

6 December 2017		ITEM: 11
Corporate Parenting Committee		
The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After – Academic Year 2016-2017		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: All	
Report of: Keeley Pullen, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After		
Accountable Assistant Director: Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead - School Improvement, Learning and Skills		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate 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.

The annual report of the Virtual School Headteacher details the validated outcomes for pupils in the Virtual School cohort for the academic year 2015-2016 for those pupils in care for one year or more. This data was presented to Corporate Parents in September 2017.

In addition, the report details the non-validated data outcomes for pupils for the academic year 2016-2017 irrespective of their length of time in care and detailed analysis for this group of pupils is included in the report.

The aim of the annual report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with additional information regarding the service that the Virtual School provides for all CLA pupils across an academic year.

This annual report has been presented to and approved by the Virtual School Governing Board as part of the meeting held on 28th September 2017.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 The Committee notes the non-validated DFE outcomes of the summer 2017 tests and examinations and commends the pupils, their schools and parents/carers on their achievements.**
- 1.2 That the Committee recognises that the cohorts of pupils are small and that this should be considered when comparing year on year data.**
- 1.3 That the Committee recognises that the length of time in care can affect the progress and outcomes of the pupils.**
- 1.4 The Committee approves the Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for the academic year 2016-2017 and uses this information to acknowledge, evaluate and if appropriate, challenge the services that are provided for all CLA.**

2. Introduction and Background

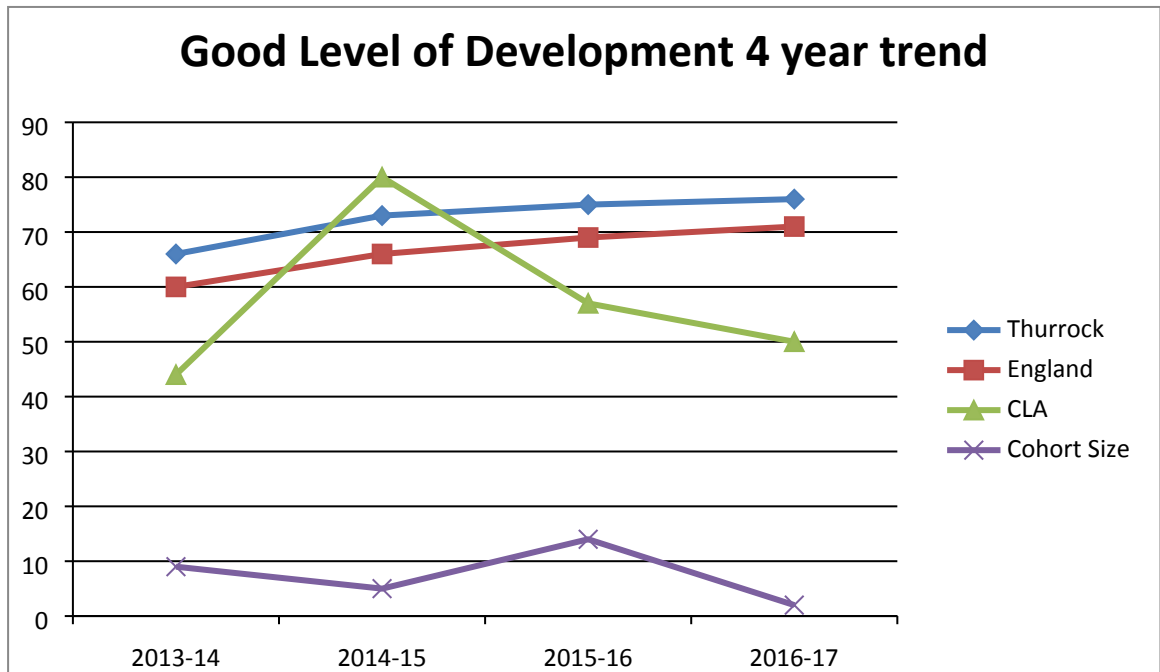
- 2.1 The target for Thurrock Children Looked After is for them to be improving year on year and to meet the expected standards. The target is to close the attainment gap between CLA and non-CLA and to be above national outcomes for all CLA. This was achieved in 2016 and indicative data suggest that this has been at least maintained in 2017.
- 2.2 The year groups to be reported are outlined as follows:
 - Early Years – Foundation Stage [4-5 years old]
 - Year 1 (5-6 years old)
 - KS1 (6-7 years old)
 - KS2 (10-11 years old)
 - KS4 (15-16 years old)
- 2.3 The annual report should provide the Committee with detailed information regarding the broad scope of work of the Virtual School which provides members with a greater depth of knowledge in order to enable the Committee to challenge. The annual report is provided as a separate document.

3. Attainment for Children Looked After

3.1 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS age 5)

- 3.1.2 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.
- 3.1.3 The GLD has fluctuated significantly over a 4 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.

3.1.4 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.



3.1.5 The provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA demonstrates a declining trend. However, this result is based upon 2 pupils who were still in care at the end of the academic year. There were 8 pupils who were in care at some stage during their reception year but these were in care for less than their academic Reception year. Out of the 8 pupils who were in care at some point during their Reception year, [4 children – 50% achieved a GLD]. Of the 2 pupils who had been in care for 1 year or more, and had subsequently left care during their Reception year, 50% [1 pupil] achieved GLD

3.1.6 The academic profile of the 2016/17 cohort saw that 50% of the 8 pupil cohort was applicable for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities [SEND] classification and they are receiving additional support in school. Pupils with SEND have specific learning needs and require extra support. Therefore, 50% 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.

3.1.7 Pupil progress was monitored through the Personal Education Plans [PEPs] for each pupil. 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.

3.1.8 Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2017 data:

- Ensure that Transition arrangements have been effectively put in place to support the pupils as they move into Year 1.
- Monitor pupil progress through the use of the Pupil Premium monitoring and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided.
- Link with schools needing additional support.
- Obtain on entry data for current Year R cohort to enable the measurement of progress.

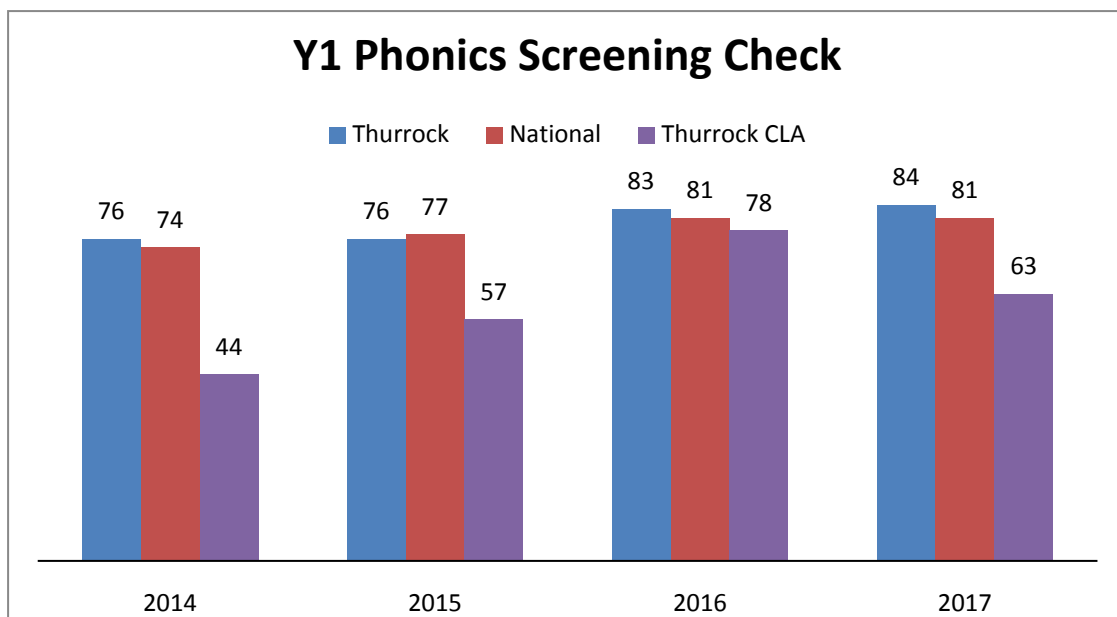
3.2 Year 1 Phonics Score [Age 6]

3.2.1 The Year 1 phonics screening check is undertaken in June by all those pupils in Year 1 and those pupils in year 2 who did not achieve age related expectations whilst in Year 1.

3.2.2 The percentage of children who reached the expected standard has decreased compared to the previous year. 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. In 2017 there were 8 pupils in the cohort and 5 pupils [63%] passed the screen.

3.2.3 This is illustrated in the table and graph below

Year	Total Cohort Size	Number who passed
2015	7	4 pupils – 57%
2016	9	7 pupils – 78%
2017	8	5 pupils – 63%



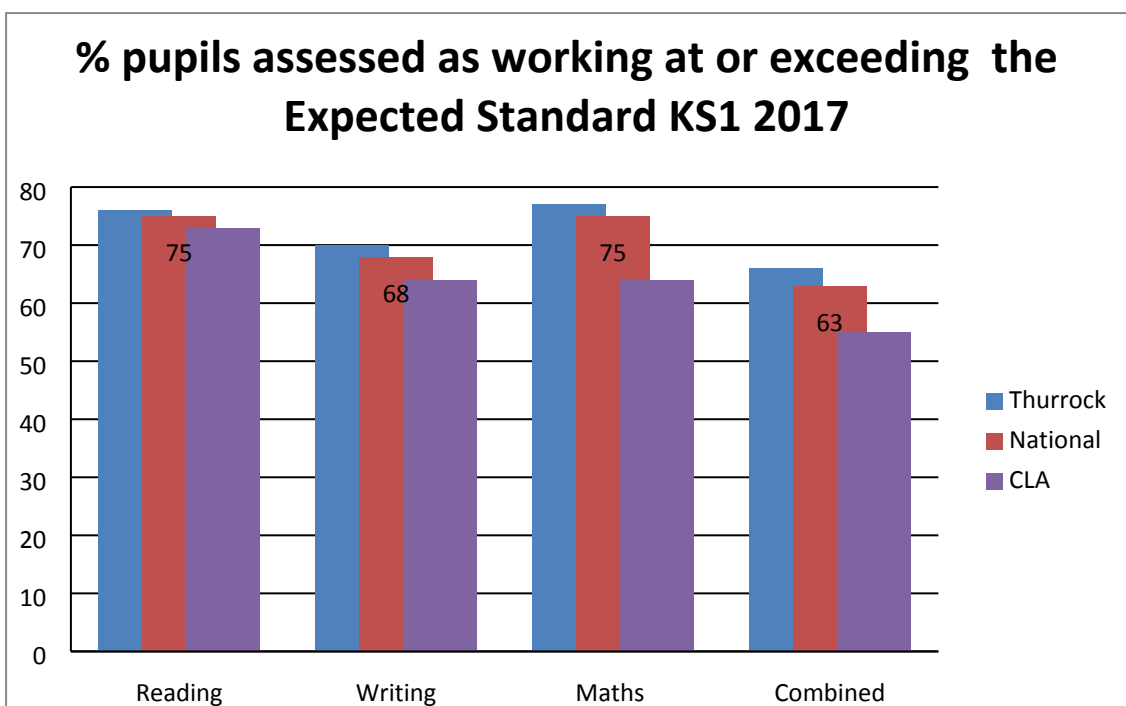
3.2.4 The data is fluctuating, however, it is difficult to gauge trends when analysing small cohort sizes. The different needs and circumstances, including length of time in care, needs to be considered. It is important to recognise the individual nature of every year 1 pupil and therefore, the Personal Education Plan process is crucial in this respect for identifying their educational needs. Foster carers have an important role to play in supporting the acquisition of phonics and early reading skills. In particular, regular sharing of books and completing phonic activities at home.

3.2.5 The planned action for the forthcoming academic year will include continuing to speak to schools to discuss provision to ensure that those who did not reach the expected standard are supported during Year 2. Those Year 2 pupils who needed to re-sit from the previous year [2016] totalled 5 children. 3 pupils [60%] passed. The two who did not are currently going through the EHCP process but they have improved on their score from the previous year. As a result of the decline in those meeting the standard for phonics, the Virtual School will be creating home learning packs and offering foster carers phonics training so that they can support their young learners at home.

3.3 Key Stage 1 Results [Non-Validated Data] 2017 [Age 7]

3.3.1 From 2016, KS1 assessments are no longer reported as levels and cannot be compared to previous years.

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.



Graph of Non-Validated Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA [2017]

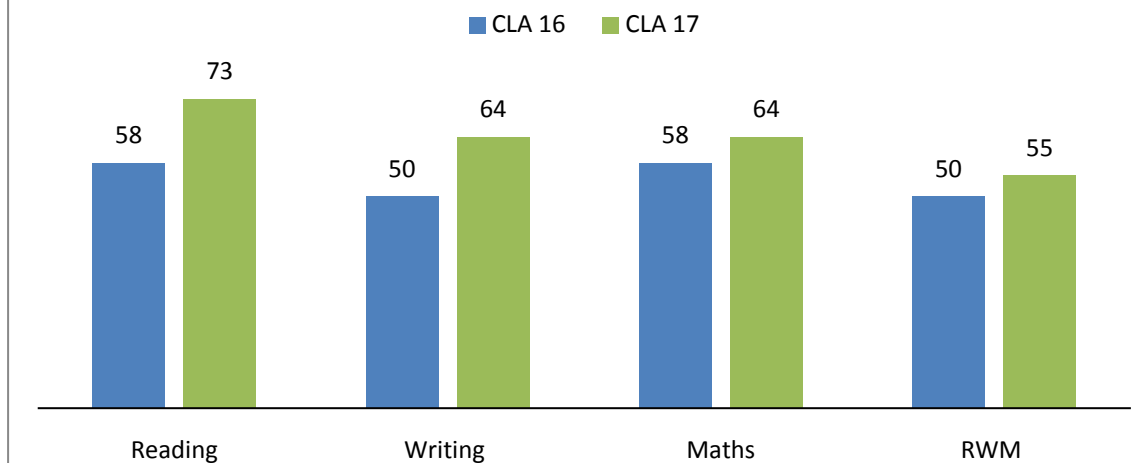
Table of Results of Thurrock CLA [11 pupils in cohort] 2017

Subject	Number of Pupils	Percentage [2017]	National CLA [2016]
Reading	8	73%	50%
Writing	7	64%	37%
Maths	7	64%	46%
Combined	6	55%	Not provided

3.3.3 The above data is based upon a cohort size of 11 pupils. This is a very small data set for comparison particularly when comparing against very large numbers for Thurrock and all Year 2 Nationally. Analysis of this data indicates that CLA have performed less well than their non-CLA peers nationally and Thurrock non-CLA pupils. However, what is most pleasing is that the difference compared to non-CLA is diminishing. For example: it is only 2% below national for reading, 4% below national for writing and 9% below national for maths.

3.3.4 What is difficult to gauge is a comparison with those who are looked after nationally due to lack of data at the time of this report. However, when comparing performance to last year's national CLA data we are significantly above in all areas. In addition, a direct comparison of our in house data demonstrates that, the results for our KS1 pupils have improved this year. This is shown in the next graph.

2017 Provisional KS1 Assessed as working at or exceeding expected [All pupils irrespective of time in care direct comparison]



3.3.5 Contextual data for the cohort shows that only 1 [9%] of the 11 pupils were in an out of borough school. All pupils [100%] 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.

3.3.6 In terms of prior attainment, only 7 pupils [64%] of the cohort obtained a good level of development at the end of their reception year two years prior to the Key Stage [KS] 1 assessments. This would suggest that the rate of attainment and progress for these pupils has remained consistent across KS1. These pupils would have needed to make accelerated progress in that time to be able to reach the expected standard. 1 pupil [25%] out of the 4 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 11]	Met expected standard [% of those in this period]
2017	3 pupils [27%]	2 pupils [67%]
2016	4 pupils [36%]	3 pupils [75%]
2015	0 pupils	
2014	0 pupils	
2013	2 pupils [18%]	0
2012	2 pupils [18%]	1 pupil [50%]

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

2 pupils who have been in care the longest, the one pupil who did not reach expected standard only did not meet it in maths. It was met in reading and writing.

Of the 2 pupils who have been in care since 2013 who did not meet the standard, 1 is currently going through the EHCP process and 1 met the standards in reading and maths but not writing.

It should also be noted that 5 pupils [45%] have left care during the academic year; however, data has still been collected as they were looked after at some point during this academic year.

Only 2 pupils in the cohort [18%] are SEN support, 1 of these is currently going through the EHCP process.

3.3.8 Planned action by the Virtual School in response to this data.

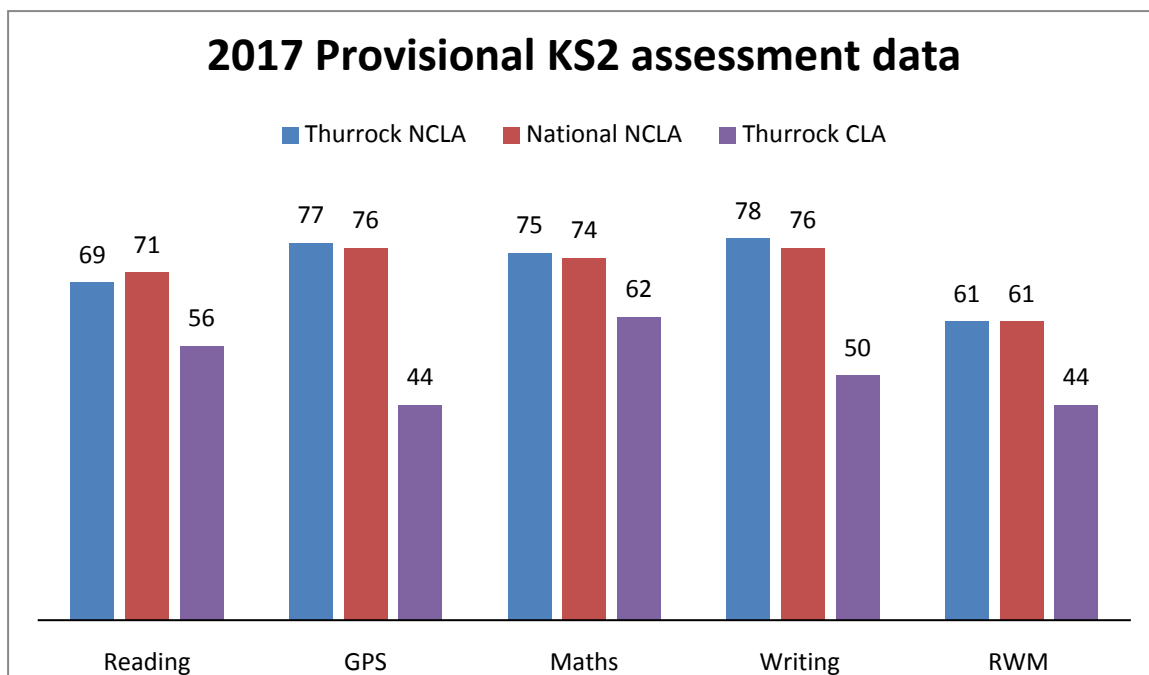
- Ensure that Transition arrangements have been effectively put in place to support the pupils' move into Year 3
- Monitor pupil progress through use of the Pupil Premium monitoring and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided
- PEP meeting in place within the Autumn term 2017
- Link with schools needing additional support
- Monitor progress for current year 3 to check that those who did not meet the expected standard are being appropriately supported.

3.4 Key Stage 2 Results [Non-Validated Data] 2017 [Age 11]

3.4.1 From 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 cohort size for the 2017 Key Stage 2 SATS was 16 pupils. There were a further 7 pupils who were disapplied from SATS due to the setting they attended or SEND needs. Therefore, the decision has been made to dis-apply them from the reporting requirements. The data provided is based upon attainment for those 16 pupils who took the tests.

3.4.3 For Thurrock CLA the statistics for those achieving the expected standard were as follows: reading 56% [9 pupils], GPS 44% [7 pupils], maths 62% [10 pupils] and writing was 50% [8 pupils]. The graph below illustrates the comparisons with non-CLA nationally and all pupils in Thurrock for 2017 results. National CLA statistical comparisons are not available at the time of this report due to the time of publication of the Statistical First Release.

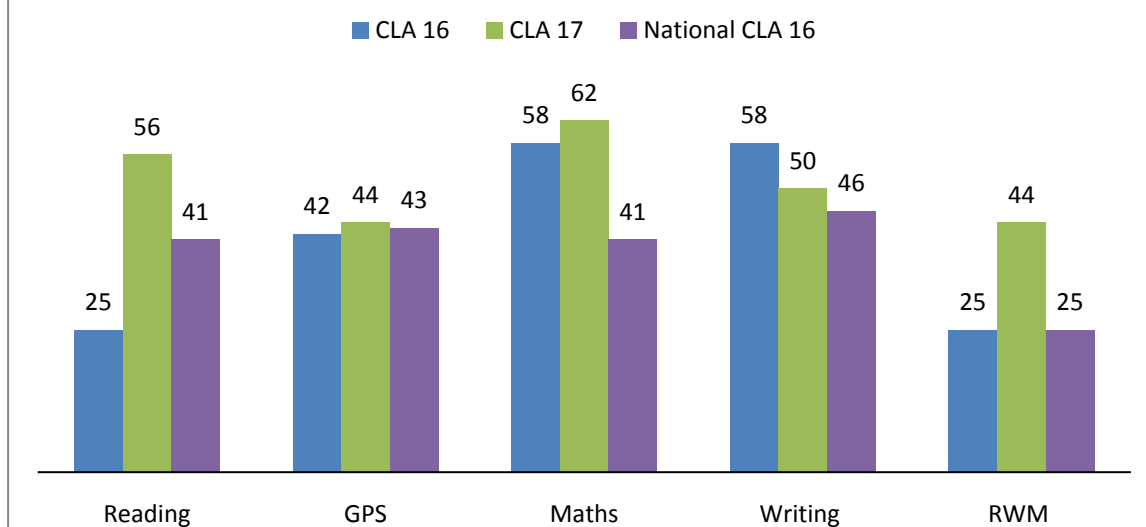


Graph of Non-Validated Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA [2017]

- 3.4.4 Children Looked After were below all Thurrock and National children in all areas. However, consideration should be given that this is comparing 16 pupils with a large number of children across the country and the borough. The biggest areas for development based upon this 2017 data would be Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling [GPS] and writing.
- 3.4.5 The following graph illustrates the comparison between Thurrock CLA over 2 years of the new testing regime. What is good news is the increase in the number of pupils reaching the expected standard from 25% in 2016 to 56% this year in reading. There has been a significant increase in those pupils achieving a combined score in reading, writing and maths. The graph also illustrates the comparison against last year's CLA national data in the absence of current CLA data.

2017 Non-Validated KS2 assessment data 2 year trend

[All pupils irrespective of time in care direct comparison]



3.4.6 Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this cohort of pupils. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress.

3.4.7 15 pupils out of the 16 who took their tests [94%] made at least expected progress from their prior attainment at Key Stage 1. Some made greater than expected progress. 1 pupil who did not make as much progress was due to missing school for being in hospital for much of year 5 and an Education Healthcare Plan is currently being applied for to support in Year 7.

3.4.8 Prior attainment at Key Stage 1 for this cohort was low with only 8 pupils [50%] reaching level 2B+ in reading, 6 pupils [37%] reaching 2B+ in writing and 7 pupils [44%] 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 2 as over 60% of the cohort was below national average previously. This progress measure would suggest that although pupils did not meet the expected standards, their rate of progress was at least good.

3.4.9 The Year 6 cohort contained 6 pupils [37%] out of the 16 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. However, these pupils made at least expected progress except for 1 pupil as mentioned above.

3.4.10 The length of time in care varied for this cohort between 2011 and 2017. The table below illustrates this:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 16]	Met expected KS2 standard RWM [% of those in this period]	Met expected KS1 standard in RWM	Expected Progress [% of those in this period]
2017	6 pupils [37%]	3 pupils [50%]	2 pupils [33%]	6 pupils [100%]
2016	1 pupil [6%]	0 [0%]	0	1 pupil [100%]
2015	3 pupils [19%]	2 [67%]	1 pupil [33%]	3 pupils [100%]
2013	1 pupil [6%]	1 [100]	0	1 pupil [100%]
2012	4 pupils [25%]	2 [50%]	2 pupils [50%]	3 pupils [75%]
2011	1 pupil [6%]	0 [0%]	0	1 pupil [100%]

3.4.11 The table below illustrates the achievement of those who were disapplied from SATS and their length of time in care:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 7]	Reason for not completing SATs	Expected Progress
2017	2 Disapplied pupils	EHCP for both 1 Held back 1 year 1 in hospital	All pupils are making expected progress from prior attainment and on their individual education plans.
2016	Disapplied 1 pupil	EHCP attends Special School	
2014	Disapplied 1 pupil	EHCP attends Special School	
2013	Disapplied 1 pupil	EHCP attends Special School residential	
2011	Disapplied 1 pupil	EHCP attends Special School residential	
2009	Disapplied 1 pupil	EHCP attends Special School	

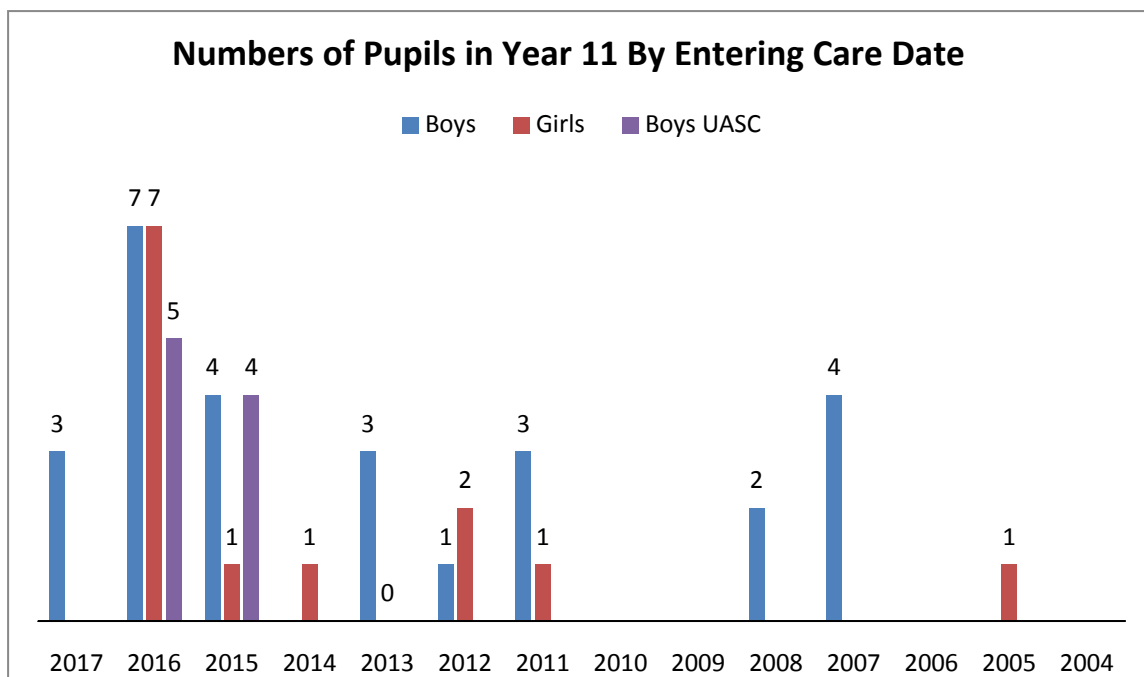
3.4.12 Planned interventions as a result of this data will include:

- Virtual school staff visiting every current Year 6 pupil's school in Autumn17/Spring term 18

- PEP meetings held for every Year 6 in Autumn term 17
- Programme of tuition and/or intervention in place for every Year 6, linked to Pupil Premium Plus Grant
- Target support and interventions for current Year 5 cohort
- Support for transition of pupils in Year 7 who did not meet the expected standard
- Support for those pupils in Year 7 who have SEND to ensure that the provision is matching need.

3.5 Key Stage 4 GCSE Non-Validated Results [Year 11 – Age 15-16]

- 3.5.1 The following section of this report includes the 2017 data for GCSE. Progress 8 and Attainment 8 is not being reported in the following section due to the availability of data at the time of this report being compiled. The 2017 data will include the performance of all pupils in the 2016-2017 Year 11 Virtual School Cohort. This is irrespective of the length of time in care. The information for this report is currently Non-Validated data.
- 3.5.2 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.
- 3.5.3 The numbers of pupils in care in Year 11 by entering care date is illustrated in the graph below. Potentially the length of time in care affects the educational outcomes. This graph does not illustrate the fact that 8 pupils [20%] became looked after in the academic year 2016/17, that is, from September 2016. 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. In total 17 pupils [42%] became looked after from January 2016 when in Year 10 or in Year 11.



3.5.4 Key Headline Data for whole cohort of 40

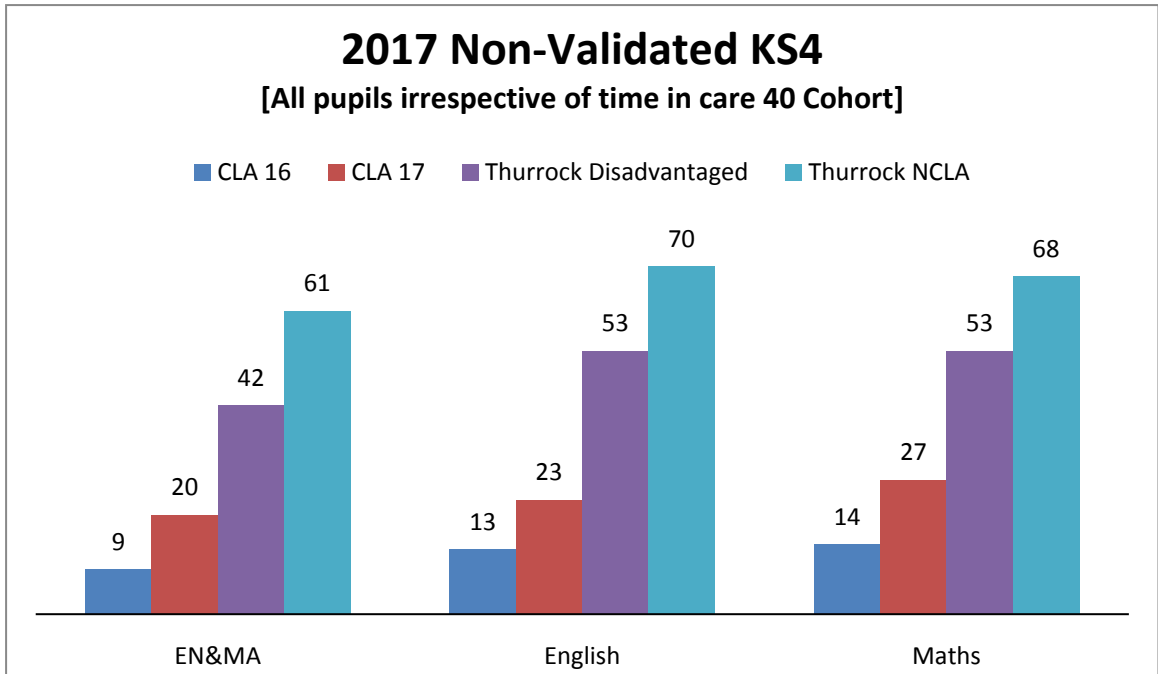
- There were a total of 40 pupils in the year 11 cohort and 23 pupils [57.5%] were eligible to take 5 GCSEs
- Although the cohort is reduced from last year's size of 55 pupils to 40, more students were eligible for taking GCSEs this year which is an improvement from the previous academic year
- Indicative data shows that 5 pupils [12.5%] of the total cohort achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths. This is an improvement on last year's 9% although there is no requirement to report on 5 A*-Cs and there will be no national data comparisons or Thurrock data comparison as this is no longer reported
- 8 pupils [20%] achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of grade C [point 4] or above
- For English language, 7 pupils [18%] achieved the expected standard or above
- In English literature, 9 pupils [23%] achieved the expected standard or above
- In Maths, 11 pupils [27%] achieved the expected standard or above.

3.5.5 Key Headline Data for cohort of those eligible for GCSE exams 23 pupils

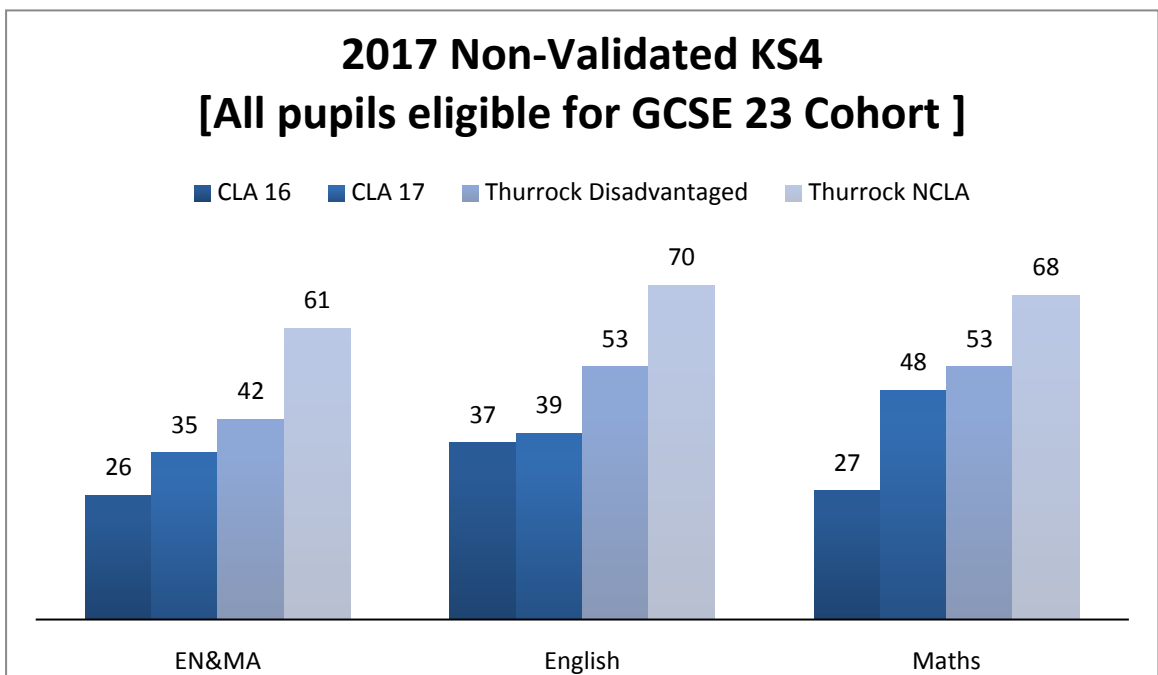
- Indicative data shows that 5 pupils [22%] of the total cohort achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths
- 8 pupils [35%] achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of grade C [point 4] or above
- For English language, 7 pupils [30%] achieved the expected standard or above

- In English literature, 9 pupils [39%] achieved the expected standard or above
- In Maths, 11 pupils [48%] achieved the expected standard or above.

3.5.6 The graphs below demonstrate the improvements that Thurrock CLA have made compared to the previous 2016 cohort



Graph Depicts Comparison between Year 11 cohort of 40 in 2017 against all Thurrock Pupils and attainment against CLA in 2016 – includes Thurrock Disadvantaged 2017.



Graph Depicts Comparison between Year 11 cohort of 23 in 2017 against all Thurrock Pupils and attainment against CLA in 2016 – includes Thurrock Disadvantaged 2017.

- 3.5.7 The above data demonstrates that there has been a marked improvement in this years' attainment for the whole cohort and for those eligible for taking GCSEs. The two graphs illustrate an improving picture for Thurrock CLA and outcomes are improving. The attainment gaps are gradually decreasing. In terms of attainment at GCSE level this year, it has increased significantly for the cohort of 40.
- 3.5.8 There are specific reasons as to why not all of the 40 pupils were able to sit GCSE qualifications. It is important that this report includes these young people and accounts for their education outcomes.
- 3.5.9 28 pupils [70%] of our year 11 pupils looked after by the local authority attended a provision that was out of borough, of which 7 [25%] students were in specialist provision. Specialist provision includes alternative provision, residential specialist schools, and 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 or English and maths. 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.
- 3.5.10 A total of 15 students [37%] did not sit formal qualifications. This was due to SEND needs, being UASC and learning English as an additional language or attending alternative education providers. There were 2 pupils who were missing education at the time of their exams due to the time that they came into care and the need for their care placement to be moved. These students were receiving tuition in their home and have college placements starting in September 17.
- 3.5.11 Additionally 18 pupils [45%] of the cohort had SEND needs with 7 pupils [18%] with EHCPs or Statements. These students did not achieve above grade C in their exams if they were eligible for GCSE. Those students who have SEND Support took qualifications matched to their individual needs with some able to sit GCSEs. Despite not reaching grade C or above, they did meet their target grades to enable them to enrol at colleges for post 16 courses.
- 3.5.12 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 a full range of 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: all of the pupils who achieved 5 or more A*/9-C Grades in more than 5 subjects including English and Maths have been in care for longer than 1 year.

- 3.5.13 The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children UASC entering care in year 11 has decreased. In 15/16 42% of the cohort contained UASC pupils. In the academic year 16/17 10 pupils [25%] were UASC. This year we had two pupils who took a full complement of GCSE subjects. The remaining 8 pupils took subjects linked to learning English, maths and science. Where possible schools try to support UASC students to access a full range of subjects but the priority for these young people is to learn English and make the best possible pathways for post 16 learning.
- 3.5.14 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.
- 3.5.15 Pupils attending alternative education providers took a range of entry level and vocational courses in order to prepare them for their post 16 pathways. These pupils were attending a variety of settings and completing different courses which they passed.
- 3.5.16 Planned actions as a result of 2017 data are continuing from the previous year with additional measures being taken. For example: tuition for year 11 started in October 2017 rather than waiting until January 18. We are continuing to:

- Attend Year 10 and Year 11 PEP meetings
- Ensure that schools provide robust Pupil Premium Plus information
- Link the quality of the PEP with release of Pupil Premium Plus funding
- Provide additional home tuition and IT equipment when necessary
- Triangulate data predictions with further evidence such as work sampling
- Access exam stress counselling where necessary
- Provide support for Post 16 pathways
- Targeting tuition for particular students who are on the cusp of 4/5/C grades which will be additional to that received by the Pupil Premium Plus in school
- Complete home visits for particularly vulnerable students
- Provide intensive pastoral support alongside their school for high priority cases for those at risk of poor performance due to social and emotional difficulties

In addition we are:

- Providing half termly Designated Teacher Forums, monthly social worker forums and termly foster carer forums to promote the educational outcomes of

pupils by communicating key messages and training and to provide information advice and guidance for individual cases

- Supporting social care to minimise the change of school or college when there are placement changes
- Actively seeking to expand our team with professionals to build capacity and improve impact on outcomes for Children Looked After.

5. Additional Information for the Committee

5.1 Detailed within the annual report is an overview of progress towards last academic year's school improvement priorities. The Virtual School Headteacher is particularly pleased with the improvement in attendance for CLA for the academic year as well as the improvements in Key Stage data. This year we are focussing on the following school improvement priorities. To improve achievement of all pupils by:

- [Key Priority 1] Improving the attainment and progress of Children Looked After (CLA) to be in line with or above the national average outcomes for CLA for all Key Stages
- [Key Priority 2] Improving the attendance of CLA to maximise educational outcomes
- [Key Priority 3] Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions of CLA to ensure that they are receiving the maximum entitlement of education
- [Key Priority 4] Improve the quality of the PEP meeting and PEP documentation as a key driver for improving pupil academic outcomes by supporting needs and raising expectations
- [Key Priority 5] Improving systems of tracking, analysis and accountability to support educational outcomes for CLA.
- [Key Priority 6] Embed the new Virtual School team structure to support the needs of all CLA

5.2 These Key Priorities have been set in response to data analysis. We are aiming to reduce fixed term exclusion and we are putting in key actions and strategic documentation in response to these priorities. A detailed School Improvement Plan has been submitted to the Governing Board which specifies actions and timescales to improve outcomes for our CLA. These will be scrutinised by the Governing Board every term as part of the Headteacher's report to Governors.

5.3 The Virtual School Headteacher has successfully appointed a Post 16 and an Early Years/Primary Education Adviser for the part of the Virtual School team. These are working full-time and are supporting and challenging schools and colleges to improve outcomes and provision. A Secondary Education Adviser is due to start in post in January 2018.

6. Conclusion

6.1 In summary, the above report details attainment outcomes for those in care during the academic year 2016-2017. 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.

7. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

7.1 This section is not applicable as alternative options are not necessary for the purpose of this report. Any actions and analysis linked to the attainment of Children Looked After are embedded throughout the report.

8. Reasons for Recommendation

8.1 It is requested that the Committee agree the recommendations and use the reporting mechanisms to support and challenge the work of the Virtual School on behalf of Children in Care.

9. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

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

10. Implications

10.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Nilufa Begum**
Management Accountant

This report asks that the Committee notes the increasing demand of services for Children Looked After and the range of services provided as detailed in the annual report. 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 needing alternative provision for their specific needs has had an implication on spending and budgets.

10.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Principal Solicitor

This report asks that the Committee notes the 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.

10.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

Supporting the improved educational attainment of Children Looked After targets Thurrock’s most vulnerable young people. Data is collated to understand the profile of young people supported. Individual plans are informed by each young person’s personal needs, including equality and diversity as well SEND and emotional health needs.

10.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

11. **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
- ‘Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children’ DFE July 2014

12. **Appendices to the report**

- Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher Academic Year 2016/2017

Report Author:

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Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After

Children’s Services