

**Annual Report of
the Virtual School
Headteacher
Academic Year
2015/2016**

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 LAC:

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

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

Corporate Parenting Committee

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

Introduction and Overview

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

Staffing of the Virtual School

Mrs Keeley Pullen – Virtual School Headteacher

Mrs Grace Page – LAC Advisory Assistant

Mrs Tina McGuinness – Business Administrator

Additional Consultants and Services [commissioned by Virtual School]

Miss Lee-Anne Jenkins – Post-16 Support

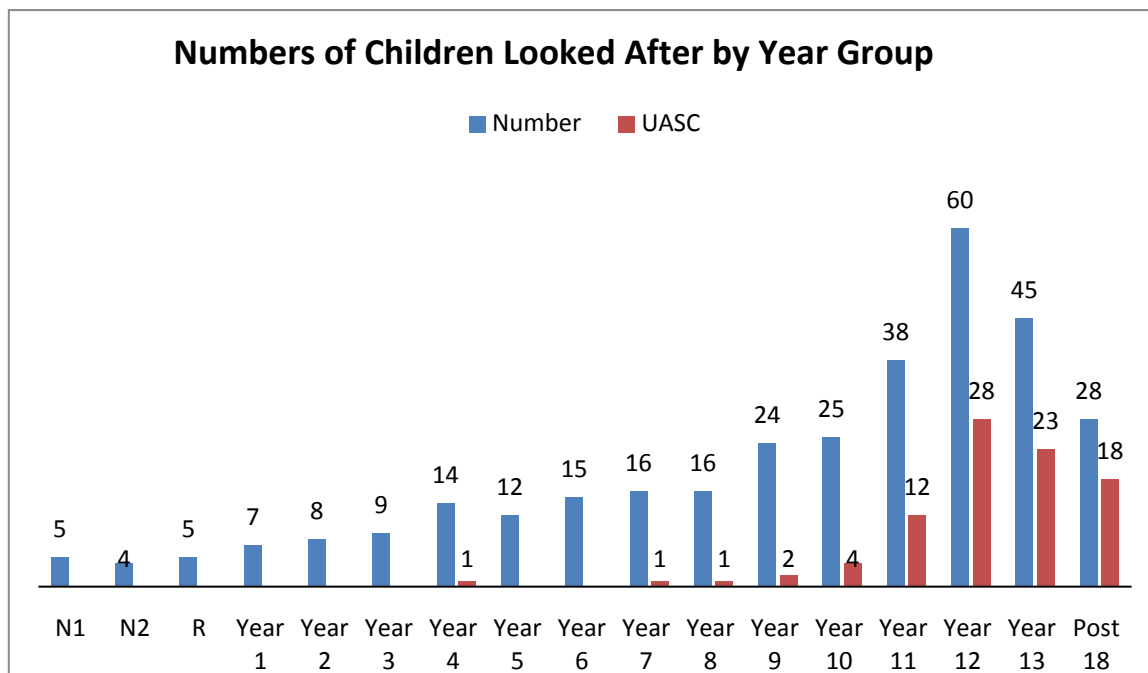
Fleet Tuition Service

Welfare Call and from September 16 Looked After Call

Book Trust – The Letterbox Club

Current Contextual Data

Number of Looked After Children by Year Group [Updated December 16]



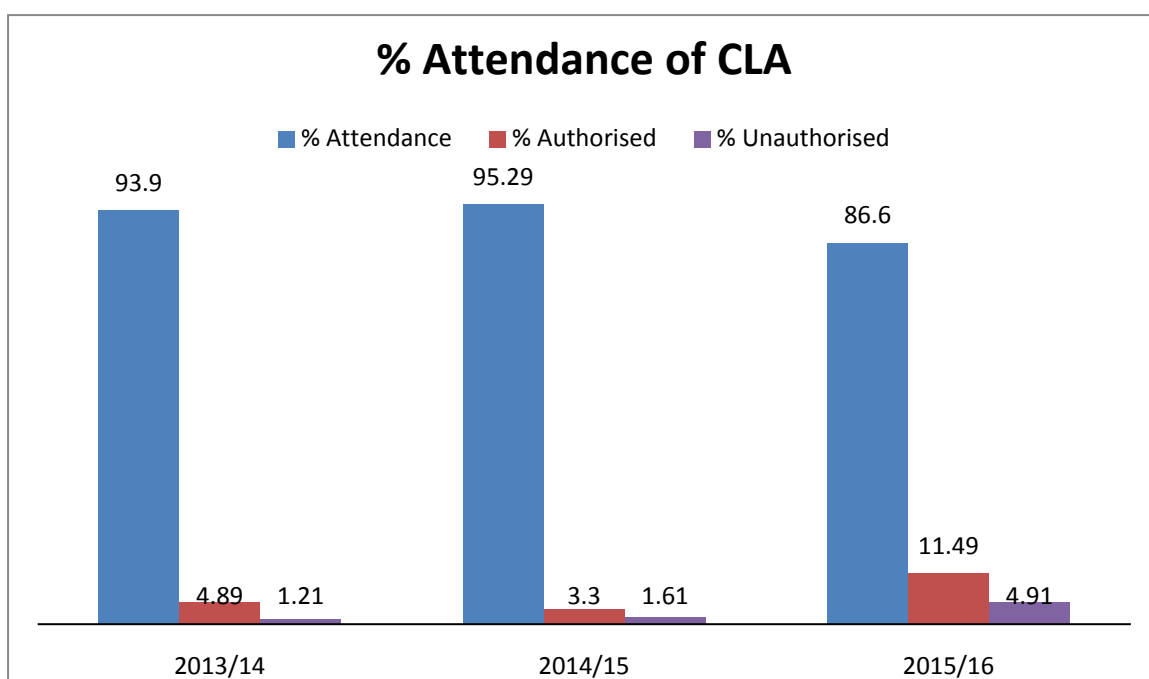
Number of Pupils in Alternative Provision/SEND School/Specialist Provision by Year Group Updated December 16

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

Number of CLA with SEND by Year Group Updated November 16

N2	R	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4	YR5	YR6	YR7	YR8	YR9	YR10	YR11	YR 12	YR 13
0	2	3	1	3	5	5	8	8	7	11	12	17	18	16

Attendance



After a positive set of data for the academic year 2014/15 the attendance of CLA has declined. This was partially due to a small group of pupils who had high levels of persistent absence. A pastoral support programme is put in place for students who are refusing to attend school and the Virtual School works closely with foster carers and social workers to support the child/young person.

Robust tracking of attendance is vital in ensuring that good attendance is prioritised.

Current Data September 16 – December 16 [Autumn Term 16]

Attendance data for the autumn term 2016 is 79% for pupils in Year R to Year 11.

There are currently 18 pupils who have below 90% attendance in the autumn term. This is due to sickness or a refusal to attend school. These pupils are being provided with tuition where possible and pastoral support.

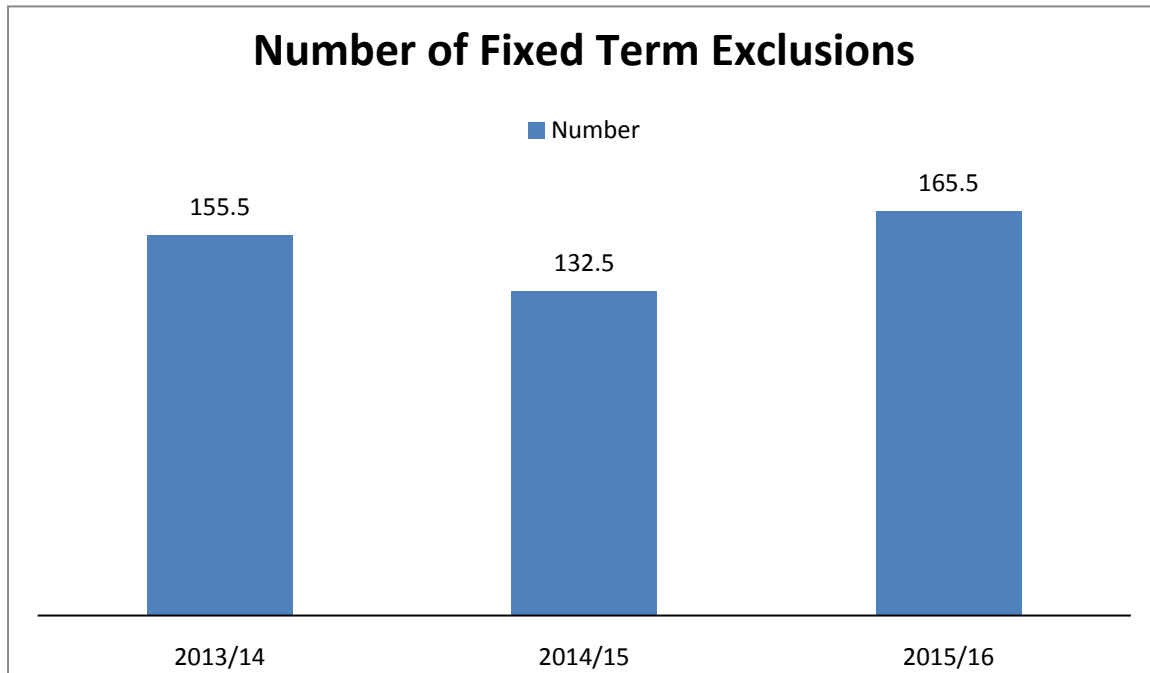
Attendance was monitored daily through the use of Welfare Call until July 2016 and from September 2016 it will be Contact Call. The Virtual School Headteacher monitors the attendance of priority CLA as identified by the Virtual School on a weekly basis.

Attendance monitoring for all pupils is conducted by the Virtual School Headteacher on a fortnightly basis to identify any concerns.

The Virtual School 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.

Fixed Term Exclusions

There is a variable trend with this data over a period of three years. Wherever possible we encourage schools to avoid fixed term exclusions. At times this is not possible due to the child/young person's behaviour. A review of needs and support is always made whenever a CLA pupil is excluded. There have been no permanent exclusions of CLA for a three year period.



Children Missing Education [CME]

The Local Authority carefully monitors any child missing education of our CLA 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 to secure school places or alternative provision. For pupils who are without an educational placement, a Personal Education Plan [PEP] meeting is held to plan actions for how to secure education provision. Wherever possible the Virtual School provides tuition through Fleet Tuition Services whilst a student is between educational placements.

Child Sexual Exploitation [CSE]

All Virtual School Staff have attended Child Sexual Exploitation Training. Particular attention is paid to Children Missing Education through lack of school place or poor attendance. 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.

Separate data is available through the social care liquid logic system which details every child/young person's CSE risk assessment and actions taken to support them.

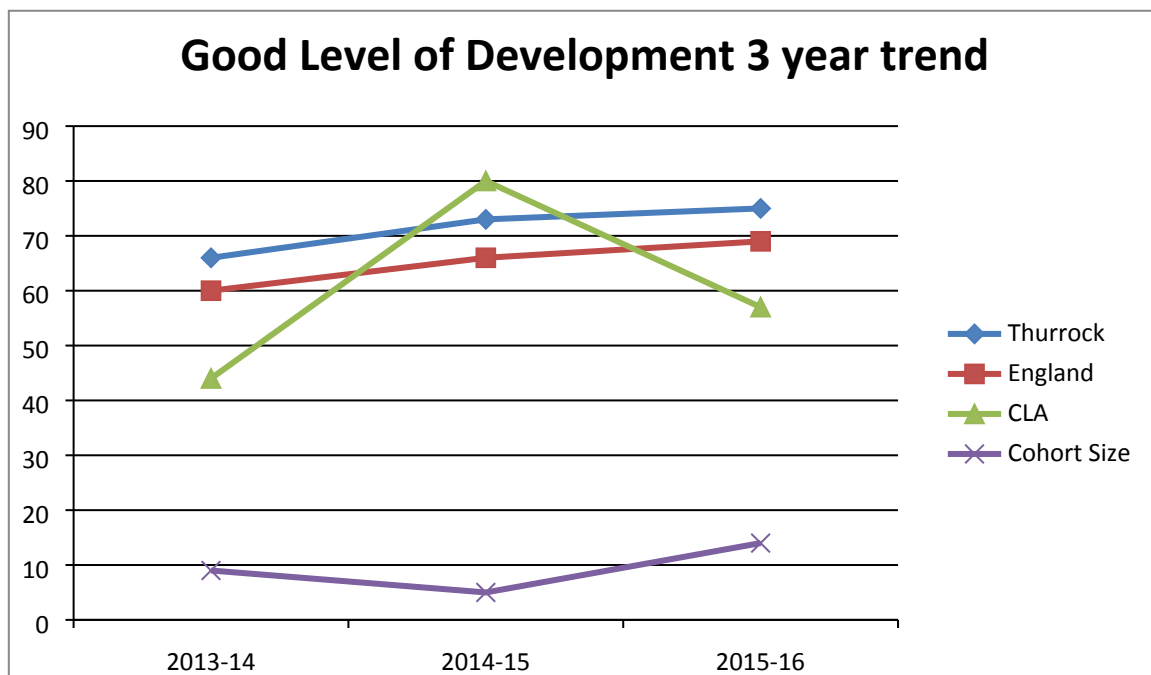
Attainment Data of CLA

Early Years Foundation Stage 2016

The Good Level of Development (GLD) measure is awarded at the end of EYFS when a pupil has achieved at least the expected level in the entire prime areas of learning and in literacy and mathematics.

The GLD has fluctuated significantly over a 3 year period and this demonstrates the uniqueness and small size of each cohort. The size of each cohort shows that each child's result is worth a significant percentage amount.

The diagram below illustrates the performance of Thurrock CLA against national and Thurrock non-CLA pupils. The Department for Education does not provide national data comparisons for Children Looked After in the area of a Good Level of Development.



To reach the percentage of children making a good level of development, each child is assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals; whether she/he meets the level, has not yet reached the level or exceeded it and points are awarded accordingly in a range between 17 to 51. If a child meets every Early Learning Goal, she/he will receive at least 34 points.

The provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA demonstrates a fluctuating but maintenance of an upward trend of attainment. The previous year saw that 4 out of 5 pupils achieved GLD whereas this year, 8 pupils out of 14 achieved this.

Although 15/16 data indicates that there is a dramatic decrease in attainment from the academic year 14/15, more pupils achieved GLD than in the previous year. The cohort size has increased significantly compared to the previous year from 5 pupils to 14. Of this year's cohort, 8 pupils [57%] attended a Thurrock school.

Contextually the profile of this year's cohort differs from that of the previous year. Of the 2015/16 cohort, 8 pupils [57%] had been in care for less than a year prior to the end of the Reception year. The remaining 6 pupils [43%] had been in care for more than a year, although 4 [67%] out of the 6 pupils stopped being looked after in the autumn term 2015 of their reception year due to SGO or adoption arrangements. A total of 7 pupils [50%] left care during the academic year 15/16. This demonstrates the effective work of the social care teams in finding permanent placements or for positive reunifications with birth families. Of the 6 pupils who had been in care for more than 1 year, 3 [50%] reached the expected standard of a GLD.

The academic profile of the 2015/16 cohort saw that 40% of the cohort was applicable for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities [SEND] classification with one of these pupils already having an Education Health Care Plan [EHCP] on entry to school. Pupils with SEND have specific learning needs and require extra support. Therefore, 40% of the cohort were working significantly below the national average according to development matters which assessed their learning at below their chronological age. In addition, these pupils had a larger gap to close in order to meet a Good Level of Development. They were provided with additional support in their schools through group and individual support interventions. It aided them in their progress and enabled them to catch up with their peers to make expected progress across the year, even if they did not meet the expected standards.

In terms of monitoring and progress this was through the Personal Education Plans [PEPs] for each pupil. These took place every term that the child was looked after and detailed the learning and development for every pupil and specific targets were set to enable them to make progress. Pupils made progress across the year by achieving their targets and by the Virtual School holding schools to account for the quality of teaching and support they provided and by the use and impact of Pupil Premium Plus funding. All pupils in this cohort made at least expected progress across the academic year from their on entry starting points.

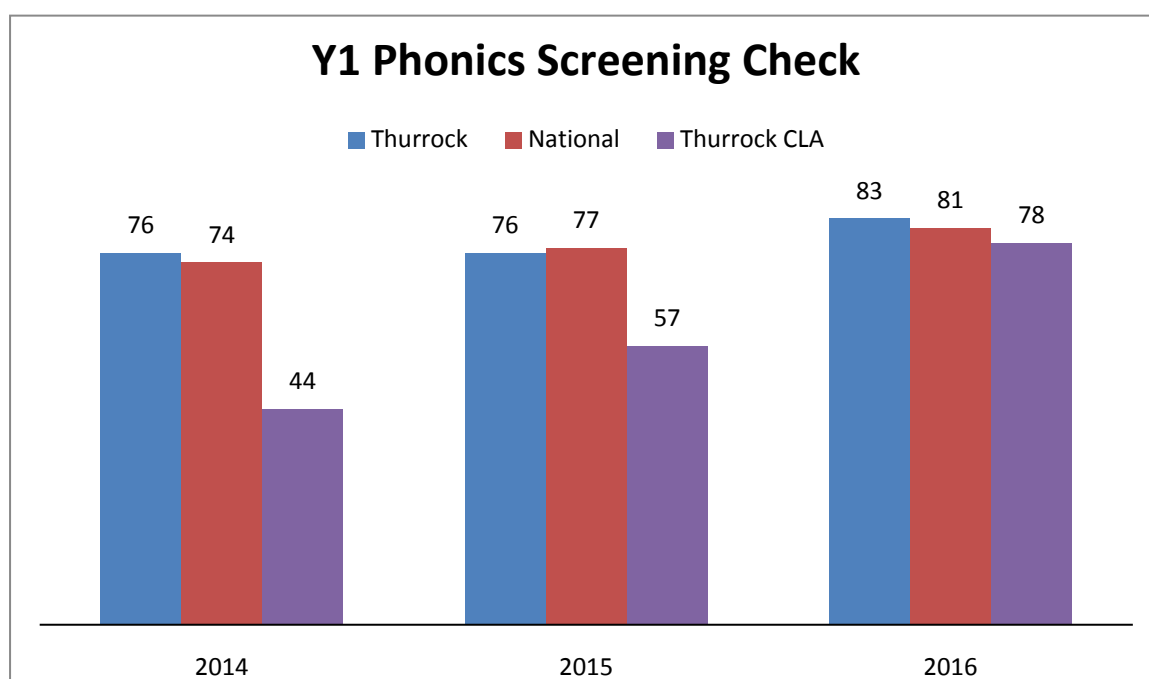
Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2016 data

- Ensure that Transition arrangements have been effectively put in place to support the pupils as they move into Year 1.
- Monitor pupil progress through use of the Pupil Premium monitoring and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided.
- PEP meeting in place within the Autumn Term 16 for all pupils.
- Link with schools needing additional support.
- Obtain on entry data for current Year R cohort to enable the measurement of progress.
- Ensure that pupils in Nursery have a termly PEP meeting with a member of the Early Years Team co-ordinating this to check that they are making appropriate progress and that Early Years Pupil Premium funding is being allocated to suit individual needs and measuring impact of this.

Year 1 Phonics Score Results 2016

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 risen by 21 percentage points; the national average has risen by 4 percentage points. The data for 2015 was based upon a cohort of 7 pupils, 4 [57%] of whom passed. In 2016 there were 9 year 1 pupils in the cohort and 7 pupils [78%] passed the screen. The gap between CLA and non-CLA is closing rapidly.



Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2016 data

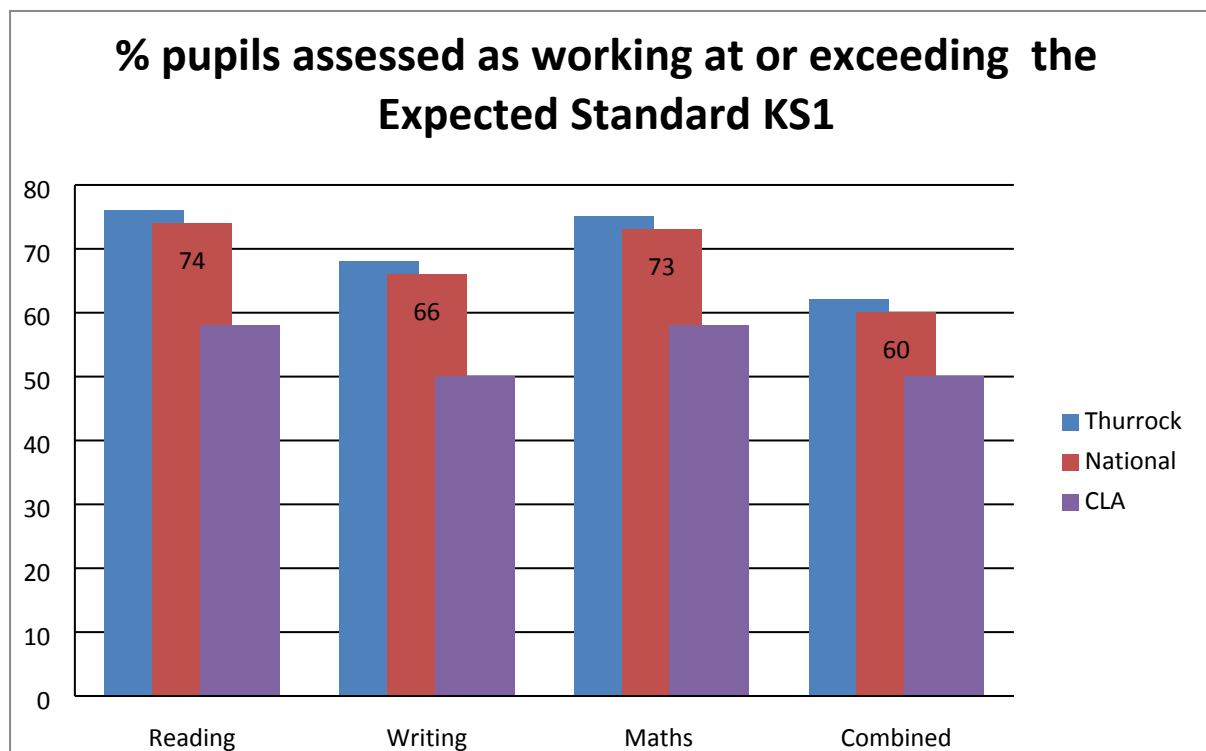
This year the Virtual School will be speaking with schools to discuss their phonics provision to ensure that those who did not reach the expected standard are supported during Year 2.

As part of the Year 1 PEP process, the Virtual School will be asking schools to monitor and evidence progress in phonics to measure those on track and those needing extra support.

Key Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2016

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. Grammar, punctuation and spelling assessments were not included this year due to an error at Standards and Testing Agency.

In the graph below, it is possible to see how Children Looked After performed against National and Thurrock non-CLA. The table does not include National CLA performance data as this is not available at the time of this report.



The above data is based upon a cohort size of 12 pupils. This is a very small data set for comparison. Analysis of this data indicates that CLA have performed less well than their non-CLA peers nationally and Thurrock non-CLA pupils. What is difficult to gauge is a comparison with those who are looked after nationally due to lack of data.

Contextual data for the cohort shows that 7 [58%] of the 12 pupils were in an out of borough school. 4 [80%] pupils out of the 5 who achieved the combined

score in reading, writing and maths attended a Thurrock school. This would indicate that those who did well attended a Thurrock school. This may well reflect the effective school improvement structures employed by Thurrock Council School's Improvement team as well as the strong relationships that the Virtual School Head has with Thurrock Head teachers who share the commitment for raising standards for all children in the borough.

The Virtual School maintains the same tracking and monitoring systems for all pupils irrespective of placement. The Personal Education Plan procedures are the same and the expectations and accountability measures are the same. Pupils across the year made expected progress based upon their individual targets and prior attainment.

In terms of prior attainment, only 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. These pupils would have needed to make accelerated progress in that time to be able to reach the expected standard. 1 pupil [20%] out of the 5 who did not reach GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage reached the expected standard at KS1.

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

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 12]	Met expected standard [% of those in this period]
2015	4 pupils [33%]	3 pupils [75%]
2014	2 pupils [17%]	1 pupil [50%]
2013	3 pupils [25%]	2 pupils [67%]
2012	3 pupils [25%]	0

The data in the table above would suggest that the length of time in care has not impacted on this group in terms of attainment. It is worth noting that, of the 3 pupils who have been in care the longest, they have significant SEND and emotional needs. These 3 pupils have also had the most placement instability due to these needs, including changes of carers and schools. However, during this current academic year 16/17, there has been greater stability for these children in terms of placement and schooling. It is hoped that this will continue.

Of the 12 pupils in the cohort, 5 pupils [42%] had SEND with 1 attending a specialist residential placement who has an EHCP. A further 2 pupils are currently undergoing the EHCP process due to learning and social emotional needs.

Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2015 data.

- Ensure that Transition arrangements have been effectively put in place to support the pupils' move into Year 3.
- Monitor pupil progress through use of the Pupil Premium monitoring and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided.
- PEP meeting in place within the Autumn/Spring
- Link with schools needing additional support.
- Carefully monitor writing progress for current year 2 through pupil premium, PEPs and conversations with the schools.
- Monitor progress for current year 3 to check that those who did not meet the expected standard are being appropriately supported.

Key Stage 2 SATS 2016

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.

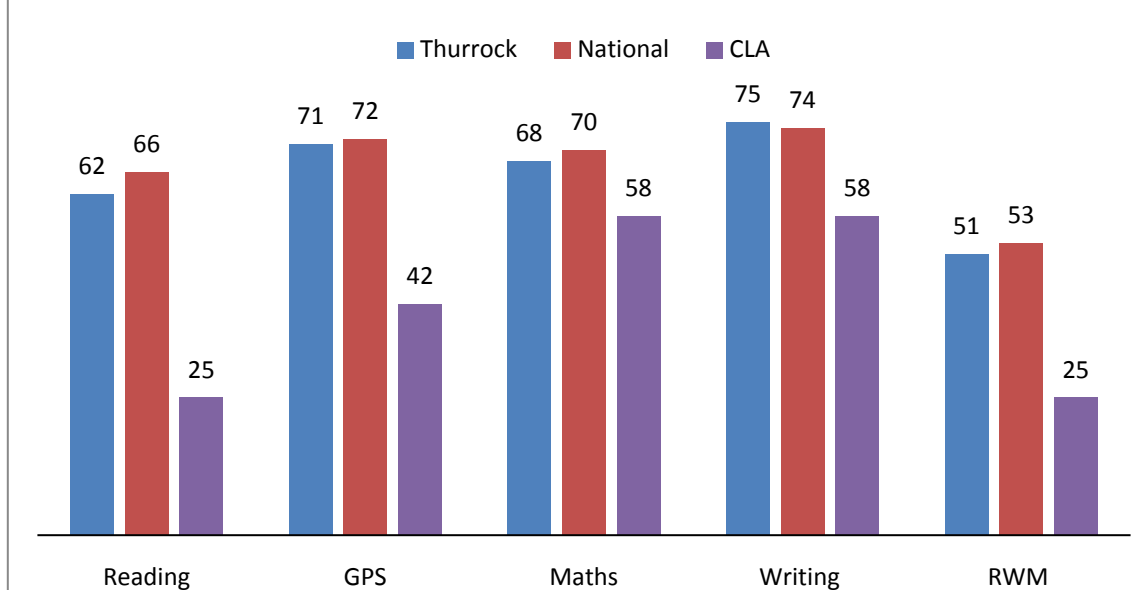
The expected standard in the tests is a scaled score of 100 or above. Attainment nationally in the tests is highest in grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) at 72% and lowest in reading at 66%. At 74%, attainment in the writing teacher assessment is higher than in any of the test subjects.

Last year, 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. This year, 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.

The cohort size for the Key Stage 2 SATS was 12 pupils. There were a further 2 pupils who attend special independent schools who do not take part in SATS testing, Therefore the decision has been made to dis-apply them from the reporting requirements. The data provided is based upon attainment for those pupils who took the tests.

For Thurrock CLA, reading was 25% [3 pupils], GPS was 42% [5 pupils], in maths 58% [7 pupils] and in writing was 58% [7pupils]. The graph below illustrates the comparisons with non-CLA nationally and all pupils in Thurrock. Nationally CLA statistical comparisons are not available at the time of this report due to the time of publication of the Statistical First Release.

2016 Provisional KS2 assessment data



Children Looked After were 10% below all Thurrock children in maths and 17% below in writing. The biggest area for development based upon this data would be reading. The reading test was particularly difficult at a national level this year and this is reflected by the decline in data nationally. Historically Thurrock CLA perform well in reading at the end of KS2 tests. However, the 2016 test proved to be too difficult for them. The subject matter of the reading test involved family experiences as well as the type of life experiences which our CLA have not yet had. The depth of reading skills required were also extensive and required a level of maturity, knowledge and higher level reading skills which was not yet possible for some of the pupils in this cohort.

The Virtual School uses part of their budget to fund Letterbox Clubs. This scheme provides each Thurrock CLA from Year 2 to Year 6 with sets of books and educational games delivered to their house 6 months every year between May and October and a special Christmas package in December. The intention of this scheme is to raise the profile of reading as a pleasurable pass time and to foster a love of books within their placements. The implementation of this scheme is currently under review in terms of impact and how it could be used more effectively.

Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this 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. Some pupils who did not meet the standard in one or more subjects had still made excellent progress and were working within the curriculum bands for their year group; however, they did not perform in the harder tests.

A particular success story for this year group should be noted for one pupil who made 3 years' worth of progress in 1 academic year. In year 5 the EHCP

process had started due to this pupil being at least 2 years behind his peers in all subjects. There were many concerns regarding learning, development and social and emotional difficulties. However, this pupil met the expected standard in all subjects except reading where he narrowly missed the 100 score by scoring 98. An EHCP is not necessary due to his amazing efforts and the support received from his school, his carers and the Virtual School. He has successfully transitioned into year 7.

Prior attainment at Key Stage 1 for this cohort was extremely low with only 3 pupils [25%] reaching level 2B in reading, 2 pupils [17%] reaching 2B in writing and 4 pupils [33%] achieving 2B in maths. Progress measures from the Department for Education will be published later this academic year so a better analysis of progress can be provided. However, this prior data would suggest that pupils were not expected to reach the required standard at Key Stage 4 as 75% of the cohort were below national average previously. This progress measure would suggest that although pupils did not meet the expected standards, their rate of progress was good.

The Year 6 cohort contained 5 pupils [42%] out of the 12 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.

The length of time in care varied for this cohort between 2007 and 2015. The table below illustrates this:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 12]	Met expected standard RWM [% of those in this period]
2015	3 pupils [25%]	0
2014	2 pupils [17%]	0
2013	2 pupils [17%]	0
2012	4 pupils [33%]	2 pupils [50%]
2007	1 pupil [8%]	1 pupil [100%]

The length of time in care has had a positive influence on those obtaining the required standard. It is worth noting that of these, 2 of the 3 pupils achieved the expected levels at the end of KS1 too.

Planned interventions as a result of data for 2016 Year 6 Cohort:

- Provide Letterbox Parcels monthly for 6 months for pupils from Year 2 to Year 7. These contain books, games and activities to support English and maths
- Virtual school staff visiting every current Year 6 pupil's school in Autumn16/Spring term 17.
- PEP meetings held for every Year 6 in Autumn term 16.

- Programme of tuition and/or intervention in place for every Year 6, linked to Pupil Premium Plus Grant.
- Target support and interventions for current Year 5 cohort.
- Support for transition of pupils in Year 7 who did not meet the expected standard.

Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2016 - Indicative results

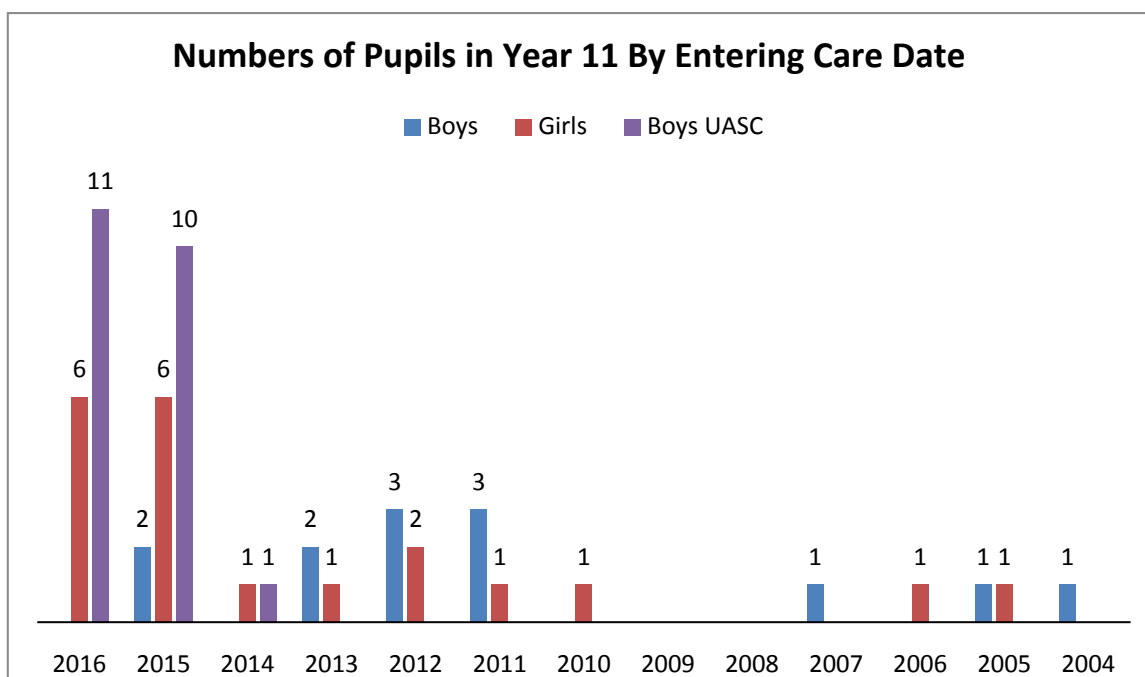
Provisional results for Thurrock CLA show an improvement from last year and the gap against national CLA is starting to close. The data provided for this report will contain information for the whole of the Year 11 cohort that the Virtual School was responsible for in the academic year 2015-2016 irrespective of when the young person came into care.

At the beginning of the academic year there were 39 pupils in Year 11, by the end there were 55. The table below 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 30 pupils [55%] became looked after in the academic year 2015/16. 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, particularly when a large majority of these young people were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC] with no English.

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.



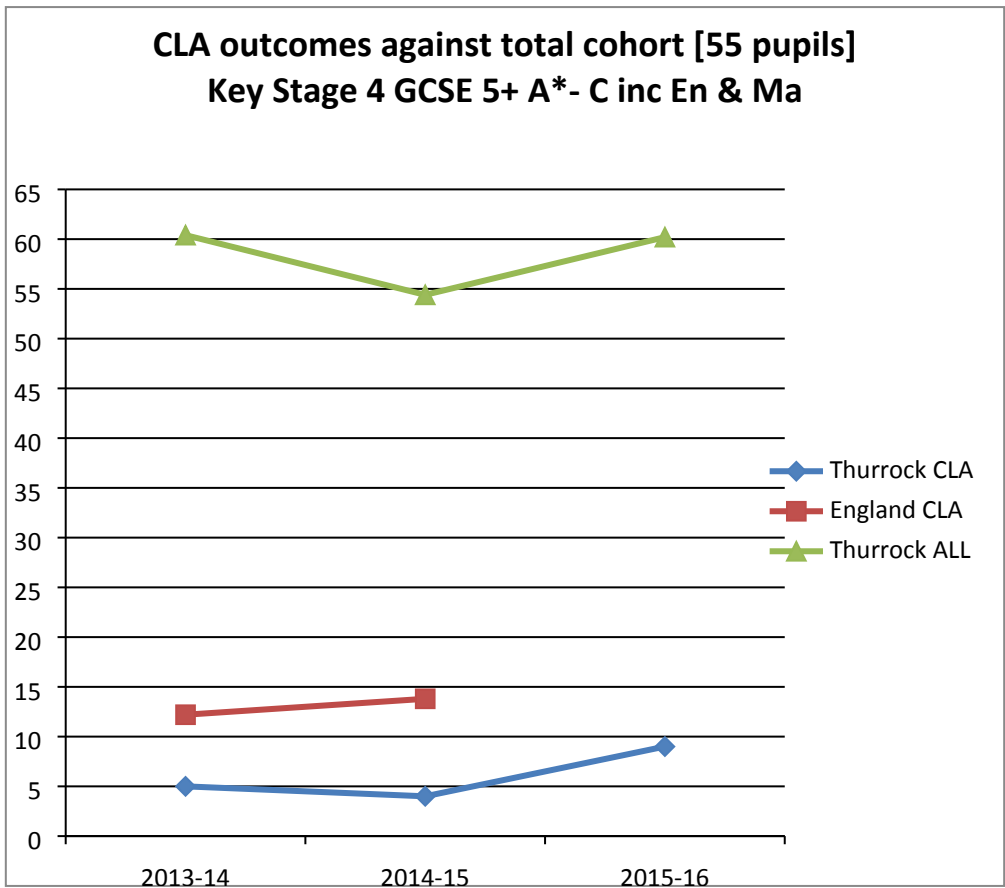
There were a total of 55 pupils in the year 11 cohort and 19 pupils [34.5%] were eligible to take 5 GCSEs. There was a further 1 pupil who took under 5 GCSEs.

Indicative data shows that 5 pupils [9%] of the total cohort achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Maths. 2 of the pupils who achieved 5 GCSEs grade C and above attended a Thurrock school. An additional 2 pupils [4%] achieved 5 or more GCSEs graded above C, however, they narrowly missed achieving both English and/or Maths. These pupils attended out of borough schools.

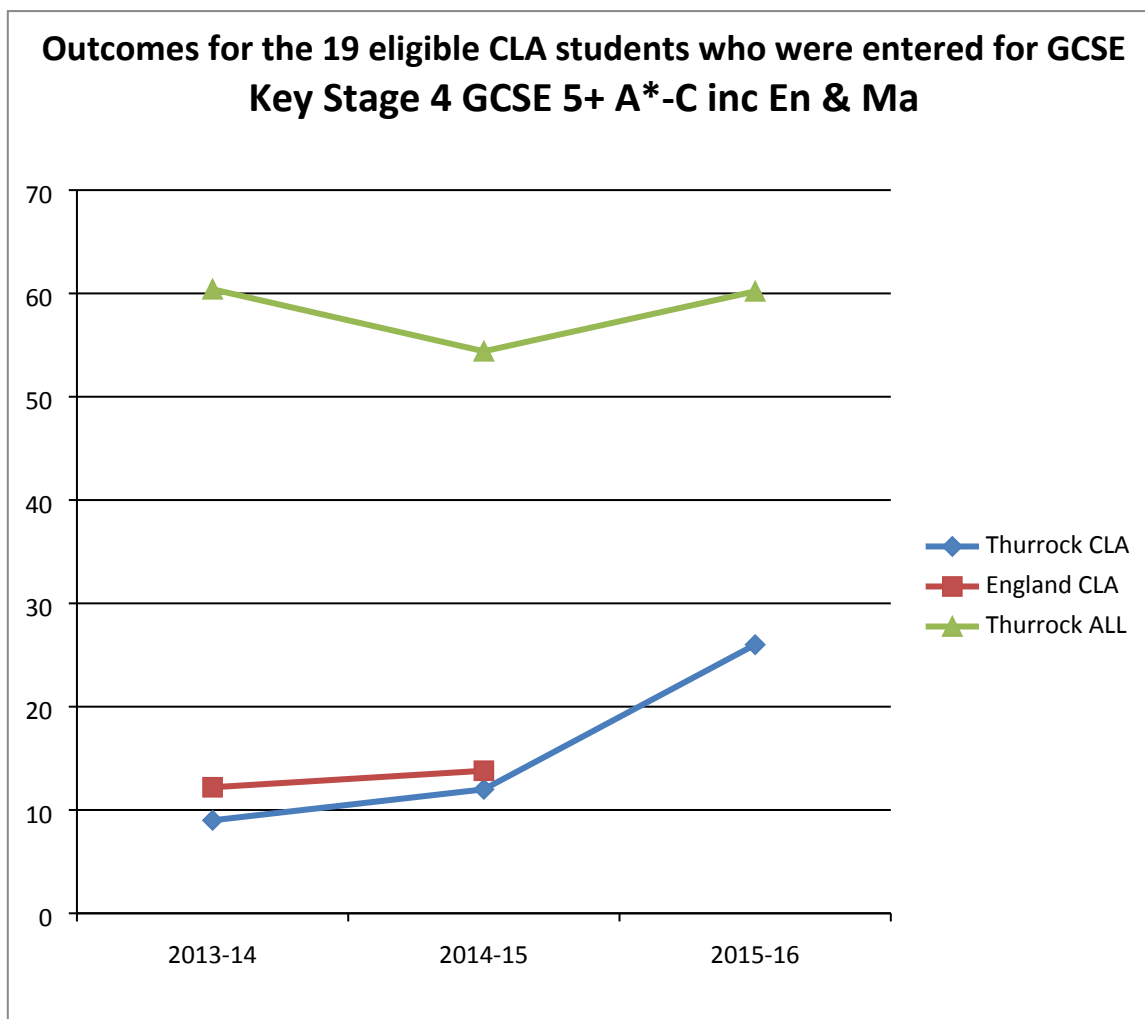
For maths, in total 8 pupils [14.5%] achieved a grade C or above. The figure for those achieving grade D or above in maths was 15 pupils [27%]. This data was for the whole cohort. When we narrow this figure down to those only eligible for taking GCSEs, it reduces to 19 pupils. This data shows a significant increase on last year. When considering those only eligible for GCSE, 79% achieved grade D or above in maths and 42% achieved grade C or above.

English language results for the whole cohort were a similar picture. In total 7 pupils [13%] achieved a grade C or above. For those achieving grade D or above, it was 15 pupils [27%]. When narrowed down to those eligible for GCSEs 37% [7 pupils] achieved grade C and 79% achieved grade D or above.

The graphs below highlight the improvement in outcomes against national CLA data and Thurrock all pupils' data.



This line graph depicts data for the whole of the cohort [55 pupils]



This line graph depicts data for the 19 pupils who were sitting 5 or more GCSEs

The two graphs illustrate an improving picture for Thurrock CLA and outcomes are improving. The attainment gaps are gradually decreasing and in terms of attainment at GCSE level this year, the indicative data shows that it has doubled from last year. The aim now is for this trend to continue to improve.

Additional Contextual Information for Key Stage 4 Cohort

There are specific reasons as to why not all of the 55 pupils were able to sit GCSE qualifications. It is important that this report includes these young people and accounts for their educational outcomes

48 [83%] of our year 11 pupils looked after by the local authority attended a provision that was out of borough, of which 17 [49%] students were in specialist provision. Specialist provision includes Pupil Referral Units, residential specialist schools, SEND schools. These placements matched the needs of the pupils at that time, based upon their social care and educational needs. Where possible these students sat formal qualifications which included

GCSE, BTEC, functional skills or Entry Level. However, this did mean that they were not at the level to study 5 GCSEs. 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 7 students [17%] did not sit formal qualifications. 3 of these have significant SEND and 4 pupils are resitting Year 11 and so were not eligible for exams this academic year. Additionally 18 pupils [33%] of the cohort had SEND needs with 13 pupils [24%] with EHCPs or Statements. The 2 pupils with EHCPs who were eligible for GCSE exams achieved incredibly well based upon their level of needs with 1 obtaining 5 GCSEs C and above and 1 making accelerated progress to achieve D grades.

The length of time in care for this cohort has supported the educational progress of these pupils. Of those students who have been in care the longest, the majority have SEND needs. Although they may not have achieved GCSE qualifications, their placement and education needs were met in the appropriate provision. Those students who had been in care for a length of time who were able to sit GCSE qualifications did achieve pass grades and made appropriate progress against prior attainment. For example: 2 out of the 3 pupils who entered care in 2013 achieved 5 A*-C grades. The other pupil who came into care in 2013 attended a specialist residential provision due to significant SEND and achieved Entry Level 3 qualifications.

The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children UASC entering care in year 11 is increasing. 23 pupils [42%] of the 15/16 cohort contained UASC pupils. Only 2 pupils were attending a school in Year 10 and as such had 4 terms of formal education in England in order for them to take their GCSEs. These 2 young men achieved pass grades. 3 UASC pupils were long term missing from care but they are still eligible for counting in our indicative results. A further 2 pupils had been placed back into year 10 and were not eligible to take their exams in 2016. The graph above illustrates when our UASC came into care. It is a challenge to find suitable educational places that can support the needs of these vulnerable pupils. The Virtual School assists with obtaining school places wherever possible or sourcing appropriate English Studied as an Other Language [ESOL] provision.

Monitoring and tracking was extensive for our year 11 cohort of pupils. All pupils had a termly PEP attended by a member of the Virtual School. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress. In addition, 1-1 tuition was funded by the Virtual School through Fleet tuition services to key groups of pupils to support outcomes. This was in English and Maths.

Planned interventions as a result of 2016 data

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

We are continuing to:

- Attend Year 10 and Year 11 PEP meetings
- Ensure that schools provide robust Pupil Premium Plus information
- Link the quality of the PEP with release of Pupil Premium Plus funding
- Provide additional home tuition and IT equipment when necessary
- Triangulate data predictions with further evidence such as work sampling
- Access exam stress counselling where necessary
- Provide support for Post 16 pathways
- Targeting tuition for particular students who are on the cusp of C grades which will be additional to that received by the Pupil Premium Plus in school
- Complete home visits for particularly vulnerable students
- Provide intensive pastoral support alongside their school for high priority cases for those at risk of poor performance due to social and emotional difficulties.

In addition we are:

- Providing half termly Designated Teacher Forums, monthly social worker forums and termly foster carer forums to promote the educational outcomes of pupils by communicating key messages and training and to provide information advice and guidance for individual cases
- Supporting social care to minimise the change of school or college when there are placement changes
- Actively seeking to expand our team with professionals to build capacity and improve impact on outcomes for Children Looked After
- Meeting with Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) on a termly basis to discuss effective practice for the Local Authority.

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?

1. Virtual School Team attending PEP meetings to raise the level of challenge and accountability.
2. Transition of EYFS into Year 1 tracked and supported.
3. Phonics progress for Year 1 and Year 2 tracked
4. Every Year 6,7,10 and 11 LAC to have a PEP meeting in the Autumn term 16.
5. All Year 10s and 11s and Year 6 being visited in their school by VS team.
6. Year 6 targeted in Autumn 16 or Spring 17.
7. Current Year 2 predictions and pupils targeted where necessary in Spring term 17.

8. Pupil Premium Plus Grant allocations and monitoring for impact in raising attainment and progress.
9. Raising expectations in PEP compliance across all aspects of the service. Linking provision of the Pupil Premium Plus funding with the quality of the PEP.

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](#). Prior to this legislation and guidance, the Pupil Premium allocation was given as a lump sum to schools in the October of the academic year. The monitoring of the impact was through the PEP process. This funding enabled schools to spend it on a range of activities or equipment items and was used for school trips. The Virtual School Headteacher monitored this process and some schools were not demonstrating the impact of this money on pupils in a proactive or satisfactory manner. Subsequently, from the academic year 2014/15 The Virtual School has become responsible for the allocation and monitoring the impact of this fund for our Children Looked After with those in borough and out of borough. This is in line with DFE guidance listed above. All schools will be receiving the full amount of funding, £1500 per pupil, directly into their budget which is paid across three terms. The Virtual School Headteacher is tracking on a termly basis how this money is raising the achievement of the Looked After child/young person and assessing 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 around 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]

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 PEPs and particular emphasis has been made on key year groups for the academic year 2016/17. This is further detailed in the Roles and Functions of the Virtual School. It is also important that the Virtual School attends PEP meetings for particularly vulnerable students or when a potential issue has been identified. For example, concern with progress. The Virtual School Headteacher [VSH/T] is responsible for Quality Assuring [QA] every PEP. During this process particular attention is made to progress data, school provision, support from the foster carer, the pupil's views and the quality of educational targets that are set. If a PEP is judged to be of poor quality the Headteacher challenges the appropriate professional to ensure that this is rectified.

The VSH/T keeps a tracking sheet of PEP compliance and notes down comments or actions as part of the QA process. The Directors Management Team asks for sample PEPs from all year groups as part of the QA process. The Virtual School has recently written a PEP procedure policy to ensure that all those with responsibility for the PEP have clear guidelines and expectations around this process.

Post 16 Update

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

Not in Education Employment or Training [NEET]

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

Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

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

provide ESOL group tuition. This originally begun as 5 hours per week, then it expanded to 10 hour due to demand and since September 2016 it is 15 hours per week. This is for students who are not able to access formal education due to lack of availability of places or the pupils' current stage of English. The impact of this has been substantial as it enabling UASC to access education and ultimately move onto more academic Level 1 and 2 courses.

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

Working in Partnership with other Teams in Thurrock Council

The Virtual School works with a range of teams within Thurrock to enable the best possible outcomes for our Looked After Children. 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.

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 VSH/T has been meeting at Foster Carer support groups every term to provide key information about Pupil Premium Plus and Electronic Personal Education Plans. Foster carer forum meetings will started in Spring Term 16 and will continue to happen once per term. These cover a range of topics. 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 VSH/T has been worked with newly qualified social workers across the academic year to provide training in Personal Education Plans [PEPs] and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice. Training has also included assessment, levels and progress and , how to challenge and raise aspiration. More experienced social workers have been provided with Electronic Personal Education Plan [EPEP] training to enable them to use the EPEP system when it becomes live. 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. The Virtual school offers 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.

Attendance at PEP Meetings

Wherever possible 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.

Book Trust – The Letterbox Club

As a school we provide key year groups from Year 2 to Year 7 with the Book Trust's Letterbox initiative. The Letterbox Club was initiated at the University of Leicester. The programme aims to provide enjoyable educational support for looked-after and other disadvantaged children aged 5-13 and focuses on improving their educational outlook by sending, directly to their home address, a parcel of carefully selected items for them to use and keep. The parcels contain a variety of books (fiction and non-fiction), number games and fun educational materials aimed at stimulating reading and educational activity in the home. The children receive their first parcel in May and then once every month for six months, with the last parcel arriving in October. If the child moves placement (or returns to their birth family) during this time the parcel will be sent to their new address until the end of the programme. The foster parents and carers involved have been advised of this programme. The Virtual School has supported this programme for the past 6 years and this continues to be highly valued by the child and the carers.

Fleet Tuition Services

The Virtual School commissions the services of Fleet Tuition. The One to One Tuition Programme for Looked After Children (LAC) has been created to provide additional academic support for children who are not currently reaching their potential. It has been set up to be delivered in concert with classroom teaching as extra help for pupils, but outside of school hours. **The Programme is an initiative to help LAC gain more confidence in, and understanding of, academic subjects. It is designed for the pupils who would benefit the most, it complements classroom teaching by addressing barriers to learning that are personal and particular to each child. Particular focus is given to Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 pupils as they benefit most from the programme. However, if tuition is required pre KS2 or post-16 this service can be provided.** The programme is designed to ensure that the right support is in place for LAC and is important to improving pupil achievement and closing the attainment gap. Support in the form of one-to-one tuition can also be highly effective in boosting the confidence and motivation of pupils who may be falling behind. While mainstream classroom teaching is effective for many pupils there are some pupils who will not make the progress they need to in a whole-class setting. These pupils would benefit from additional tuition, on a one-to-one basis, that addresses their particular skills gaps. Without an individualised approach it will be very hard for this group to make the progress necessary to achieve their full potential. 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.

Attendance Monitoring

Thurrock Virtual School commissions the services of an external provider to monitor the attendance of all of our Children Looked After in and out of borough attending schools and colleges. For the academic year 2015/16 our long standing provider of this service Welfare Call was used. A tendering process was conducted in the summer term 2016 and as a result the current provider is Contact Call. They provide the same service. 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 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.

School Improvement Priorities

These are detailed in the Virtual School Improvement Plan. This is written every year and 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 2015/2016 were

To improve achievement of all pupils by:

- Improve the attendance of Children Looked After to ensure that they are receiving the maximum entitlement of education. Attendance target figure 94% for 2015/16.
- Continuing to embed the Electronic-Personal Education Plan [EPEP] system which can be accessed by all professionals and the children involved in the PEP process. Schools will be required to update this every term so that there is always a current live PEP for the pupils. The impact of this will be: more involvement from schools, foster carers, the pupil voice, social care and the virtual school team to ensure that the best provision is in place for the child/young person.
- Raising the profile of the PEP meeting and PEP documentation as a key driver for improving pupil academic outcomes by supporting needs and raising expectations.
- Further developing methods of challenge and accountability for schools and colleges by raising the expectations for the achievement of their pupils. This will be through the PEP process, the pupil premium funding and provision of training. This will also be through the LSCB Executive Committee supporting the Virtual School Head Teacher by holding Head teachers and Governing Bodies to account.
- Enhancing the role of the corporate parent through greater challenge to schools and colleges to ensure that they are providing the best possible education for our pupils. This will be through the Virtual School working with and training a range of professionals who support our Looked after Children [LAC].
- Ensuring that the information on pupil progress is shared amongst the team working for the LAC to promote better outcomes and enable greater challenge and support.
- To improve attainment of Looked after Children to be in line or above national average. Score of 100 at KS2– 70%, GCSE A-C including maths and English at KS4 - 15%.
- Establish a Virtual School Governing Body to support and hold to account the Virtual School Head Teacher and to develop strategy for raising the outcomes of Children Looked After.

Key Priorities for Academic Year 2016/2017

To improve achievement of all pupils by:

- Improving the attainment and progress of Children Looked After (CLA) to be in line with or above the national average outcomes for CLA
- Improving the attendance and reducing the number of fixed term exclusions of CLA to ensure that they are receiving the maximum entitlement of education
- Raise the quality of the PEP meeting and PEP documentation as a key driver for improving pupil academic outcomes by supporting needs and raising expectations
- Improving systems of tracking, analysis and accountability to support educational outcomes for CLA.

Author of this report

Keeley Pullen BA[Hons] PGCE NPQH

Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Thurrock Children Looked After