

# **NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL VIRTUAL SCHOOL**

## **Annual Report 2020**

**Based on 2018-19 academic year performance**

***Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked after Children  
and Previously Looked after Children***

## 1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. This Annual Report considers the Nottingham City Virtual School arrangements for promoting and supporting the educational achievement of it's looked after children and their educational outcomes in the 2018-19 academic year.
- 1.2. The Nottingham City Virtual School Self Improvement Plan 2020 provides details of the improvements and developments necessary to ensure they are fulfilling their responsibilities, and that arrangements in place are effective in improving outcomes for children in care. The Self Improvement Plan is based on performance in the 2018-19 academic year as well as any ongoing improvements and developments identified during the current academic year.
- 1.3. The Nottingham City Virtual School sits within Nottingham City Council's Education Service and reports directly to the Directors of Education and the Director of Children's Integrated Services.

## 2. **Nottingham City Virtual School Team**

### 2.1. The virtual school team consists of:

**Virtual School Head-** responsible and accountable for providing leadership, management and development for all aspects of the Virtual School. Ensuring fulfilment of the local authority's statutory duties regarding the education of children in care and previously looked after children.

**Virtual School Team Manager-** supports the Virtual School Head to provide effective leadership, management and development of the Virtual School. The Team Manager is responsible for the oversight of cases and provides case supervision to the Education Support Officers within the Virtual School, advising on educational interventions and targeted casework as appropriate.

**Education Support Officers x 5.5 fte equivalent-** provides advice, support and training to key stakeholders in respect to the education of children care and previously looked after children, including social workers, designated teachers, carers and parents that adopt. Education Support Officers have an allocation of children in care cases and are responsible for monitoring and tracking their educational outcomes. They attend and contribute to PEP meetings, re-integration meetings and exclusion meetings, when required, to provide advice, challenge and support.

**Business Support administrators x2-** responsible for all administrative tasks relating to the Virtual School, including maintenance of the virtual school information management systems and support with monitoring and reporting on attendance and attainment information and Personal Education Plans.

**Data support officer-** responsible for developing and maintaining the Virtual School's information management systems, as well as tracking and reporting on attendance, achievement and progress of the authority's children in care.

2.2. Throughout the last two years the Virtual School has undergone a service restructure, as part of the wider education directorate restructure. Consequently, the previous Achievement Consultant posts were deleted from the structure and replaced with the Team Manager post. A full-time Education Support Officer was appointed to take responsibility for the education of post-16 children in care. A part-time Education Support Officer was recruited on a fixed term contract responsible for the education of previously looked after children, this post is funded through the DfE grant to Virtual Schools to support the additional duties in respect to previously looked after children.

### **3. Nottingham City Virtual School Governing Body**

3.1. The Nottingham City Virtual School Governing Body is a voluntary body established to provide support, advice and challenge to the Virtual School in order to improve the educational outcomes of its authority's children in care. The Governing Body has been formed out of recognition of the benefits and contributions that can be made when a body of professionals, with different skills and expertise, come together to improve outcomes.

3.2. The Virtual School Governing Body meets termly and are provided with reports that enables members to scrutinise and consider the educational outcomes and experiences of the authority's children in care and make recommendations for improvement.

3.3. During the 2018-19 academic year the Virtual School Governing Body met each term (autumn, summer and spring), as planned, in March, June and November.

#### **4. Nottingham City Virtual School arrangements**

- 4.1. The Virtual School has a number of processes and arrangements in place to promote the educational achievement of its looked-after children and to support their access to suitable high quality education placements. These arrangements, and their effectiveness, are described within each 'Pupil Outcomes' section of this report.
  
- 4.2. The Virtual School uses its training, information provided on our website and the support and advice we provide to social care and education colleagues to promote and create a culture of high educational aspirations for its children in care and previously looked after children.

## 5. Nottingham City Virtual School roll.

5.1. In the 2018-19 academic year, 473 statutory school-aged children were on the roll of the Virtual School. Of the 473 school age children, 176 (37%) were of primary school age and 266 (56%) secondary school age. 338 (71%) were receiving education within Nottingham City and Nottingham County boundaries and 109 (23%) were receiving education outside of Nottingham. 26 (5%) children had no recorded school.

5.2. The table below provides key headlines relating to children on the Virtual School roll over the last two years:

	2017/18	2018/19
<b>No on roll (stat. school age)</b>	443	473
<b>Joiners (all ages)</b>	189	177
<b>Leavers (all ages)</b>	207	188
<b>No of asylum seeker pupils*</b>	14* + 6* (with refugee status)	20* + 1* (with refugee status)
<b>Attendance rate (stat.school age)</b>	93.60%	93.46%
<b>Authorised absence</b>	3.90%	4.12%
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	1.80%	2.25%
<b>Number of days missed</b>	343	351
<b>Fixed-term</b>	No of Pupils: 61	No of Pupils: 53
	No of Exclusions: 139	No of Exclusions: 122
	Incidence of exclusion per pupil:	Incidence of exclusion per pupil:
	28 pupils had 1 exclusion	27 pupils had 1 exclusion
	21 pupils had between 2 and 3 exclusions	16 pupils had between 2 and 3 exclusions
	9 pupils had between 4 and 6 exclusions	6 pupils had between 4 and 6 exclusions
	2 pupils had 7 exclusions	1 pupil had 7 exclusions
1 pupil had 13 exclusions	3 pupils had between 8 and 9 exclusions	
<b>Permanent</b>	No permanent exclusions.	1 permanent exclusion

5.3. In the 2018-19 academic year there were less children that experienced a fixed term exclusion than in the previous year and less number of exclusions per se. Anecdotally, this reduction can be attributed to the role of the Virtual School Education Support Officers, who moved to having a case allocation from May 2018 and became

responsible for monitoring and tracking the educational experiences of their allocated children. The Education Support Officers also receive weekly attendance and exclusion reports relating to children on their caseload, enabling them to intervene when data and information indicates causes of concerns- to prevent the escalation of any education issues.

- 5.4. The average attendance rate of children in care has remained very much the same since the 2017-18 academic year, although the number of children that have missed school through unauthorised and authorised absences have increased slightly (a less than 1% increase).
- 5.5. To support children having access to high quality education placements, in line with statutory guidance, the Nottingham City Virtual School supports and advises social care colleagues to seek schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' when children in care require a school place.
- 5.6. In the 2018-19 academic year, of the 473 children in care on the Virtual School roll the figures for their school OFSTED inspection judgement are as follows:

OFSTED Judgement	2017-2018	%	2018-2019	%
Academy Converter	(included in "other")	0	38	8.0%
Good	248	56%	269	57%
Inadequate	1	0.2%	14	3.0%
Other	68	15%	10	2.0%
Outstanding	82	18%	70	15%
Requirements improvement	27	6.0%	46	10%
WASP	17	4.0%	26	5.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>443</b>		<b>473</b>	

5.7. There were more children attending schools judged as requires improvement in the 2018-19 year than the previous year, the reason for this is currently unknown, but could be attributed to schools receiving a subsequent lower judgement after children are placed or that children were attending schools judged inadequate or requires improvement prior to being placed in care. In both instances, the Virtual School will always advocate for children remaining in their education place, to prevent the known negative implications of multiple schools moves on children's educational outcomes and emotional wellbeing.

**SIP Action:** develop arrangements for monitoring and reporting on the reasons why children in care are attending schools judged as requiring improvement and inadequate.

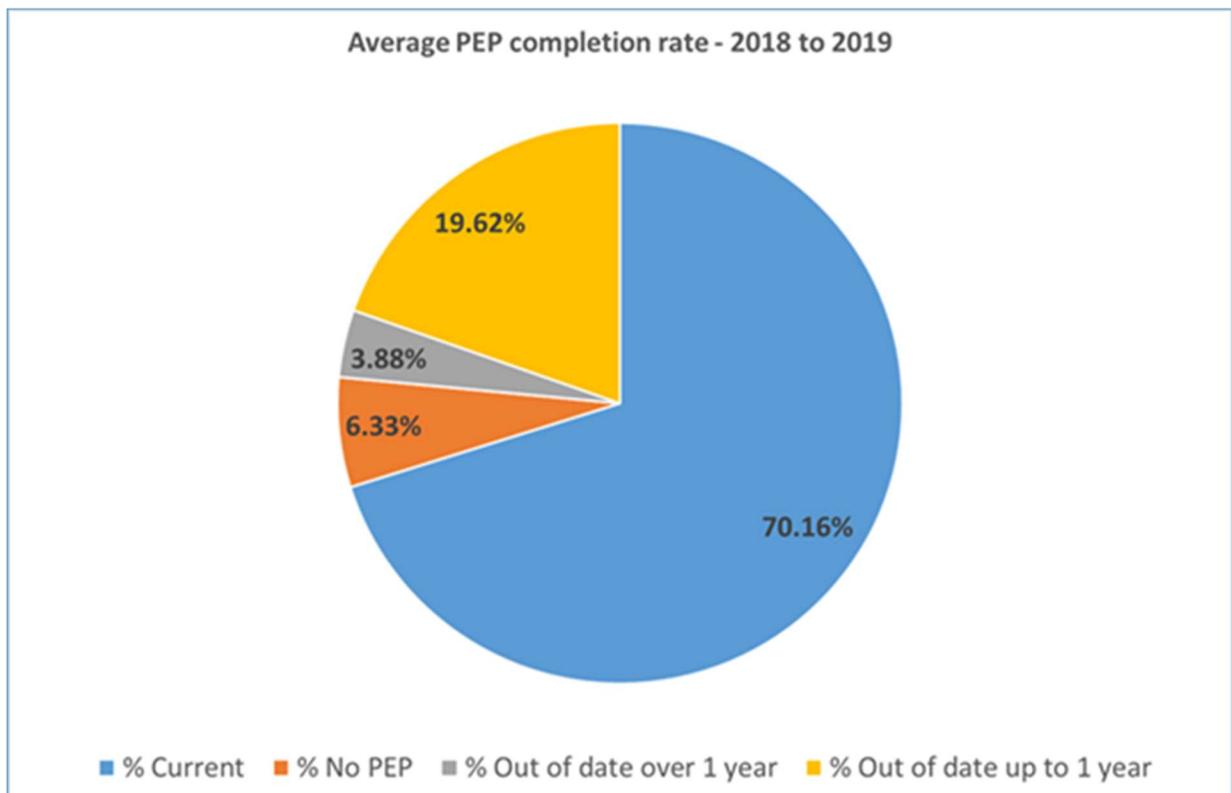
**SIP Action:** consider other experiences that can be monitored by the Virtual School that will help determine the quality of education provision being attended by children in care.

## 6. Pupil Outcomes: Personal Education Plans

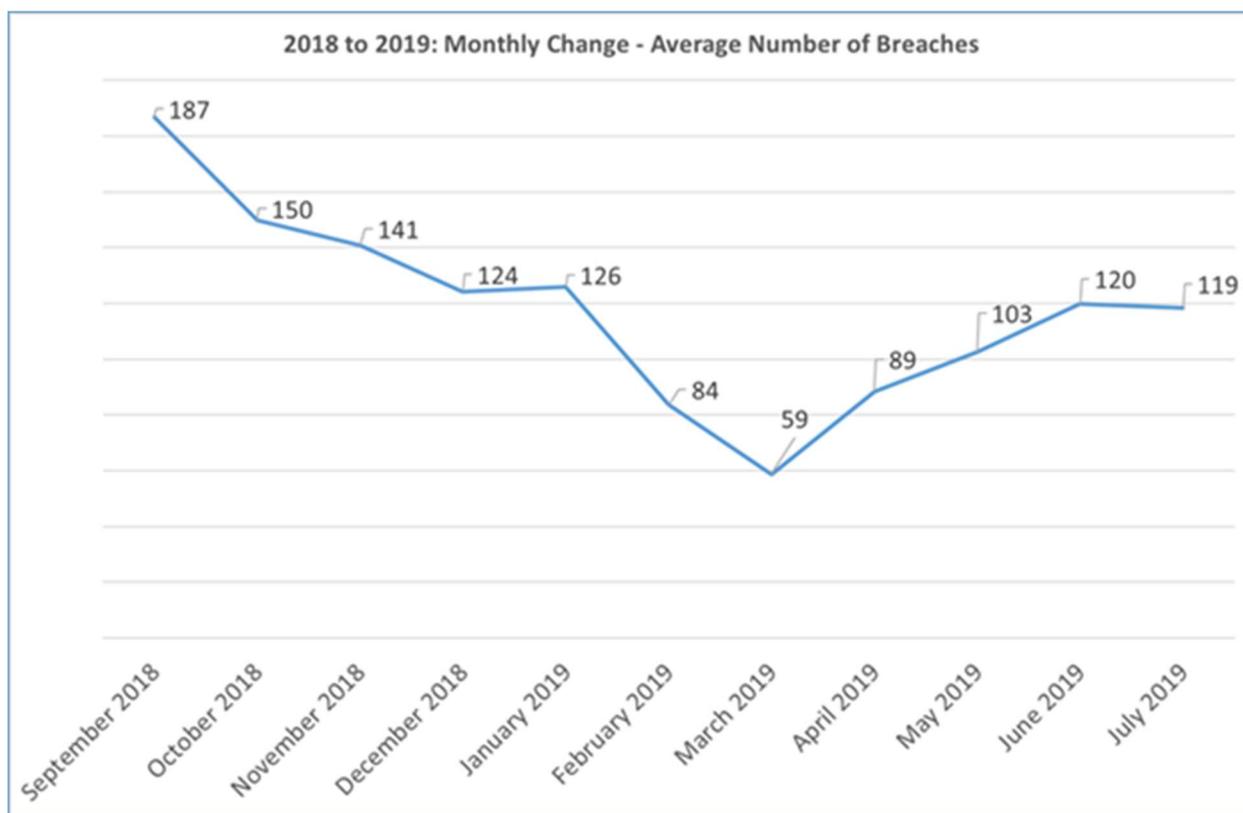
6.1. At the end of the academic year 2018-19 (week ending July 26<sup>th</sup> 2019) the weekly PEP compliance was as follows:

- 71% of all the authority's children in care had an up to date PEP completed in the last 6months.
- 21% of children had a PEP completed during the last year
- 2% of children have a PEP that was out of date by over a year
- 6% of children have not yet had a PEP completed.

6.2. Below is a table of **average** PEP completion in the 2018-19 academic year.



## 6.3. PEP completion over time 2018 to 2019:



- 6.4. The Virtual School completed two audits of PEP breaches in the 2018-19 academic, one in October 2018 and one in April 2019. The purpose of the audits is to understand which children have not had an up to date PEP completed and the reasons for this, separate reports detail the findings of each audit are available.
- 6.5. The PEP breach audit completed in April 2019 was based on the PEP completion rate as of 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019, which indicated there were 74 PEP breaches (out of date by more than 6 months or no recorded PEP completed). 81% (323/397) of children had a completed up to date PEP. The audit indicated that if the Virtual School took into consideration the 'extenuating' circumstances for children not having a PEP this would result in a compliancy figure of 94%.
- 6.6. The Virtual School Education Support Officers monitor all children that have not had an up to date PEP completed, the completion and distribution of weekly PEP compliance reports supports the Education Support Officers to do this monitoring.

They can therefore review their allocated cases listed as a breach weekly to ensure children's education arrangements and experiences are not being compromised as a consequence of them not having an up to date PEP.

6.7. The current arrangements for completing and reporting PEP compliance requires improvement to improve efficiency, quality and accessibility. Identified issues with the current PEP are as follows:

- The current PEP is paper based, making it time consuming for the different professionals (carers, designated teachers, children and social workers) to contribute and then write up their views/information on one form, which sometimes causes delay in PEP reports being typed and sent to the Virtual School.
- PEPs are not always being sent to the Virtual School inbox, but are instead saved directly to Liquid Logic, consequently they are then inaccurately recorded as 'breach' as they have not been counted or checked by the Virtual School.
- Inability to report on the number of PEPs attended by carers, children or the Virtual School, therefore performance in this area, and the possible impact of non-attendance cannot be considered.
- The current system does not enable consideration of any extenuating circumstances for non-completion of PEPs.
- The process for the Virtual School quality assuring PEPs is time consuming and inefficient whilst PEP completion is completed on a paper-based form.

6.8. Because of the above inefficiencies in the current PEP processes work has commenced to move to an electronic PEP, hosted on the Welfare Call custom-built ePEP portal.

**SIP Action:** implement the ePEP portal to enable more detailed PEP reporting, which includes the ability to monitor PEP attendance by children and the Virtual School.

**SIP Action:** develop a quality assurance process as part/aligned to the ePEP system.

**SIP action:** improve monitoring arrangements of children that do not have an up to date PEP to enable the Virtual School Education support officers to ensure children's education arrangements and experiences are not being compromised.

## 7. Pupil outcomes- attendance and exclusions

7.1. Welfare Call is commissioned to gather attendance and exclusion data for children in care of statutory school aged. Attendance data is updated daily for each child in care on the Virtual School roll and caseworkers scrutinise the reports weekly in order to support and challenge social workers, carers and schools where children are identified as having low attendance or where they have been subject to a fixed term exclusion.

7.2. There was a slight drop in the school attendance rate for Nottingham City children in care in the 2018-19 academic year – see table below:

	2017/2018	2018/2019
Attendance Rate	93.60%	93.46%
Authorised absence	3.90%	4.12%
Unauthorised absence	1.80%	2.25%

7.3. There was 1 permanent exclusion of a child in care during the 2018/19 academic year and 122 incidents of fixed term exclusion during 2018/19, a decrease from the previous academic year. The table below provides details of the number and types of fixed term exclusions experienced by our children in care:

Exclusion Code	Number of Incidents 2017/2018	% of Incidents 2017/2018	Number of Incidents 2018/2019	% of Incidents 2018/2019
Bullying	0	1.40%	0	0
Damage	3	2.10%	8	6.55%
Drug and alcohol related	4	2.80%	3	2.45%
Non-cooperation	/	/	7	5.73%
Other	45	32.30%	4	3.27%
Persistent disruptive behaviour	29	20.80%	12	9.83%
Physical assault against a pupil	14	10%	10	8.19%
Physical assault against an adult	10	7.20%	9	7.37%
Racist Abuse	2	1.40%	2	1.63%

Theft	1	0.70%	0	0
Truancy	/	/	2	1.63%
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil	7	5.00%	3	2.45%
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult	22	15.80%	17	13.93%
School unable to supply reason	/	/	45	36.88%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>139</b>		<b>122</b>	

**SIP Action:** follow up with schools reasons for exclusions and ensure these are recorded on the Virtual School system.

## 8. Pupil outcomes- attainment and progress 2018-19

8.1. The following attainment outcomes were obtained through a combination of the Department of Education Key to Success website, Nexus Nova reporting, Local Authority Information Tool (LAIT), the LA data Matrix and Statistical First Release.

### 8.2. **Phonics 2018/2019 (Year 1 only)**

	Number		Percentage		National CLA	National All
	17/18	18/19	17/18	18/19	2018/2019	
Total No in Cohort	19	20				
Passed	12	7	63%	35%	63%	82%

- At the time of reporting, June 2020, there were 25 children in care in Year 2, 20 of these children feature in the above results (the other 5 are new to care and therefore did not feature in last year results).
- There has been a significant decline (-28%) from the previous year of children passing their year 1 phonics.
- Of the 20 pupils for whom we obtained results 13 were looked after for 12 months+, 38% of these passed their phonics. The national CLA for 12months+ was 68%.

**SIP Action:** drill down on the contextual and demographic detail of those children in year 1 that did not pass their phonics, in order to consider the strategies and interventions necessary for improvement next year.

**SIP Action:** consider interventions to support those children in care that did not pass their phonics in the 2018-19 year to support them to achieve in future assessments

**SIP Action:** have arrangements in place to enable the Virtual School to obtain phonics results for all its children in care, even where children were not in care at the time of taking the tests.

### 8.3. Key Stage 1 attainment 2018-19

	Number		Percentage		National CLA	National All
	17/18	18/19	17/18	18/19	2018/2019	
Cohort – Reading	9	21	55%	52%	53%	75%
Cohort – Writing	8	21	38%	43%	43%	69%
Cohort – Maths	9	21	33%	57%	51%	76%

- Of the 21 pupils for whom we obtained results, 18 were looked after for 12 months+.
- The percentages of children looked after for 12months+ achieving age related expectations compared to National is as follows:
  - Reading: the percentage achieving expected standard was 61% (National CLA was 52%).
  - Writing: the percentage achieving expected standard was 50% (National CLA was 43%).
  - Maths: the percentage achieving the expected standard was 67% (National CLA was 49%).
- There has been an improvement from the previous year in the percentage of Nottingham City children in care achieving expectations in both Writing and Maths at Key Stage 1.
- The percentage of children looked after 12months+ achieving expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths is higher than National CLA 12months+.

### 8.4. Key Stage 2 Attainment 2018-19

	Number		Percentage		National CLA	National All
	17/18	18/19	17/18	18/19	2018/2019	
Cohort – Reading	30	32	67%	28%	50%	73%
Cohort – Writing	25	32	60%	31%	51%	78%
Cohort – Maths	30	32	55%	31%	52%	79%

- 8.5. There were 33 Key Stage 3 pupils on the roll of the Virtual School at the point of reporting, June 2020, for whom we required their 2018-19 Key Stage 2 assessment

outcomes. The Statistical First Release (SFR) published in May 2021 contained Key Stage 2 assessment data for 23 of our children; we therefore referred to Keys to Success for the data of the other 10 children, and was able to obtain the assessment data for a further nine, therefore 32 results were obtained in total.

**SIP Action:** have arrangements in place to ensure the Virtual School is able to obtain Key Stage 2 statutory assessments results for all its children in care on roll, irrespective of their date into care.

8.6. Of the 32 children for whom results were obtained, 29 are for children looked after for 12 months or more, results for these 29 are as follows:

- Reading: the percentage of children achieving the expected standard was 28% (National CLA was 49%).
- Writing: the percentage of children achieving the expected standard was 31% (National CLA was 50%).
- Maths: the percentage of children achieving the expected standard was 28% (National CLA was 51%).

8.7. Performance at Key Stage 2 in 2018-19 for Nottingham City children in care was particularly poor in comparison to the previous year performance and in comparison to National CLA performance. The Virtual School therefore completed a drill down analysis to consider contextual and demographic information pertaining to the children that sat the assessments to ascertain whether there were any specific circumstances or experiences that may have had an impact on their achievement.

8.8. The drill down on the contextual and demographic detail of the Key Stage 2 cohort that sat tests last year indicated the following:

- 50% of the children have a special education need, receiving SEND support or have an EHCP.
- 70% of the children experienced two or more placement moves whilst being in care.

- 90% of the children experienced one or more schools moves whilst being in care.

These three factors can have a significant impact on a child's educational achievement and may therefore be a contributory factor in the decline of performance at Key Stage 2 in the 2018-19 academic year.

**SIP Action:** Monitor Teacher Termly Assessments and educational outcomes of the children in care that did not achieve age related expectations in their key stage 2 assessments, in order to put in place support and interventions to enable them to progress and achieve in future assessments.

#### 8.9. Key Stage 4 Attainment 2018-19

	Number	Percentage	National CLA	National All
	18/19	18/19	2018/2019	
KS4 9-4 English and Maths	65	16.9%	18.0%	59.8%
KS4 9-5 English and Maths	65	12.3%	7.0%	40.1%
KS4 Attainment 8 Average	65	17.6	19.2	44.7
KS4 Progress 8 Average	65	-1.12	-1.23	-

8.10. There were 80 post-16 pupils on the roll of the Virtual School at the point of reporting, June 2020, for whom we required their 2018-19 Key Stage 4 assessment outcomes. The Nexus reporting contained Key Stage 4 assessment outcomes for 65 of these 80 children. Thirteen of the 15 children for whom we were unable to obtain results were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) who came into care shortly before or after the period of Key Stage 4 assessments. The two other children were not UASC and therefore were expected to have completed some form of assessment at Key Stage 4.

8.11. To actively pursue assessment results, or the reason assessments were not completed, for all Key Stage 4 children in care on the roll of the Virtual School, irrespective of the date they came into care, in a timely way, is an area the Virtual School needs to improve on and forms an action within our SIP.

8.12. There was a total of thirteen UASC for whom we were unable to obtain Key Stage assessment results, mainly because they did not take assessments due to their language barrier or because they arrived into this country, and became a child in care, after the assessment dates. UASC children are particularly vulnerable to underachievement and therefore specific monitoring of this cohort to ensure timely support and intervention to support them to achieve is required, this forms part of our Self Improvement Plan.

8.11.56 of the 80 children were looked after for 12 months or more, the results of all 56 children looked after for 12+ months were obtained, as follows:

- KS4 9-4 English and Maths: the percentage of children achieving was 19.6% (National CLA was 17.9%).
- KS4 9-5 English and Maths: the percentage achieving was 14.3% (National CLA was 7.0%).
- KS4 Attainment 8: average was 18.6 (National CLA was 19.1).
- KS4 Progress 8: average was -1.03 (National CLA was -1.28).

8.12. NCC CLA pupils have achieved a better performance result in KS4 9-5 English and Maths and also with the KS4 Progress 8 average compared to the National CLA average.

8.13. For those who have been looked after 12 months or more, NCC CLA pupils have achieved a better performance result in KS4 9-4 E&M, KS4 9-5 E&M, and KS4 P8 compared to the National CLA average.

**SIP Action:** have arrangements in place to ensure the Virtual School is able to obtain the Key Stage 4 statutory assessments results for all its children in care, irrespective of the date they came into care and where assessments were not completed record the reasons for this.

**SIP Action:** monitor and track the educational arrangements of UASC as a specific cohort, to ensure they are receiving appropriate support and interventions to enable them to achieve.

### **Attainment- conclusion**

8.14. The Virtual School has arrangements in place to collect the statutory assessment results for its children in care. However, there have been a small number of pupils across each Key Stage where we have been unable to obtain their results; improvement is required in this area, this is therefore an action within our Self Improvement Plan.

8.15. The Virtual School has arrangements in place to carry out an analysis of attainment data in order to consider the possible impact of external factors or demographics on children's attainment, for example multiple school/placement moves or whether a child is attending an out of area school. This has been a positive development as it enables the Virtual School to explore targeted interventions and actions necessary to promote the achievement of its children in care.

8.16. The drill-down on contextual information of Key Stage 2 looked after children completing their assessments in 2018-19, demonstrated that despite some children achieving expectations at Key Stage 1 they failed to do so at Key Stage 2. The Virtual School must therefore establish effective arrangements for gathering, analysing and acting on the outcomes teacher termly assessments in order to support children whose educational performance is declining.

**SIP Action:** carryout annual drill downs of attainment data linked with contextual and demographic information across all Key Stages.

**SIP Action:** gather and monitor Teacher Termly Assessments for Nottingham City children in care to track progress and enable the Virtual School to provide timely intervention and support where necessary.

## 9. Pupil Premium Plus arrangements and (2019-20)

9.11. The Virtual School produces and updates its Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) policy every financial year and provides copies of the updated policy to all schools that have a Nottingham City child in care on their roll.

9.12. During the 2019-20 financial year all schools with a Nottingham City child in care on their role was able to apply for the full Pupil Premium Plus allocation- split across three terms, the Virtual School did not top slice funding. To apply for funding schools complete and submit a brief online form detailing the amount of funding required, the purpose of the funding and its intended impact.

9.13. Schools were also able to apply for additional PPP funding over and above the £2300 allocation, where costs of interventions required funding that exceeded the allocation. Below is an annual breakdown of Pupil Premium Plus expenditure for the 2019-20 financial year.

<b>Annual Pupil Premium Plus budget for financial year 2019/2020</b>		<b>£1,030,400</b>
<b>Breakdown of Expenditure</b>		<b>Amount £</b>
Pupil Premium Plus applications (includes summer, autumn and spring term requests, plus applications for extra funding)		716,072
Attendance at Alternative Providers - costs met by Virtual School*		167,291
Laptops for children in care		4,950
Chrome Books for children in care		2,400
Nottingham City Education Psychology Service support*		3,855
Virtual School Staff training costs		325
National Association of Virtual School Heads - annual subscription		500
Welfare Call Ltd annual contract (attainment, attendance data collection)		27,300
Welfare Call Ltd annual contract (ePEP)		18,191
SIMS annual contract		5,019
Unlock*		29,712
Big It Up Virtual School's contribution*		10,000
DSG budget contribution - various children in care activities		22,468
Virtual School Team premises rental		5,057
Contribution to Fair Access for the provision of education for children in care		17,260
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,030,400</b>

9.14. Details of the Virtual School PPP expenditure marked \* in the table above is as follows:

- **Attendance at alternative provision-** the cost for this intervention has been particularly necessary when children in care unable to attend mainstream provision are placed out of area. The Virtual School has sometimes experienced difficulties in securing alternative provision places for children in care placed out of area, due to the costs and other authorities reluctance to fund. Where alternative provision is required for children placed out of area the Virtual School will often fund the cost of this to avoid delay and drift in securing provision.
- **Nottingham City Education Psychology Service-** the Nottingham City Virtual School commissioned 15 sessions (3 hours per session) of EP services in the 2019-20 academic year, this was more sessions than that purchased in 2018-19 (10), due to the demand for this intervention in the previous year. The Education Psychology sessions are used to provide timely assessments and/or interventions for individual children in care identified as requiring support.
- **Unlock-** Nottingham City Virtual School recognises the importance of raising the motivation and aspirations of children in care; this is the aim of the Unlock project. The Virtual School piloted Unlock in the 2018-19 academic year, full details of the project and its outcomes forms part of a separate report. The 2018-19 pilot project was a success, so was therefore commissioned to run again in the 2019-20 academic year.
- **Big it Up Awards-** the Virtual School contributes to the children in care achievement awards delivered and coordinated by Childrens Social Care Service. The aim of the Big it Up awards is to recognise and celebrate the achievements of the authority's children care, to raise their self-esteem and sense of worth.

9.15. The two interventions and projects the Virtual School funded through Pupil Premium (Unlock and the Education Psychologist) have been individually evaluated and both interventions have had a positive impact on the education of the children in care that have taken part.

9.16. Although schools are required to describe the intended impact of interventions funded through Pupil Premium, the Virtual School has not checked whether intended impact has been achieved. Effective alignment of Pupil Premium Funding to each child's PEP will enable the Virtual School to effectively monitor the impact funding has had on the child's educational outcomes.

**SIP Action:** align the process of allocating Pupil Premium Plus funding to schools with the PEP process, this will enable better monitoring of funding provided and its impact on the educational outcomes of children in care.

**SIP Action:** raise the issue of out of area authority's reluctance to fund the cost of alternative provision for children in care with NAVSH.

## 10. Virtual School Training Programme (2018-19)

10.11. Below is a list of the training delivered by the Virtual School in 2018-19 academic year:

- Foster Carer Training delivered - 25.9.18 ( 6 attendees)
- Foster Carer Training delivered - 22.1.19 (13 attendees)
- Designated Teacher Training delivered – 17.10.18 (14 attendees)
- Designated Teacher Network delivered – 17.10.18 (20 attendees)
- Designated Teacher Training delivered – 13.3.19 (5 attendees)
- Designated Teacher Network delivered - 13.3.19 (20 attendees)
- Designated Teacher Training delivered – 19.6.19 (3 attendees)
- Designated Teacher Network delivered - 19.6.19 (13 attendees)
- Governor’s Training delivered - 12.11.18 (3 attendees)
- Governor’s Training delivered - 5.6.19 (4 attendees)
- Governor’s Conference - 22.6.19 (5 attendees)
- Promoting Education previously LAC – 7.9.18 (15 attendees)
- Promoting Education previously LAC – 3.12.18 (16 attendees)
- Residential Staff Training delivered – 9.11.18 (13 attendees)
- Residential Staff Training delivered – 15.1.19 (7 attendees)
- Residential Staff Training delivered – 1.5.19 (8 attendees)
- Residential Staff Training delivered – 14.5.19 (9 attendees)
- Residential Staff Training delivered – 21.5.19 (7 attendees)
- Social Worker Training – 5.2.19 (2 attendees)
- University of Nottingham Training (NQT)- 27.6.19 (37 Attendees)

10.12. Historically there has been a low take-up of training for social workers, and this has been the case in the 2018-19 academic year. The Virtual School developed ‘bite size’ (1hour training sessions in specific areas) training for social workers in the 2018-19 academic year in order to encourage take-up, however, attendance remained low.

- 10.13. Speaking with social workers and team managers, they advised when they need information and guidance in respect to the education of children in care, contact is made with the allocated Virtual School Education Support Officer and/or they invite them to relevant meetings to provide the guidance, hence access to training has not always been necessary.

**SIP action:** consider and implement alternative ways of providing social workers with information and guidance to support the education of children in care.

- 10.14. All training delivered in 2018-19 was evaluated in the same way, using a standard evaluation form. An analysis of the feedback from training has been completed and forms part of a separate Training Evaluation Report 2018-19.

**SIP action:** review the outcome of the training evaluation and take appropriate actions to improve and develop the Virtual School Training offer accordingly.

## 11. Post-16 children in care

11.11. In May 2019 the Nottingham City Virtual School employed a full time Education Support Officer, with specific responsibilities for post-16 children in care. The Post-16 Education Support Officer has responsibility for monitoring, tracking, reporting and supporting the educational outcomes of Post-16 Children in Care.

11.12. The role of the post-16 Education Support Officer consists of:

- Work in partnership with Futures and the Leaving Care Service to ensure all post-16 Nottingham City children in care not in education, employment or training (NEET) have the support from relevant services to access education, employment or training.
- Develop and maintain a system for tracking the education/employment destination of post-16 children in care.
- Review the post-16 PEP document and have arrangements in place for monitoring completion and quality assuring PEPs for post-16 children in care.
- Have arrangements in place for gathering assessment and attainment information for post-16 children in care.

11.13. Soon after commencing in post, the post-16 Education Support Officer began developing a more robust system for monitoring the educational outcomes of post-16 children in care. Consequently, by the end of the 2018-19 academic year the Virtual School has been able to report on the EET status and PEP compliancy rates for this cohort of children, as follows:

### 11.14. EET Status of post-16 children in care (June 2019)

	<b>EET</b>	<b>NEET</b>	<b>Status Unknown</b>
<b>Year 12</b>	49	11	4
<b>Year 13</b>	25	12	3
<b>Total</b>	74	23	7

- In June 2019 71.8% (74) of the post-16 cohort was in Education, Employment or Training.
- Of the 74 young people in Education, Employment or Training, nine were completing A Levels/Level 3 Studies, accounting for 12% of the cohort.

11.15. The Post-16 Education Support Officer carried out extensive work between May and June 2019 to ascertain the EET status of individual Post-16 children in care. At the end of May 2019 there were 30 children whose EET status was unknown to the Virtual School, this was reduced to 7 by June 2019 and by July 2019 there was only 1 young person whose status was unknown.

11.16. In May 2019, the Post-16 Education Support Officer tracked completion of Pathway PEPs for all Nottingham City post-16 children in care, to consider compliance rates and to provide a baseline for future reporting. There were 103 post-16 children in care on the Virtual School roll at that time, 64 in Year 12 and 40 in Year 13. Of the 103, 29 children had a Pathway PEP completed (28%). Following recruitment of the post-16 Education Support Officer Pathway PEP compliance started to improve by the end of the 2018-19 academic year; going from 28% completed PEPs in May 2019 and increasing to 34% by the start of July, accounting for a 6% improved compliancy rate.

**SIP Action:** gather the destination status of all (100%) Nottingham City post-16 children in care periodically throughout the year, ready for reporting at the end of each academic year.

**SIP Action:** Review the arrangements, developed by the Education Support Officer responsible for post-16 children in care, to gather destination information of children post-16, to ensure they are effective and efficient.

**SIP Action:** develop and commission projects, initiatives and programmes to raise the motivation and aspirations of post-16 children in care and support access to work

experience/placement opportunities, in order to reduce the number post-16 children in care NEET.

**SIP Action:** increase the percentage of post-16 children in care having an up to date and quality PEP through, encouraging, advising and supporting FE providers and social workers to hold PEP meetings for children and through the development of an effective post-16 PEP quality assurance process.

## **12. Previously looked after children**

12.11. To meet the additional duties in respect to previously looked after children the Nottingham City Virtual School uses the PLAC grant to fund the post of an Education Support Officer with a specific responsibility to provide advice, support and guidance in respect to previously looked after children.

12.12. Between September 2019 and June 2020 the number of cases for which advice, support and guidance has been provided and recorded in respect to previously looked after children is 42 (4 adoptive parents, 19 SGOs, 2 information not supplied, 17 Professionals (social workers, schools, CAMHS)). These cases generated 334 enquiries in the following areas:

- Adoption Support Funding
- Applying/eligibility for Pupil Premium Funding
- Appropriate use of Pupil Premium Funding
- Education provision for PLAC- admissions and applications for a school place
- Information and advice regarding SEN and SEN funding;
- Support with PEPs and PEP meetings
- Online safety concerns
- Respite requests
- Requests for information: attachment awareness, training, home-schooling
- Covid-19 laptop requests
- Post- adoption education support
- Support with education concerns
- Post Adoption- social, emotional and mental health support
- CAMHS request for support
- Behavioural support requests
- Advocacy support- attendance at meetings

12.13. The Education Support Officer works in partnership with Adoption East Midlands to support with requests for advice and information in respect to previously looked after children.

### **13. Virtual School Information and Case Management System**

- 13.11. Following the 2018 Ofsted Inspection, the Nottingham City Virtual School explored different information and case management systems that support effective and efficient monitoring and tracking of educational outcomes for children in care. A system where educational outcomes for children in care can be gathered and presented clearly and accurately to enable the Virtual School to provide the support necessary to promote and support children's educational achievement.
- 13.12. Work was undertaken to develop an electronic PEP within Liquid Logic, with an aligned quality assurance process. However, following much scoping it became apparent that an ePEP within Liquid Logic would not enable the Virtual School to effectively perform its duties and responsibilities, mainly because completion would be very reliant on social care colleagues, as plans for schools to access the system did not go ahead. Furthermore, Liquid Logic is not able to hold and report on other educational information relating to children in care; attendance and exclusions, attainment and progress, pupil premium and school move information.
- 13.13. Following visits to other Virtual schools to consider their PEP and case management systems, a decision was made to commission a purpose built ePEP from an external provider- Welfare Call.
- 13.14.** Throughout the 2018-19 academic year, whilst considering alternative systems, the Virtual School has continued to use SIMs, Liquid Logic and various spreadsheets to enable us to track and monitor education outcomes of children in care. PEPs continued to be completed on the paper-based forms and compliance monitored and reported on weekly. An interim PEP QA process has been in place pending the implementation of the ePEP, consisting of the Virtual School team checking PEP paper work on completion to ensure it is relevant to the needs of the child. PEPs not of sufficient quality are declined and an email sent to the social worker and/or designated teacher with advice on what is required for it to be improved and accepted. A log of the declines and feedback is kept by the Virtual School.

**SIP action:** successfully develop and implement the Welfare Call ePEP portal as the Virtual School Information and Case Management system.

## **14. Conclusion**

14.11. This Annual Report provides details of the educational outcomes of Nottingham City children in care in the 2018-19 academic year and the Virtual School's arrangements for monitoring, tracking and supporting them. The Virtual School is responsible for monitoring and allocating Pupil Premium Plus funding to support with the education of children in care, this report provides details of how this funding was used and the arrangements in place for allocation.

14.12. The Virtual School Self-Improvement plan provides details of the actions and developments necessary for the Virtual School to further develop and improve its arrangements and processes to effectively promote and support the educational achievement of Nottingham City children in care.

Report end.