

15 January 2019		ITEM: 7
Corporate Parenting Committee		
The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After – Academic Year 2017-2018		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Keeley Pullen, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Interim Assistant Director of Learning, Inclusion 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] is 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 attainment outcomes for pupils in the Virtual School cohort for the academic year 2016-2017 for those pupils in care for one year or more. This data was presented to Corporate Parents in June 2018.

In addition, the report details the non-validated data outcomes for pupils for the academic year 2017-2018 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 broad 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 27th September 2018.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 The Committee notes the non-validated DFE outcomes of the summer 2018 teacher assessment, 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 That the Committee notes that prior attainment for pupils will impact on attainment in later years and CLA in care have made good progress.**
- 1.5 The Committee approves the Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for the academic year 2017-2018 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, 2017 and indicative data suggest that this has been at least maintained in 2018.

- 2.1.1 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)

- 2.1.2 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.

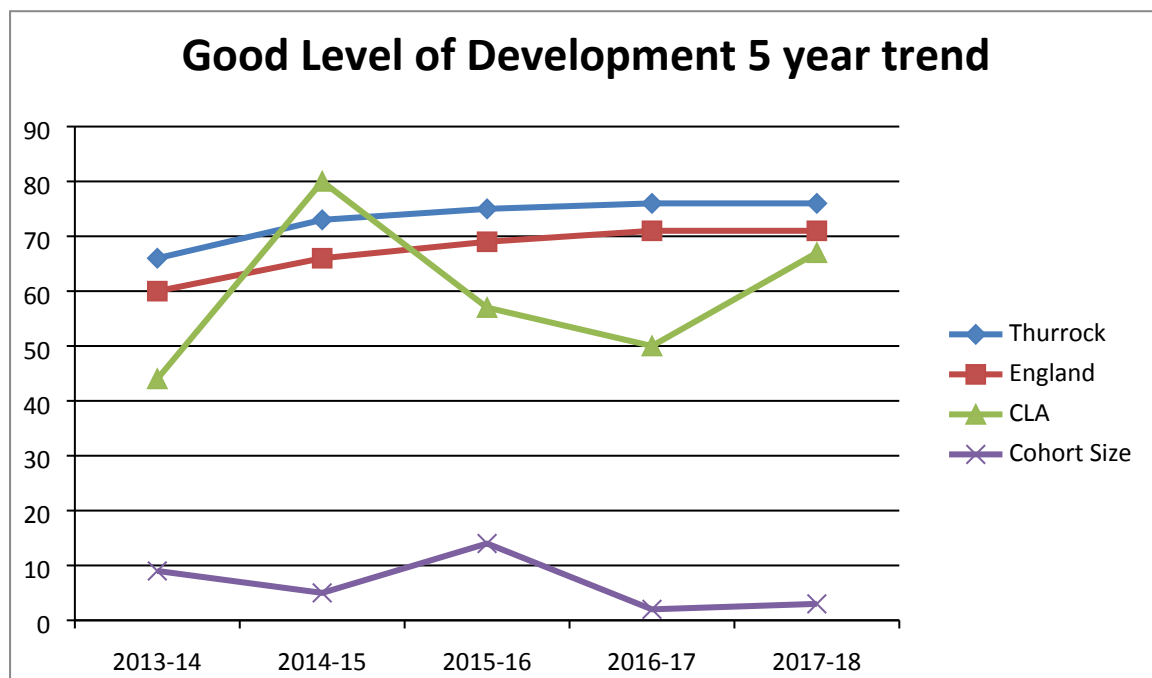
3. Attainment for Children Looked After

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 5 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 For the 2017/18 academic year the provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA demonstrates an improving trend with attainment at 67%, a 17% increase on the previous year. However, this result is based on 3 pupils who were in care for a period of 1 year or more. These 3 pupils [30%] of the cohort became CLA prior to April 2017. 1 of these pupils had SEND.

3.1.6 There were a further 7 pupils [70% of the cohort] who were in care at some stage during their reception year but these were in care for less than their academic reception year. 5 pupils [50%] became looked after in the summer term 2018 and a further 2 pupils [20%] became CLA in the autumn term. Of the 7 pupils who were in care for less than the academic year, none of these pupils achieved GLD. As they have not been in care for a long period, these pupils have gaps in their prior learning. They were not attending early years provision prior to becoming looked after or they had missed a significant amount of their early years curriculum. This has caused developmental delay and their schools have been providing extra staffing and/or interventions to support their learning and help them to diminish the difference. They have made good progress since becoming looked after. The Personal Education Plan has been used to identify areas for development and levels of intervention and support to meet needs.

3.1.7 The academic profile of the 2017/18 cohort saw that 50% of the 10 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.

3.1.8 **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 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 Plus allocation and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided based upon needs
- Link with schools needing additional support
- Obtain on entry data for current 2018/19 Year R cohort to enable the measurement of progress.
- Create provision maps for each child with their school to detail rates of progress and impact of interventions
- Support the application of Education of Health Care Plans for those SEN support pupils who are not making rapid progress
- Provision of the Literacy Book Trust home learning resources to Nursery and Reception age pupils
- Provision of phonics learning pack for carers to use at home with Nursery and Reception pupils.

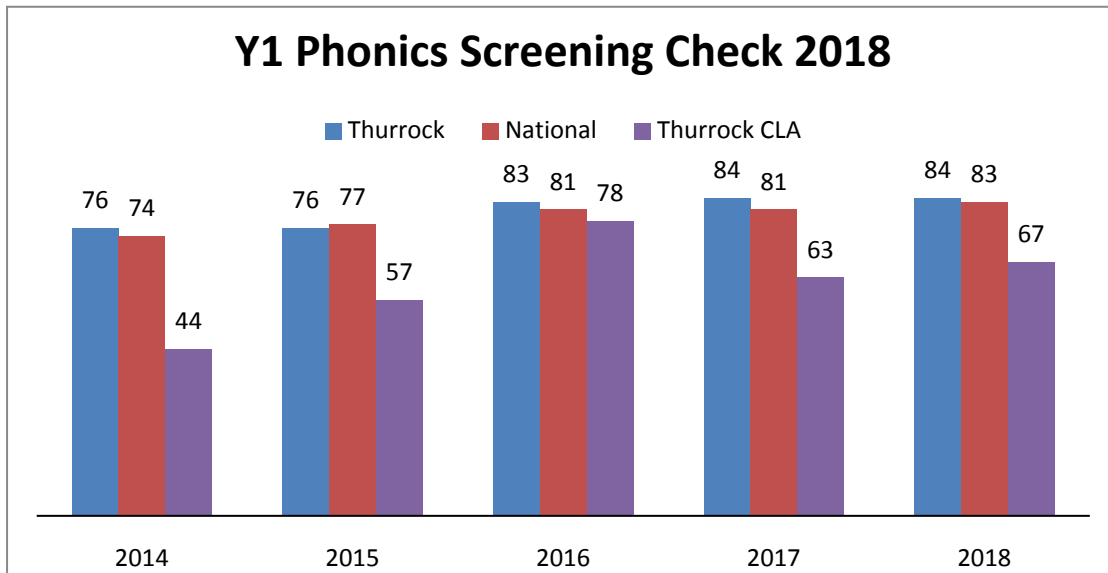
3.2 **Year 1 Phonics Score [Age 6]**

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

3.2.2 The percentage of children who reached the expected standard has increased 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. For 2018 there were 6 pupils in the cohort and 4 children passed [67%]

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%
2018	6	4 pupils – 67%



3.2.4 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. Only 2 children had been in care for a year or more. 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. The Virtual School distributed phonic home learning resource packs and guidance for our foster carers to use in order to help them with activities that promote phonological awareness and skills. The Virtual School also uses the Booktrust Literacy Letterbox resources which aim to promote reading in the home. All pupils from N1 to Year 9 receive these.

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.

3.2.6 **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data**

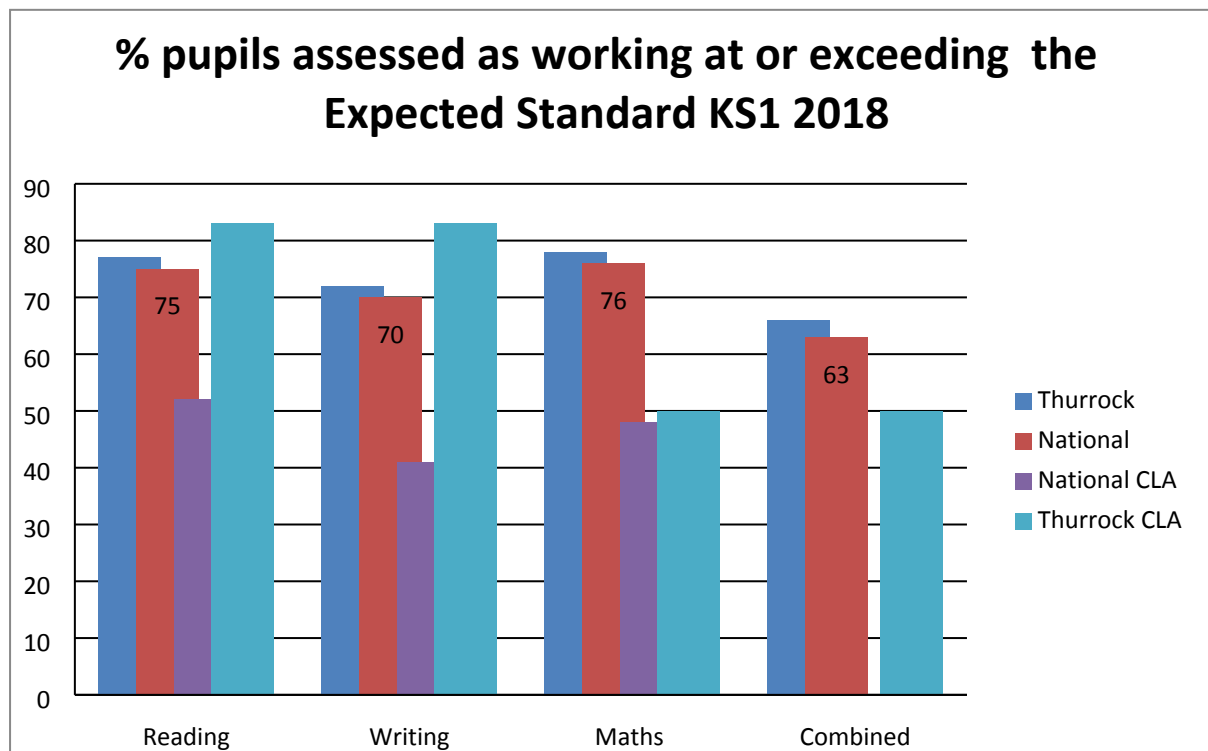
- This year the Virtual School has already spoken with the schools of the pupils who have not passed and planned interventions are in place for Year 2.

- Continue this forthcoming academic year with the provision of Phonics home learning packs and foster carer training for how to support phonological awareness at home.
- Provision of reading and phonics activities to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 through the Literacy Booktrust initiative. [This is detailed in the annual report]

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 2018 performance data as this is not available at the time of this report.

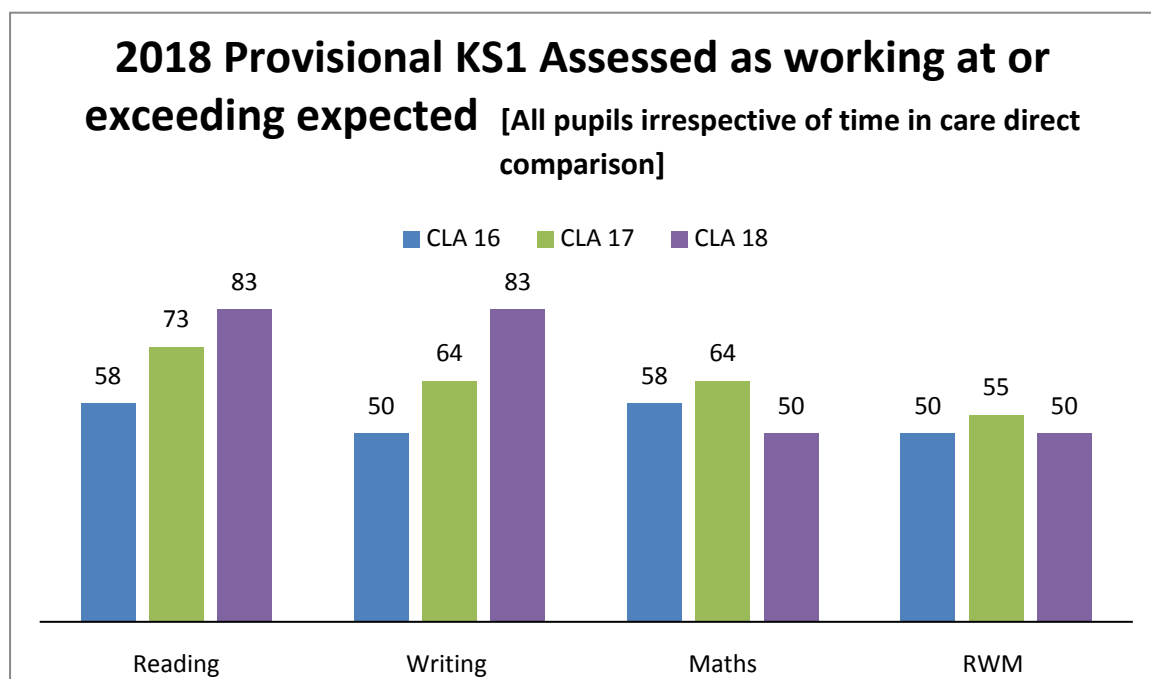


2018 Graph of Unvalidated Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA

Table of Results of Thurrock CLA [6 pupils in cohort] 2018 – there were a further 2 pupils who were disapplied from SATs due to the severity of their SEND needs.

Subject	Number of Pupils	Percentage [2018]	National CLA [2017]
Reading	5	83%	52%
Writing	5	83%	41%
Maths	3	50%	48%
Combined	3	50%	Not provided

- 3.3.3 The above data is based upon a cohort size of 6 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 Thurrock CLA have performed better than their non-looked after peers in the areas of reading and writing. The area for development is maths as this has declined to 50% which has affected the overall reading, writing and maths combined score. Specific CLA 3 year trend is provided in the graph below as a point of comparison. The increase in English scores is very good but a greater focus needs to be placed upon maths for improvement.
- 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 in reading and writing. This is shown in the next graph.



- 3.3.5 Contextual data for the cohort shows that all pupils who took SATs were in a Thurrock school. The 2 pupils who were disapplied due to SEND, attend provision out of borough.
- 3.3.6 All pupils across the year made expected progress based upon their individual targets and prior attainment. The 2 pupils who were disapplied have made expected progress based upon their starting points. They did not achieve a GLD at the end of their reception year due to developmental delay. These 2 pupils have been in care for 1 year or more. Their schools provide full time 1-1 intervention to support their specific needs. Both pupils have also had changes of care placement and changes of school during Key Stage 1.

3.3.7 In terms of prior attainment, only 3 pupils [50%] of the cohort obtained a good level of development at the end of their reception year two years prior to the Key Stage 1 assessments. This would suggest that the rate of attainment and progress for these pupils has remained consistent across key stage 1 for maths and accelerated for English. These pupils would have needed to make accelerated progress in that time to be able to reach the expected standard. 3 pupils [100%] out of the 3 who did not reach GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage, reached the expected standard at KS1 for English and 1 pupil [33%] achieved this in maths.

Of the cohort that took SATs this year, 3 pupils [50%] had SEND and were accessing SEN support provision in their schools. All of these children achieved the expected standard in English and only 1 did not meet this standard for maths. These pupils made accelerated progress based upon prior achievement and learning needs.

3.3.8 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 6]	Met expected standard R,W,M[% of those in this period]
2017	1 pupil [17%]	1 pupil [100%]
2016	2 pupils [33%]	
2015	2 pupils [33%]	1 pupil [50%]
2014	0 pupils	
2013	1 pupils [17%]	1 pupil [100%]

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. Out of the 6 pupils who took SATs only 1 did not achieve the expected standard in reading or writing.

3.3.9 **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data**

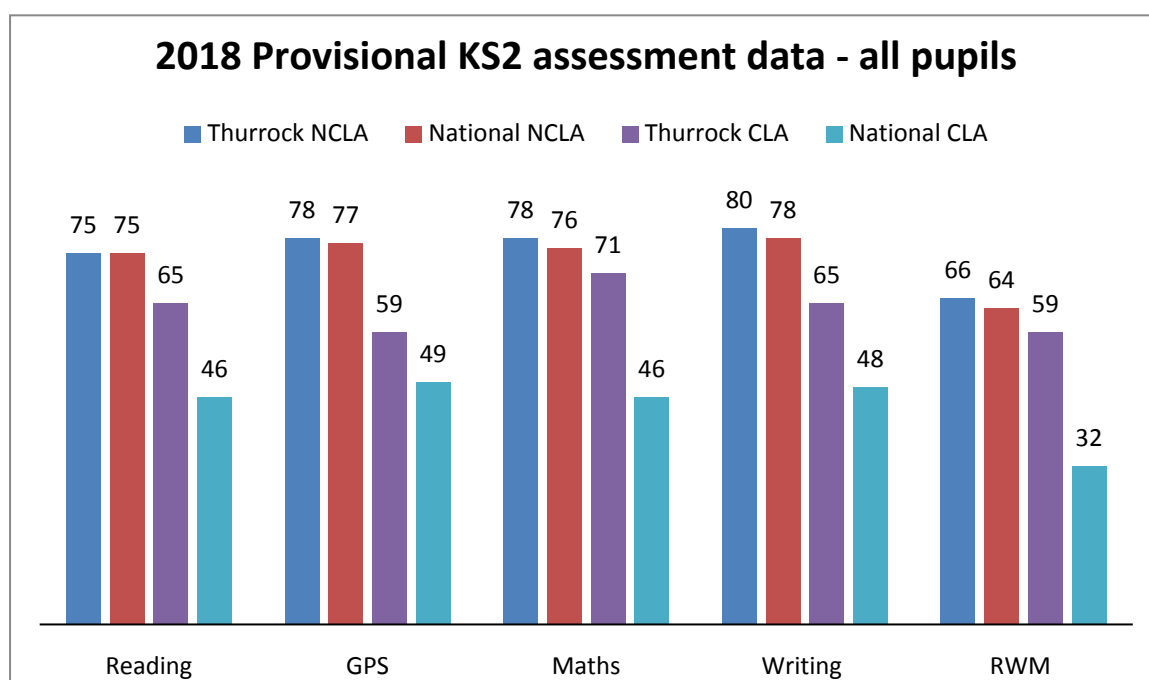
- Provision of home learning packs from Literacy Booktrust to support learning at home.
- Monitor progress for current year 3 to check that those who did not meet the expected standard are being appropriately supported.
- Provision of maths training to support foster carers in this area.
- For the two pupils disappled from SATs due to SEND, continue to support their educational provision and track progress identifying what extra support is necessary through their EHCPs. Support their transition into Key Stage 2.

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

3.4.1 In 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. Comparative data prior to 2016 is not available for this reason.

3.4.2 The cohort size for the 2018 Key Stage 2 SATS was 17 pupils. All pupils took their SATS this year and there were no pupils disapplied. The results that are reported will be based upon those on the Virtual School roll during this academic year. Specific analysis will be available later in the year from the DFE which details those in care for 12 months or more.

3.4.3 For Thurrock CLA the statistics for those achieving the expected standard were as follows: reading 65%, GPS 59%, maths 71% and writing was 65%. The graph below illustrates the comparisons with non-CLA nationally and all pupils in Thurrock for 2018 results. National CLA statistical comparisons are based upon 2017 data as 2018 data is not available at the time of this report due to the time of publication of the Statistical First Release.

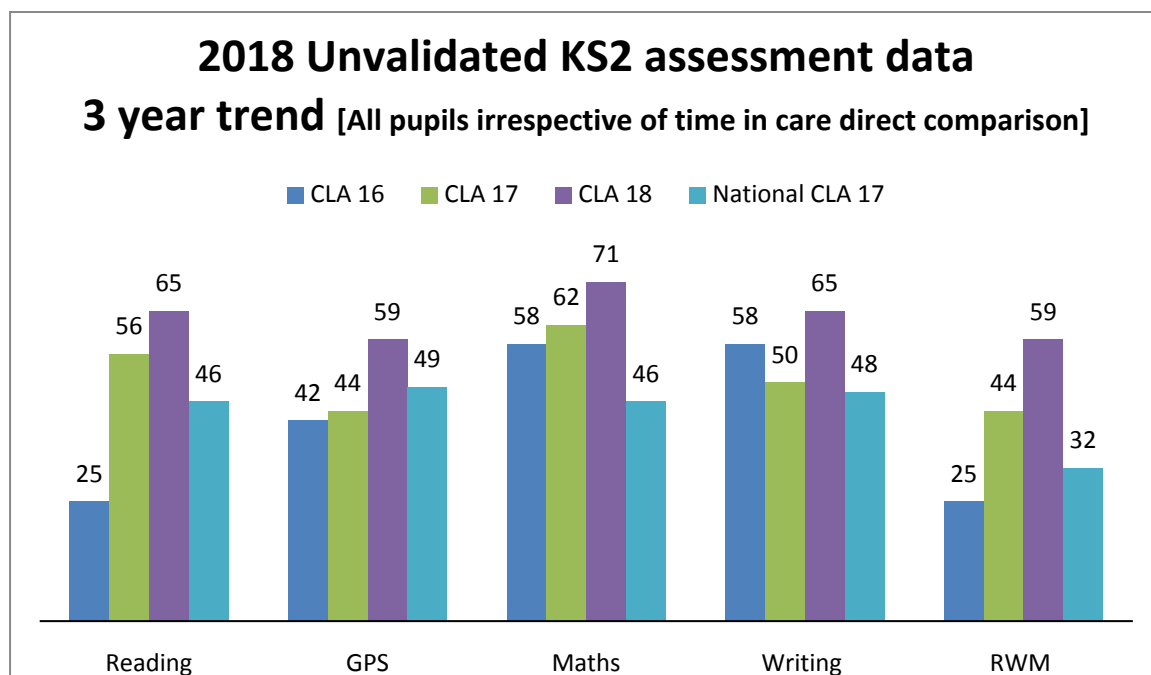


Graph of Non-Validated Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA, 2018. The National CLA data is 2017

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 17 pupils with a large number of children across the country and the borough. The gap is narrowing between our looked after and Thurrock non-looked after and it remains significantly above the national CLA outcomes in all areas. What is good news is the increase in the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading from 25% in 2016 to 56% in 2017 and in 2018 it

is now 65%. There has been a significant increase in those pupils achieving a combined score in reading, writing and maths from 44% in 2017 to 59% in 2018. Notably there is only a 5% gap for reading, writing and maths combined between our children looked after and national non-looked after. The graph also illustrates the comparison against last year's CLA national data in the absence of current national CLA data.

3.4.5 The available data shows that there has been a closing of the gap against non-looked after children and that the differences are being diminished. The graph below illustrates the 3 year trend.



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 The Year 6 cohort contained 7 pupils [41%] out of the 17 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.

Progress scores will be available when the validated data is made available later in the year however, progress based upon available prior key stage 1 data is provided below.

Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this cohort of pupils. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how the Pupil Premium Plus Grant was supporting learning and progress.

3.4.8 Prior attainment at Key Stage 1 for this cohort was broadly in line the outcomes for KS2. For reading at KS1 65% achieved the standard, 59% achieved writing and 47% achieving the maths standard. Maths has been the biggest area for progress as now 71% achieved the standard in KS2 compared to their previous outcomes at KS1. Specific progress data for Key Stage 2 is made available later in the year from the Department for Education. However, early indications show that children have made at least expected progress.

3.4.9 The length of time in care varied for this cohort between 2012 and 2018. The table below illustrates this:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 17]	Met expected KS2 standard RWM [% of those in this period]	Met expected KS1 standard in RWM	Expected Progress [% of those in this period]
2018	3 pupils [18%]	100%	100%	100%
2017	5 pupils [29%]	4 pupils [80%]	2 pupils [40%]	100%
2016	0			
2015	1 pupil [9%]	0	0	100%
2014	2 pupils [12%]	0	0	100%
2013	4 pupils [24%]	2 pupils [50%]	2 pupils [50%]	100%
2012	2 pupils [12%]	1 pupil [50%]	1 pupil [50%]	100%

3.4.10 Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2018 data

- Attendance at PEPs or Quality Assurance visits to the schools to check pupil progress
- Identification of those who did not achieve Expected and support transition into Year 7
- Provision of Literacy Book Trust resources for Primary phase pupils
- Support for those pupils in Year 7 who have SEND to ensure that the provision is matching need.

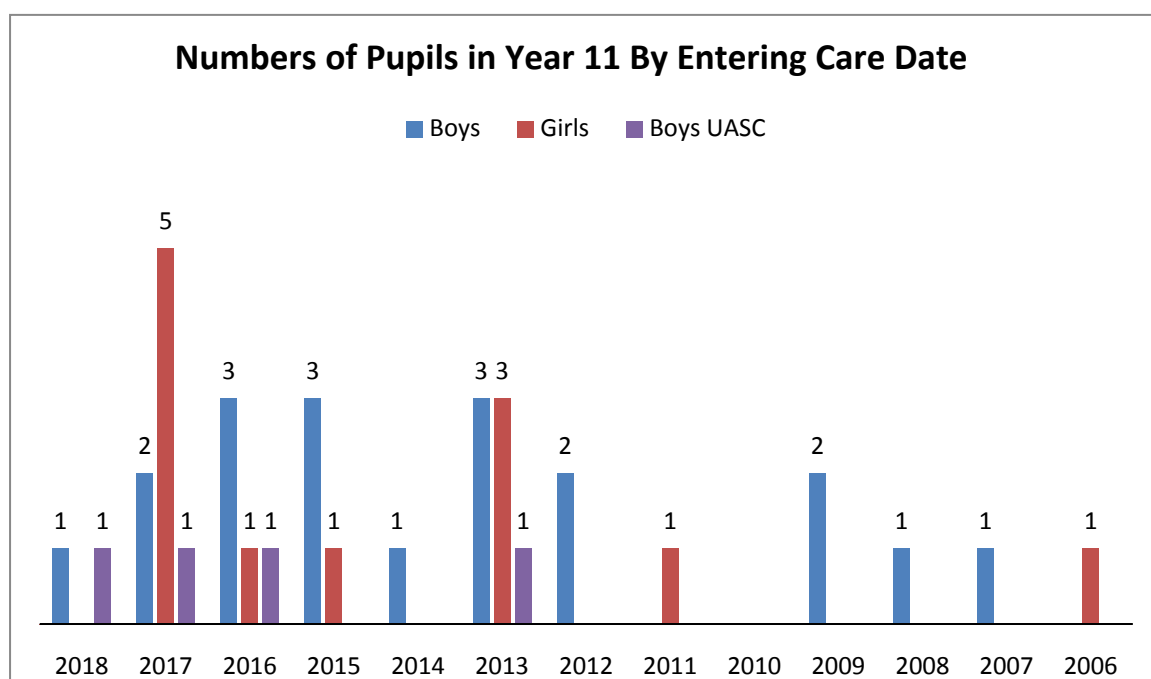
3.5 Key Stage 4 GCSE Non-Validated Results [Year 11 – Age 15-16]

3.5.1 The following section of this report includes the 2018 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 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 This graph does not illustrate the fact that 3 pupils [10%] became looked after in the academic year 2017/18, that is, from September 2017. 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 7 pupils [23%] became looked after from January 2017 when in Year 10 or in Year 11.



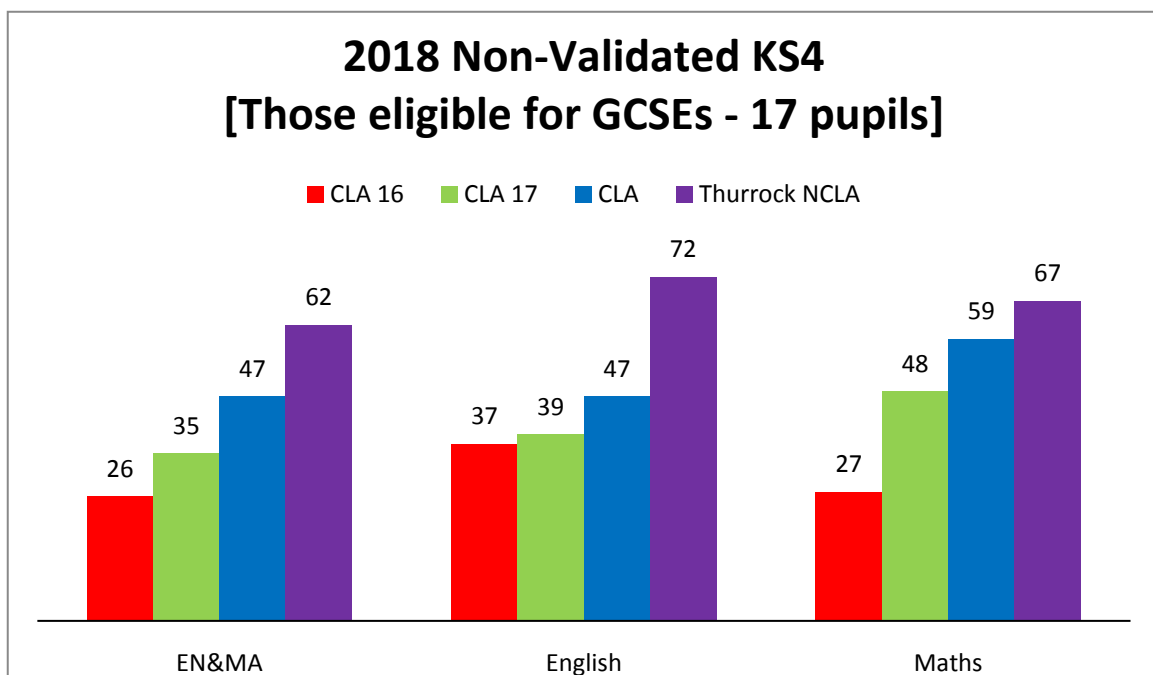
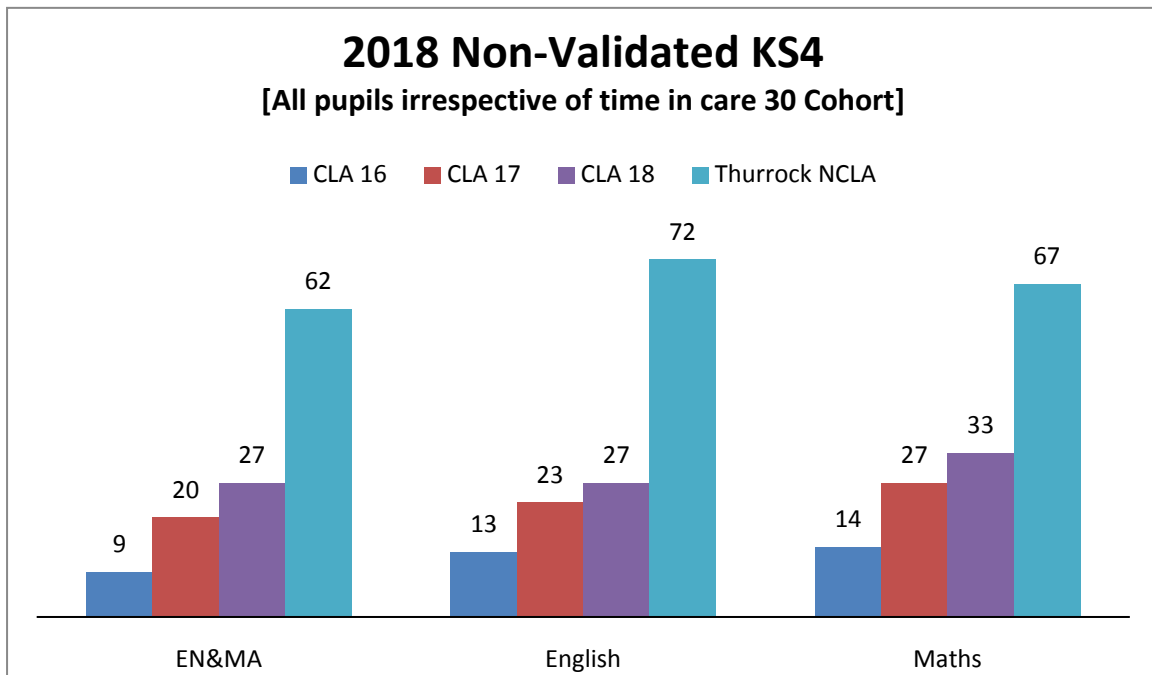
3.5.4 Key Headline Data [Cohort of 30]:

- There were a total of 30 pupils in the year 11 cohort and 17 pupils [56.6%] were eligible to take GCSEs in English and maths
- 8 pupils [27%] achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of grade C [point 4] or above
- 8 pupils [27%] achieved English at grade 4 or above
- In Maths, 10 pupils [33%] 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 [Cohort of 17 eligible for GCSE maths and English]:

- 8 pupils [47%] achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of grade C [point 4] or above
- For English, 8 pupils [47%] achieved the expected standard or above
- In Maths, 10 pupils [59%] achieved the expected standard or above.

3.5.6 The graphs below demonstrate the improvements that Thurrock CLA pupils have made compared to the previous 2016 and 2017 cohorts.



- 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 against non-looked after
- 3.5.8 There are specific reasons as to why not all of the 30 pupils were able to sit GCSE qualifications. It is important that this report includes these young people and accounts for their educational outcomes
- 3.5.9 20 pupils [67%] of our year 11 pupils looked after by the local authority attended a provision that was out of borough. There were 12 [40%] students attending 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 exams. However, due to the nature of their needs, not all were able to sit either English or maths GCSE combined. 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 6 students [20%] did not sit formal qualifications. This is a reduction of 17% compared to the previous year's 37%. Each pupil has a specific reason for this. 1 pupil was pregnant and receiving home tuition after being in a secure residential, 1 pupil's SEND needs and attending special school, 1 pupil experienced numerous placement breakdowns and needed specialist SEN provision which was difficult to source at a late stage in the school term, this pupil received tuition. 1 UASC pupil age assessed as over 18 years during year 11, 2 pupils attending alternative provision refused to engage with qualification process despite intensive support from the Virtual School, social care and the setting.
- 3.5.11 Additionally 10 pupils [33%] of the cohort had SEND needs with 7 pupils [23%] with EHCPs. These students did not achieve above grade 4 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 4 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. Specific progress data will be made available from the DFE later in the 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 17/18 there were 3 pupils [10%]. This year we had two pupils who took a full complement of GCSE subjects. One pupil achieved 9 and A* in maths. This

student is now following an A Level pathway with ambitions to attend Cambridge. The remaining UASC pupil was age assessed as over 18 and did not take qualifications. 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 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 interventions as a result of 2018 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 from the summer term of Year 10
- 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 termly Designated Teacher Forums, 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

3.5.17 **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?

- Provision of Literacy Book Trust home learning resources to those aged between 3-13
- Provision of tuition for year 11 which started in the summer term of year 10
- Conducting termly school visits for key year groups of children and those who are not making expected progress
- Evidencing the work of the Virtual School through visit notes and case notes
- Development of an SEND strategy to further improve the outcomes for this group of children
- Continuing the interventions and key actions developed over the previous year to build upon good practice and successful outcomes.
- Introducing the use of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires [SDQ] for every pupil from year R to 17 years old

4. **Additional Information for the Committee**

- 4.1 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 reducing fixed term exclusion and the rates of attainment for our key phases. The completion of Personal Education Plans within timeframe and to a good quality has seen an improvement and all targets as set out by the Ofsted improvement plan have been met. Our aim for this year is for this target to continue to be met consistently across the academic year.

Key Priorities for 2017/2018 were

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

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

- [Key Priority 2] Improving the attendance of CLA to maximise educational outcomes

Attendance rates have not improved this academic year compared to the previous year but the number of non-authorised absence has reduced.

- [Key Priority 3] Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions of CLA to ensure that they are receiving the maximum entitlement of education

This has reduced on the previous year and is the lowest it has been for the last 5 years indicating that the strategies employed this year have worked well to reduce FTE.

- [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

PEP compliance has increased over the year to be at consistently over 95%. The quality of the PEP has improved to ensure that at least 90% of PEPs are graded at good with the remaining amount on the cusp of good. Robust tracking and additional quality assurance measures enacted by increased capacity of the virtual school team has enabled this.

- [Key Priority 5] Improving systems of tracking, analysis and accountability to support educational outcomes for CLA.

Tracking data is in place for all pupils in all year groups. Poor progress is addressed using the escalation process for poor progress and Virtual School staff visit schools where pupils have poor progress and strategies to improve outcomes are agreed and actioned.

- [Key Priority 6] Embed the new Virtual School team structure to support the needs of all CLA

The Virtual School team has had a full complement of staff since January 2018. This increased capacity has enabled there to be a thorough quality assurance process for PEPs, greater tracking and improved challenge of pupil progress and this has had an impact on the overall outcomes for all pupils in the Virtual School cohort.

4.2 Key Priorities and targets for this academic year 2018-2019 have been set in response to data analysis and changes in statutory guidance. 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.

4.3 The support of post 16 pupils is a continued focal point for our team. Our target is to reduce the number of those young people Not in Education, Employment or Training [NEET] and increase the number of pupil achieving higher level qualifications and fulfilling aspirations to attend university.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 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.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

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

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Management Accountant DSG and Schools

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.8.2

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Legal, Social Care and Education

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 and previously looked after children" that must be followed in meeting this duty.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead, Community Development and Equalities

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.

7.4 Other implications (where significant)

There are no implications as a result of this report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 In summary, the above report details attainment outcomes for those in care during the academic year 2017-2018. 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.

9. 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 and Previously Looked After Children' DFE February 2018

10. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher Academic Year 2017/2018

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Children's Services