

7 June 2017		ITEM: 5
Corporate Parenting Committee		
The Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for Children Looked After – Academic Year 2015/2016		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Keeley Pullen, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After		
Accountable Head of Service: Roger Edwardson, Interim Strategic Leader School Improvement, Learning and Skills		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children’s Services		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

Raising achievement in all areas of education for our Children Looked After [CLA] remains a key priority for Thurrock Council. The Virtual School monitors and supports the educational progress and outcomes for CLA irrespective of where they are placed, in or out of borough. The Virtual School is responsible for pupils aged between 3 years and 18 years and this includes those who have left care during an academic year.

The annual report of the Virtual School Headteacher details the provisional outcomes for all pupils in the Virtual School cohort for the academic year 2015-2016 irrespective of their length of time in care. The detailed analysis for this information on attainment has been presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee on 10th January 2017 by the Virtual School Headteacher.

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

This annual report has been presented to and approved by the Virtual School Governing Board. This is a newly established board since the beginning of the current academic year 2016-2017. The Virtual School Headteacher provides termly reports to this board and it is used a mechanism to develop further strategy and accountability for improving the educational outcomes of Thurrock CLA.

In addition, this paper will also detail the ratified data which has recently been provided by the DFE Statistical First Release which highlights the attainment of pupils who have been placed in care for longer than 1 year.

This information was not available from the DFE until April 2017. The Virtual School Headteacher would like to inform the Committee of this data as previous reports detailed all pupils in the cohort, irrespective of their time in care.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 The Committee notes the verified DFE outcomes of the summer 2016 tests and examinations and commends the pupils, their schools and parents/carers on their achievements. In particular, that Thurrock CLA has performed above national CLA performance indicators in all areas.**
- 1.2 The Committee approves the Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher for the academic year 2015-2016 and uses this information to acknowledge, evaluate and if appropriate, challenge the services that are provided for all CLA.**

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The target for Thurrock Children Looked After is for them to be improving year on year and to meet the expected standards. The target is to close the attainment gap between CLA and non-CLA and to be above national outcomes for all CLA. A detailed report on the attainment for all CLA was provided on 10/1/17. This existing paper details attainment data from the DFE.

2.1.1 The year groups to be reported based upon DFE data for CLA in care for 12 months or more are outlined as follows:

KS1 (6/7 years old)
KS2 (10/11 years old)
KS4 (15/16 years old)

2.1.2 The annual report should provide the Committee with detailed information regarding the broad scope of work of the Virtual School which provides members with a greater depth of knowledge in order to enable the Committee to challenge. The Virtual School Headteacher would like to present the next annual report in December 2017 detailing the academic year 2016-2017, with a further attainment update in 2018 once the DFE standardised attainment data is provided. The annual report is provided as a separate document.

3. Attainment for Children Looked After in care for 12 months or more:

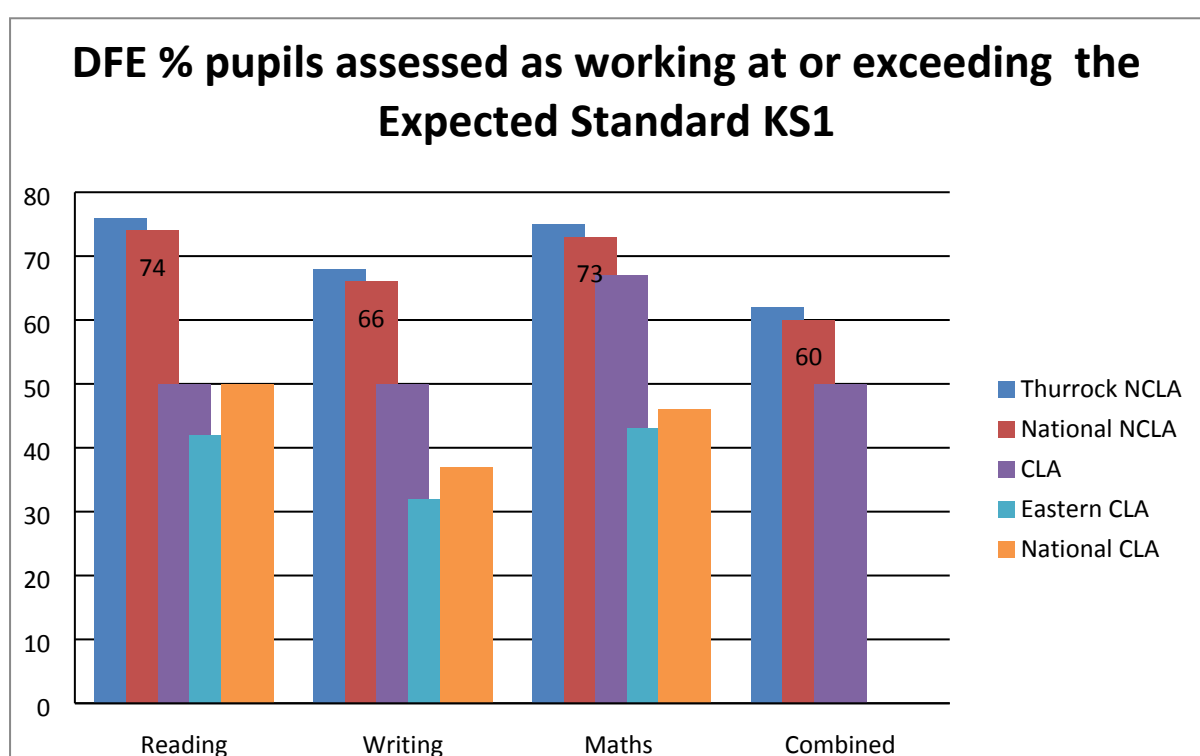
3.1 Key Stage 1 [Age 6/7 - Year 2]

3.1.2 There were 6 pupils who were counted in the DFE category versus the original 12 reported on in January 2017. Thurrock CLA performed above the National

and Eastern region CLA standards and the gap between non-CLA is much smaller for our CLA than others.

3.1.3 In 2016 KS1 assessments are no longer reported as levels and cannot be compared to previous years. National Curriculum levels have been replaced by National Standards in the interim Teacher Assessment Frameworks, which are only to be used in 2016 and 2017. The results are still based on teacher assessments and for the first time this year include a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

3.1.4 In the graph below, it is possible to see how Thurrock CLA performed against National and Thurrock non-CLA and additionally National and Eastern Region CLA. This is an improvement on previous year's attainment 14/15 where Thurrock were below National and Regional CLA for outcomes.



3.2 Key Stage 2 (age 10/11, Year 6)

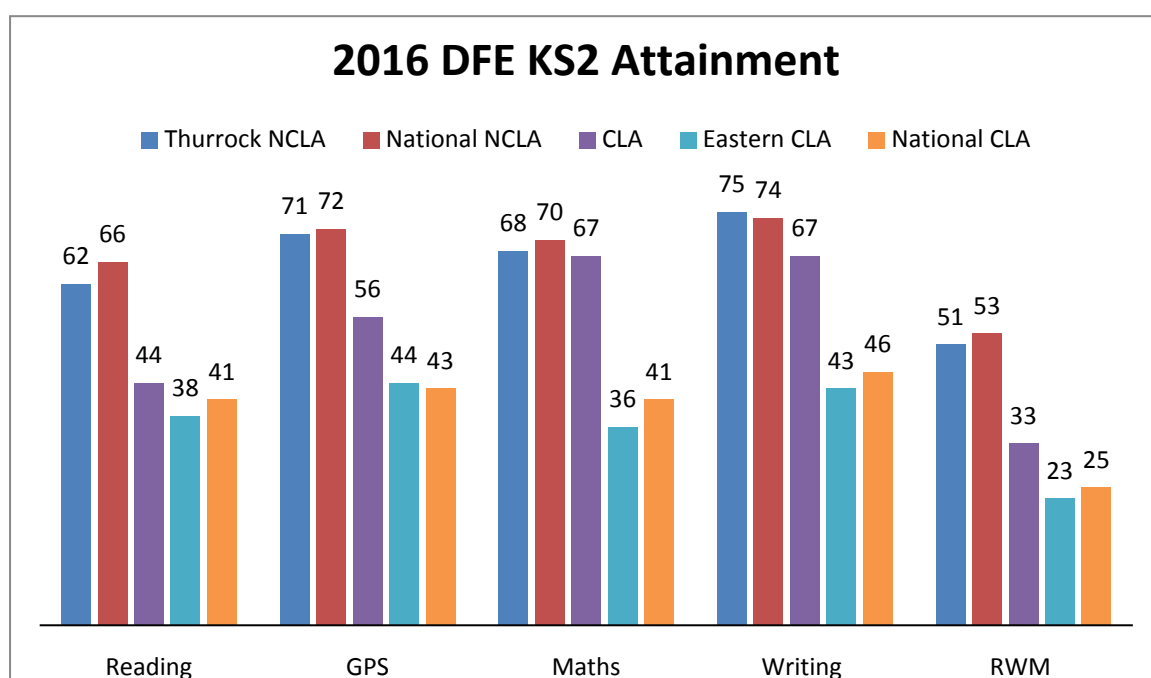
3.2.1 In 2016, the new more challenging national curriculum, which was introduced in 2014, was assessed by new tests and interim frameworks for teacher assessment. KS2 results are no longer reported as levels: each pupil receives their test results as a scaled score and teacher assessments based on the standards in the interim framework.

3.2.2 The expected standard in the tests is a scaled score of 100 or above. Attainment nationally in the tests is highest in grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) at 72% and lowest in reading at 66%. At 74%, attainment in the writing teacher assessment is higher than in any of the test subjects.

3.2.3 In 2015, to achieve a level 4 (the previous expected standard) pupils would have needed to get 46 per cent in their maths tests and 36 per cent in reading. In 2016, under the new, tougher standards, those percentages have increased to 54.5 per cent for maths, and 42 per cent for reading. GPS has remained the same at 61 per cent.

3.2.4 The cohort size for the Key Stage 2 SATS was 12 pupils originally and in the DFE return there are 10. Those who had been in care for 12 months or more performed above National and Eastern Regional CLA. This is illustrated in the graph below.

3.2.5 For Thurrock CLA, reading was 44.4% [4 pupils], GPS was 55.6% [5 pupils], in maths 67% and in writing was 67% [7 pupils].



3.2.6 The comparison between attainment at KS1 and progress for KS2 was noted in the previous report dated 10/1/17. 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.

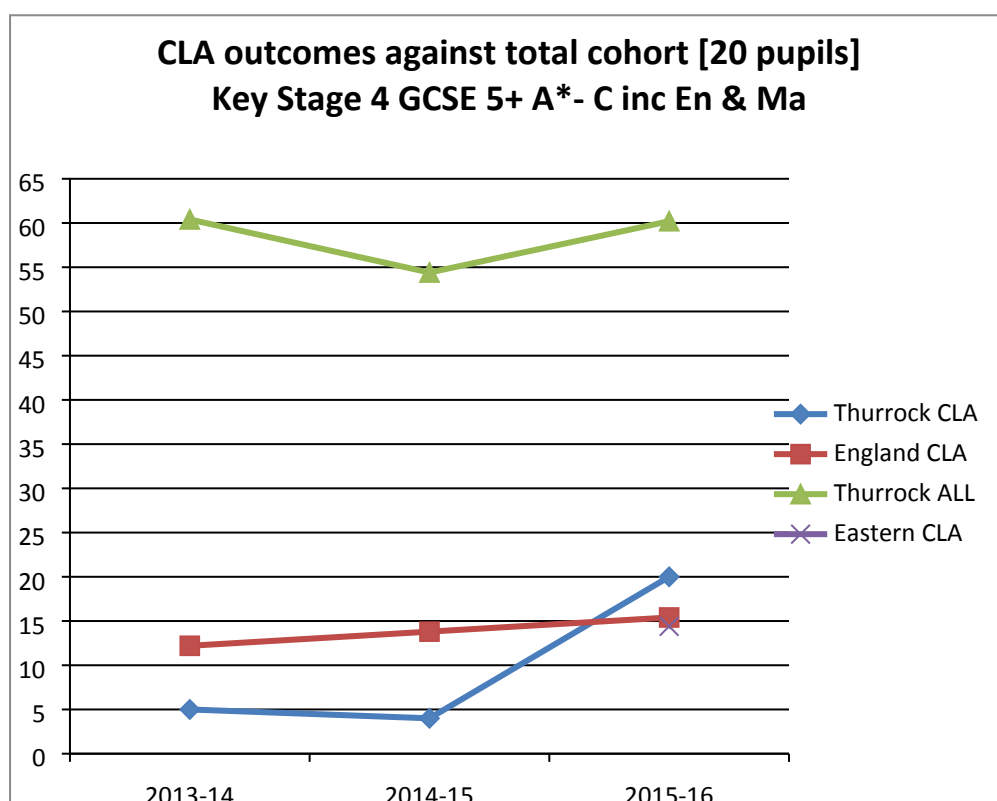
4. GCSE KS4 (age 16) – DFE Statistical First Release Results

4.1. Provisional results for Thurrock CLA showed an improvement from last year and the gap against National CLA is starting to close. The data provided for the Committee in January 17 was based upon a cohort size of 55 pupils. The DFE Statistical First Release Data provides attainment information for 20

pupils who were in care for 12 months or more. This data will be used in this report for comparison. DFE data verifies that there is an upward trend and a closing of the gap for KS4 attainment with Thurrock CLA performing above National and Eastern Region CLA for 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and maths and in the new measures of Progress 8 and Attainment 8.

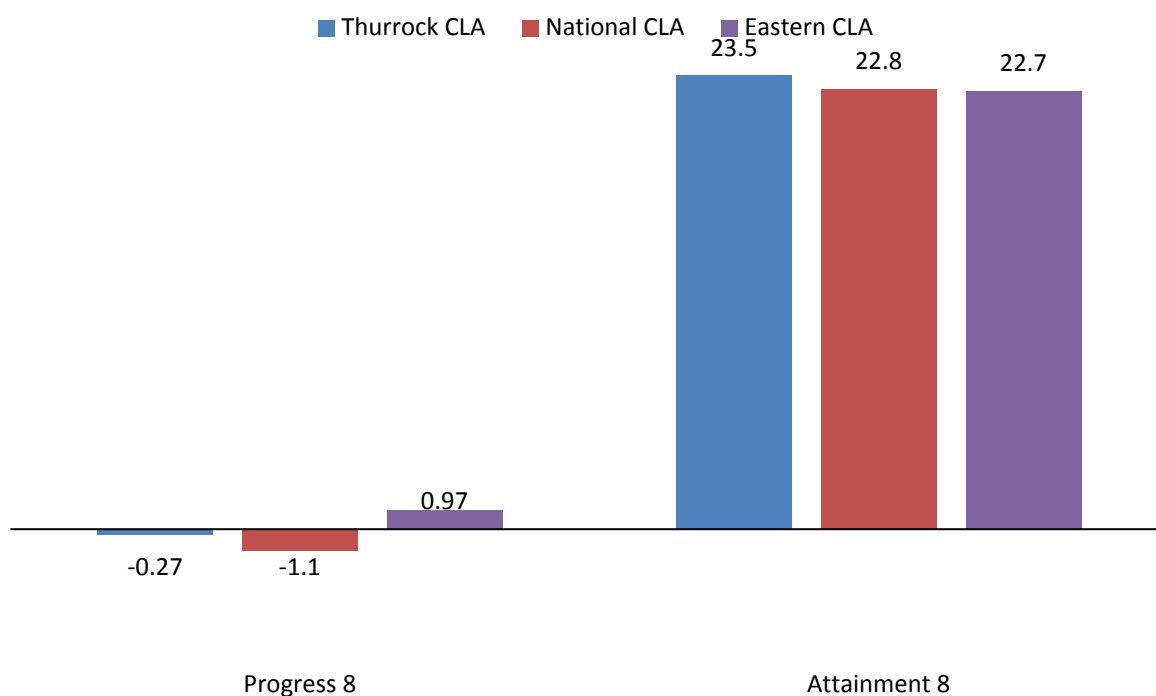
4.2 DFE data shows that 4 pupils [20%] of the total DFE cohort of 20 pupils achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths.

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



4.4 An additional attainment measure for KS4 was introduced in the academic year 2015/16. This is called Progress 8 and Attainment 8. This is beyond the 5 GCSEs benchmark and now focusses on students achieving an even higher standard of 8 GCSEs graded above C. It takes the best 8 subject scores and averages these against progress for prior attainment. To a degree this puts our CLA at even more of a disadvantage compared to non-CLA as the expectation is that they can achieve 8 or more GCSEs. The previous report to the committee detailed the barriers faced by CLA for achieving 5 GCSEs and so to achieve 8 or more is a greater challenge for young people. The chart below illustrates the success that our eligible young people achieved against national and regional CLA.

2016 DFE KS4 Progress 8 Attainment [15 pupils]



5. Additional Information for the Committee

- 5.1 Improved data for those in care for 12 months or more demonstrates improvement at all Key Stages and performance above National and Eastern region CLA.
- 5.2 The Virtual School Governing Board is now in existence and consists of: Virtual School Headteacher, Headteacher representatives from Secondary and Primary, The Strategic Lead for School Improvement, the Lead Safeguarding Officer from South Essex College, Service Manager for Looked After Children and is chaired by the Director of Children's Services. Meetings are held every term and policies and strategy are agreed. The Virtual School Headteacher provides a range of termly data for scrutiny and accountability purposes including Children Missing Education, exclusions, attendance and Personal Education Plan compliance.
- 5.3 The Virtual School Headteacher and Strategic Lead for School Improvement are currently in the process of expanding the Virtual School team to include 3 full time qualified teacher posts. These teachers will be directly responsible for monitoring and holding schools/colleges to account for the development of good education provision for all CLA in and out of the borough. The aim of this expansion will be to further improve progress and attainment of all CLA.

5.4 Funding from these posts is being provided through a combination of core funding and money from the top slice of the pupil premium plus grant.

6. Reasons for Recommendation

6.1 None.

7. Impact On Corporate Policies, Priorities, Performance And Community Impact

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

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

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

This report asks that the Committee notes the increasing demand of services for Children Looked After and the range of services provided as detailed in the annual report. The responsibilities of the Virtual School have increased to support those in pre-school and in post 16 as a result of the changes to the Statutory Guidance in July 2014. The growing demand for services, particularly for those who are post 16 and/or Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children has had an implication on spending due to the cost of interventions such as English Studied as an Other Language provision.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

This report asks that the Committee notes the outcomes, and offer its commendations, taking into account in so doing the various contextual influences described by the report author. No decision is required. The Council is required by s22(3A) of the Children Act 1989, as amended, to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. The Children and Families Act 2014 amended s22 to require the Council to appoint an officer to ensure that the duty is properly discharged. There is statutory guidance "Promoting the education of looked after children" that must be followed in meeting this duty.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development & Equalities Manager

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

8.4 Other implications (where significant)

There are no implications as a result of this report.

9. Conclusion (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

9.1 In summary, the above report details attainment outcomes for those in care for 12 months or more. This is information in addition to that provided by the Virtual School Headteacher in the Corporate Parenting Report for January 2017. The results do not reflect the unique pathway of every individual in each cohort. Every pupil has an individual story which details the varying strengths and difficulties that she/he experiences as a child or young person in care. Some pupils overcame their challenges and exceeded expectations and made exceptional progress. All of our Children Looked After achievements should be recognised and celebrated and we as a Council will continue to support them in the next stages of their academic journey.

10. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- 'The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data' ADCS
- 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children' DFE July 2014
- DFE Statistical First Release LAC Outcomes 2016 [LA Tables 2017]

11. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 - Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher Academic Year 2015/2016

Report Author:

Keeley Pullen

Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After

Children's Services