

**Annual Report of
the Virtual School
Headteacher
Academic Year
2017/2018**

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1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to detail the work of the Thurrock Virtual School and the academic outcomes for Thurrock Children Looked After for the academic year 2017-18.

The data contained in this report uses validated DFE data for 2017 outcomes, which was obtained in March 2018. Current attainment uses indicative data for the 2018 results. Validated data for 2018 will not become available until March 2019.

This report will be provided for the Governing Body to approve in September 2018 and will subsequently be presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

2. The Role of the Thurrock Virtual School

A separate document is available named the Roles and Responsibilities of the Virtual School. For the purpose of this report a brief outline will be provided. The Department for Education document: Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children [February 2018] details the roles and responsibilities of Virtual School Heads. In summary it specifies that:

Parents want their children to have the best start in life and to reach their full potential. As corporate parents, local authorities should have equally high aspirations for the children they look after.

As leaders responsible for ensuring that the local authority discharges its duty to promote the educational achievement of their looked-after children, Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children's Services should ensure that:

- top priority is given to creating a culture of high educational aspirations and that the authority strives for accelerated progress and age-related attainment or better for looked-after children;
- looked-after children have access to a suitable range of high quality education placement options and that, when commissioning services for them, the authority takes account of the duty to promote their educational achievement;
- VSHs are in place and that they have the resources, time, training and support they need to discharge the duty effectively;
- VSHs have robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after; and
- the authority's Children in Care Council (CiCC) regularly considers the educational experiences as reported by looked-after children and is able to respond effectively to any issues.

The VSH should be the lead responsible officer for ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of the authority's looked-after children, including those placed out-of-authority.

VSHs should ensure the educational attainment and progress of children looked after by the local authority are monitored and evaluated as if those children attended a single school.

The VSH should ensure that there are effective systems in place to:

- maintain an up-to-date roll of its looked-after children who are in school or college settings, and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress;
- ensure sufficient information about a child's mental health, SEN or disability is available to their education setting so that appropriate support can be provided;
- inform head teachers and designated teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked-after by the VSH's local authority.
- ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP;
- ensure up-to-date, effective and high quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes, and that all looked-after children, wherever they are placed, have such a PEP;
- avoid drift or delay in providing suitable educational provision, including special educational provision, and unplanned termination of educational arrangements through proactive, multi-agency co-operation. Where this requires negotiation with other authorities this should be completed in a timely manner and with the best interest of the child as paramount;
- ensure the educational achievement of children looked after by the authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare; and
- report regularly on the attainment, progress and school attendance of looked-after children through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

[Pages 8 and 9 of Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children DFE 2018]

The Virtual School has overall responsibility for monitoring, supporting and providing interventions to ensure that Children Looked After [CLA] achieve the best possible outcomes. We achieve this by:

- Coordinating and quality assuring all Personal Education Plans [PEP]
- Monitoring and challenging schools to make effective use of the Pupil Premium Plus grant
- Tracking the academic progress, attendance and exclusions of CLA
- Using our tracking data to highlight individuals who are not on target to achieve their predicted outcomes and ensuring that the correct educational support is provided
- Ensuring that Special Educational Needs or Disability [SEND] needs are identified and supported appropriately
- Implementing a range of targeted interventions to raise academic standards
- Providing support and challenge to students, schools/colleges and carers
- Ensuring effective educational transition is in place between schools or specialist providers

- Encouraging our young people to high aspirations about their future and remove barriers to further education
- Leading training for Foster Carers, Designated Teachers, Social Workers, school governors and providing bespoke training where appropriate to educational staff
- Celebrating the achievement of our pupils

Staffing of the Virtual School

Mrs Keeley Pullen – Virtual School Head Teacher

Mrs Grace Page – Virtual School Operations Co-Ordinator

Ms Rebecca Prince – Early Years and Primary Education Adviser

Ms Gemma Lilley – Secondary Education Adviser

Miss Lee-Anne Jenkins – Post 16 Education Adviser

Mrs Tina McGuinness – Administrator for the Virtual School for LAC

Additional Services [commissioned by Virtual School]

Looked After Call – to monitor attendance

TLC Live – Online Tuition

Fleet Tuition Service – for provision of 1-1 tuition

Equal Education – for provision of 1-1 tuition

Prospero – for provision of 1-1 tuition

3. **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.

4. **Guidance Documents Developed by the Virtual School**

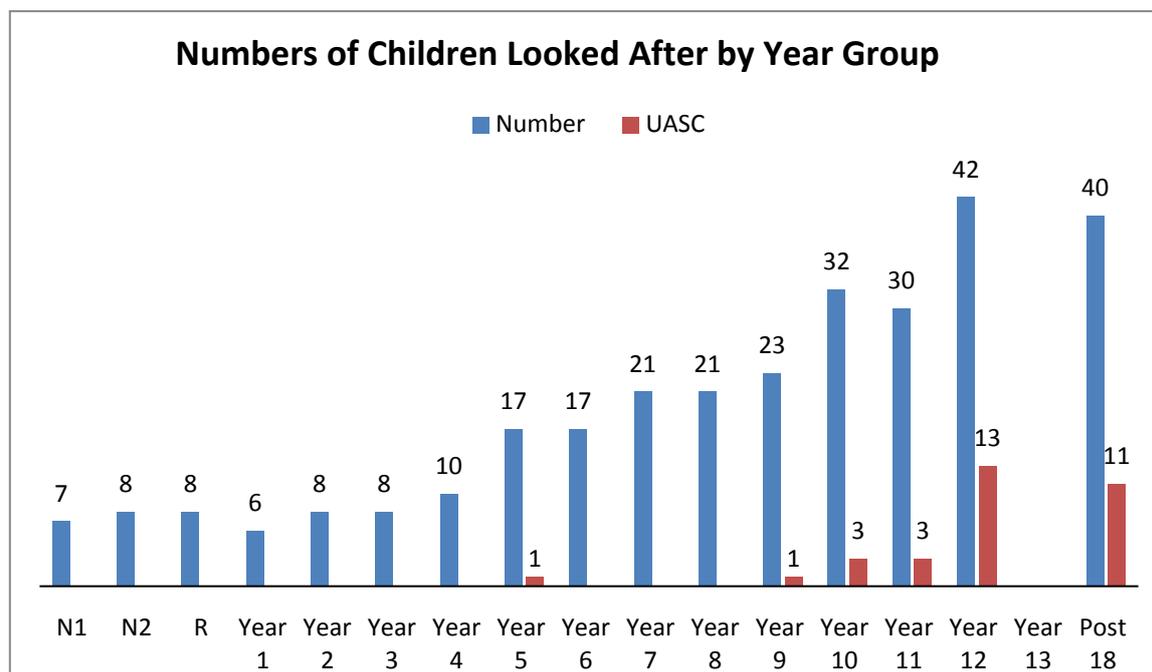
- Thurrock Virtual School Pupil Premium Policy
- Thurrock Virtual School Exclusion Guidance for Schools
- Thurrock Virtual School Exclusion Guidance for Colleges
- Thurrock Virtual School Attendance Policy
- Thurrock Virtual School Anti-Bullying Policy
- PEP Protocol for Social Workers and Designated Teachers – Schools, Colleges and Early Years
- PEP Flowchart for Social Workers
- Quality Assurance Process Flowchart
- Quality Assurance Criteria for PEPs
- Completing Attainment on EPEP
- EPEP and Target Setting
- Roles and Functions of the Virtual School
- Phonics Resources Packs for Foster Carers

Additional Documents:

- School Improvement Plan
- Head Teacher Termly Reports

5. **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.

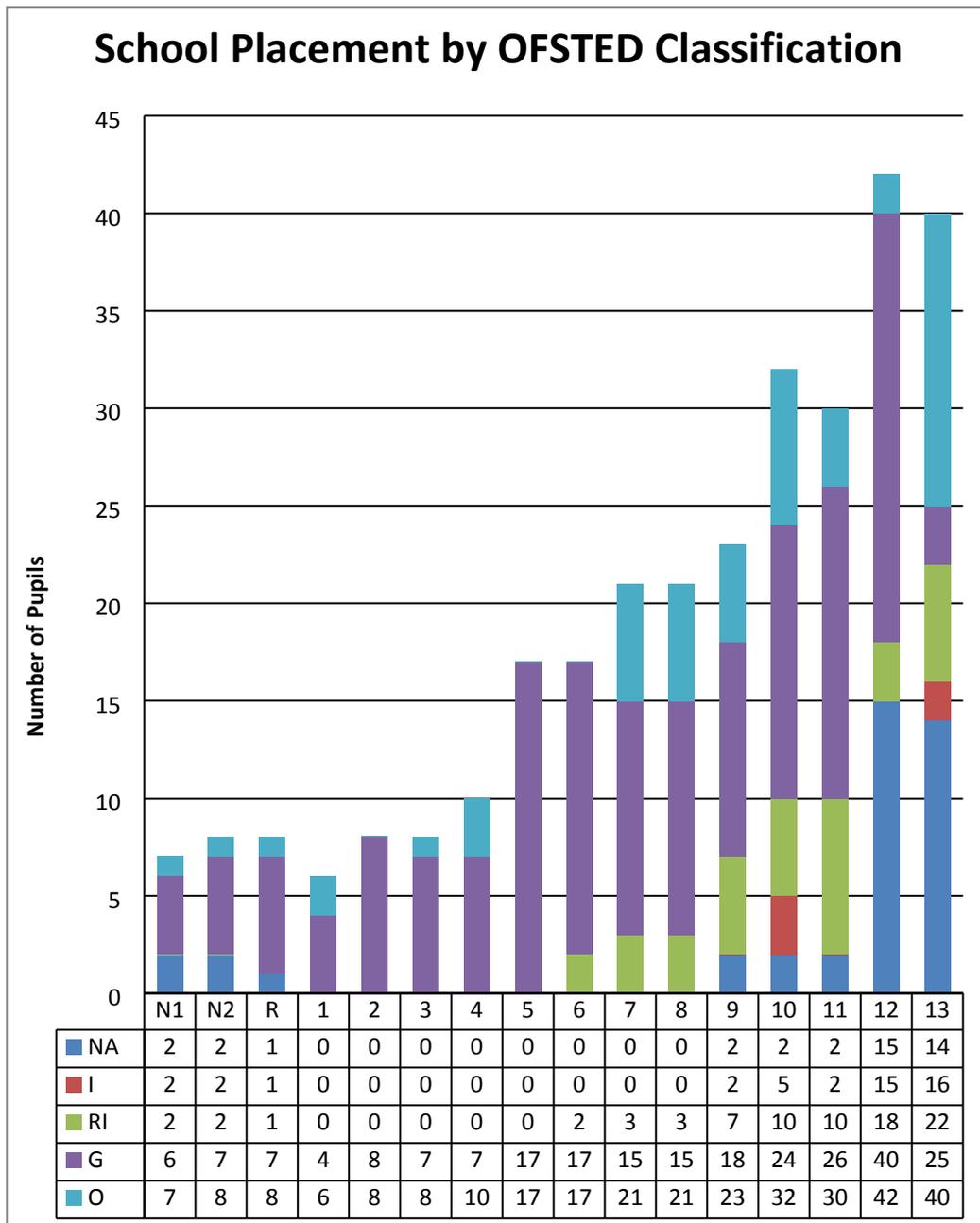
6. Current Contextual Data**Number of Looked After Children by Year Group [Updated July 2018]****Number of Pupils in attendance at Alternative Provision/SEND School/Specialist Provision by Year Group [Updated July 2018]**

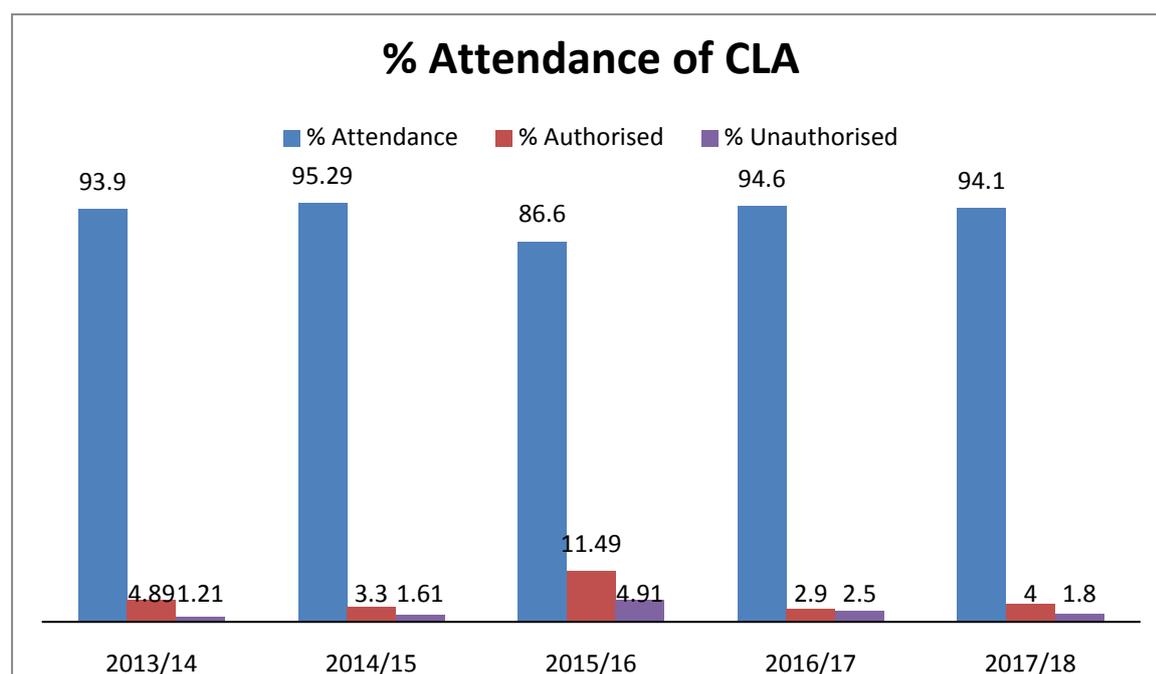
N1	N2	R	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	YR 7	YR 8	YR 9	YR 10	YR 11	YR 12	YR 13
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	5	4	4	6	6	2	3

Number of CLA with SEND by Year Group [Updated July 2018]

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	2	2	4	1	6	7	7	11	7	12	13	11	17	13

School Placement of CLA by OFSTED classification July 2018



7. Attendance

Robust tracking of attendance is vital in ensuring that good attendance is prioritised. Attendance rates have slightly decreased compared to the previous year.

Unauthorised attendance has decreased. For the forthcoming academic year, we are striving for above 95% and will continue to do so. It has been requested by governors that we show the comparisons for key stages and this will be reported for the forthcoming academic year.

There were 29 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 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 is monitored daily through the use of Looked After Call. 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 Head Teacher annually and put forward to the Governing Body to approve.

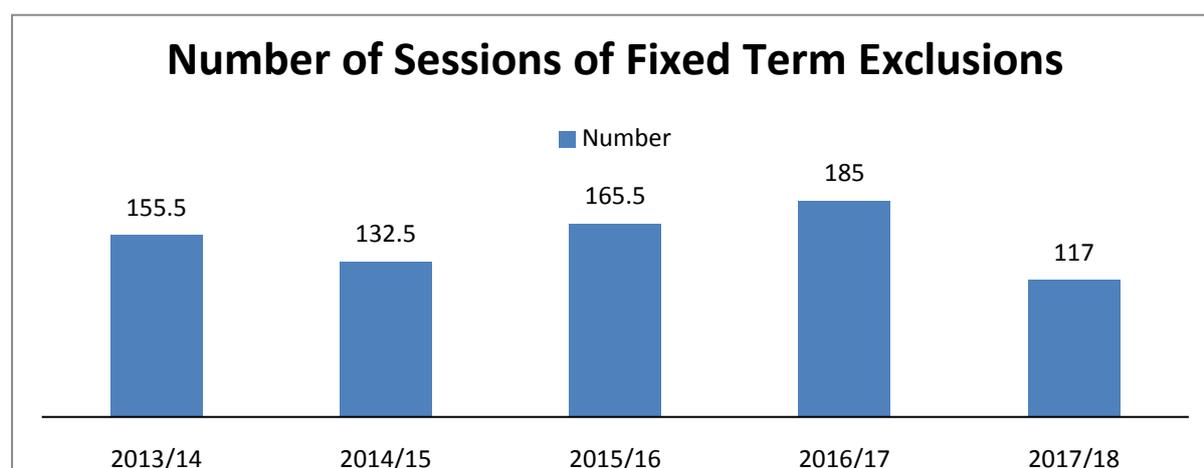
8. Exclusions

There have been no permanent exclusions of CLA for over a five year period. Wherever possible we encourage schools to avoid fixed term exclusions [FTE]. This academic year we have managed to reduce the number of FTE to its lowest in five years. This is a result of our proactive approach to working with schools. A review of needs and support is always made whenever a CLA pupil is excluded. The Virtual School work with schools to reduce fixed term exclusions, however, some of our pupils are participating in activities that would warrant the need for exclusion. We have managed to negotiate alternatives to exclusion off site through measures such as:

- Internal support
- Action plan meetings when excluded
- Alternative provision

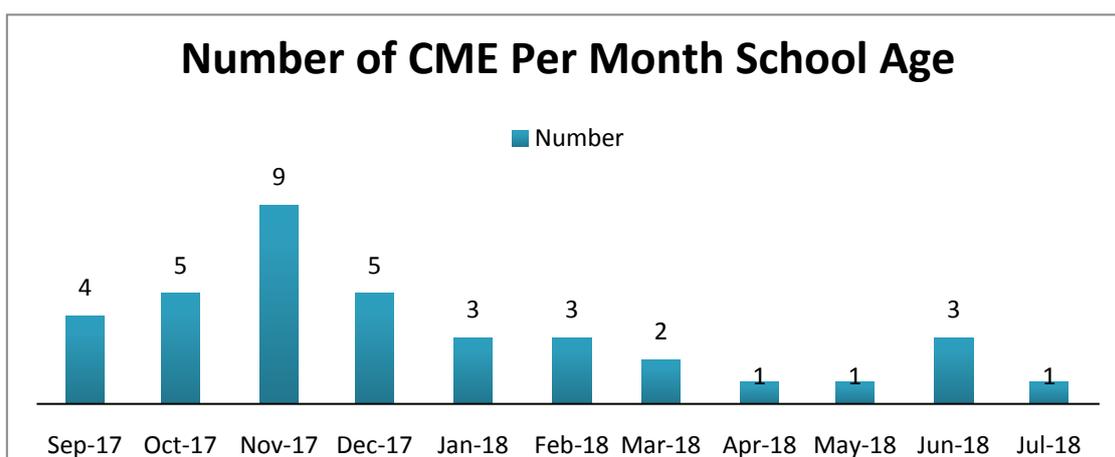
One recent success has been reducing a ten day exclusion to a three day exclusion and we are currently negotiating a managed move to a more positive education environment.

Policy guidance has been written by the VSHT to support schools and colleges to not exclude pupils and the National Association of Virtual School Heads is currently negotiating with OFSTED to see how they can support CLA pupils with exclusions. This is a national issue with CLA pupils being excluded.



9. 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 commissioned tuition services whilst a student is between educational placements. In the academic year 2017/18 the Virtual School has commissioned an online tuition service to support those who are missing education to work in conjunction with a personal tutor if appropriate. This is a company which currently serves a variety of Virtual Schools in other authorities. This is 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. It is more difficult to access education if a child/young person has Special Educational Needs because due to the consultation process.

10. Child Sexual Exploitation [CSE]

All Virtual School Staff have attended Child Sexual Exploitation Training in the past academic year. 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.

11. **Attainment Data of CLA**

Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] 2018

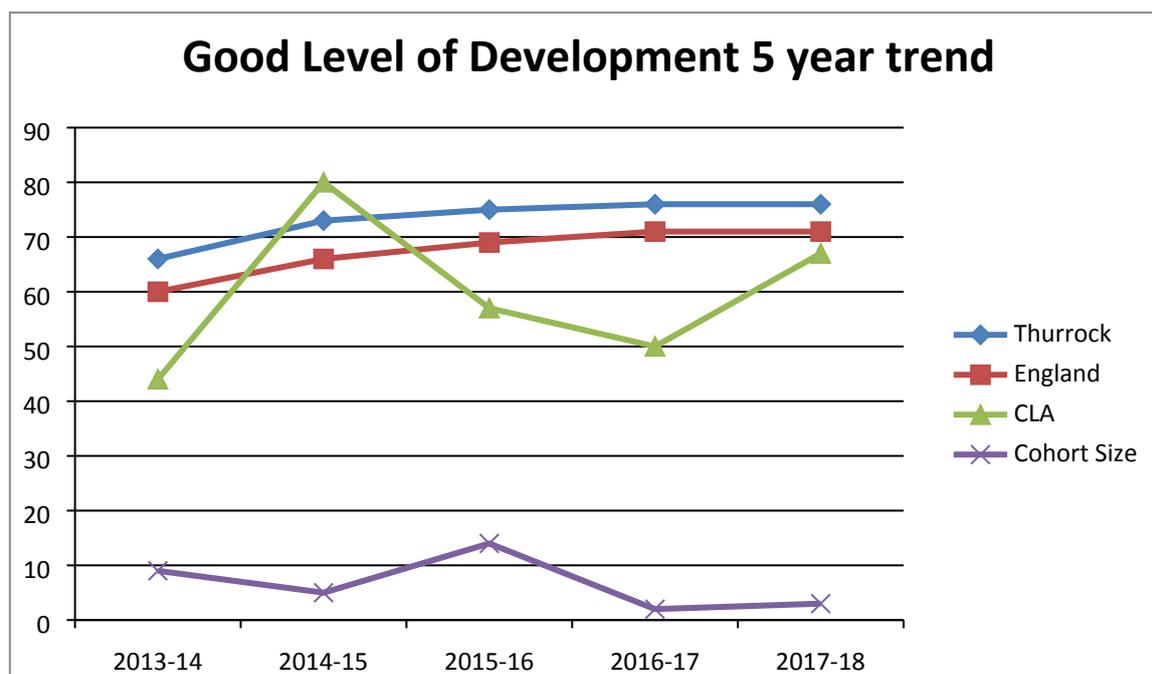
Indicative data

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.

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 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.

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.



For the 2017/18 academic year the provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA demonstrates an improving trend of 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.

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. 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.

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.

In terms of monitoring of 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 on entry starting points.

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.

Year 1 Phonics Score Results 2018

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 increased compared to the previous year. The cohort sizes are small year on year.

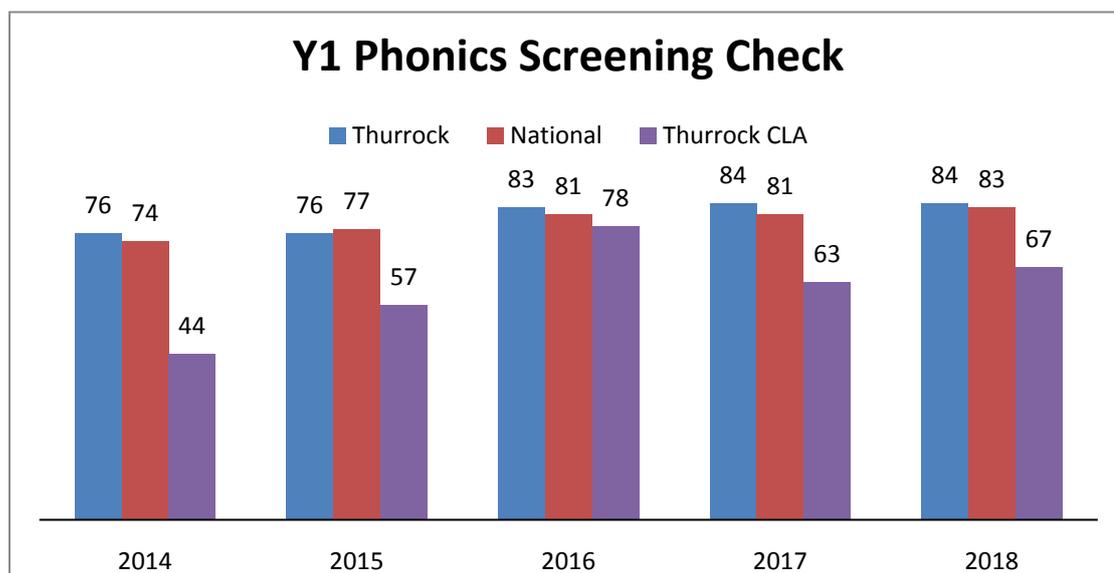
This is illustrated in the table below

Year	Total Cohort Size	Number who passed
2015	7	4 pupils – 57%
2016	9	7 pupils – 78%
2017	8	5 pupils – 63%
2018	6	4 pupils – 67%

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

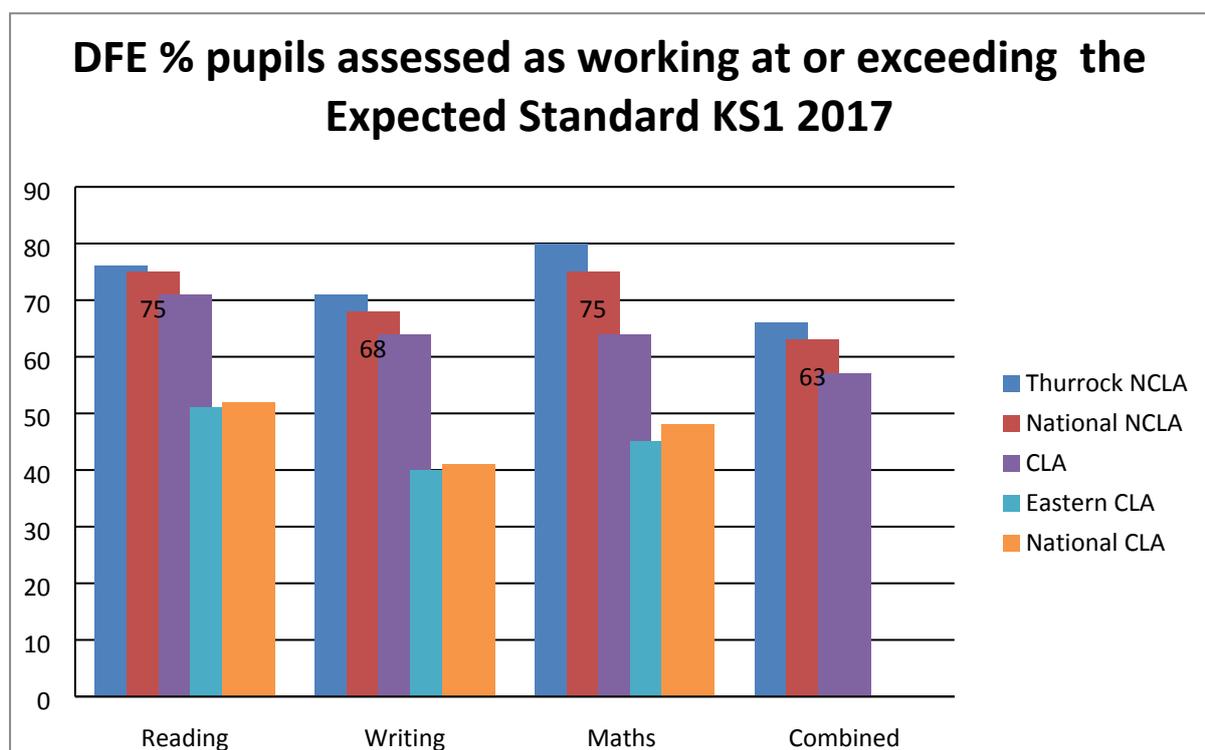
Personal Education Plan process is crucial in this respect for identifying their educational needs. Foster carers have an important role to play in supporting the acquisition of phonics and early reading skills. In particular, regular sharing of books and completing phonic activities at home.

The graph below compares CLA attainment against Thurrock and National non looked after. There is no national data for CLA for comparison as this is not reported.



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 further on in the report]

Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2017**Validated data**

Graph of Validated 2017 Data Comparing Thurrock CLA to National and Eastern

The previous annual report demonstrated indicative data for all pupils in the Virtual School cohort for 2017 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.

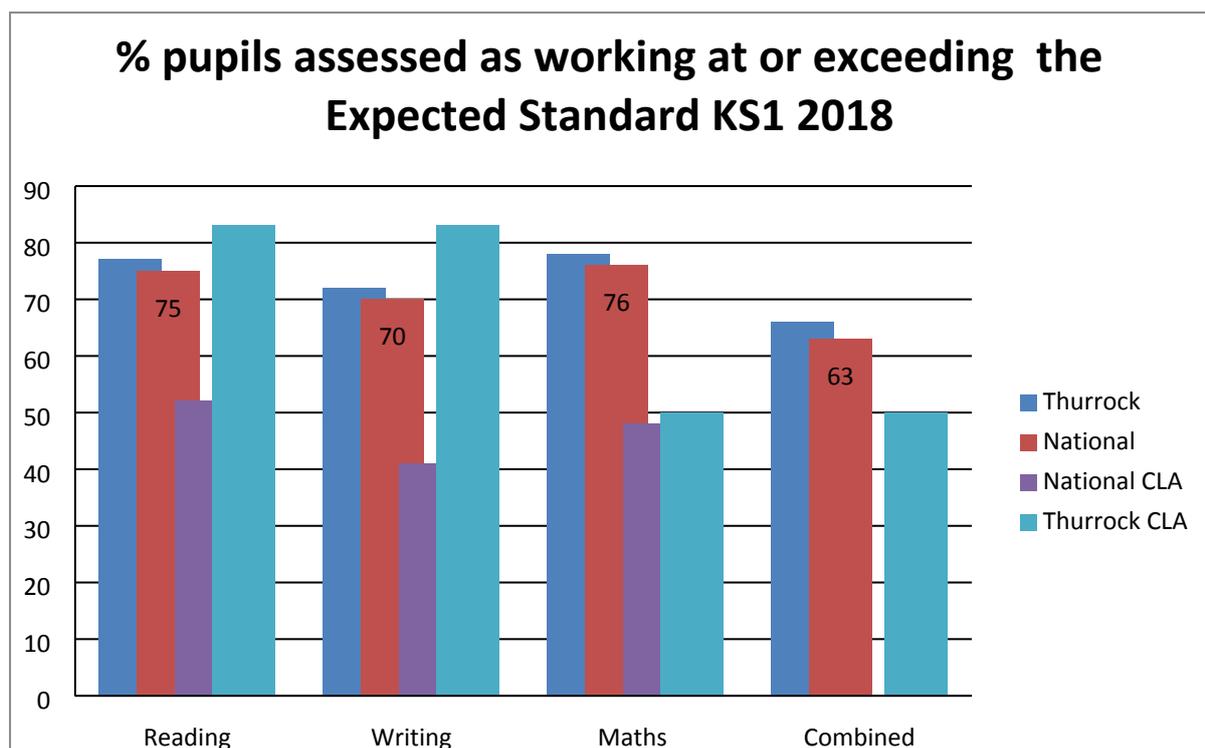
When comparing the performance of Thurrock Children Looked after against the performance of all CLA nationally and those within the Eastern Region boroughs Thurrock CLA are exceeding in reading, writing and maths.

Key Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2018**Non-Validated data**

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

The reported data is based upon all pupils in the Virtual School year 2 cohort during this academic year. Specific analysis of those in care for 12 months or more will be provided by the DFE later in the year.

In the graph below, it is possible to see how Thurrock CLA performed against National and Thurrock non-looked after. The graph includes National CLA performance data for 2017 as a point of comparison as 2018 is not available at the time of this report.



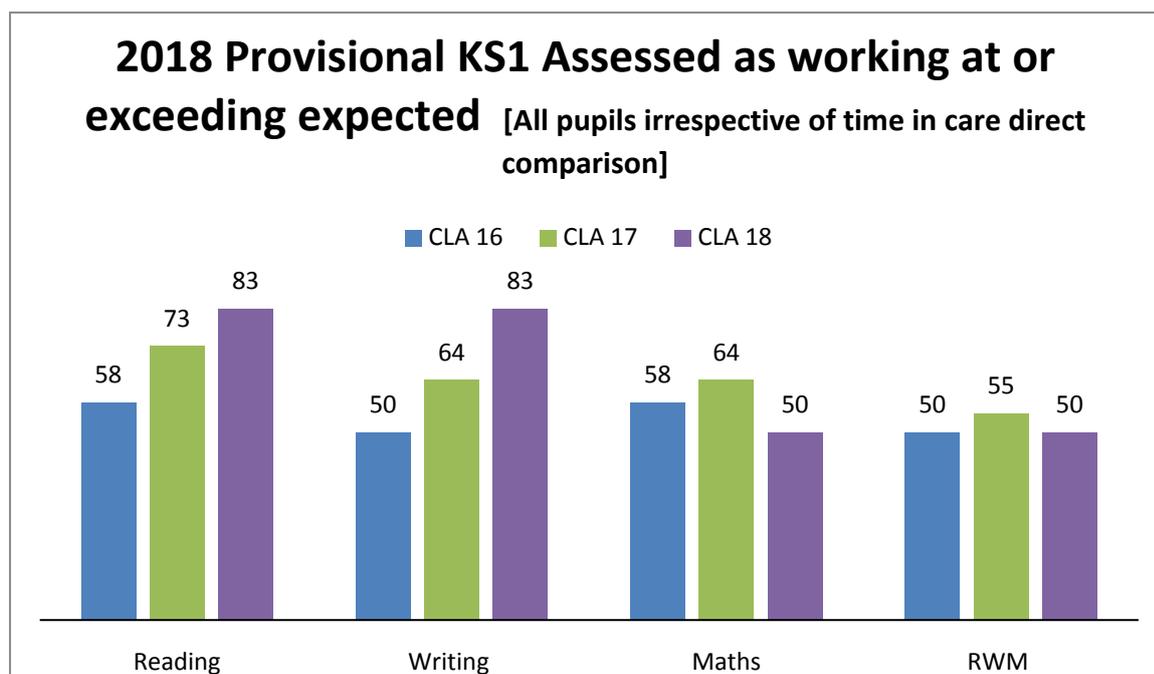
Graph of Unvalidated Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA

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

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.



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.

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. 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.

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.

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

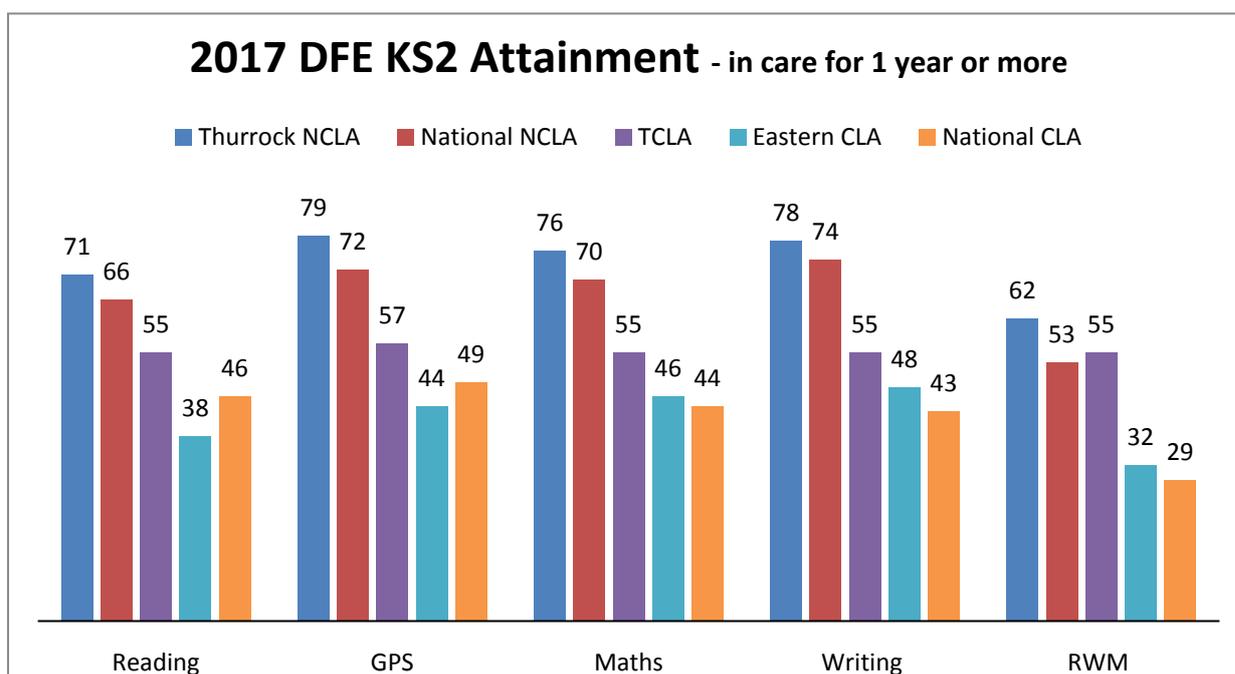
Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 6]	Met expected standard R,W,M[% of those in this period]
2017	1 pupil [17%]	1 pupil [100%]
2016	2 pupils [33%]	
2015	2 pupils [33%]	1 pupil [50%]
2014	0 pupils	
2013	1 pupils [17%]	1 pupil [100%]

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.

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 disapplied 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.

Key Stage 2 SATS 2017
Validated Data



The previous annual report provided details of the Non-Validated data for the KS2 2017 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 reading and combined. 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.

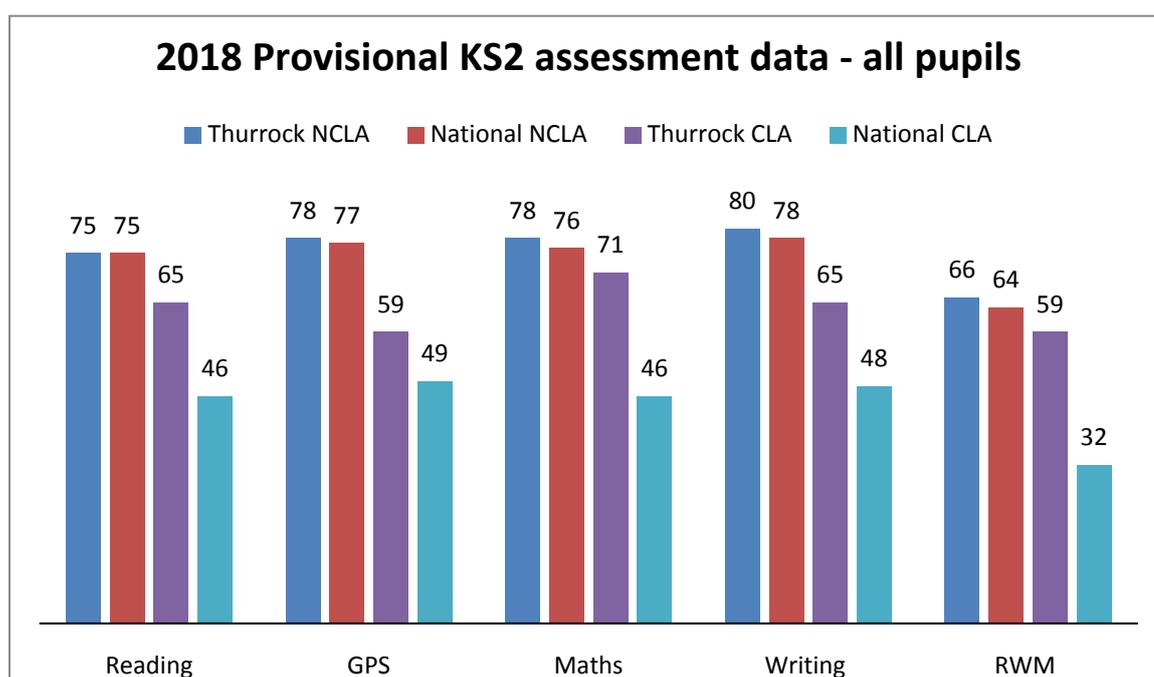
This data includes the 6 pupils who were disapplied from SATs due to their provision.

Key Stage 2 SATS 2018 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 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.

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.

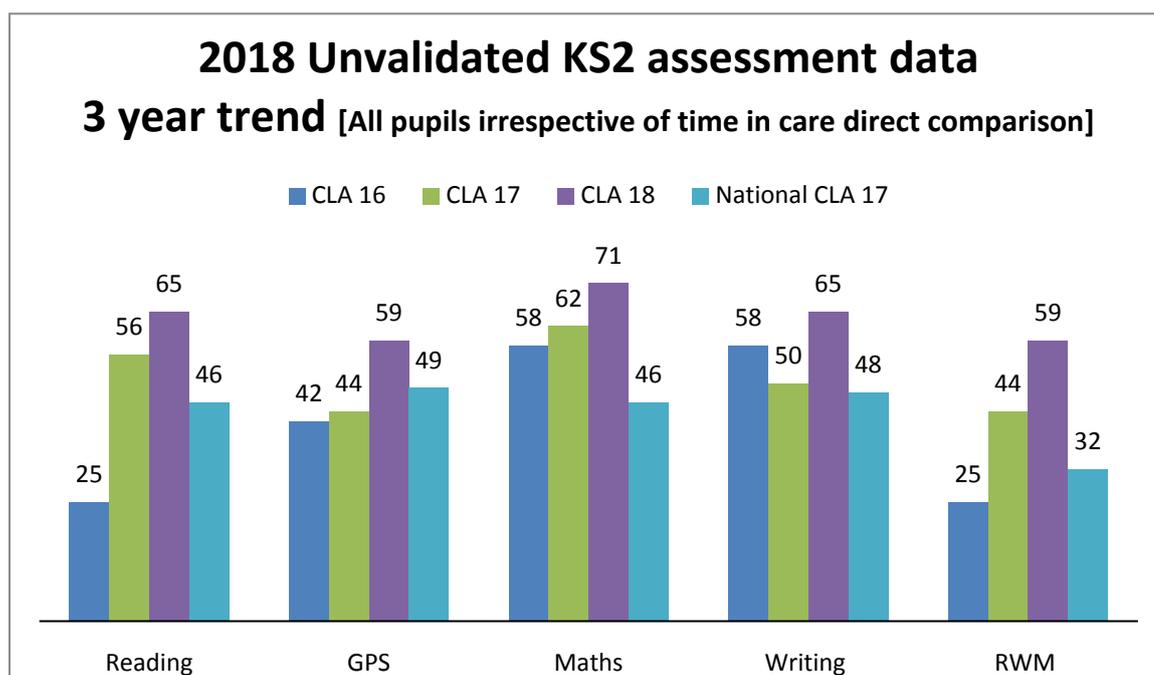


Graph of Indicative Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA [2018]

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.

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. The graph also illustrates the comparison against last year's CLA national data in the absence of current national CLA data.

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.



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.

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 in March 2019 however, progress based upon available 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.

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.

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%

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.

Overall Standards for Primary Age Children Looked After

For every year group in this phase the attainment of Thurrock Children Looked After has improved from the previous year. We are successfully diminishing the difference against non-looked after children and we have demonstrated that our pupils are performing above the standards of those in the eastern region and national children looked after.

Those factors which have affected these improvements can be attributed to the following reasons:

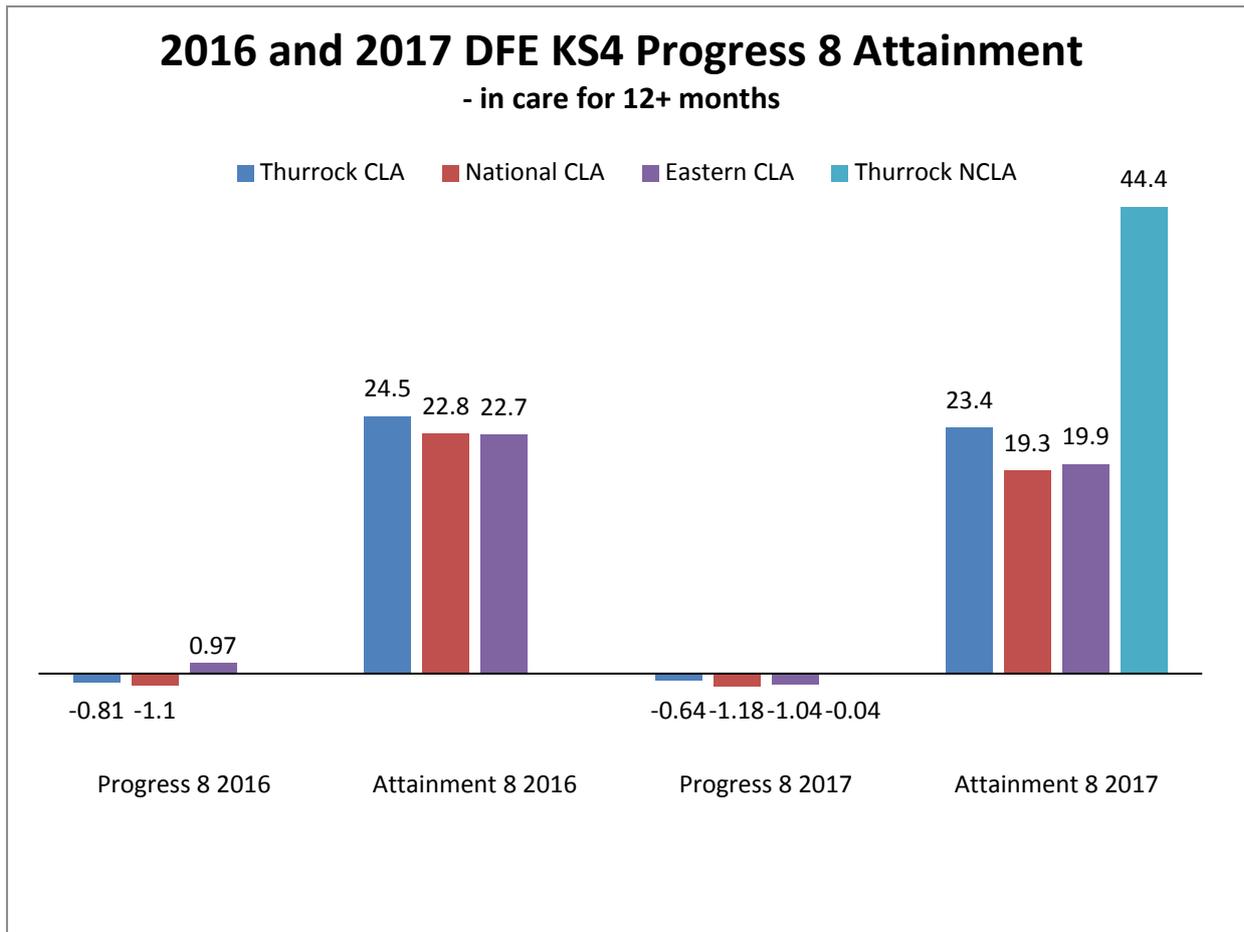
- Increased staffing of the Virtual School team has enabled Thurrock to closely monitor the progress of our pupils through visits to the schools and attendance at key meetings such as Personal Education Plan meetings, Educational Health Care Plan reviews
- Improved monitoring has increased the level of challenge and accountability for schools to demonstrate that they are providing appropriate provision and improving outcomes
- Positive relationships with schools have been established which has facilitated an open and honest dialogue which focuses on the needs of the pupil
- All staff members within the Virtual School team have a clear focus on what actions need to be taken to improve outcomes and they share the aspirations for improvement and strategies to support our pupils with schools, carers and social workers
- There is a correlation between the stability of school placement and care placement for our pupils where those who have greater consistency will do better than those who have frequent changes. Wherever possible the Virtual School try to ensure that there is stability of school placement and where pupils have needed to change, the team has supported this transition.

Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2017

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 particularly for progress 8.

GCSE KS4 (age 16)



DFE Validated Data Thurrock CLA results 2017

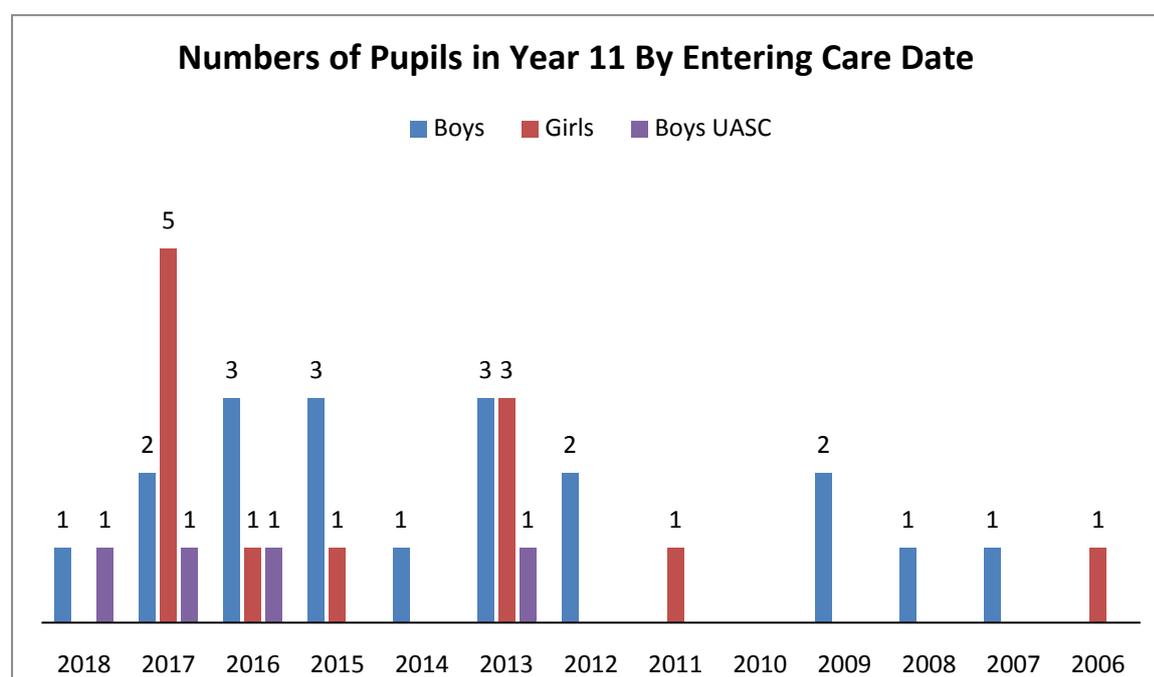
Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2018

Non-Validated Results

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 2017 data will include the performance of all pupils in the 2017-2018 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 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.

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.

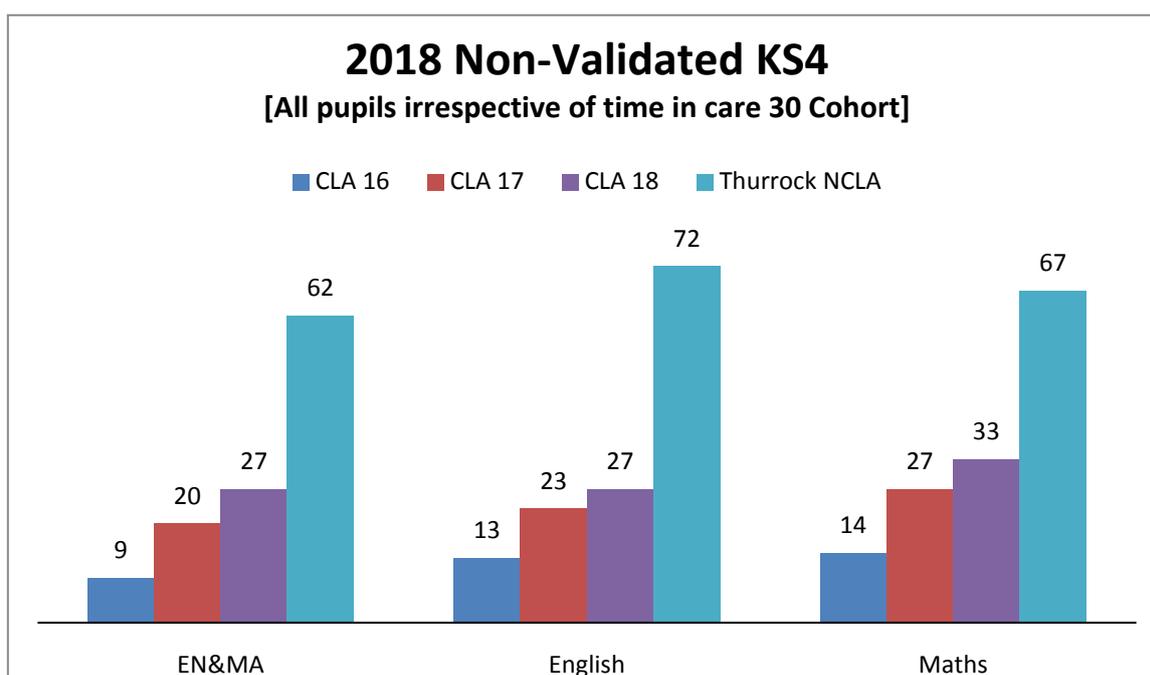
Key Headline Data [Cohort of 30]:

- 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.

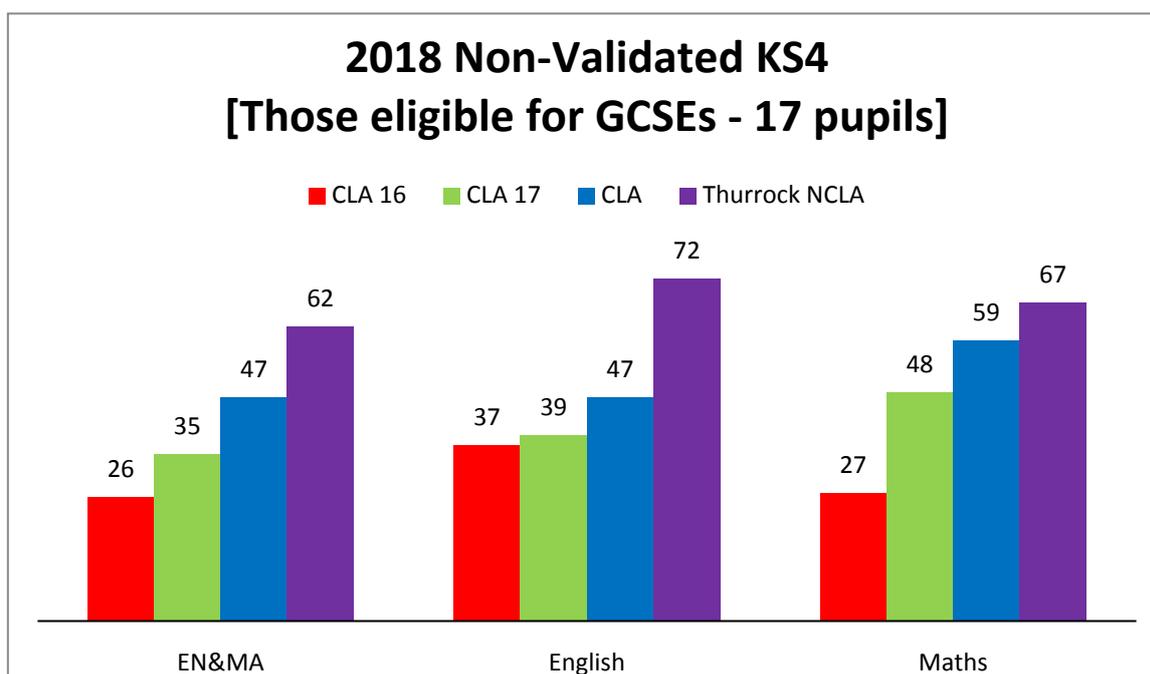
Key Headline Data [Cohort of 17 eligible for GCSE maths and English]:

- 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.

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



Graph Depicts Comparison between Year 11 cohort across a 3 year period. It compares against Thurrock non-looked after.



Graph Depicts Comparison between Year 11 cohort across a 3 year period. It compares against Thurrock non-looked after.

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.

Additional Information for Key Stage 4 Cohort

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

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.

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.

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.

The length of time in care for this cohort has supported the educational progress of these pupils.

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. 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.

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.

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 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

Key Stage 5 2018

Our pupils in years 12 and 13 continue to be supported by the Virtual School Post 16 Education Adviser. There have been some real successes this year in Key Stage 5, with 5 pupils starting university for the academic year 2018. Pupils have achieved a range of A-Levels and Level 3 equivalent qualifications. Other pupils have achieved Level 2 qualifications and their equivalent. The aftercare team continues to support our pupils and the Virtual School assists where required.

12. **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

13. Case Studies

Case Study 1, Year 11 Pupil – A

A was an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking child when entering the country in 2013 and he did not speak English.

A had not had a good quality PEP since 2016 and no targets had been set by his school since December 2016 despite numerous challenges and visits by team members of the Virtual School. Pupil Premium funding was with-held and additional resources such as piano tuition and 1-1 tuition were paid for directly by the VS.

A visit was made in January 2017 by a new team member of the VS to acquire a clearer picture of the current situation and gain some academic data, which was also not present or updated. It was raised in the meeting that predicted English outcomes for him at this point were around a grade 4. This was not a secure pass, and needed intervention, due to his predicted Maths grades being an 8. Priorities were set and low aspirations for A by the school were challenged. Targets were put in place to improve attitudes to learning and tuition had been set up to focus on English literature, which was highlighted as an area of concern due to ESOL needs. The lack of previous PEP targets and dissemination of these to teaching staff from the school had meant that there were no areas of focus coming from PEP meetings. This PEP set clear areas of focus for revision timetables, extra English in school, improving attitude to learning and accessing feedback from teachers.

Meetings were held in March and April where work was also undertaken with the SENCO/ DT to improve feedback to A through one to one's with designated teacher and improvement of home and school communication. A was in addition bought a laptop with PP+ funding to support his work at home and school. PP+ funding was withdrawn directly from the school due to lack of focused PP+ targets and spending plans, and was used to directly fund the laptop. A had requested an apple laptop.

Further meetings were held at the school to support the new designated teacher regarding the role and responsibilities of this post. Part of this support included personal PEP training and the VS maintained correspondence with the school to monitor progress and support them their offer to the young person.

The spring term data showed an impact of this challenge and support and A was predicted a 6 in English Lit and Language.

In late April 18 A received a fixed term exclusion due to inappropriate behaviour, the VS supported the school with our exclusion policies and communicated with the designated teacher. A back to school planning meeting was held to discuss actions to prevent further exclusion. A seemed to respond to having so many professionals emphasise the issues, the VS worked closely with social care and the carer to ensure A understood the consequences of his exclusion and how to make his last terms successful. He responded to the extra work put in by professionals around him and engaged in all provisions on offer.

A's GCSE results were exceptional.

Maths - 9	Further maths -A*
RE- 8	Spanish- 8
Biology -8	Chemistry -8
Physics -8	Graphics- B
English Lang- 6	English Lit- 6
History- 6	PE -6

Following GCSE result day, the Virtual School then supported A to gain a position in the London Academy of Excellence, who had previously denied his application. The VS secondary education adviser worked with the carer and the college, provided support in his reapplication and made a personal plea to the college to offer him a place, outlining the package of support that came from VS. He was subsequently offered a position in this college, which is a feeder college to Oxbridge. His carer personally thanked VS for their input and A also wrote a letter to the VSHT thanking her for the support in place by the VS throughout his schooling.

Case Study 2, Year 11 Pupil – T

T is a female who became CLA in February 2017 in Year 10. She had a history of poor school attendance. When she did attend, she was leaving classes, not engaging while in class and using avoidance tactics when she did not want to attend lessons. At this time she was experiencing anxiety; she was self-harming and receiving support from CAMHS.

Poor attendance was having a detrimental effect on T's progress and grades. After being taken into local authority care, T began to improve her attendance initially but was still not accessing lessons though other improvements had been noted by the school such as punctuality and appearance. In March of 2017 T's attendance had improved from below 50% to 73.1% but actual lesson attendance was much lower.

T was fairly negative in her outlook about school generally and her ability to achieve in particular. She used school more as a social meeting place. She did, however, say

at her first PEP that she enjoyed art and music. A VS team member attended this PEP and realised that she would benefit from some direct support work to look at how our support could re-engage her now that she was in a more settled placement with supportive carers. The VS team member visited T at home and became her key person.

The first meeting was positive and T presented as open to looking into the options available to her. The initial visit was mainly an introduction and to assess if she was willing to work with the VS. A good relationship with T and her carer was developed during the visits and there were open and honest conversations during each visit. This enabled a key VS person to become the steady contact and conduit for education. T was comfortable enough with this key person to speak honestly and this made it possible for the VS to support her fully and communicate her needs and potential barriers to learning to others.

T's attendance remained an issue for the coming months and she expressed the difficulty of being in the vicinity of the home of her birth mother who was well known in the area.

The VS key person worked closely with the school Designated Teacher to ensure that T had appropriate support in school for both her educational and emotional needs. School were very supportive but eventually everyone involved in T's case had to agree that she was not likely to attend school where she was on roll. At this point T had begun to increase her disengagement from lessons and was refusing to comply despite support from school staff.

T had begun to voice that she would like to change school setting as she wanted a fresh start away from her family home and where she was not known. By the end of year 10 her anxiety at school had grown to such a level that during the summer holidays she was refusing to return to school-and then attend any education. During another visit the key person spoke to T about supporting a school move, once it was apparent that a return to her existing school was not viable, and worked with her to ascertain what she felt would support her to make a successful move and to be able to attend. At this stage T was still refusing education at all but had begun to come around to moving setting. T was still concerned that having missed so much education that she would never catch up so what was the point. The key person was able to discuss her options, offer practical support and resources along with offering to continue her visits, attending all meetings and speaking on T's behalf when she felt she was not able to confidently get across her feelings, often due to her anxiety.

After discussion during a pupil priority meeting the VSHT approached a new school who had a proven track record of supporting our vulnerable pupils. The school agreed to give T a fresh start and support her to get the best outcomes possible. The school was closer to the foster carer's home and they were also able to support with transport and be on hand for any contact from the school.

The key worker continued to meet with T at school and attend PEPs and any meetings around her education. Regular telephone contact with the carers also facilitated the support network around T.

Additional tuition was funded by VS to support gaps in learning, T was provided with a bespoke timetable to focus her learning to maximise outcomes given the short time before she was due to sit GCSEs.

By Spring Term in 2018 T had greatly improved her attendance to 93.7%. With continued support from school staff T was able to remain in her classes, access more learning and develop resilience and strategies to manage her anxieties. By Year 11 T was achieving 94% attendance and was preparing to sit GCSE exams.

This was and is a massive achievement for T coming from a position of high anxiety and school refusal.

T successfully sat GCSE exams in year 11 and achieved: English Language Grade 5 English Literature Grade 3, Maths Grade 4, Double Science Grades 3:3, Music Btech Pass.

She has applied, been accepted to and is attending college on a Hairdressing Course.

Case Study 3 - Year 13 pupil – L

L became a CLA on 24th February 2016. This was also L's final year of schooling – year 11. Despite presenting with significant emotional and mental health concerns, L was still achieving at school and focused on raising aspirations and achieving the goal of getting to university. L had a wide network of professionals providing support at this point: social care, VS, school DT, nurse and social worker, foster carer, troubled families and EWMHS. L finished year 11 with 5 GCSE A-C grades that included maths and English, an incredible achievement and testament to C's determination and resilience.

L decided to stay on at the sixth form to study A levels in psychology, English and sociology; a two year pathway. L had a positive start to the sixth form and settled well forming a positive peer group. In addition to the A level studies L completed and passed a first aid course and signed up for Duke of Edinburgh silver award following the completion of the bronze award. At this point L was refusing careers advice and to make any considerations for university as this made her too anxious.

In January 2017 L made a historical disclosure of sexual abuse; the police became involved and an ABE was carried out. Following this disclosure L's mental health deteriorated significantly with increased self-harming episodes, suicidal ideations and heightened periods of low or hysteria. This led to an attempted suicide at the end of February where L was hospitalised. During this time many meetings were

convened with all agencies which had widened to include the crisis team. The VS and school agreed a reduced timetable to support L's recovery which would be reviewed regularly. L's attendance at sixth form did increase again but L was still unable to regulate emotions during school. L moved placement from a foster placement to a semi-independent supported accommodation in June 2017. This was further away from L's sixth form College and this move immediately affected attendance dramatically.

L started the second year and a PEP was held very early into the term to review L's support needs as it was evident that L was continuing to battle with emotional and mental well-being. It was conveyed that L should continue to attend 4 days per week but a high amount of pastoral care would be in place for the times L attended. L was able to maintain not 100% attendance but a steady 70-80% through the first half term. In January a multi-agency professional meeting was held where it was evident that L's education was being heavily impacted. L was under the care of multiple hospital departments for physical as well and mental health issues and L stated it was too painful to attend college using public transport. L was also behind in all subjects. More changes to the timetable were agreed by VS and taxis to support attendance were put in place. L was advised following this if mock exams were failed; L would be withdrawn from the course.

L did begin to improve attendance but only slightly, but against all odds passed the mock exams. Following this L, stopped attending sixth form almost completely and was completing work at home, however this was not supervised. As the A level exams approached VS agreed to fund taxis for her revision days and days of exams to ensure that L attended as L refused to use public transport due to pain. VS negotiated with the college that the taxis would continue and the pastoral support would be in place when L attended. L did attend the A Level exams and achieved D in sociology, E in psychology E in English. During the last year L was also able to gain an unconditional offer to a university, causing great excitement for L. VS have provided CS with a laptop to support further studies and a voucher to buy university essentials.

Without the constant support of the VS and a co-ordinated multiagency approach, the outcomes for L would not have been so positive.

14. 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 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.

16. 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. Up until March 2018, educational settings received £1,500 which was allocated over three terms. Since the increase in the grant in April 2018, the settings will now receive £1,800 which is released in three equal installments of £600 every term. 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. From April 2018 the top slice increased to £500 per annum.

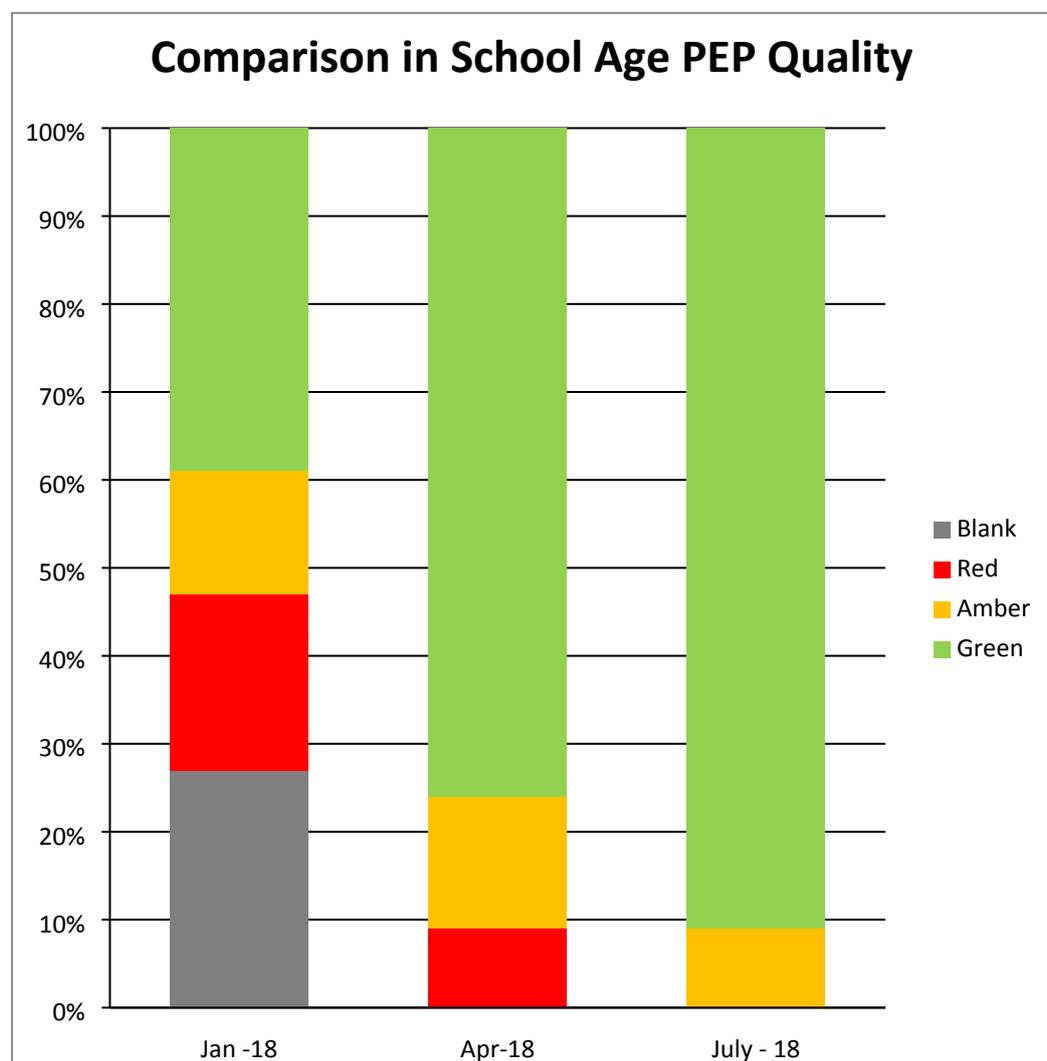
For example:

- Additional tuition for Year 11 pupils was provided in English and maths and £34,445 was provided for this. This supported pupils who achieve better GCSE grades and provide them with confidence and support for the exams
- Additional tuition for certain children who could not receive that support at school, the amount for this was £17,100
- Provision of alternative provision for students at risk of permanent exclusion to enable them to access education. This has included funding for additional support staff or bespoke timetables of alternative provision
- Provision of equipment to support learning for some students. This has included equipment to support specific courses such as photography or IT equipment
- £2,500 has been spent on providing the Attachment Aware Schools resource books by L Bomber
- Commissioning of education psychologists for assessments and reports to aid the Education Health Care Plan process
- Provision of additional educational experiences such as educational trips, outdoor and adventurous activities and activities to promote specific interests or skills
- Literacy Book Trust resources for pupils aged 3 to 13 years £18,214
- IT resources for specific students for post 16 study.

17. **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 2017/18 and those who are new into care. 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 team is responsible for Quality Assuring [QA] every PEP. We have introduced a specific protocol around PEP quality assurance and this has been shared with those who have joint responsibility for the PEP. PEP compliance rates have improved and now are consistently operating at 95% and above compliance for every child aged 3 to 18 years. A range of documents have been produced to aid the completion of high quality paperwork and the robust procedures have enabled to quality of PEP to improve so that at least 90% of school age PEPs are rated to be a good standard. During the Quality Assurance 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 Virtual School challenges the appropriate professional to ensure that this is rectified. The team keep 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. As part of the Pupil Premium release process, the VSHT audits PEPs every term for quality to

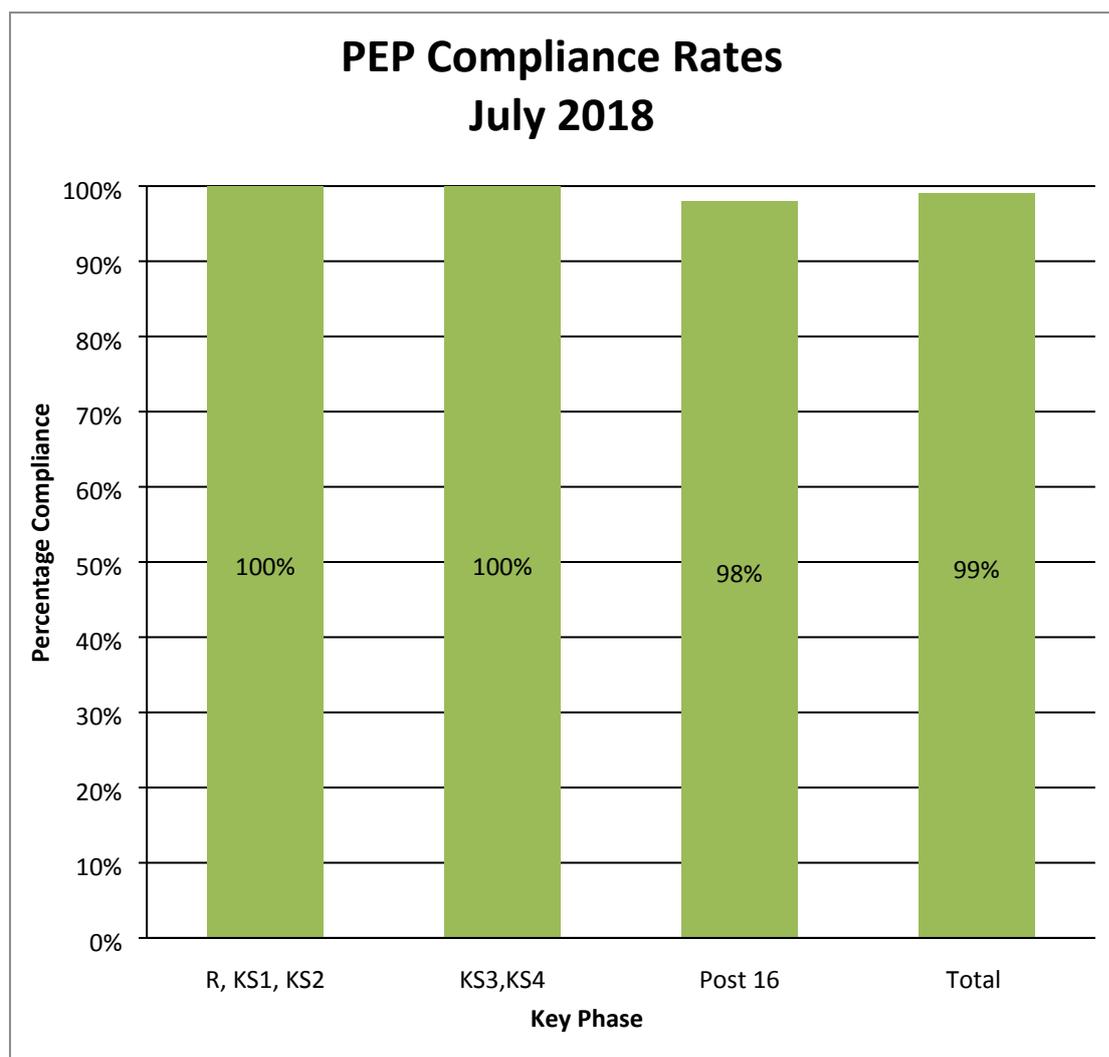
ensure that the PEP is used to support the academic achievements of the CLA pupils. The graph below details the improvement in PEP quality across the year after the application of key strategy documents and the impact of the quality assurance process which has been driven by the Virtual School Education Advisers



91% of PEPs were graded as a good quality at the end of the academic year with 9% being on the cusp of good. We are striving for at least 95% good for the forthcoming year.

PEP compliance has improved greatly over the academic year and each key phase education adviser keeps data for her area. This is reported monthly to the performance data Directors meeting.

The graph below provides PEP compliance for the end of the academic year.



18. 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+ Education Adviser 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.

Direct Comments in a letter of thanks from a Year 14 UAS pupil about to start university:

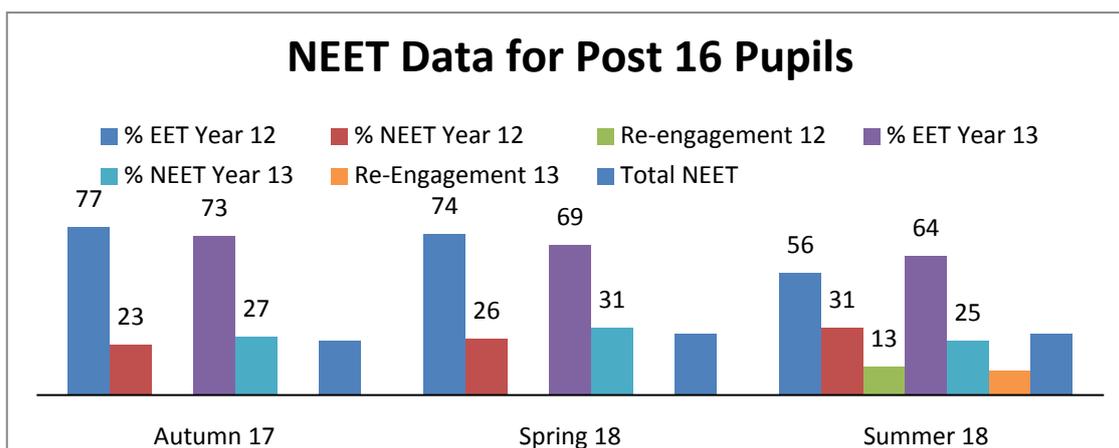
'From the very beginning of my education here in UK, the support I have been receiving from Lyan and Grace were huge and uncountable, I can only mention the most precious support I have received.

When I was young, newcomer and unaccompanied lonely immigrant, Lyan and Grace were on my side more than anyone else more than my social worker, they taught me how to speak to people in a good manner and in better English, they also provided me books which helped me a lot in developing my English. They were the roots of my educational development who supported me to reach where I am now. They supported me and encouraged to be a better student by registering and enrolling me in South Essex College. Moreover, once I have enrolled I have received a material support like laptop and books which helped me to do my assignments and study properly for four years. Not only educational support from Lyan but many more, she was on my side when I was struggling to find accommodation. They were there when I needed them in any obstacle I face on my way. Im still in a hand of their support as I am starting university this year I have nicely asked Lyan for a better laptop to get me through my education at Uni'.

This young man is about to start a degree in Engineering. This is a huge success for all and an excellent outcome. The Virtual School is providing a highly specialised laptop and a gift card for student essentials.

19. 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+ Education Adviser works with the young person, social care, personal advisors 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. The NEET and EET figures supplied in the graph below are specifically only for the children in the Virtual School cohort and would therefore see high in comparison with the national figures. In the summer term, data for those who are NEET but taking part in engagement activities, as defined by the DFE, have been included.



20. Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

This year has seen a decreased demand for the Virtual School team to support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC]. The Eastern Region sharing protocol arrangements have enabled young people to be transferred to boroughs with fewer numbers than Thurrock. The number of UASC coming into Thurrock has not reduced, however, they now move to other boroughs. Our existing UASC pupils continue to do so well in their colleges and schools and those who have been with us for over 12 months are making good progress in 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.

20. Virtual School Governing Body

The Virtual School Governing Body [GB] was formed in the autumn term 2016. Meetings are held once per term. The Governing Body is used to hold the Virtual School to account and ensure that the team are maximising positive outcomes for CLA.

The members of this GB 2017/18 were:

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

Vice Chair: M Lucas [Assistant Director of Learning, Skills and Inclusion]

Headteacher: K Pullen [Virtual School]

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

In Borough School Representative Primary: N Shadbolt [HT Aveley Primary School]

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

Post 16 Education Representative: Vacancy

Social Care Representative: Representatives from Head of Service positions

Staff Governor: G Page [Operations Co-Ordinator for the Virtual School]

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.

21. **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.

Book Trust Letterbox

In order to promote enjoyment and pleasure in reading and improve reading outcomes the Virtual School works in partnership with the Letterbox Club. The Letterbox Club is an award-winning programme managed by Book Trust, in partnership with the University of Leicester, which aims to provide enjoyable educational support for Looked After Children aged 5-13. Children and young people in care to Thurrock are enrolled onto the programme which entitles them to a colourful parcel of books, maths activities, stationery and other complementary materials once every month for six months, from May to October. All of the books in the parcels have been carefully selected by the panel at Book Trust for the children in the programme. Over the six-month period the parcels will also include other items such as a library joining card or information about how to join a library, name plates, bookmarks and letters from a selection of children's authors.

Thurrock Virtual School Book Trust Co-ordinator, Mrs Tina McGuinness, holds an Open Forum once a month for the Foster carers and CLA to collect the parcels in person and build a relationship with the Virtual School promoting reading and the use of library facilities.

Advice and Guidance for previously looked after 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. From September 2018, the Virtual School will continue to deliver this service for previously looked after children, in line with the statutory guidance.

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.

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, Equal Education and Prospero. 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.

22. Author of this report

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Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Thurrock Children Looked After

Submitted to Governors 27th September 2018

Submitted to Corporate Parenting Committee 15th January 2019