

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

Mission Statement

At the core, is the aspiration to ensure that children and young people are provided with every opportunity to learn effectively and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding so they are able to make informed choices about their futures from a range of options. This range will be at its widest when children succeed in their schools and are provided with the ambition, resilience and opportunity to optimise their learning within and beyond the school.

The Virtual School believes that every child and young person really does matter; every child and young person has a right to a childhood and has the right to a first class education that enhances their life chances as an adult. We believe that Children Looked After and Young People should be given every opportunity to aspire to be the best they can.

The Virtual School provides additional support, advice and guidance over and above the universal services that all Thurrock children and young people can access, alongside direct support to the children themselves. We believe there should be no educational gaps between attainment and potential and there should be a narrowing of the gap between attainment and national standards.

The main outcomes we want for our children and young people accord with the Thurrock Children and Young People's Plan and are that CLA:

- ❖ value themselves and grow up to be fair, tolerant and supportive, learning to respect others and enjoy the respect of others;
- ❖ are engaged in and are challenged by high quality education and enjoyable learning experiences;
- ❖ are able to show resilience and cope with change;
- ❖ are not disadvantaged by circumstance, poverty, disability or race;
- ❖ seek out and engage in opportunities for self-improvement, with the guidance and support of multiagency teams;
- ❖ achieve recognised and appropriate qualifications in line with their academic potential, so they access a wide range of training, employment and further education opportunities when they leave school, allowing them to take an active and full role in society as adults.

To achieve this, The Virtual School will work in partnership with schools, educational settings and social care to create a high quality experience for Children Looked After and Young People.

Corporate Parenting Committee

The Virtual School Head Teacher is accountable to the Corporate Parenting Committee for the educational achievement of Children Looked After [CLA]. The Committee comprises 8 Members and exists to ensure that all elements of the Council work together to ensure that the children looked after by Thurrock get the best possible service that can be offered. The Committee promotes the role of all Councillors as corporate parents and provides the robust vehicle for their mandate to be exercised on behalf of young people. There are also four Co-Opted Members of the Committee who each possess a range of knowledge and experience in order to advise Members and add to the scrutiny process. These include representatives from the Children in Care Council (CICC), Open Door and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Thurrock One Team Foster Care Association. This committee meets termly and managers from different sectors of social care and education present reports and recommendations as part of a cycle. This process acts as a measure of accountability and supports the development of strategy and policy for meeting the statutory requirements for children in care.

Introduction and Overview

The Virtual School Headteacher has been in full-time post since June 2014. Since the previous Headteacher left her post in April 2013 the Virtual School team have continued to fulfil the core functions for supporting CLA in Thurrock and raising aspirations for this group.

Staffing of the Virtual School

Mrs Keeley Pullen – Virtual School Headteacher

Mrs Grace Page – LAC Advisory Assistant

Mrs Tina McGuinness – Business Administrator

Additional Consultants and Services [commissioned by Virtual School]

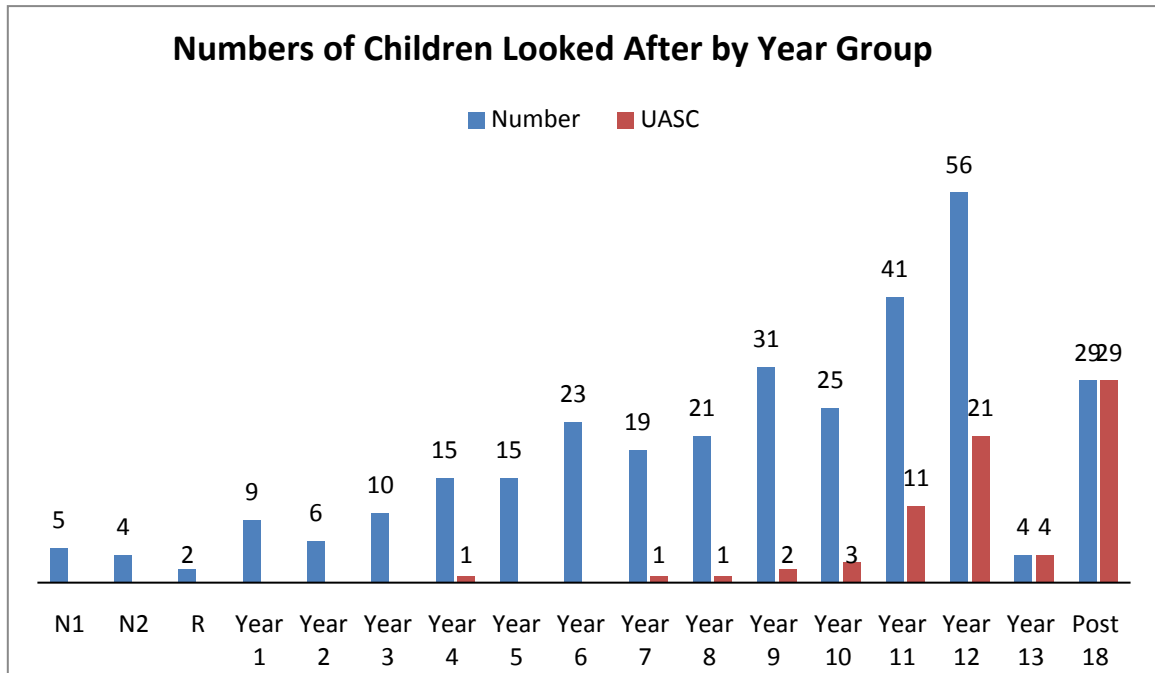
Miss Lee-Anne Jenkins – Post-16 Support

Fleet Tuition Service for provision of 1-1 tuition

Looked After Call – to monitor attendance

Current Contextual Data

Number of Looked After Children by Year Group [Updated July 2017]



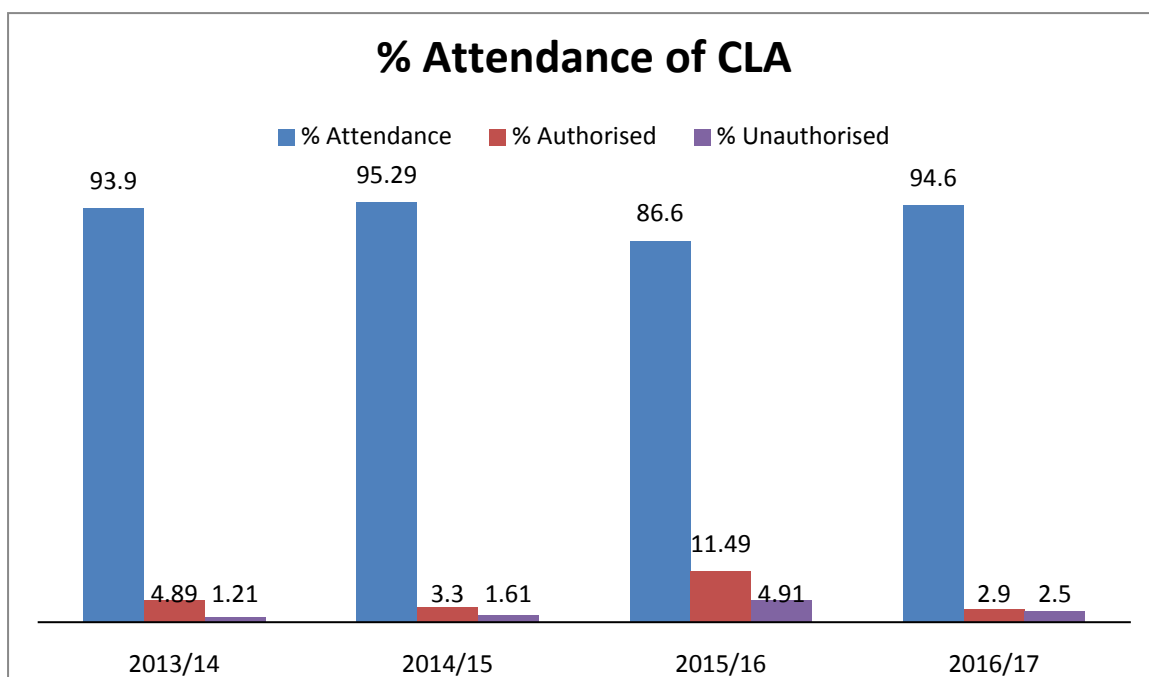
Number of Pupils in Alternative Provision/SEND School/Specialist Provision by Year Group [Updated July 2017]

N1	N2	R	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	YR 7	YR 8	YR 9	YR 10	YR 11	YR 12	YR 13
0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	2	3	5	5	8	5	1

Number of CLA with SEND by Year Group [Updated July 2017]

N1	N2	R	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	YR 7	YR 8	YR 9	YR 10	YR 11	YR 12	YR 13
0	0	0	2	1	4	6	8	8	6	11	11	10	14	10	19

Attendance



Robust tracking of attendance is vital in ensuring that good attendance is prioritised. Attendance rates have improved compared to the previous year to 94.6%. For the forthcoming academic year, we are striving for above 95%.

There were 18 pupils who had persistent absence below 90%. Of these students some had been in hospital for extended periods of time due to sickness and operations. There have been 2 school refusers who have required additional support. A pastoral support programme is always put in place for students who are refusing to attend school and the Virtual School works closely with foster carers, social workers and their schools to support the child/young person.

Attendance was monitored daily through the use of Welfare Call until July 2016 and from September 2016 we have used Looked After Call. We have been very pleased with the service received from this company during this academic year and the Virtual School staff has received training to enable us to collate and analyse attendance data.

The Virtual School Headteacher monitors the attendance of priority CLA as identified by the Virtual School on a weekly basis. Attendance monitoring for all pupils is conducted by the Virtual School Headteacher on a fortnightly basis to identify any concerns.

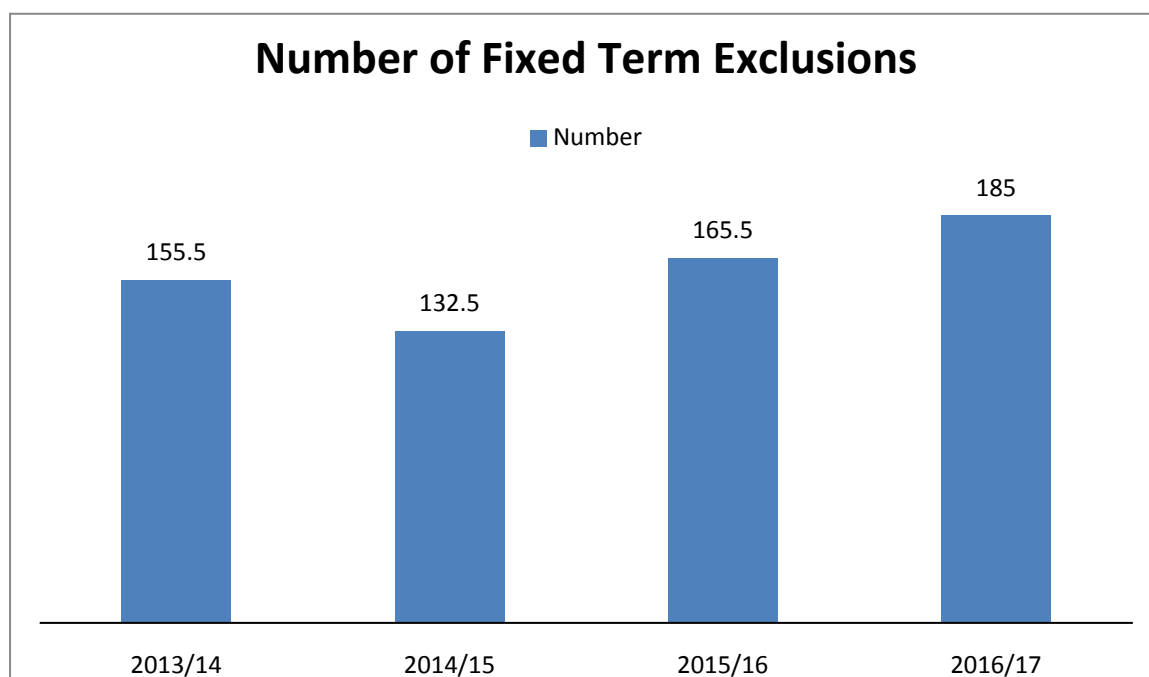
The Virtual School receives daily updates from Looked After Call for any pupil who is absent or excluded. If a pupil is absent and this is unauthorised the social worker and foster carer is contacted by Looked After Call to find out the reason why s/he is not at school. This system compliments the safeguarding measures that are in place for individual schools and prevents delay when a student may be missing.

The Virtual School is supportive of the DFE Absence protocols and only supports holiday or absence in term time in extenuating circumstances and supports the school of the particular pupil if they are given an unauthorised absence if planned absence is taken without the school's consent.

An attendance policy is in place and this is reviewed by the Headteacher annually and put forward to the Governing Body to approve.

Fixed Term Exclusions

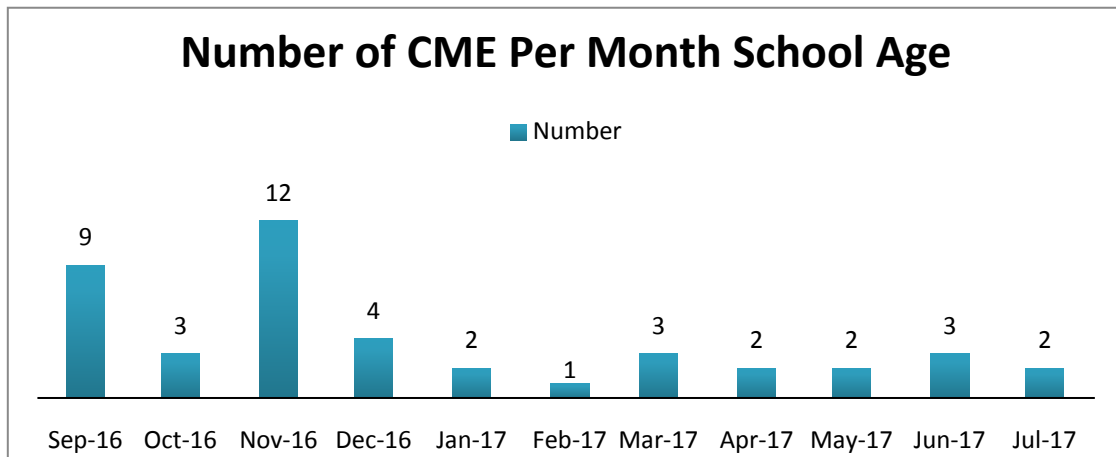
Wherever possible we encourage schools to avoid fixed term exclusions. At times this is not possible due to the child/young person's behaviour. A review of needs and support is always made whenever a CLA pupil is excluded. Although the number of exclusions has risen, it equates to a total number of 18 pupils who had exclusions during the academic year due to their challenging behaviour. There have been no permanent exclusions of CLA for a four year period. For the following academic year we will be setting school improvement targets to address the increase in fixed-term exclusion rates and increasing our level of challenge to schools who exclude.



Children Missing Education [CME]

The Local Authority carefully monitors any child missing education for those CLA placed in and out of borough. The Virtual School produces weekly data for any child who is missing education due to lack of a school place or through extended absence. This data is shared and discussed in Directors Management Team monthly. Monthly CME data is available and provided to Governors on a termly basis. The Virtual School takes action which is individualised to meet the needs of the pupils and where necessary, works with the Admissions Team, Inclusion Manager and SEN Service teams in Thurrock and other boroughs to secure school places or alternative

provision. For pupils who are without an educational placement, a Personal Education Plan [PEP] meeting is held to plan actions for how to secure education provision. Wherever possible the Virtual School provides tuition through Fleet Tuition Services whilst a student is between educational placements. For the following academic year 2017/18 the Virtual School will also be commissioning an online tuition service to support those who are missing education. This is a company which currently serves a variety of Virtual Schools in other authorities and we are hoping that this can be a far speedier response for students who are missing education as this tuition can be set up within 48 hours.



The table highlights a fluctuation of figures and this very much depends on the profile of pupils coming into care and whether they have education prior to becoming looked after or if they have to move away from their school due to placement availability in borough. The figures are relatively low, however, the virtual school staff work very hard to access education as soon as they are made aware that there is a child missing education.

Child Sexual Exploitation [CSE]

All Virtual School Staff have attended Child Sexual Exploitation Training. Particular attention is paid to Children Missing Education through lack of school place or poor attendance as this is a potential factor for making a pupil vulnerable and higher risk of CSE. The Virtual School works very closely with all services to minimise the risk of child sexual exploitation for our children/young people in and out of borough. The authority holds a fortnightly meeting where a range of partners from health, youth offending services, WIZE Up, the police, mental health, education welfare and education attend. In this meeting all vulnerable pupils are discussed and actions are directed to provide the necessary support. The Virtual School attend Strategy Meetings when required to discuss pupils at risk of CSE and when they are missing from placement. Separate data is available through the social care liquid logic children's system which details every child/young person's CSE risk assessment and actions taken to support them. This data is held and reported separately from this

document. The Virtual School is not responsible for collating this data but can access it if required.

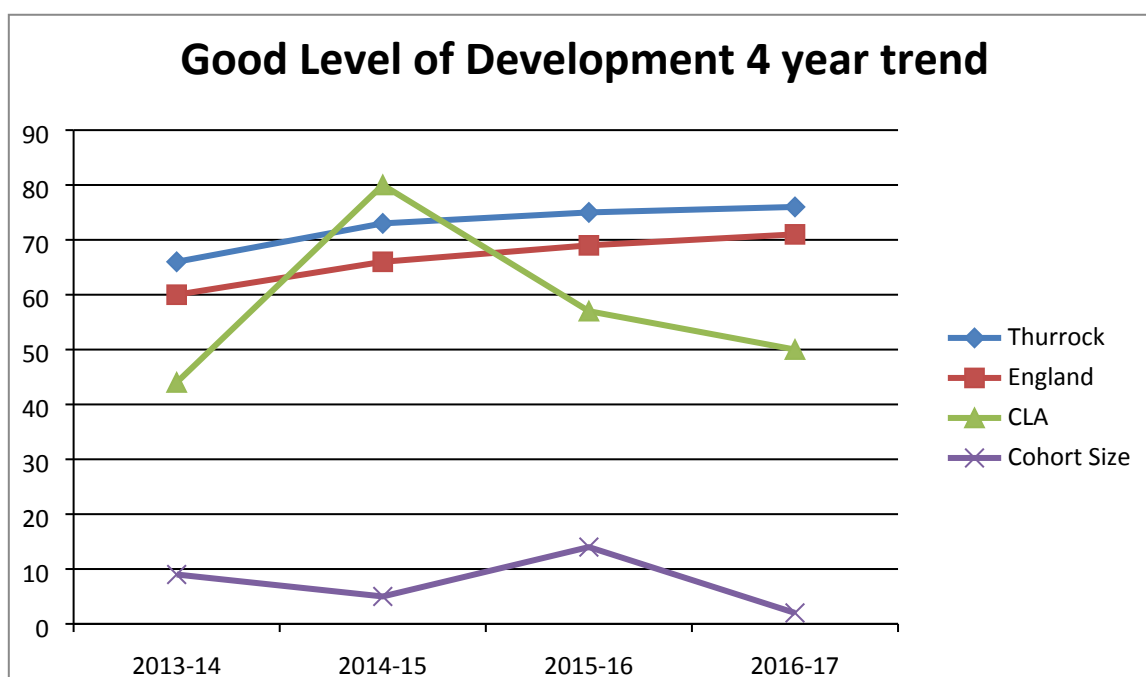
Attainment Data of CLA

Early Years Foundation Stage 2017

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.

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.

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.



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.

The provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA demonstrates a declining trend. However, this result is based on 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.

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.

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.

At the time of writing this report only 2 pupils have moved year group in the Virtual School cohort up to Year 1 as the others are no longer looked after.

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.

- Ensure that pupils in Nursery have a termly PEP meeting with a member of the Early Years Team co-ordinating this to check that they are making appropriate progress and that Early Years Pupil Premium funding is being allocated to suit individual needs and measuring impact of this.

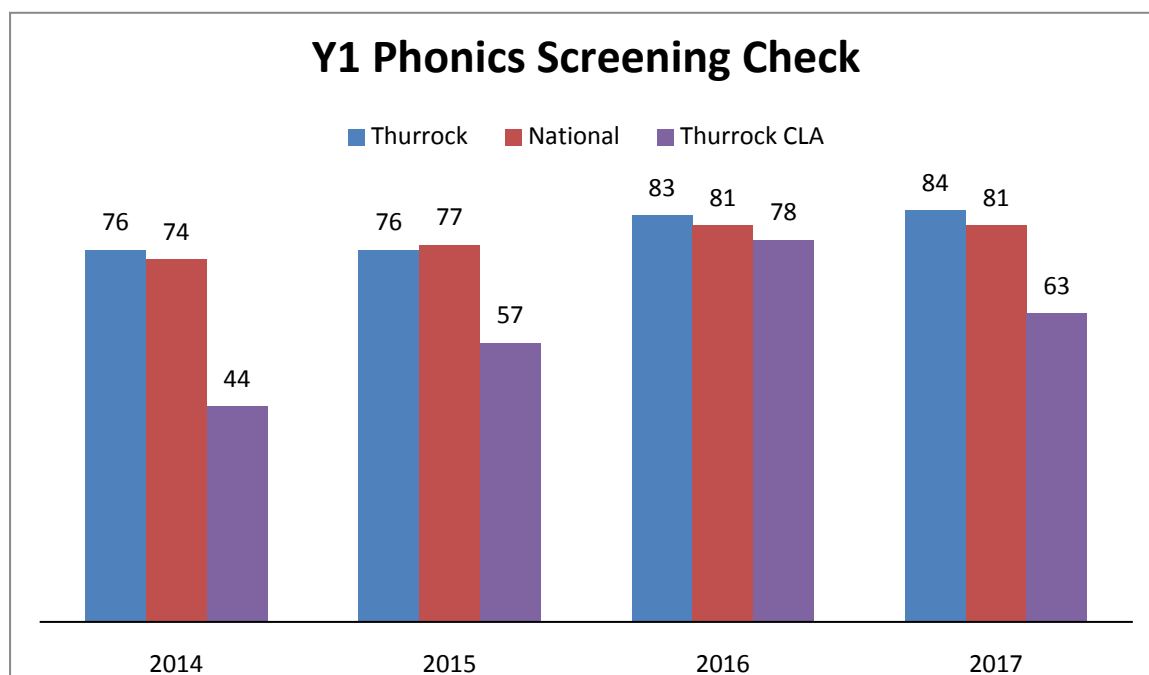
Year 1 Phonics Score Results 2017

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 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.

This is illustrated in the table below

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



The data is fluctuating however, it is difficult to gauge trends when analysing such 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

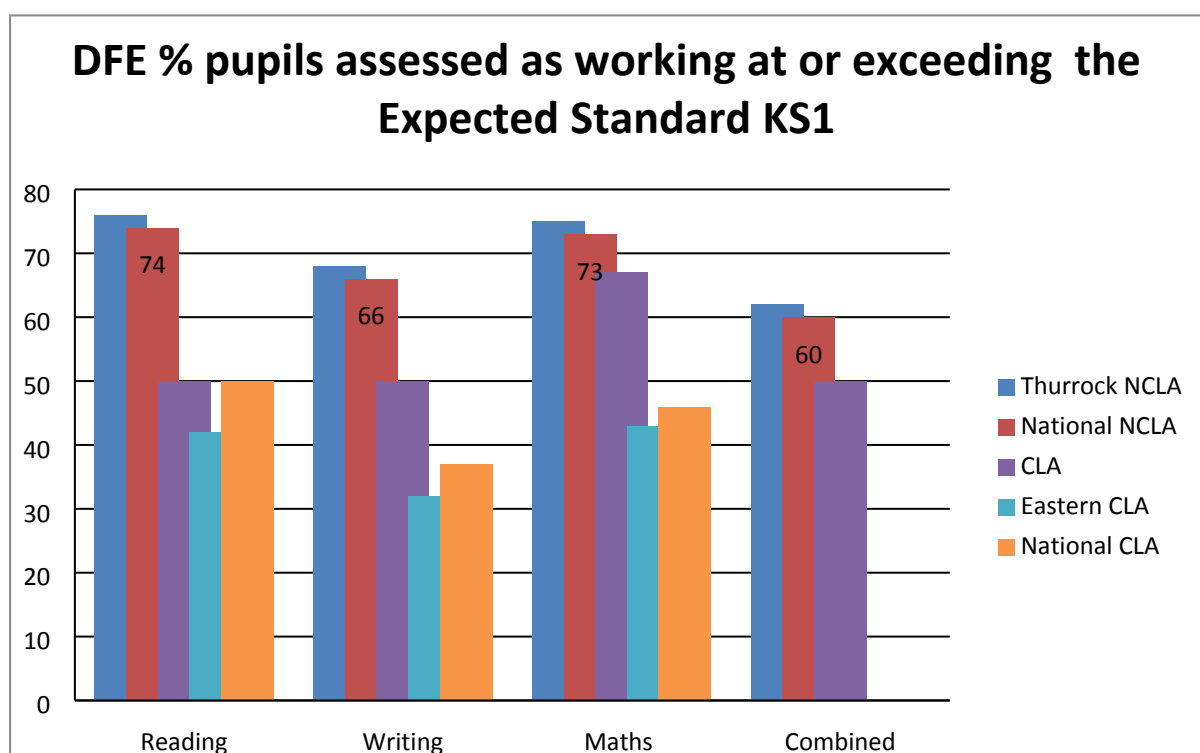
role to play in supporting the acquisition of phonics and early reading skills. In particular, regular sharing of books and completing phonic activities at home.

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

This year the Virtual School will continue to speak with schools to discuss their phonics 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.

Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2016

Validated data



Graph of Validated 2016 Data Comparing Thurrock CLA to National and Eastern

The previous annual report demonstrated indicative data for all pupils in the Virtual School cohort for 2016 irrespective of their length of time in care. The data shown in the table above is validated data which the Department for Education use for those pupils in care for more than a year.

When comparing the performance of Thurrock Children Looked after against the performance of all CLA nationally and those within the Eastern Region boroughs

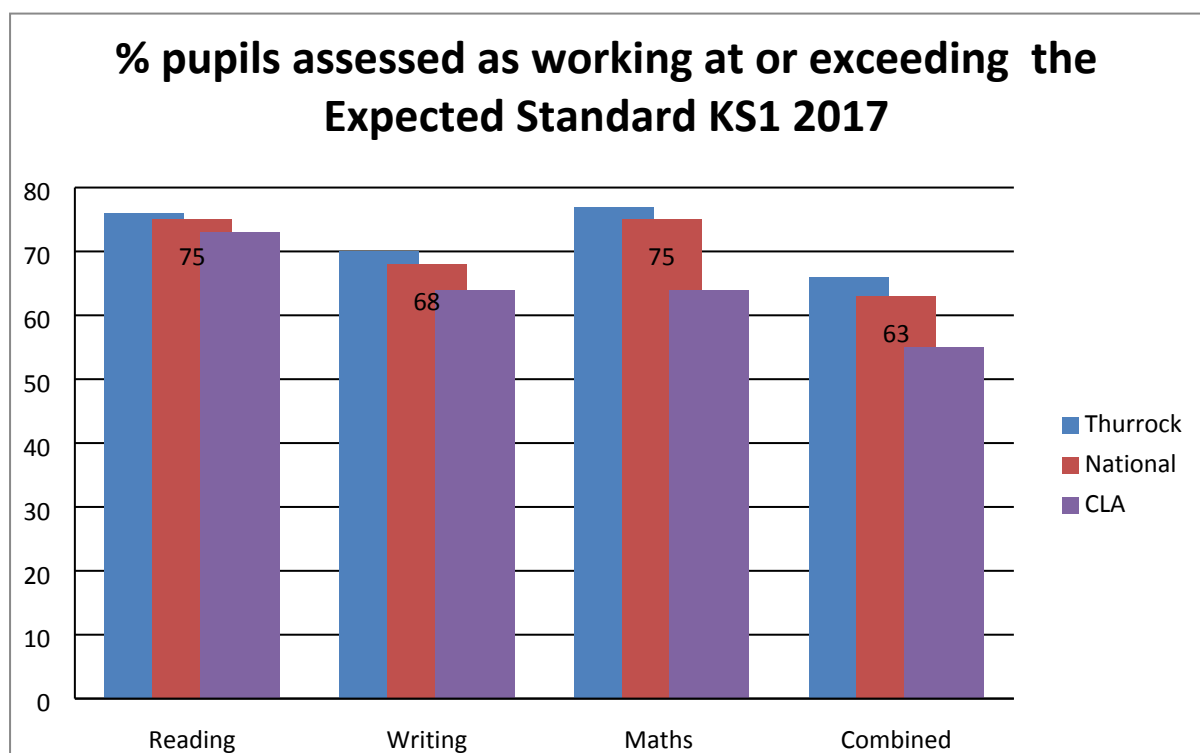
Thurrock CLA are exceeding in writing and maths and were in line nationally and above Eastern for reading.

Key Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2017

Non-Validated data

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

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]

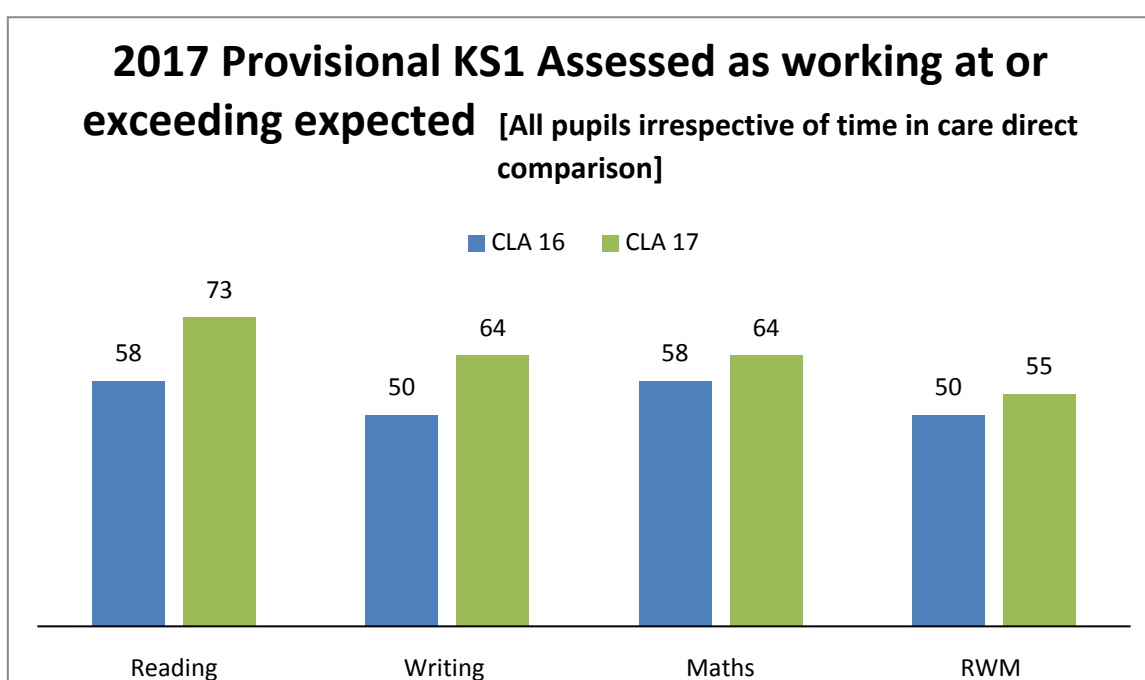
Table of Results of Thurrock CLA [11 pupils in cohort] 2017

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

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, 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.

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.



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. 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.

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. All pupils across the year made expected progress based upon their individual targets and prior attainment.

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 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 [25%] out of the 4 who did not reach GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage reached the expected standard at KS1.

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.

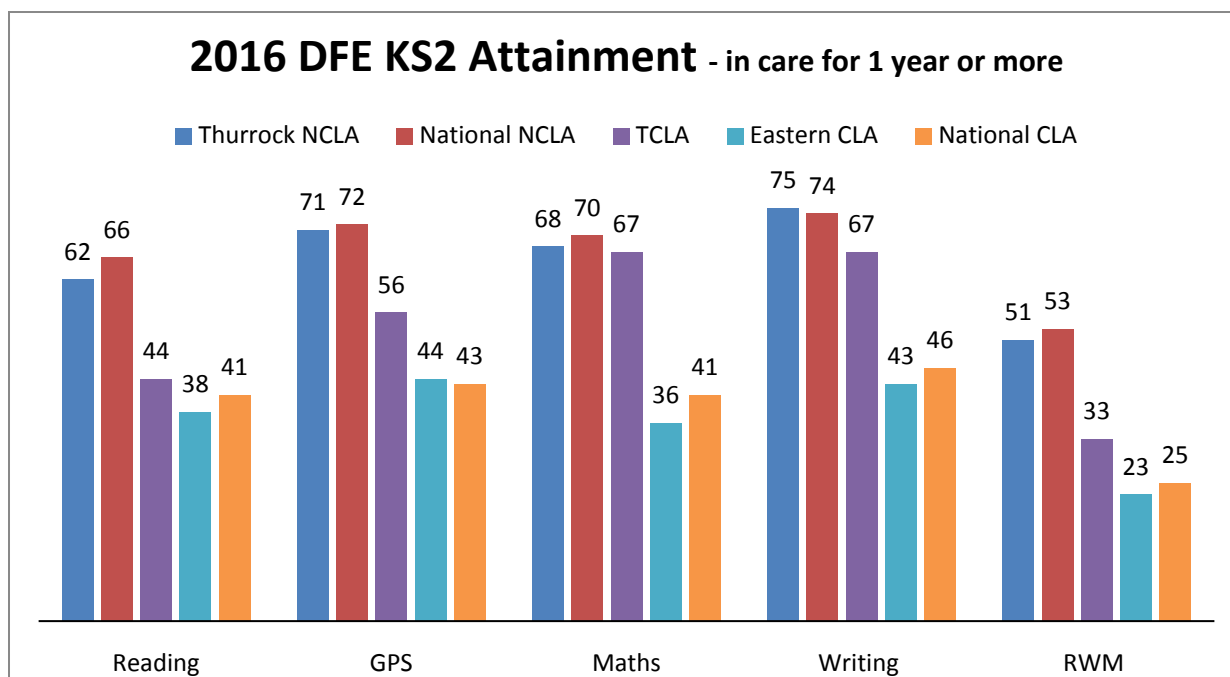
It should also be noted that 5 pupils [45%] have left care during the academic year; however, data has still been collected as they were looked after at some point during this academic year.

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

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' 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.

Key Stage 2 SATS 2016
Validated Data



The previous annual report provided details of the Non-Validated data for the KS2 2016 SATS. The above data is validated data which displays the performance of Thurrock CLA who have been in care for 1 year or more compared to those nationally and in the Eastern Region.

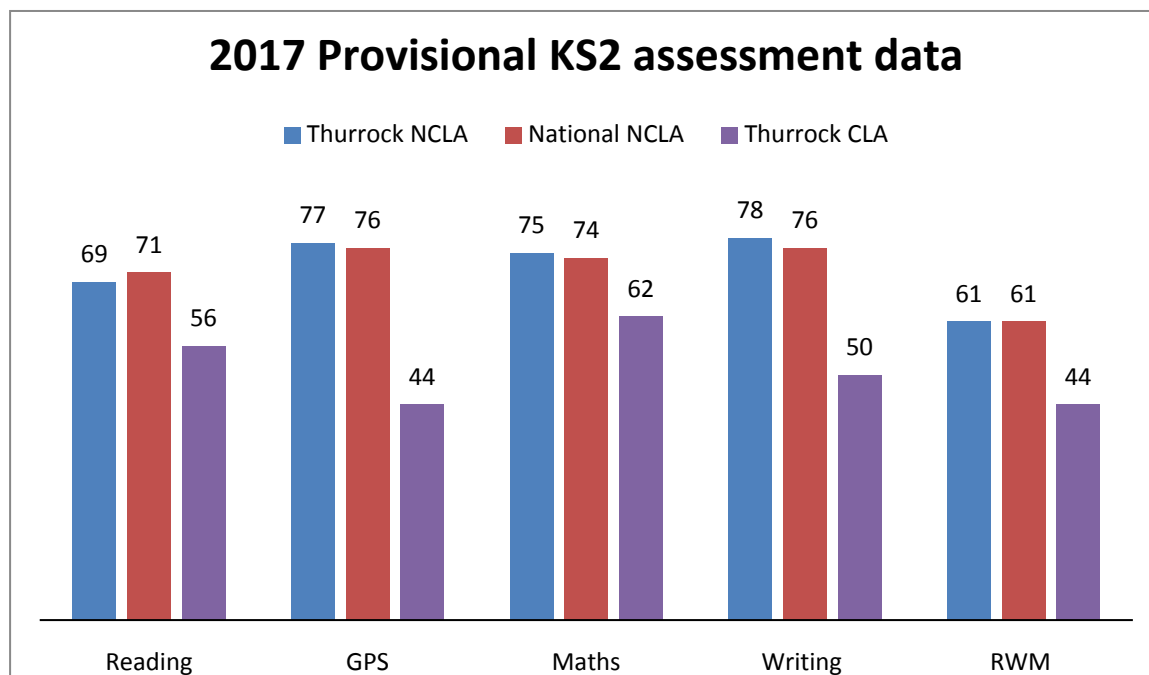
Thurrock Children Looked After performed better than national and Eastern Region CLA. Performance was significant in the areas of writing, GPS and maths. The DFE Statistical First Release shows that Thurrock CLA progress from KS1 and KS2 was exceptional and significantly above National and Regional CLA rates of progress.

Key Stage 2 SATS 2017
Non-Validated Data

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.

The cohort size for the 2017 Key Stage 2 SATS was 16 pupils. There were a further 7 pupils who were disappled 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.

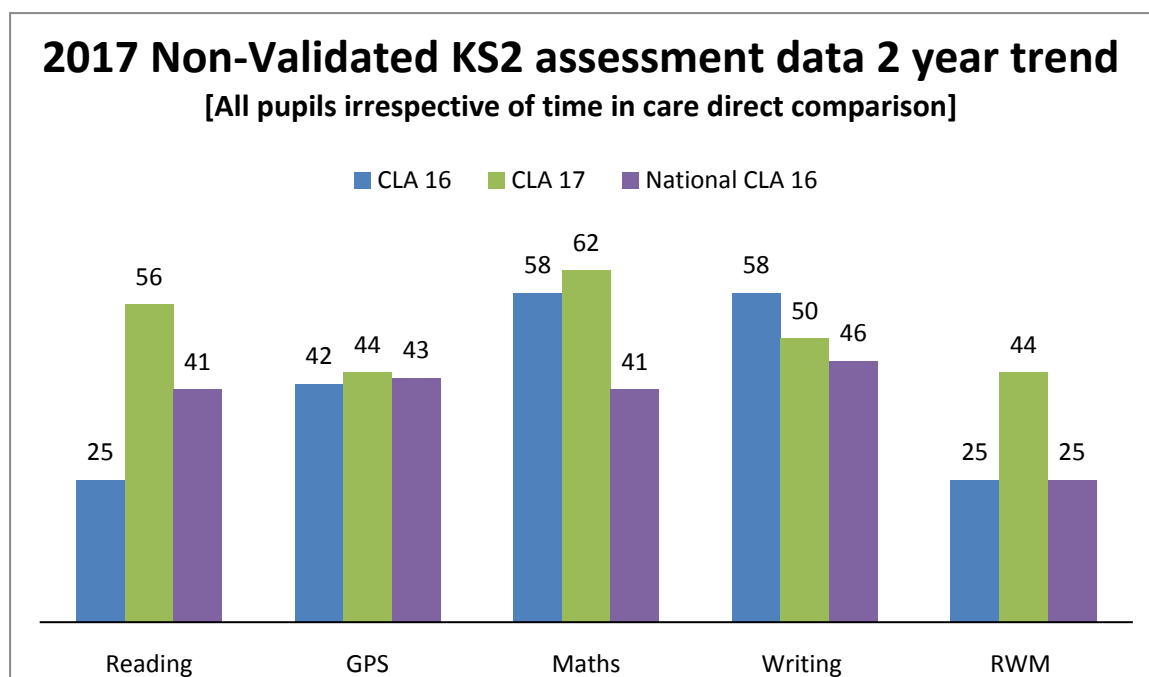
For Thurrock CLA the statistics for those achieving the expected standard were as follows: reading 56% [9 pupils], GPS 44% [7 pupils], maths 62% [10 pupils] and writing was 50% [8 pupils]. The graph below illustrates the comparisons with non-CLA nationally and all pupils in Thurrock for 2017 results. 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]

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.

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.



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.

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.

Prior attainment at Key Stage 1 for this cohort was low with only 8 pupils [50%] were 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.

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.

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%]

Those who were disapplied by 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	

Planned interventions as a result of data for 2017 Year 6 Cohort:

- Virtual school staff visiting every current Year 6 pupil's school in Autumn 17/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.

Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2016

Validated results - DFE Statistical First Release Results

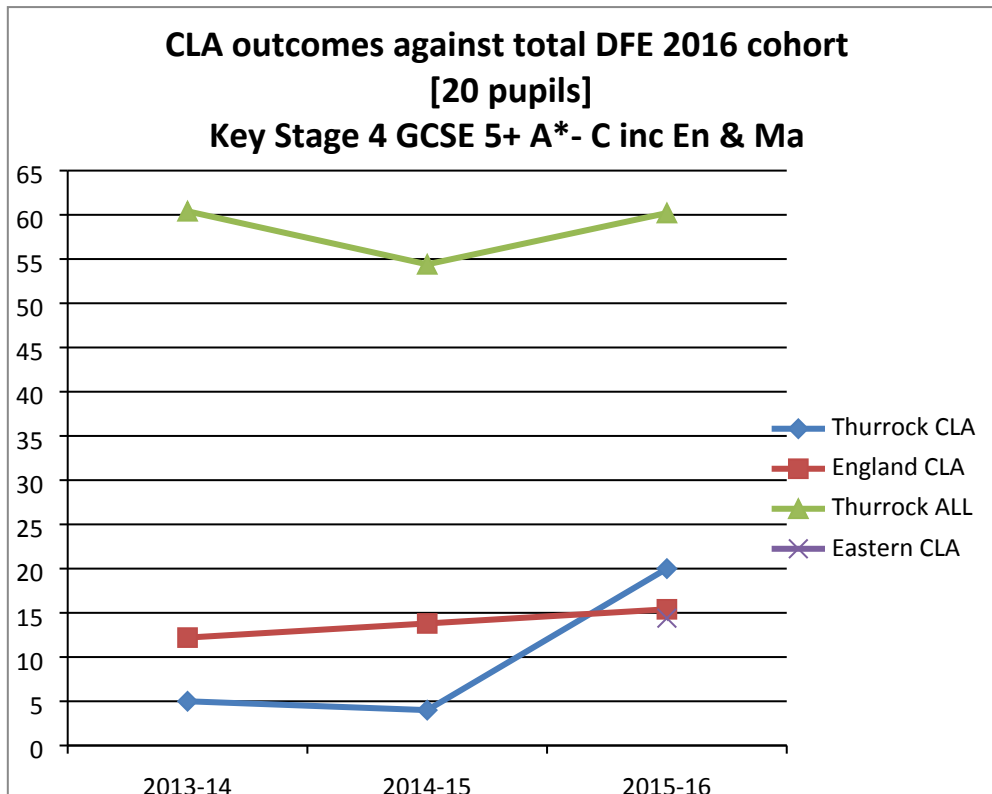
Results for Thurrock CLA show an improvement from last year and the gap against national CLA is starting to close.

GCSE KS4 (age 16)

Provisional results for Thurrock CLA showed an improvement from last year and the gap against National CLA is starting to close. The data provided for the previous annual report and Corporate Parenting Committee in January 17 was based upon a cohort size of 55 pupils. The Department for Education [DFE] Statistical First Release Data provides attainment information for 20 pupils who were in care for 12 months or more. DFE data verifies that there is an upward trend and a closing of the gap for KS4 attainment with Thurrock CLA performing above National and Eastern Region CLA for 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and maths and in the new measures of Progress 8 and Attainment 8.

DFE data shows that 4 pupils [20%] of the total DFE cohort of 20 pupils achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths.

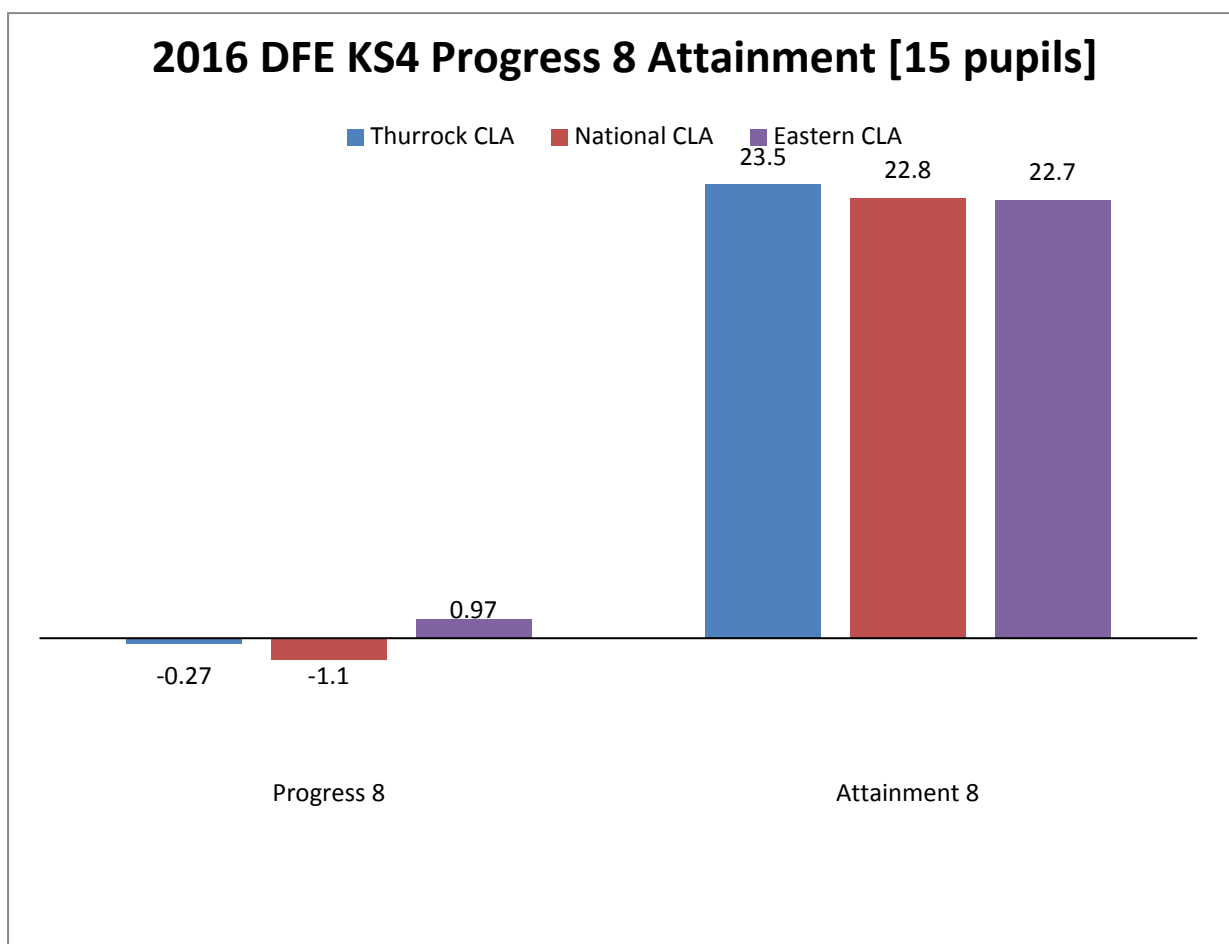
The graph below highlights the improvement in outcomes against national CLA data and Thurrock all pupils' data. The Virtual School is very proud of the achievements of these young people and it should now be noted that many of our students who missed either English or Maths by 1 grade have already achieved their C grade or are in the process of re-sitting during Year 12. We are currently waiting for their results.



DFE Validated Thurrock CLA results 2016

An additional attainment measure for KS4 was introduced in the academic year 2015/16. This is called Progress 8 and Attainment 8. This is beyond the 5 GCSEs benchmark and now focusses on students achieving an even higher standard of 8 GCSEs graded above C or above 4 in English and Maths. The chart below illustrates the success that our 15 eligible young people achieved against national and regional CLA.

Progress 8 and Attainment 8 data is very favourable for Thurrock CLA compared to national and the Eastern region. A score of 0.27 is very good as the national average is 0 and the aim is to be as close to 0 as possible. Thurrock CLA's Attainment 8 data is higher than national and Eastern region. This means that in all areas of performance at Key Stage 4, Thurrock CLA have performed better than national and Eastern region CLA.



DFE Validated Data Thurrock CLA results 2016

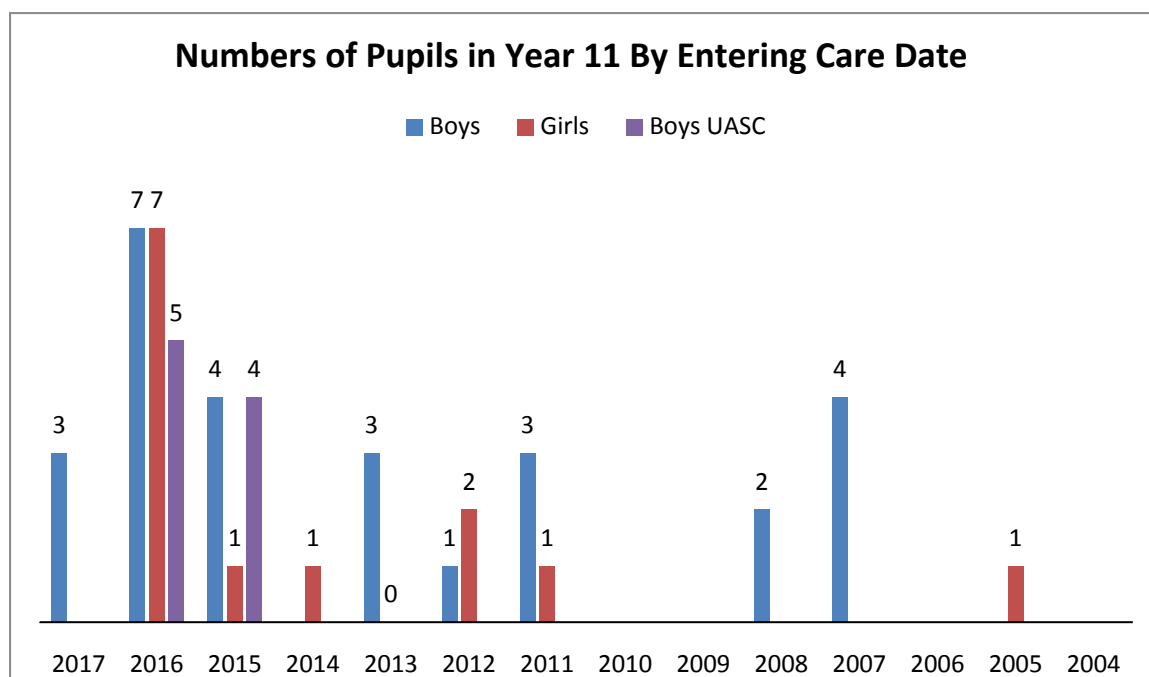
Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2017

Non-Validated Results

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 irrespective of the length of time in care.

The information used for this report is currently Non-Validated data.



The graph above shows the period when various pupils in Year 11 became looked after. Potentially the length of time in care will affect educational outcomes.

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.

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.

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.

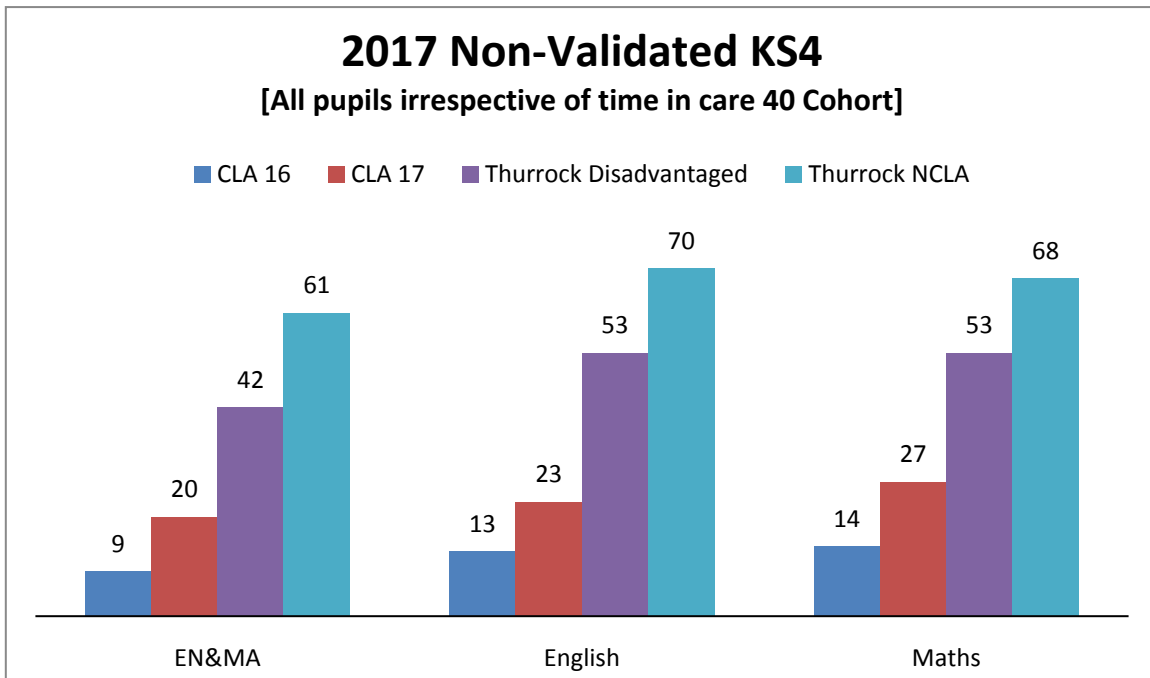
Key Headline Data [Cohort of 40]:

- 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.

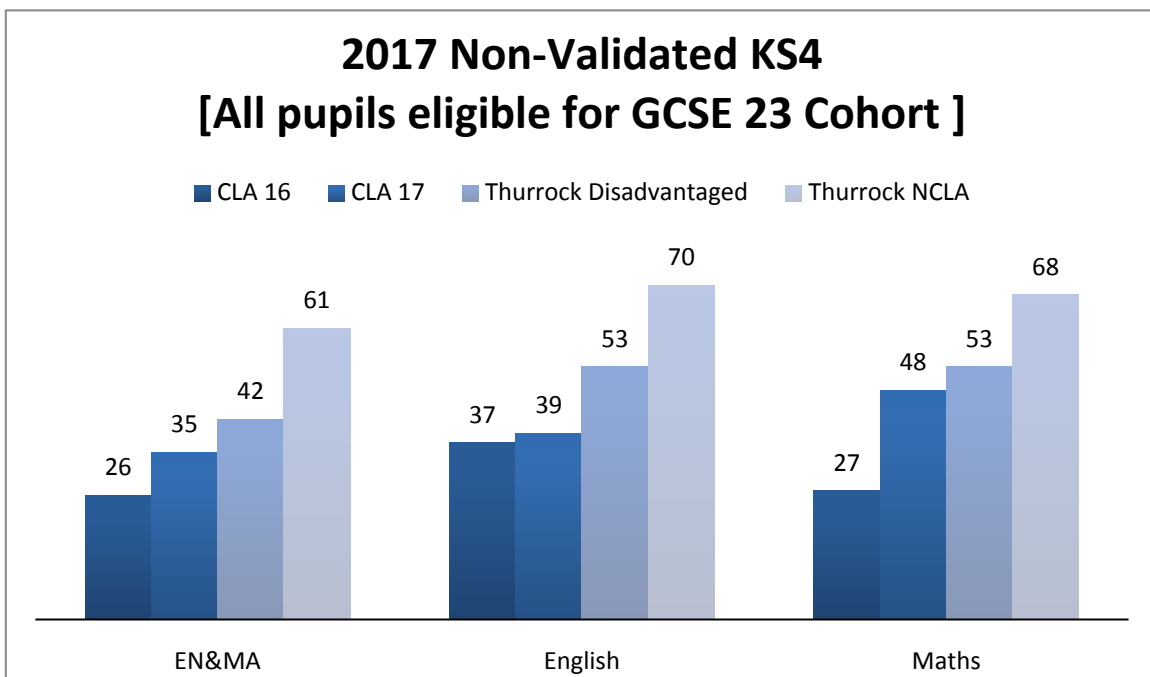
Key Headline Data [Cohort of 23 eligible for GCSE]:

- 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.

The graphs below demonstrate the improvements that Thurrock CLA pupils 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.

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.

Additional Information for Key Stage 4 Cohort

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 educational outcomes

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Planned interventions as a result of 2017 data

The Virtual School will continue with key actions that were begun last year and some additional measures are being taken.

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.

Summary of Analysis for all Key Stages

Key Headlines of Actions from All Data Collections

What are we doing as a result of this year's performance?

- Increasing capacity of the Virtual School team through two full time staff members joining as Education Advisers for Primary and Post 16. A Secondary post vacancy should be filled from January 2018
- Virtual School Team continuing to attend PEP meetings to raise the level of challenge and accountability, particularly for those in Year 11
- Transition of EYFS into Year 1 tracked and supported
- Phonics progress for Year 1 and Year 2 tracked
- Every Year 6,7,10 and 11 LAC to have a PEP meeting in the Autumn term 17
- All Year 10s and 11s and Year 6 being visited in their school by VS team
- Year 6 targeted in Autumn 17 or Spring 18
- Current Year 2 predictions and pupils targeted where necessary in Spring term 18
- Pupil Premium Plus Grant allocations and monitoring for impact in raising attainment and progress
- Raising expectations in PEP compliance across all aspects of the service. Linking provision of the Pupil Premium Plus funding with the quality of the PEP.

School Improvement Priorities

These are detailed in the Virtual School Improvement Plan which is updated at the start of every academic year. Priorities are identified and actions are detailed related to SMART targets which form the basis of the Virtual School's work across the academic year.

The aim of this document is to promote the raising of educational outcomes for all of our Children Looked After.

Key Priorities for 2016/2017 were

To improve achievement of all pupils by:

- Improving the attainment and progress of Children Looked After (CLA) to be in line with or above the national average outcomes for CLA

This key priority was achieved in all areas as evidenced in this report.

- Improving the attendance and reducing the number of fixed term exclusions of CLA to ensure that they are receiving the maximum entitlement of education

Attendance figures have improved this year, however the number of fixed term exclusions has not reduced due to specific cases mentioned in this report.

- Raise the quality of the PEP meeting and PEP documentation as a key driver for improving pupil academic outcomes by supporting needs and raising expectations

This is always an area for development as pupils come into care, new social workers join the team and schools that are new to Thurrock processes, need support. This priority remains a key focus for improvement but PEP compliance for completion and quality has improved across this academic year.

- Improving systems of tracking, analysis and accountability to support educational outcomes for CLA.

Robust systems for tracking all pupils irrespective of placement location are in place. Accountability has been improved through the creation of the Virtual School Governing Body.

Allocation and Impact of the Pupil Premium

The management of the Pupil Premium Plus grant for Children Looked After is detailed in the DFE guidance [Pupil premium grant 2014 to 2015: conditions of grant](#) and [Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities](#).

During this academic year a Pupil Premium Policy has been developed by the Virtual School and approved by the Virtual School Governing Body. This policy details the ideology and method behind allocation.

This information is shared with schools. The educational settings receive £1,500 which is allocated over three terms. The Virtual School Headteacher tracks spending on a termly basis in line with the quality assurance process of PEPS. This tracking centres on how this money is raising the achievement of the child/young person and assesses if funds are being used appropriately. This process, alongside the PEP

process is supporting the pupil to have targeted support and intervention which directly affects and plans for his/her academic and overall school achievement with a personalised approach. It is enabling the Virtual School to be updated on progress data and enables discussion with the school to centre on appropriate intervention. This system promotes accountability and improved dialogue in how to raise attainment and achievement and narrow the gap. [Separate Pupil Premium documentation is available on request]

The Virtual School top sliced £400 per pupil for the academic year and used this to provide centralised resources to support the most vulnerable in the cohort.

For example:

- Education was provided for those Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers who could not access education. A tuition programme for 15 hours per week of English Spoken as an Other Language [ESOL] for a year was provided, including during the school holidays. The top slice funded £36,000 for this. This enabled pupils to move into college placements and learn key English and learning skills.
- Additional tuition for Year 11 pupils was provided in English and maths and £20,000 was allocated for this. This supported pupils who achieve better GCSE grades and provide them with confidence and support for the exams.
- Provision of alternative provision for students at risk of permanent exclusion to enable them to access education.
- Provision of equipment to support learning for some students.
- Commissioning of education consultants to provide targeted support for schools and social workers to ensure high quality PEPs were in place.

Quality Assurance of Personal Education Plans

The Personal Education Plan [PEP] is a key document to support the child's/young person's education. Where possible the Virtual School attends specific PEP meetings and particular emphasis has been made on key year groups for the academic year 2016/17. This is further detailed in the Roles and Functions of the Virtual School document. It is also important that the Virtual School attends PEP meetings for particularly vulnerable students or when a potential issue has been identified. For example, concern with progress. The Virtual School Headteacher [VSH/T] is responsible for Quality Assuring [QA] every PEP. During this process particular attention is made to progress data, school provision, support from the foster carer, the pupil's views and the quality of educational targets that are set. If a PEP is judged to be of poor quality the Headteacher challenges the appropriate professional to ensure that this is rectified. The VSH/T keeps a tracking sheet of PEP compliance and notes down comments or actions as part of the QA process. The Directors Management Team asks for sample PEPs from all year groups as part of the QA process. The Virtual School has written a PEP procedure policy to ensure that all those with responsibility for the PEP have clear guidelines and expectations around this process. This has been approved by the Governors of the Virtual School

and is provided to schools, colleges and social workers to set expectations for the production of a high quality PEP.

Post 16 Update

The Virtual School supports pupils who have left Year 11 and are moving onto the next stage of their education. Pupils take a variety of paths either through level 1, 2 or 3, FE or HE qualifications. Others combine apprenticeships with obtaining qualifications. Every pupil is supported appropriately to create the next step that is suitable for them. Conversations regarding post 16 pathways are discussed in Year 10. Transition is discussed before the student leaves Year 11 and students are supported with applying for college positions and courses. After the students receive their qualifications they are further supported to apply for places again if they were unsuccessful with their original choice and all can access support from the Virtual School 16+ worker if necessary with activities such as applying for a bursary, receiving additional tuition, interventions and attendance at disruption meeting with colleges and employers. Further Education Personal Education Plans are put in place for every student, even those without an educational placement. The Virtual School works closely with the aftercare team to support pupils in Year 13 and beyond. In the Year 2016, 8 pupils are currently in university.

Not in Education Employment or Training [NEET]

The Virtual School closely monitors any post 16 young person who has CLA status and who is NEET. They are monitored fortnightly and the Post 16+ Support Worker works with the young person, social care, personal advisors in Thurrock, the Diversity in Apprenticeships team and local colleges and businesses to create the best possible opportunity for the young person to be placed in education, employment or training. Thurrock Council's aim is to have no NEET Looked after Children. NEET data is provided to the Virtual School Governing Body every term as part of the Headteacher's report.

Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

There has been a substantial demand for the provision of education for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC]. The population figures of this group have increased dramatically over the past 2 years and there has been a high demand for providing education. The Virtual School has been proactive in working with the local college and additional Post 16 providers out of borough to devise bespoke English Studied as an Other Language [ESOL] provision. This has enabled our young people to be able to access pre-ESOL and ESOL courses across an academic year. This has been a huge success as prior to that there was no ESOL provision available in borough and limited available out of borough in some authorities. Additionally the Virtual School have worked with Fleet Tuition services to provide ESOL group tuition. This originally begun as 5 hours per week, then it expanded to 10 hour due to demand and since September 2016 it increased to 15

hours per week. This was for students who were not able to access formal education due to the lack of availability of places or the pupils' current stage of English. The impact of this has been substantial as it enabled UASC to access education and ultimately progress onto more academic Level 1 and 2 courses.

During the 2016/17 academic year the Virtual School have worked closely with the UASC team to support the educational outcomes of these pupils. The numbers of UASC pupils are decreasing due to the eastern region distributing arrangements which has meant that other boroughs are have taken responsibility for these young peoples.

Virtual School Governing Body

The Virtual School Governing Body [GB] was formed in the autumn term 2016. Four meetings have been held over the academic year. The GB will continue to meet very term to discuss strategy for the Virtual School. The members of this GB 2016/17 were:

Chair: R Patterson [Director of Children's Services]

Vice Chair: R Edwardson [Head of Education]

Headteacher: K Pullen

In Borough School Representative: Dr S Asong [CEO The Stanford and Corringham Schools Trust]

Out of Borough School Representative: B Read [HT R J Mitchell Primary School]

Post 16 Education Representative: M Cekerevac [Student Services Manager Safeguarding and Pastoral for South Essex Colleges]

Social Care Representative: P Coke [Service Manager for CLA]

Social Care Representative: A Carter [Head of Social Care]

Observer: G Page [CLA Advisory Achievement Assistant]

For the academic year 17/18 S Murphy replaces A Carter as the post holder of Head of Social Care

The purpose of the Governing Body is to hold the VSHT to account and to ensure that clear and regular lines of reporting are in place. The VSHT prepares a range of documentation for the GB to approve and to question the strategy and decisions made by the VSHT. For example: attendance policy, PEP protocol, Pupil Premium Plus Policy.

In addition the VSHT reports to the Corporate Parenting Committee on a regular basis.

Additional Strategies to support the educational progress of Thurrock Children in Care

Working in Partnership with other Teams in Thurrock Council and out of borough councils

The Virtual School works with a range of teams within Thurrock to enable the best possible outcomes for our CLA. These include School Improvement and Inclusion, Social Care, Special Educational Needs including Educational Psychologists, Fostering, Health, Admissions and Education Welfare. This cohesive approach works together around the child/young person to create a supportive, knowledgeable level of service aimed at serving the best interest of the CLA.

The Virtual School also works with the relevant teams in other boroughs for our CLA who are placed out of borough.

Foster Carer Forums

These provide opportunities to share good practice, provide key messages and obtain valuable feedback and insight into the factors affecting the CLA. The VSHT has been meeting at Foster Carer support groups to provide key information about Pupil Premium Plus and Electronic Personal Education Plans. Foster carer forum meetings started in Spring Term 16 and will continue to happen once per term. These covered a range of topics including using EPEP. In addition the VSHT attends new foster carer forums and provides induction training.

Designated Teacher Forums

As with the Foster Carer forums, the aim of this is to disseminate key messages, improve lines of communication, foster good partnership working and discuss issues affecting our CLA in schools. These are held every half term by the Virtual School Head.

General Support for Foster Carers and Designated Teachers

The Virtual School provides a range of telephone and face to face advice and support and prides itself on being able to deliver a good level of service. Our approachable manner enables us to have good relationships with these key professionals to enable us to work together for the best outcomes of our pupils.

Social Worker Training and Support

The Virtual School adopts a flexible and responsive approach to the support and training needs of our social workers. The Virtual School Head attends briefings and team meetings with social care to disseminate good practice.

Liaison with Schools

This is a vital part in supporting the CLA as the Virtual School works closely with in and out of borough schools to ensure that pupils are supported within their educational placement. We offer support and advice on a range of areas such as behaviour, raising attainment and narrowing the gap. The Virtual School provides challenge and makes schools accountable to their statutory duties to ensure that pupils are treated and supported appropriately to meet their varying needs. Part of this also includes providing training to school governors.

Advice and Guidance for previous CLA and adopted children

The Virtual School also provides advice and guidance for those pupils who were previously looked after. This would be particularly relevant for adopted children and their schools and families to ensure that their needs are appropriately supported.

Attendance at PEP Meetings

Wherever possible and if appropriate, the Virtual School attends PEP meetings to model good practice, raise accountability, monitor the pupils' education and provision and ensure that the PEP process is thorough in supporting the CLA's education. We endeavour to attend the first PEP for every new CLA pupil and attend PEP meetings for those pupils who may be experiencing difficulties in their learning.

Fleet Tuition Services

Many schools use tuition as part of their pupil premium spend. There are occasions when additional tuition is needed. The Virtual School commissions the services of Fleet Tuition. The One to One Tuition Programme for CLA was created to provide additional academic support for children who are not currently reaching their potential or may be missing school. Generally one-one tuition is used to help pupils who face academic barriers in any subject and the Virtual School works closely with schools, foster carers, social workers and the pupil to ensure that the right tuition is matched to needs. It is not possible to provide one-one tuition for every pupil and so this resource is targeted to suit needs and support requirements.

Attendance Monitoring

Thurrock Virtual School commissions the services of an external provider called Looked After Call to monitor the attendance of all of our Children Looked After in and out of borough attending schools and colleges. All pupils are monitored on a daily basis. If pupils are not attending school an alert is created to ascertain where the pupil is and why they are not at school. This promotes the safeguarding of our pupils and promotes good attendance. It also enables the Virtual School to monitor any exclusions, attendance or punctuality issues. The Virtual School has a clear Attendance Policy which provides a rationale behind why attendance is given high priority and this can be read in conjunction with this report.

Author of this report

Keeley Pullen BA [Hons] PGCE NPQH

Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Thurrock Children Looked After

Submitted to Governors 28th September 2017

Submitted to Corporate Parenting Committee 6th December 2017