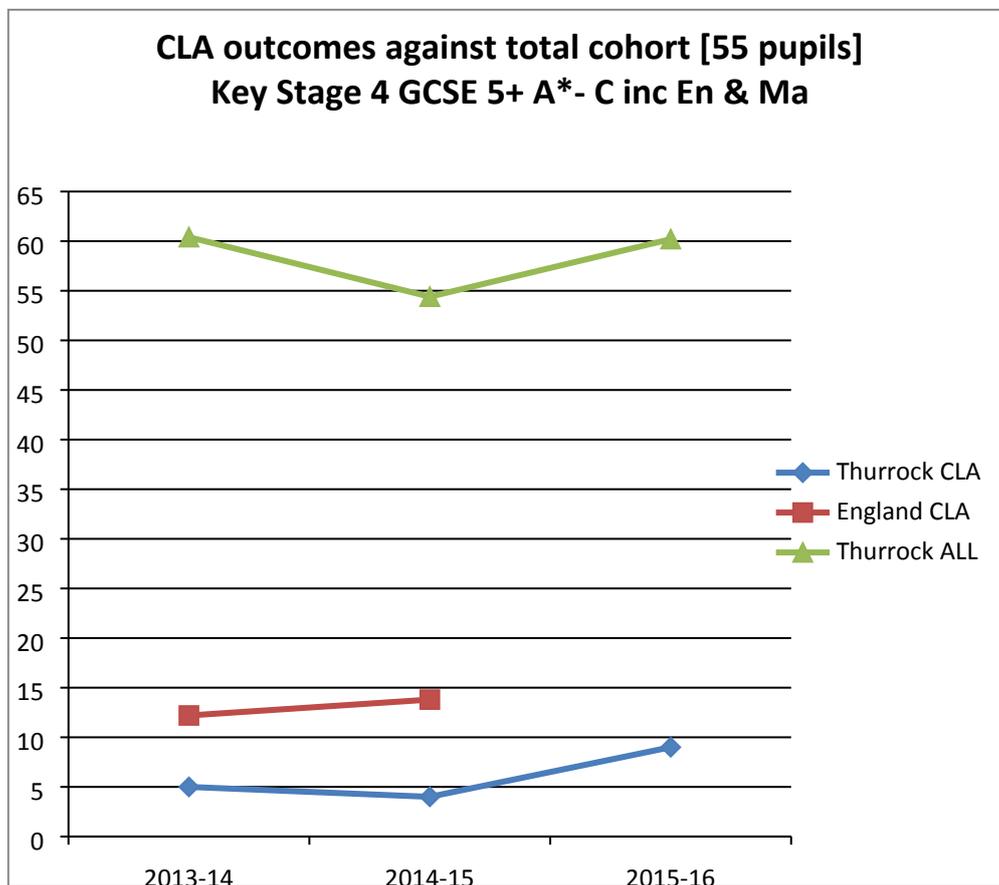
4.4 This graph does not illustrate the fact that 30 pupils [55%] became looked after in the academic year 2015/16. This made it extremely difficult for the Virtual School and Social Care to have an impact on attainment for GCSEs in

that short space of time, particularly when a large majority of these young people were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC] with no English.

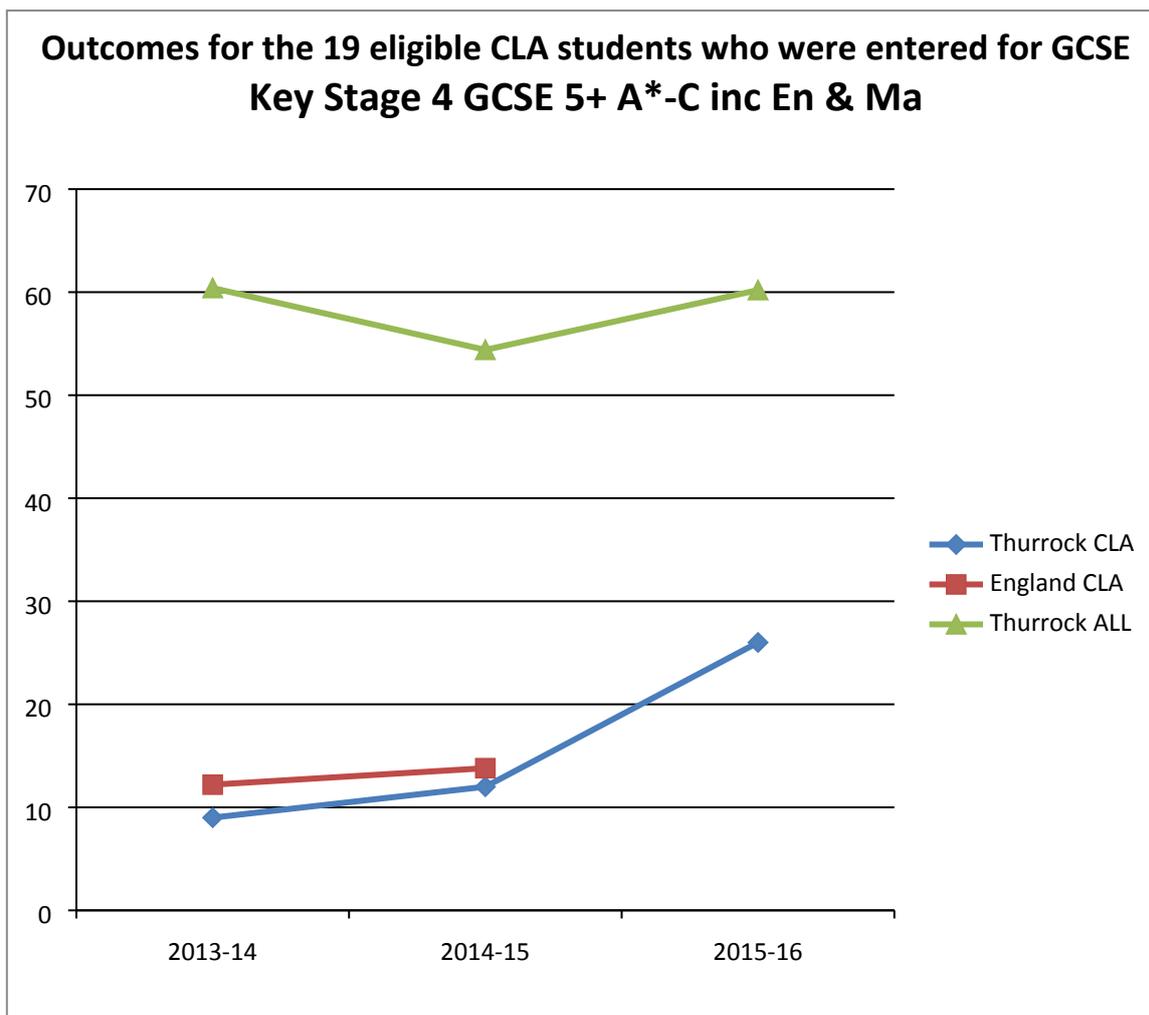


- 4.5 When a young person is taken into care it is often an extremely traumatic time for them. This would potentially affect their ability to perform in the GCSE exams as their focus may be elsewhere. The lateness of them coming into care also means that services have not been able to support education as extensively prior to them entering care. They may not be in full time mainstream education before becoming looked after, their attendance could be poor. They may have missed significant parts of schooling and are therefore trying to catch up. If they do attend a school prior to becoming looked after, they may not have been entered for qualifications due to their ability or previous educational performance. All of these factors should be considered when looking at the achievements of these young people.
- 4.6 There were a total of 55 pupils in the year 11 cohort and 19 pupils [34.5%] were eligible to take 5 GCSEs. There was a further 1 pupil who took under 5 GCSEs.
- 4.7 Indicative data shows that 5 pupils [9%] of the total cohort achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths. 2 of the pupils who achieved 5 GCSEs grade C and above attended a Thurrock school. An additional 2 pupils [4%] achieved 5 or more GCSEs graded above C, however, they narrowly missed achieving both English and/or Maths. These pupils attended out of borough schools.

- 4.8 For maths, in total 8 pupils [14.5%] achieved a grade C or above. The figure for those achieving grade D or above in maths was 15 pupils [27%]. This data was for the whole cohort. When we narrow this figure down to those only eligible for taking GCSEs, it reduces to 19 pupils. This data shows a significant increase on last year. When considering those only eligible for GCSE, 79% achieved grade D or above in maths and 42% achieved grade C or above.
- 4.9 English language results for the whole cohort were a similar picture. In total 7 pupils [13%] achieved a grade C or above. For those achieving grade D or above, it was 15 pupils [27%]. When narrowed down to those eligible for GCSEs 37% [7 pupils] achieved grade C and 79% achieved grade D or above.
- 4.10 The graphs below highlight the improvement in outcomes against national CLA data and Thurrock all pupils' data.



This line graph depicts data for the whole of the cohort [55 pupils]



This line graph depicts data for the 19 pupils who were sitting 5 or more GCSEs

4.11 The two graphs illustrate an improving picture for Thurrock CLA and outcomes are improving. The attainment gaps are gradually decreasing and in terms of attainment at GCSE level this year, the indicative data shows that it has doubled from last year. The aim now is for this trend to continue to improve.

5. Additional Contextual Information for Key Stage 4 Cohort

5.1 There are specific reasons as to why not all of the 55 pupils were able to sit GCSE qualifications. It is important that this report includes these young people and accounts for their educational outcomes

5.2 48 [83%] of our year 11 pupils looked after by the local authority attended a provision that was out of borough, of which 17 [49%] students were in specialist provision. Specialist provision includes Pupil Referral Units, residential specialist schools, SEND schools. These placements matched the needs of the pupils at that time, based upon their social care and educational needs. Where possible these students sat formal qualifications which included

GCSE, BTEC, functional skills or Entry Level. However, this did mean that they were not at the level to study 5 GCSEs. It is important to note that these students obtained positive outcomes for them based upon their needs and their academic level or educational ability at the time.

- 5.3 A total of 7 students [17%] did not sit formal qualifications. 3 of these have significant SEND and 4 pupils are resitting Year 11 and so were not eligible for exams this academic year. Additionally 18 pupils [33%] of the cohort had SEND needs with 13 pupils [24%] with EHCPs or Statements. The 2 pupils with EHCPs who were eligible for GCSE exams achieved incredibly well based upon their level of needs with 1 obtaining 5 GCSEs C and above and 1 making accelerated progress to achieve D grades.
- 5.4 The length of time in care for this cohort has supported the educational progress of these pupils. Of those students who have been in care the longest, the majority have SEND needs. Although they may not have achieved GCSE qualifications, their placement and education needs were met in the appropriate provision. Those students who had been in care for a length of time who were able to sit GCSE qualifications did achieve pass grades and made appropriate progress against prior attainment. For example: 2 out of the 3 pupils who entered care in 2013 achieved 5 A*-C grades. The other pupil who came into care in 2013 attended a specialist residential provision due to significant SEND and achieved Entry Level 3 qualifications.
- 5.5 The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children UASC entering care in year 11 is increasing. 23 pupils [42%] of the 15/16 cohort contained UASC pupils. Only 2 pupils were attending a school in Year 10 and as such had 4 terms of formal education in England in order for them to take their GCSEs. These 2 young men achieved pass grades. 3 UASC pupils were long term missing from care but they are still eligible for counting in our indicative results. A further 2 pupils had been placed back into year 10 and were not eligible to take their exams in 2016. The graph above illustrates when our UASC came into care. It is a challenge to find suitable educational places that can support the needs of these vulnerable pupils. The Virtual School assists with obtaining school places wherever possible or sourcing appropriate English Studied as an Other Language [ESOL] provision.
- 5.6 Monitoring and tracking was extensive for our year 11 cohort of pupils. All pupils had a termly PEP attended by a member of the Virtual School. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress. In addition, 1-1 tuition was funded by the Virtual School through Fleet tuition services to key groups of pupils to support outcomes. This was in English and Maths.

6. Reasons for Recommendation

- 6.1 None.

7. Impact on Corporate Policies, Priorities, Performance and Community Impact

7.1 This report relates to the council priority to improve to create a great place for learning and opportunity.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager, Corporate Finance –
Children and Adult's

This report asks that the Committee notes the increasing demand of services for Children Looked After. The responsibilities of the Virtual School have increased to support those in pre-school and in post 16 as a result of the changes to the Statutory Guidance in July 2014. The growing demand for services, particularly for those who are post 16 and/or Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children has had an implication on spending due to the cost of interventions such as English Studied as an Other Language provision

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

This report asks that the Committee notes the provisional outcomes, and offer its commendations, taking into account in so doing the various contextual influences described by the report author. No decision is required. The Council is required by s22(3A) of the Children Act 1989, as amended, to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. The Children and Families Act 2014 amended s22 to require the Council to appoint an officer to ensure that the duty is properly discharged. There is statutory guidance "Promoting the education of looked after children" that must be followed in meeting this duty.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

This report sets out the educational attainments of Children Looked After for the academic year 2015/16. Diversity and equality implications, including those related to young people with Special Educational Needs, are contained within the body of the paper and the supporting conclusion.

8.4 Other implications (where significant) – there are no implications as a result of this report

None.

9. Conclusion

9.1 In summary the above report details attainment outcomes. The results do not reflect the unique pathway of every individual in each cohort. Every pupil has an individual story which details the varying strengths and difficulties that she/he experiences as a child or young person in care. Some pupils overcame their challenges and exceeded expectations and made exceptional progress. All of our Children Looked After achievements should be recognised and celebrated and we as a Council will continue to support them in the next stages of their academic journey.

10. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- 'The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data' ADCS

11. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Keeley Pullen

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Children's Services