

**Annual Report of  
the Virtual School  
Headteacher  
Academic Year  
2018/2019**

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## 1. **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to detail the work of the Thurrock Virtual School and the academic outcomes for Thurrock Children Looked After for the academic year 2018-19.

The data contained in this report uses validated DFE data for 2018 outcomes, which was obtained in March 2019. Current attainment uses indicative data for the 2019 results. Validated data for 2019 will not become available until March 2020.

This report will be provided for the Governing Body to approve in the autumn term 2019 and will subsequently be presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

## 2. **The Role of the Thurrock Virtual School**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Ensuring effective educational transition is in place between schools or specialist providers
- Encouraging our young people to high aspirations about their future and remove barriers to further education
- Leading training for Foster Carers, Designated Teachers, Social Workers, school governors and providing bespoke training where appropriate to educational staff
- Celebrating the achievement of our pupils

### **Staffing of the Virtual School**

Mrs Keeley Pullen – Virtual School Head Teacher

Mrs Grace Page – Virtual School Operations Co-Ordinator

Ms Rebecca Prince – Early Years and Primary Education Adviser

Ms Gemma Lilley – Secondary Education Adviser

Miss Lee-Anne Jenkins – Post 16 Education Adviser

Mrs Tina McGuinness – Administrator for the Virtual School for LAC

### **Additional Services [commissioned by Virtual School]**

Looked After Call – to monitor attendance (this will change to Welfare Call in Sept 2019)

TLC Live – Online Tuition

Fleet Tuition Service – for provision of 1-1 tuition

Equal Education – for provision of 1-1 tuition

Prospero – for provision of 1-1 tuition

### 3. **Mission Statement**

At the core, is the aspiration to ensure that children and young people are provided with every opportunity to learn effectively and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding so they are able to make informed choices about their futures from a range of options. This range will be at its widest when children succeed in their schools and are provided with the ambition, resilience and opportunity to optimise their learning within and beyond the school.

The Virtual School believes that every child and young person really does matter; every child and young person has a right to a childhood and has the right to a first class education that enhances their life chances as an adult. We believe that Children Looked After and Young People should be given every opportunity to aspire to be the best they can.

The Virtual School provides additional support, advice and guidance over and above the universal services that all Thurrock children and young people can access, alongside direct support to the children themselves. We believe there should be no educational gaps between attainment and potential and there should be a narrowing of the gap between attainment and national standards.

The main outcomes we want for our children and young people accord with the Thurrock Children and Young People's Plan and are that CLA:

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

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

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

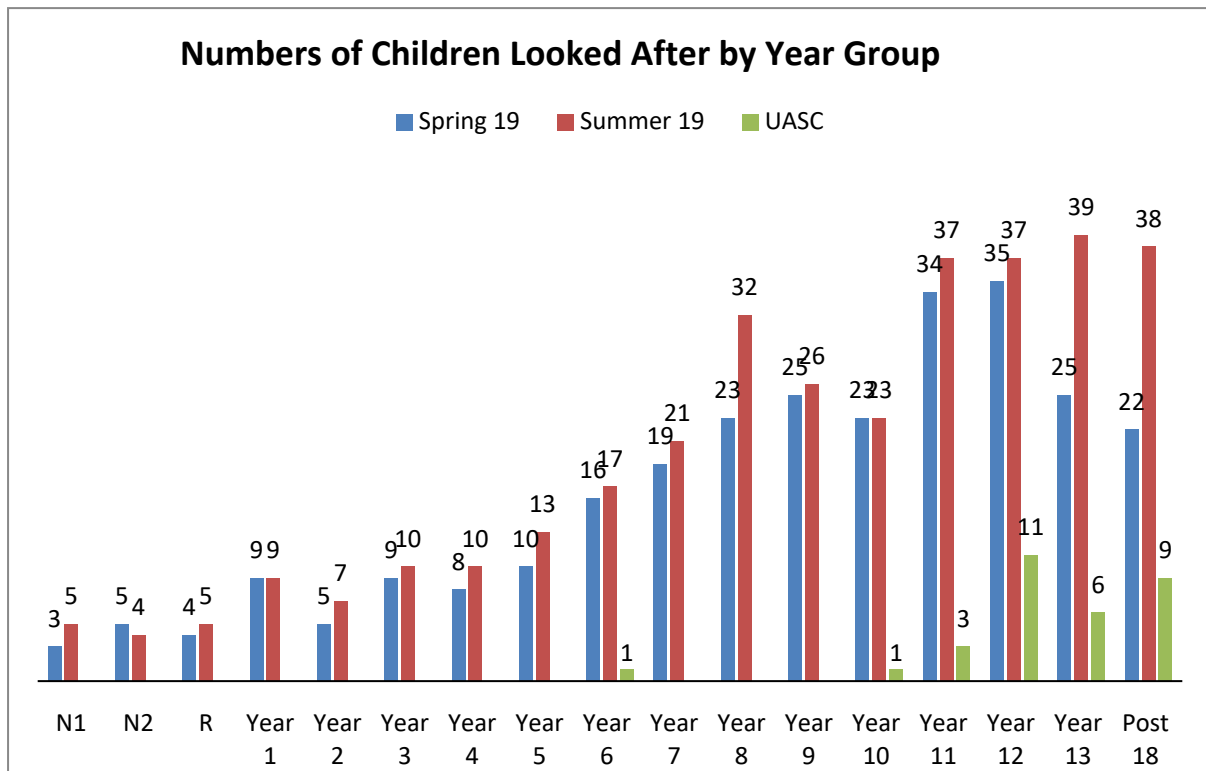
- Thurrock Virtual School Pupil Premium Policy
- Thurrock Virtual School Exclusion Guidance for Schools
- Thurrock Virtual School Exclusion Guidance for Colleges
- Thurrock Virtual School Attendance Policy
- Thurrock Virtual School Anti-Bullying Policy
- PEP Protocol for Social Workers and Designated Teachers – Schools, Colleges and Early Years
- PEP Flowchart for Social Workers
- Quality Assurance Process Flowchart
- Quality Assurance Criteria for PEPs
- Completing Attainment on EPEP
- EPEP and Target Setting
- Roles and Functions of the Virtual School
- Phonics Resources Packs for Foster Carers
- Quality Assurance Process of Education Provision
- Social Worker guidance for high quality PEP minutes
- Child Missing Education Policy/Process
- Thurrock Virtual School Safeguarding Policy
- Thurrock Virtual School Previously Looked After Policy
- Pupil Premium Spending Strategy Document 2019/2020

Additional Documents:

- School Improvement Plan
- Head Teacher Termly Reports
- Phase Teacher Termly Reports

#### 5. **Corporate Parenting Committee**

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

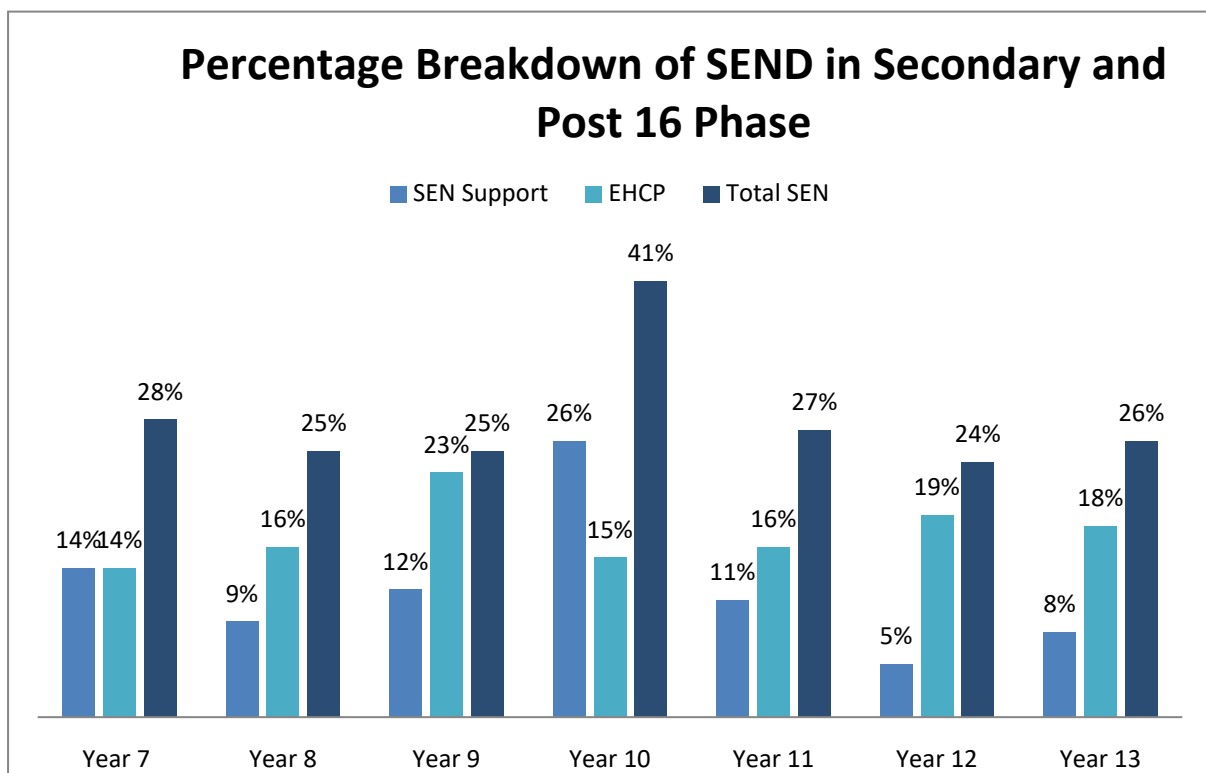
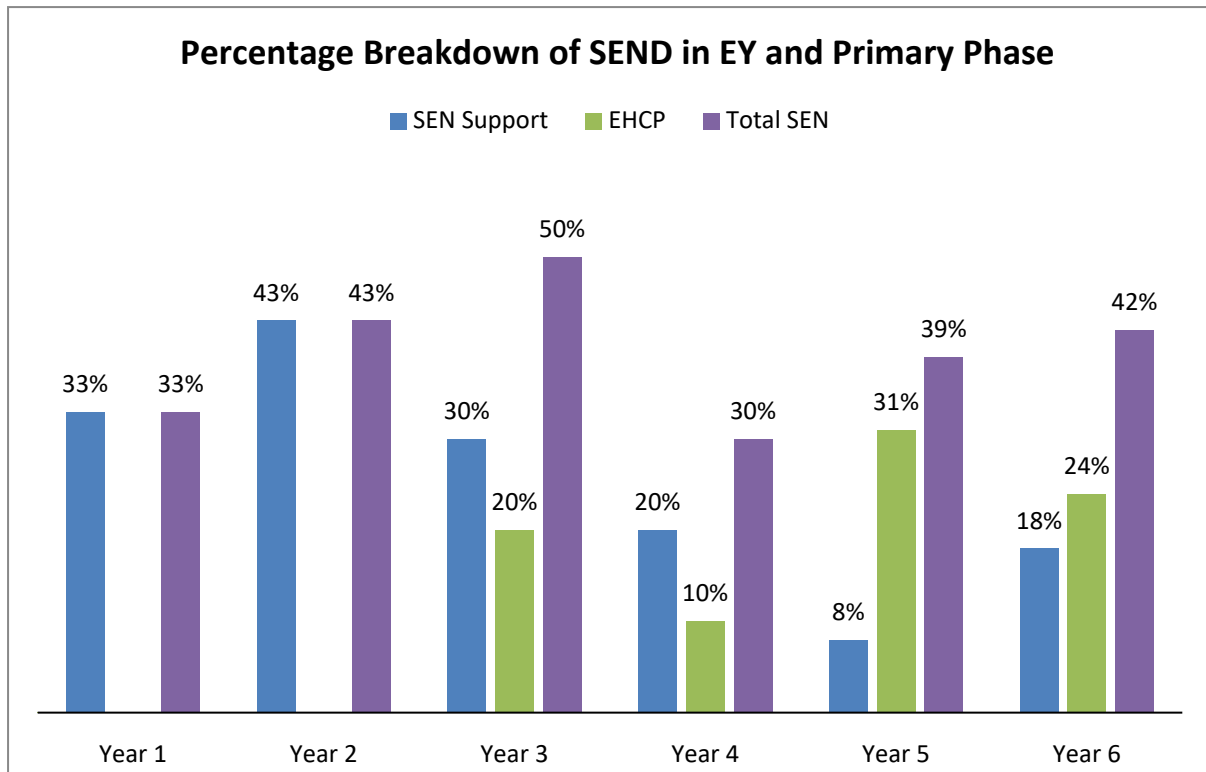
6. Current Contextual Data**Number of Looked After Children by Year Group [Updated July 2019]****Number of Pupils in Alternative Provision/SEND School/Specialist Provision by Year Group**

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

**Number of CLA with SEND by Year Group**

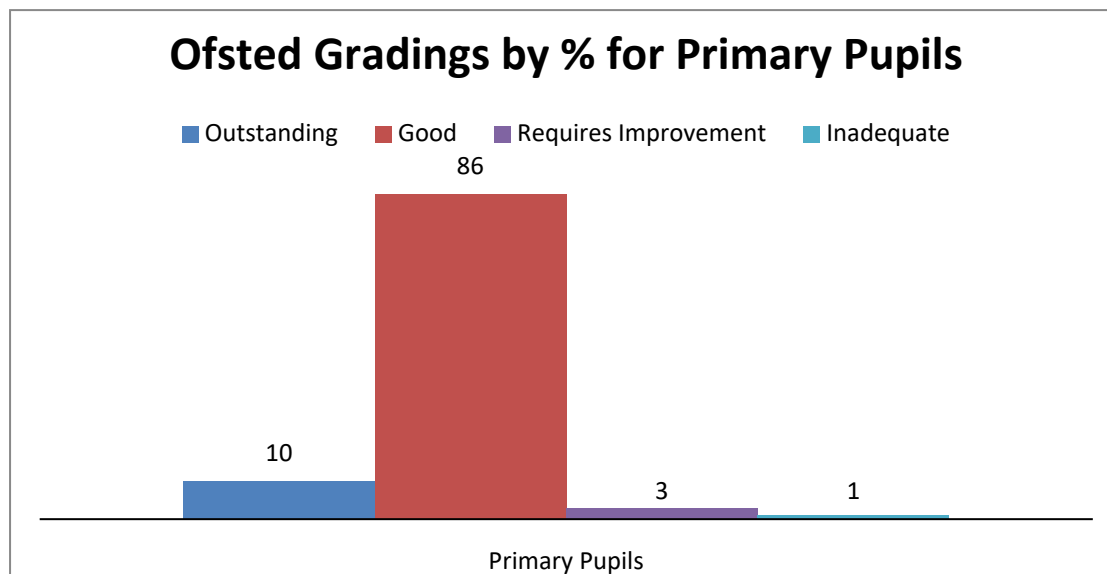
	N1	N2	R	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4	YR5	YR6	YR7	YR8	YR9	YR10	YR11	YR 12	YR 13
	0	0	0	3	3	5	3	5	7	6	8	9	10	10	9	10
SS	0			3	3	3	2	1	3	3	3	3	6	4	2	3
EHCP						2	1	4	4	3	5	6	4	6	7	7



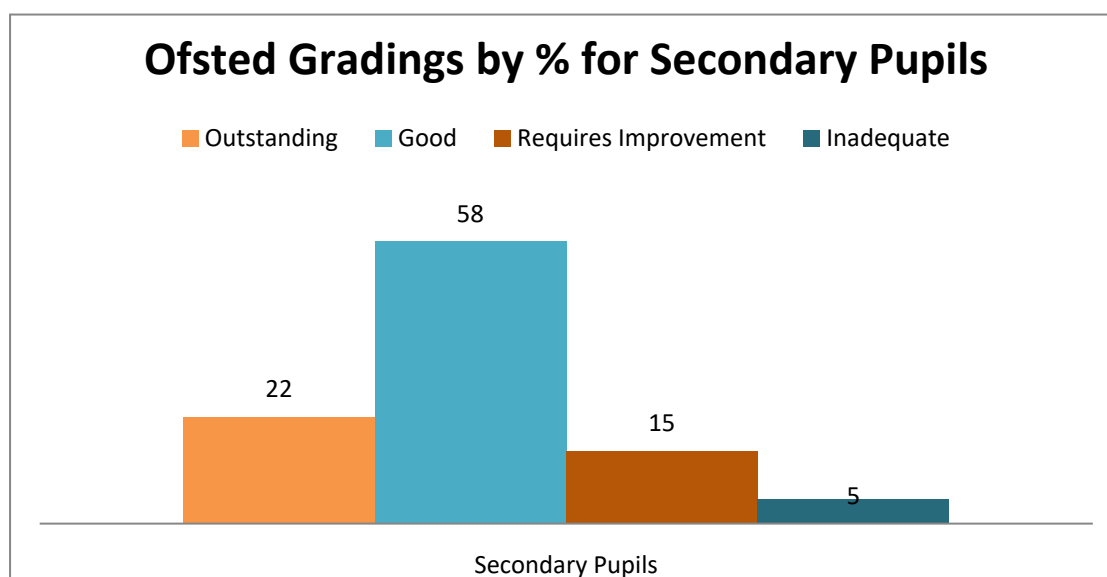


## School Placement of CLA by OFSTED classification July 2019

### Primary Phase



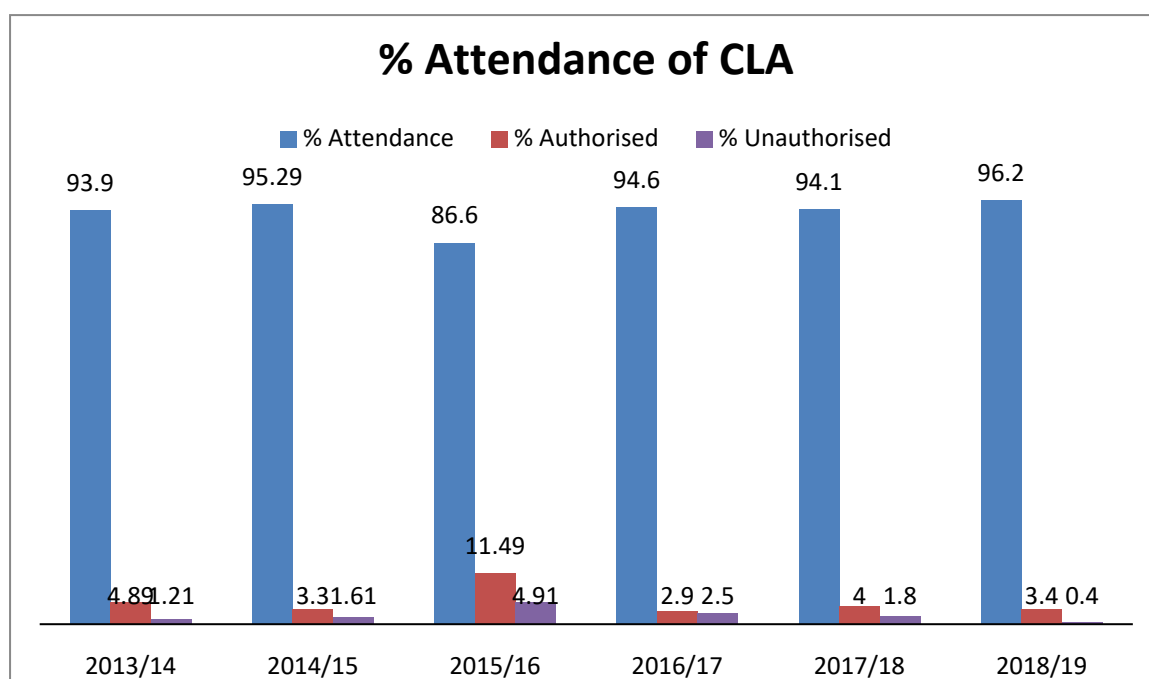
### Secondary Phase



Overall School Ofsted Grading Year R to Year 11 is:

- 85.5% of pupils attend a school graded good or above
- 68% attend a good school
- 17.5% attend an outstanding school
- 10.5% attend a school that requires improvement
- 4% attend an inadequate school

Schools graded less than good are visited by the Virtual School every term.

7. Attendance

Robust tracking of attendance is vital in ensuring that good attendance is prioritised. Attendance rates have increased compared to the previous year. Our attendance rates are comparable to all schools. Unauthorised attendance has decreased as has authorised attendance. For the forthcoming academic year, we are striving to remain above 95% and will continue to do so. Prior to the summer term attendance rates were reported to governors as 96.4% with 0.7% unauthorised. Termly attendance data is reported to governors and the key stages are represented individually and then overall attendance rates are also reported.

There were 19 pupils who had persistent absence below 90% this equates to 10% which is in line with the national average for CLA. In the spring term 2019 persistent absence was as low as 5.78%. There are a number of pupils who had poor attendance prior to coming into care and they entered care in the summer term 2019. A pastoral support programme is always put in place for students who are refusing to attend school and the Virtual School works closely with foster carers, social workers and their schools to support the child/young person. Attendance is also discussed at PEP meetings.

Attendance is monitored daily through the use of Looked After Call. The Virtual School Headteacher monitors the attendance of priority CLA as identified by the Virtual School on a weekly basis. Attendance monitoring for all pupils is conducted by the Virtual School Headteacher on a fortnightly basis to identify any concerns. The Virtual School receives daily updates from Looked After Call for any pupil who is absent or excluded. If a pupil is absent and this is unauthorised the social worker and foster carer is contacted by Looked After Call to find out the reason why s/he is

not at school. This system compliments the safeguarding measures that are in place for individual schools and prevents delay when a student may be missing.

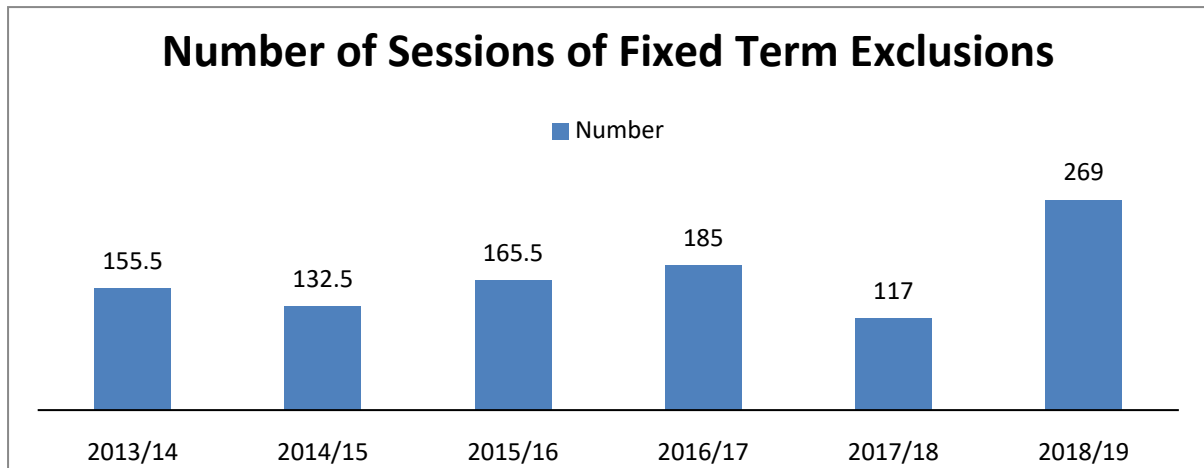
The Virtual School is supportive of the DFE Absence protocols and only supports holiday or absence in term time in extenuating circumstances and supports the school of the particular pupil if they are given an unauthorised absence if planned absence is taken without the school's consent. An attendance policy is in place and this is reviewed by the Head Teacher annually and put forward to the Governing Body to approve.

## 8. **Exclusions**

There have been no permanent exclusions of CLA for over a six year period. Wherever possible we encourage schools to avoid fixed term exclusions [FTE]. After managing to reduce the FTE rate to the lowest it had been over five year, unfortunately in 18/19 it has increased. A total of 16 pupils have been excluded across the academic year. This equates to 8.2% of the cohort. This is below published national figures of 10% for academic year 17/18. Overall 4.2% of possible school sessions were missed due to exclusion. There have been several incidences of young people with a history of exclusion, who became looked after in the academic year and then being excluded again within a week of going into care. A review of needs and support is always made whenever a CLA pupil is excluded. The Virtual School work with schools to reduce fixed term exclusions, however, some of our pupils are participating in activities that would warrant the need for exclusion. We have managed to negotiate alternatives to exclusion off site through measures such as:

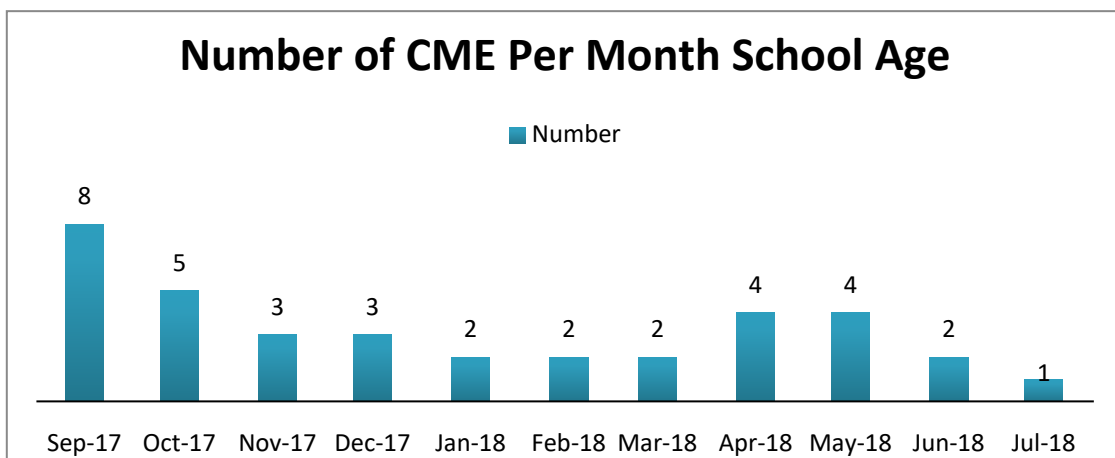
- Internal support
- Action plan meetings when excluded
- Alternative provision

As a result of this increase in data for FTE, the school improvement priorities have been set to reflect this and actions are planned in the School Improvement Plan for 2019/2020. A proactive and challenging approach with Governors as well as Headteacher is being planned.



## 9. Children Missing Education [CME]

The Local Authority carefully monitors any child missing education for those CLA placed in and out of borough. The Virtual School produces weekly data for any child who is missing education due to lack of a school place or through extended absence. This data is shared and discussed in Directors Management Team monthly. Monthly CME data is available and provided to Governors on a termly basis. The Virtual School takes action which is individualised to meet the needs of the pupils and where necessary, works with the Admissions Team, Inclusion Manager and SEN Service teams in Thurrock and other boroughs to secure school places or alternative provision. For pupils who are without an educational placement, a Personal Education Plan [PEP] meeting is held to plan actions for how to secure education provision. Wherever possible the Virtual School provides tuition through commissioned tuition services whilst a student is between educational placements. In the academic year 2018/2019 a procedure was written to detail the specific process for the steps taken by all professionals to support the placement of CME in appropriate provision.



The table highlights a fluctuation of figures and this very much depends on the profile of pupils coming into care and whether they have education prior to becoming looked after or if they have to move away from their school due to placement availability in borough. The figures are relatively low, however, the virtual school staff work very hard to access education as soon as they are made aware that there is a child missing education. It is more difficult to access education if a child/young person has Special Educational Needs because due to the consultation process.

#### 10. **Child Sexual Exploitation [CSE]**

Particular attention is paid to Children Missing Education through lack of school place or poor attendance as this is a potential factor for making a pupil vulnerable and higher risk of CSE. The Virtual School works very closely with all services to minimise the risk of child sexual exploitation for our children/young people in and out of borough. The authority holds a fortnightly meeting where a range of partners from health, youth offending services, WIZE Up, the police, mental health, education welfare and education attend. In this meeting all vulnerable pupils are discussed and actions are directed to provide the necessary support. The Virtual School attend Strategy Meetings when required to discuss pupils at risk of CSE and when they are missing from placement. Separate data is available through the social care liquid logic children's system which details every child/young person's CSE risk assessment and actions taken to support them. This data is held and reported separately from this document. The Virtual School is not responsible for collating this data but can access it if required. The Virtual School has a clear Safeguarding Policy which considers CSE as part of this in line with Thurrock processes and policy.

#### 11. **Attainment Data of CLA**

##### **Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] 2019**

##### **Indicative data**

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

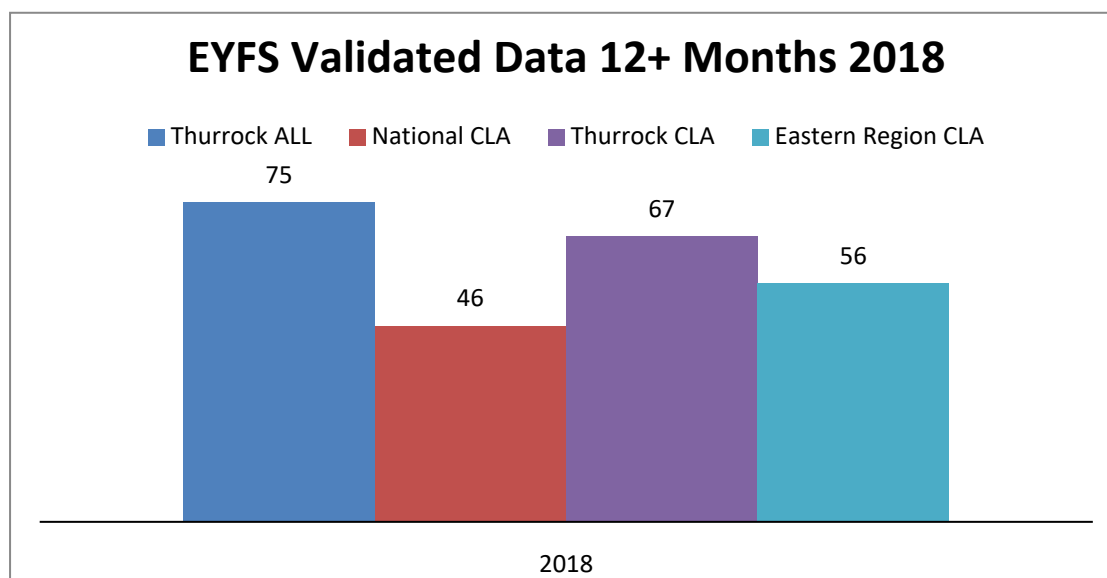
To reach the percentage of children making a good level of development, each child is assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals; whether she/he meets the level, has not yet reached the level or exceeded it and points are awarded accordingly in a range between 17 to 51. If a child meets every Early Learning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

The GLD has fluctuated significantly over a 6 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. Additionally, Year R has a large amount of movement in and out of care across an academic year. Some pupils

return home or are adopted and some new into care are only looked after for a short period of time as they may move to the care of family relatives.

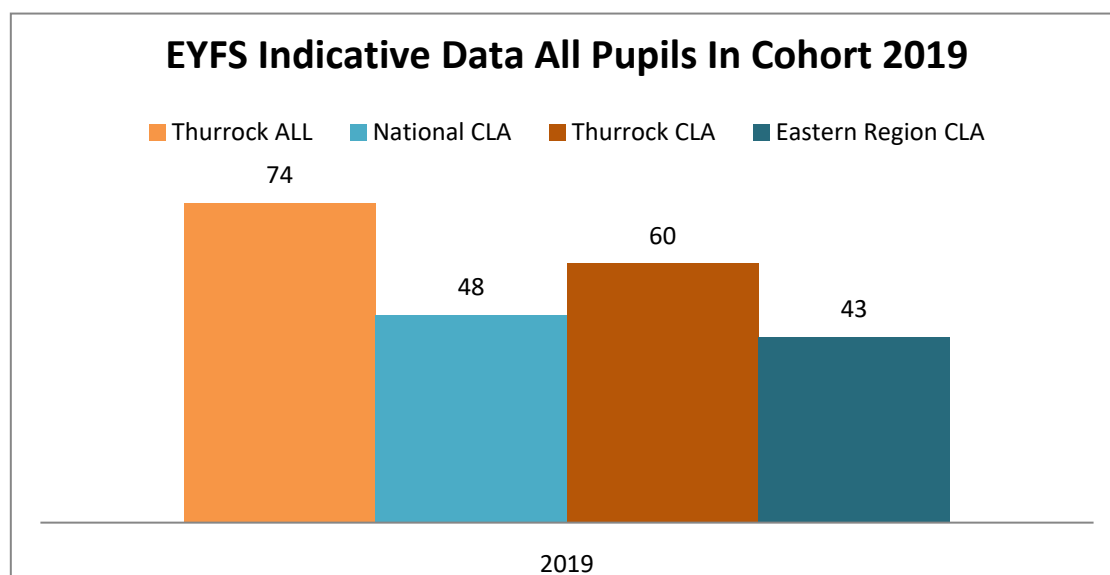
The diagram below illustrates the performance of Thurrock CLA against national and Thurrock non-CLA pupils.

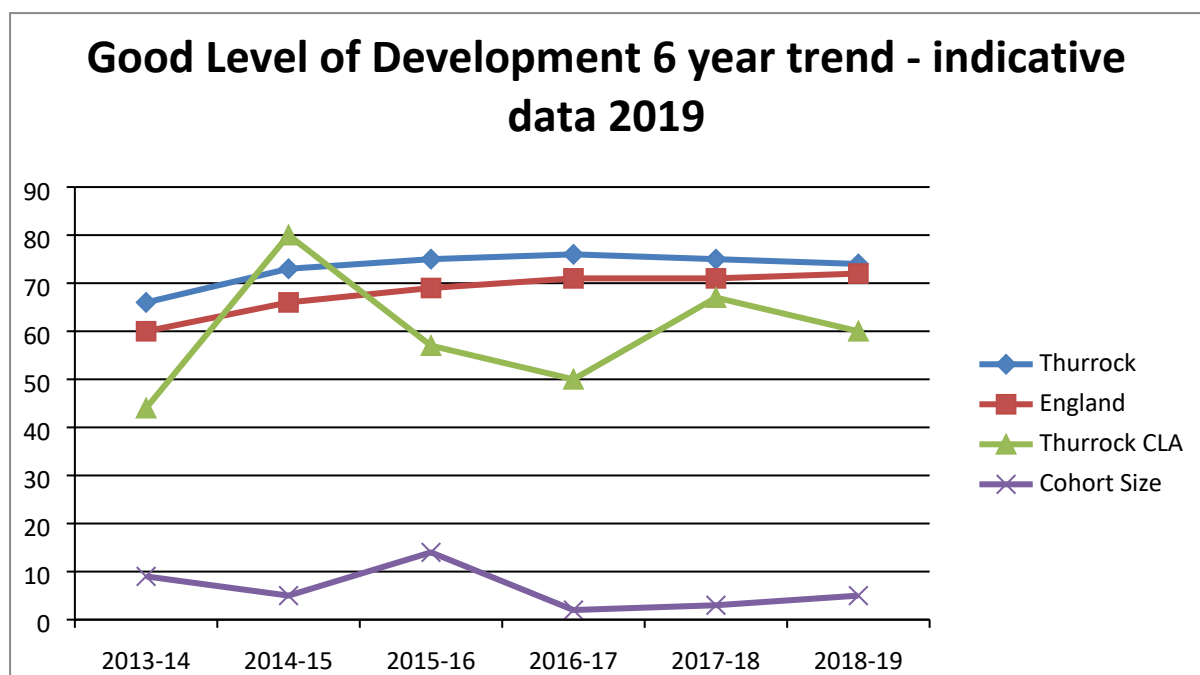
### Validated Data 2018 – Pupils in Care for 12+ Months



Validated Data for 2019 will be available for comparison later in the year when this is released by the DFE.

### EYFS Indicative Data for 2019





For the 2018/19 academic year the provisional GLD result for Thurrock CLA is 60%. However, this result is based on 5 pupils who were in care at the end of the academic year and does not account for the movement of pupils in and out of care during their reception year. Validated data will be available later on in the year and will be released by the DFE. There was only 1 pupil in the 18/19 academic year that had been in care for 12+ months. This pupil did not achieve GLD due to SEN needs. However, the pupil made steady progress over the year. 3 pupils became looked after in 2019 with a further 1 pupil entering care in the Autumn term 2018.

More clarity in terms of trends will be available once pupils are cross referenced with the SD903 LA census return and made available with the validated data.

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

#### **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2019 data**

- Ensure that Transition arrangements have been effectively put in place to support the pupils as they move into Year 1
- Monitor pupil progress through the use of the Pupil Premium Plus allocation and work with schools to ensure correct level of support is provided based upon needs
- Link with schools needing additional support
- Obtain on entry data for current 2019/20 Year R cohort to enable the measurement of progress.



- Create provision maps for each child with their school to detail rates of progress and impact of interventions
- Support the application of Education of Health Care Plans for those SEN support pupils who are not making rapid progress
- Provision of the Literacy Book Trust home learning resources to Nursery and Reception age pupils
- Provision of phonics learning pack for carers to use at home with Nursery and Reception pupils.

### **Year 1 Phonics Score Results 2018**

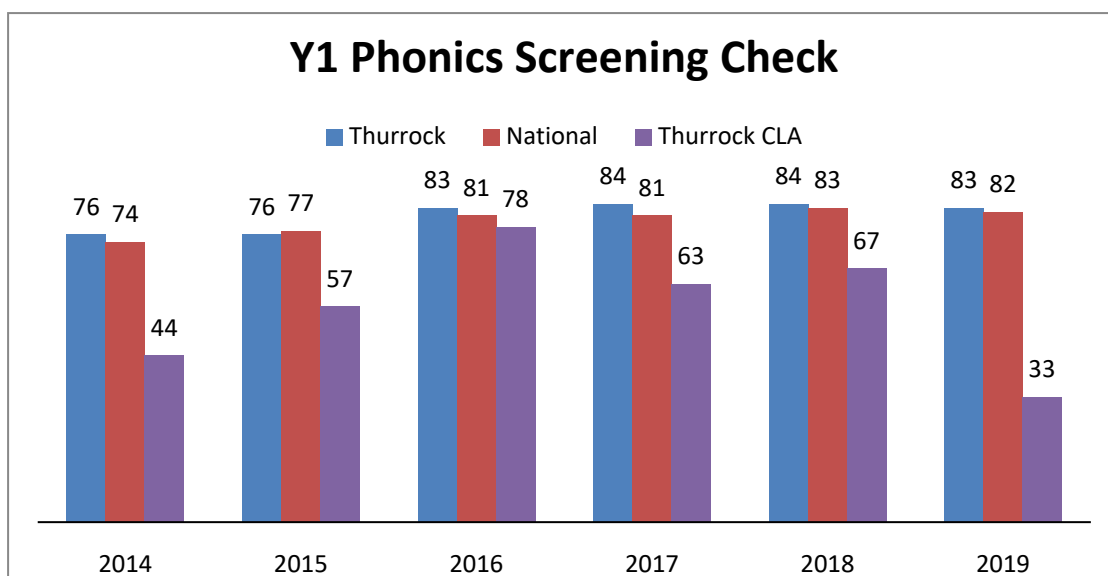
The year 1 phonics screening check is undertaken in June by all year 1 pupils.

The percentage of children who reached the expected standard has decreased compared to the previous year. The cohort sizes are small year on year.

This is illustrated in the table below

Year	Total Cohort Size	Number who passed
2015	7	4 pupils – 57%
2016	9	7 pupils – 78%
2017	8	5 pupils – 63%
2018	6	4 pupils – 67%
2019	9 – 3 were disapplied	2 pupils – 33%

The data is declining. The 33% score is based upon the 6 pupils who were able to take the phonic screen as 3 were disapplied from the test due to their low levels. There were a further 2 children who scored 31/40 and so were on the cusp of the 32 pass mark. They will be expected to pass the Year 2 screen next academic year. Out of the 9 pupils in the cohort only 4 (44%) had been in care over 1 year with the remaining 66% coming into care in the academic year. Of the cohort 44% have an identified SEND need. Out of the 6 pupils who had been in care for 12+ months, 2 (33%) were disapplied as noted above. Of the remaining 4 pupils, 2 (50%) passed the screening test. This score is lower than national CLA and Eastern region CLA for 12+ months. This issue will be addressed in the School Development Plan.

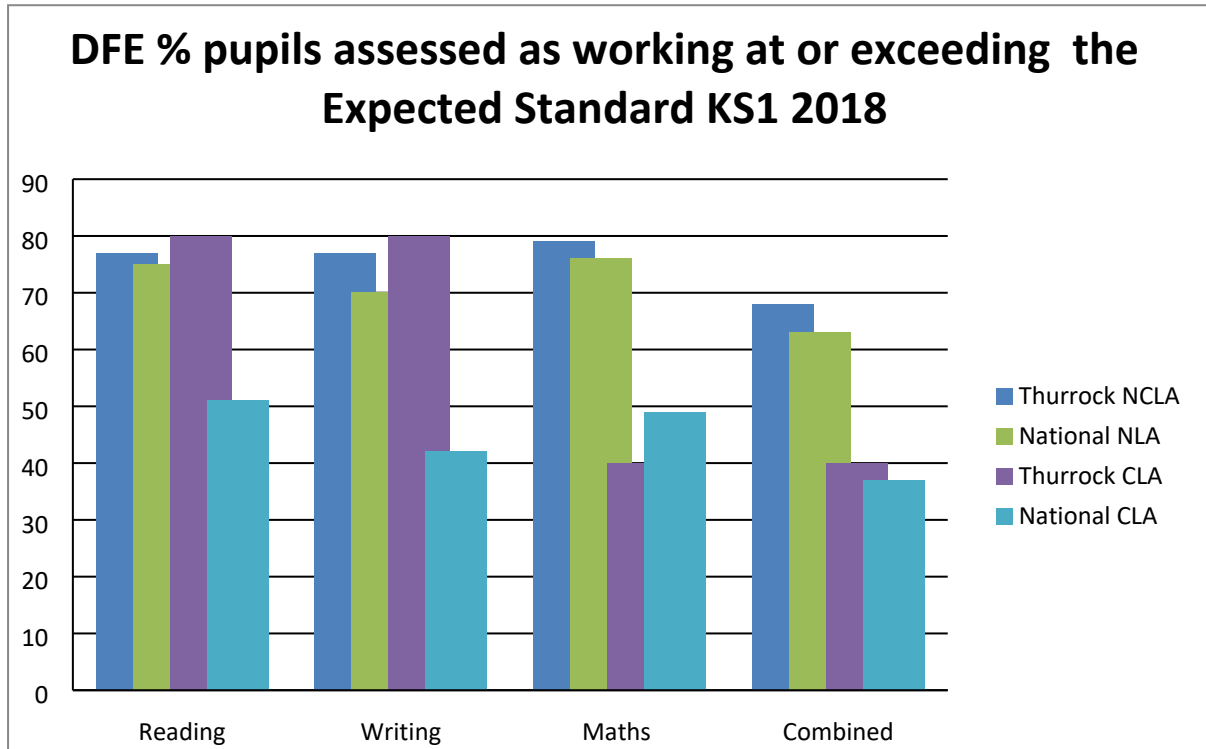


#### **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2019 data**

- This year the Virtual School has already spoken with the schools of the pupils who have not passed and planned interventions are in place for Year 2.
- Continue this forthcoming academic year with the provision of Phonics home learning packs
- Provide phonics training to foster carers to enable them to support at home
- Provide at home phonics games for children to access electronically
- Provision of reading and phonics activities to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 through the Literacy Booktrust initiative. [This is detailed further on in the report]

### Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2018

#### Validated data



Graph of Validated 2018 Data Comparing Thurrock CLA to National and Eastern

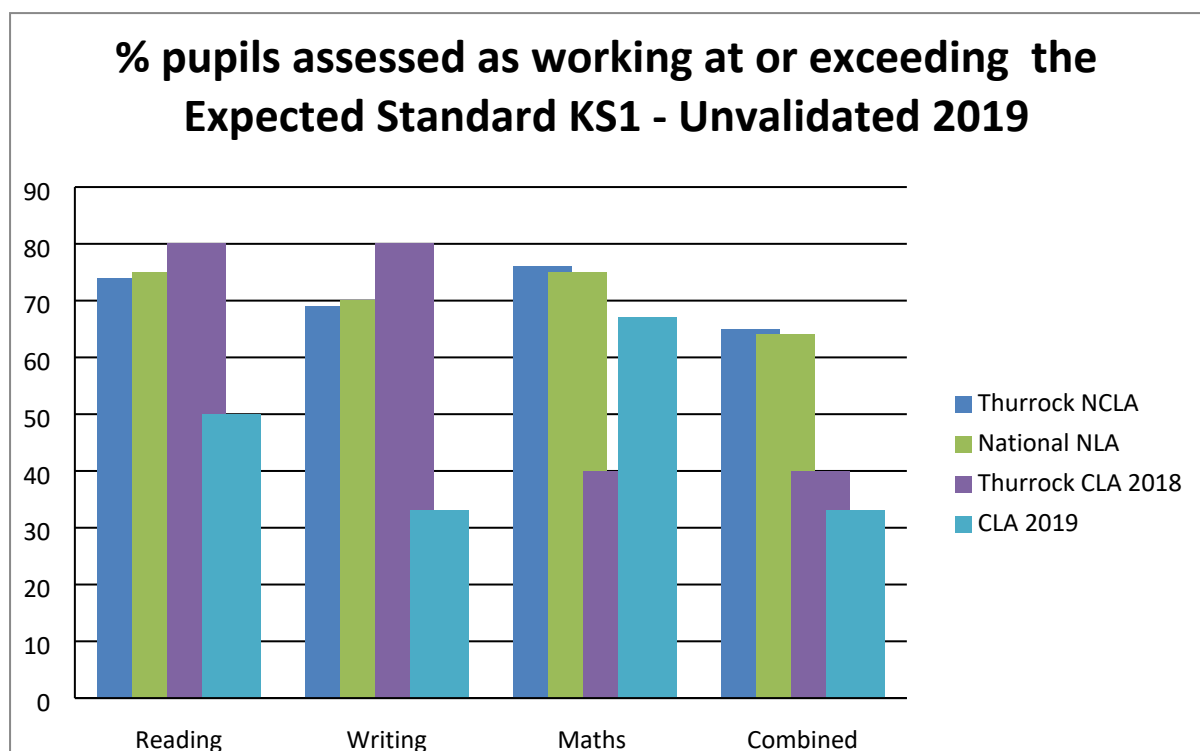
The data shown in the table above is validated data which the Department for Education use for those pupils in care for 12+ months. There have been improvements in reading and writing compared to 2017 validated data. However there has been a decline in maths and thus the combined score.

### Key Stage 1 (age 7, year 2) 2019

#### Non-Validated data

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

In the graph below, it is possible to see how Thurrock CLA performed against National and Thurrock non-looked after.



The above data is based upon a cohort size of 6 pupils. This is a very small data set for comparison particularly when comparing against very large numbers for Thurrock and all Year 2 Nationally.

Analysis of this data indicates that Thurrock CLA have performed better in maths than the previous year but have performed less well in reading and writing compared to previous year. This is unvalidated data and includes all 6 pupils in the year group irrespective of the time in care.

There was 1 pupil who was disappplied from the SATs due to their SEND needs and low level. 2 pupils have been in care for 12+ months and additionally the 1 pupil who was disappplied.3 pupils became CLA in this academic year including 2 who have been looked after since May 2019.

Therefore, this data may change once the validated data is available as some pupils have entered and left care during the academic year.

Subject	Number of Pupils	Percentage [2019]	National [2019]	CLA	Eastern Region CLA {2019}
<b>Reading</b>	3	50%	52%		51%
<b>Writing</b>	2	33%	42%		35%
<b>Maths</b>	3	67%	50%		47%
<b>Combined</b>	2	33%	38%		32%

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

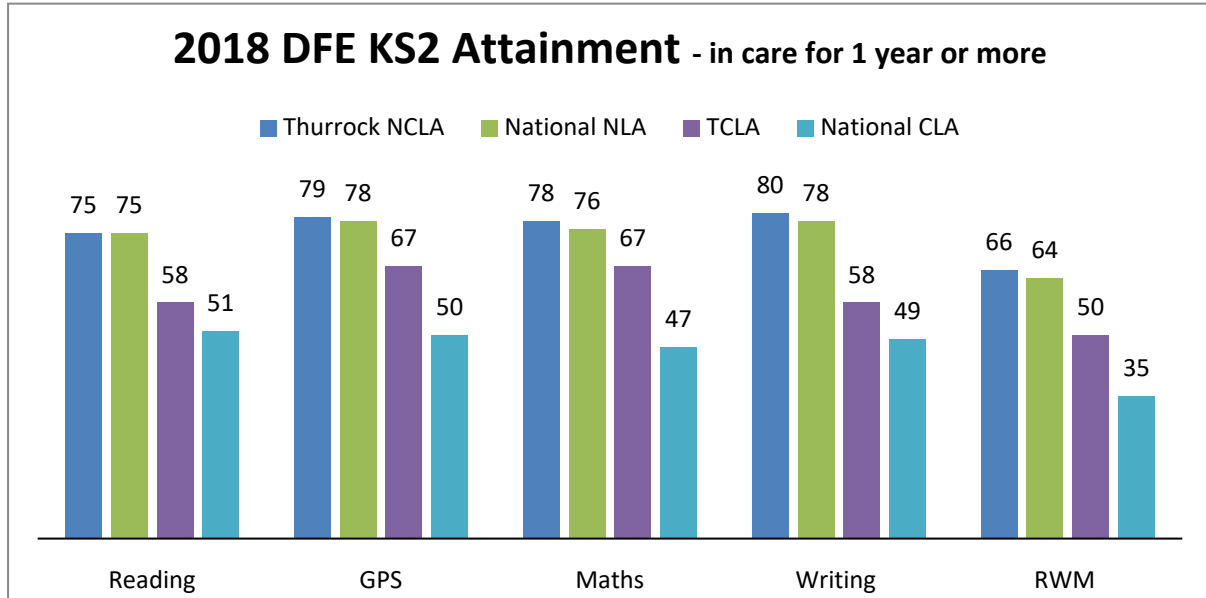
There were 3 pupils who had been in care for 12+ months and additionally the pupil who was disappplied had also been in care for more than a year. Of the 3 pupils in care for 12+ months, 2 (67%) met the required standards in all areas. Therefore, the validated data for 12+ months once obtained from the DFE will show better results. The 1 pupils who was disappplied has made expected progress based upon starting points. This pupil did not achieve a GLD at the end of reception due to developmental delay. The school provides 1-1 support and specialist intervention.

#### **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2019 data**

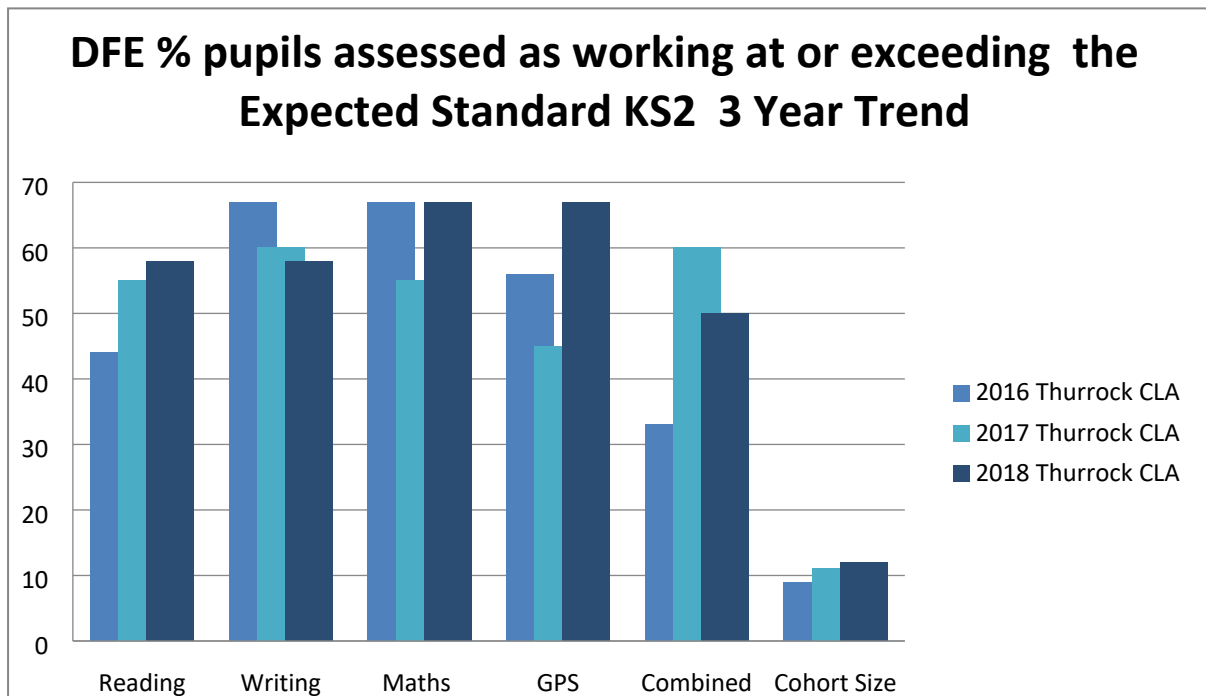
- Provision of home learning packs from Literacy Booktrust to support learning at home.
- Monitor progress for current year 3 to check that those who did not meet the expected standard are being appropriately supported.
- Provision of writing support packs in the home to support writing activities at home with carers

**Key Stage 2 SATS 2018**  
Validated Data

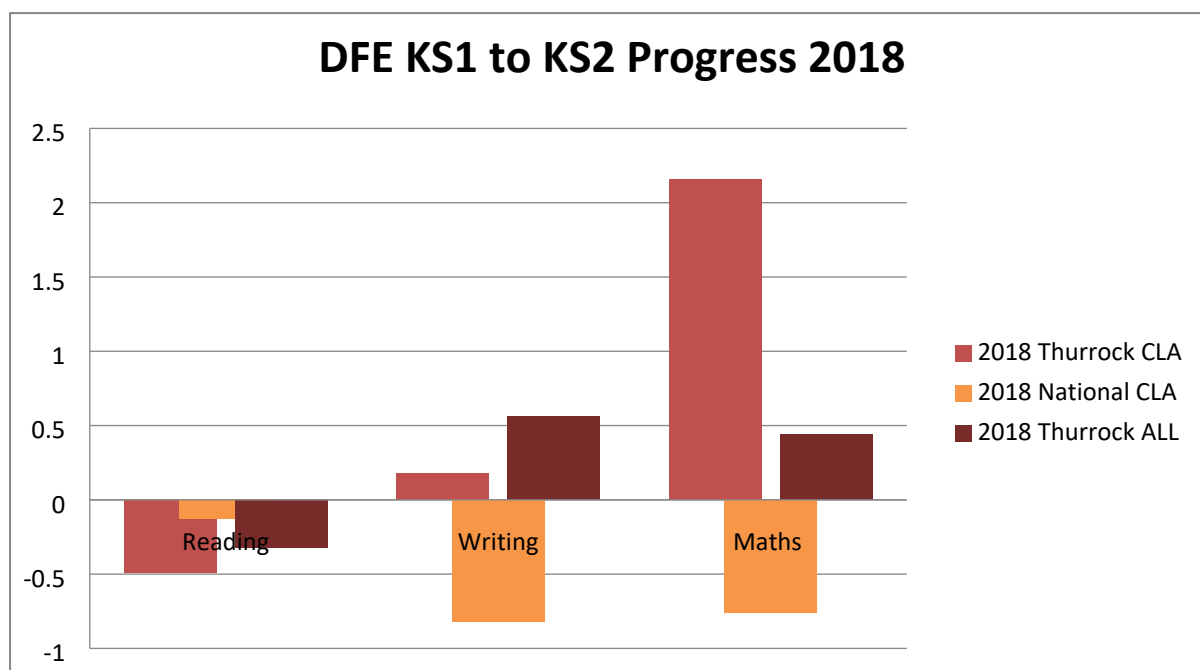
The following graph details the validated data for 2018 for Key Stage 2. The data demonstrates that Thurrock CLA performed better than national CLA.



The following table details the 3 year trend for validated from the DFE for those in care for 12+ months.



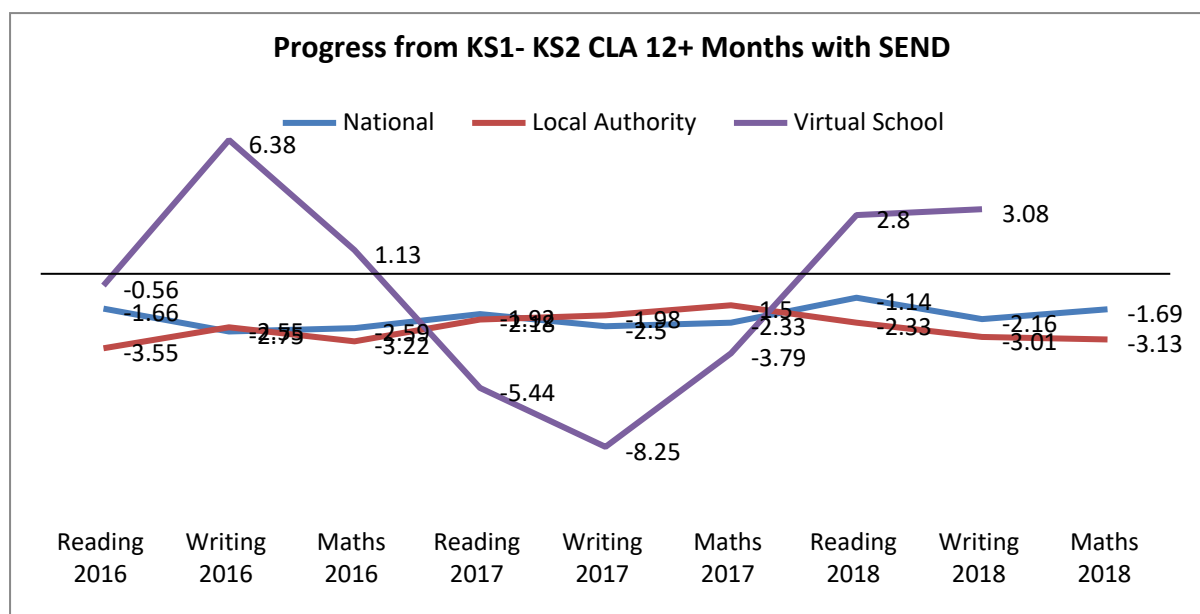
This data shows improvements in the areas of GPS, reading and Maths. However there has been a slight decline in writing. The overall combined score was lower than the previous year due to the nature of the cohort attainment summary.



The above graph details the amount of progress made from Key Stage 1 SATs results to Key Stage 2 SATS results. Thurrock CLA have made good progress compared to national CLA in writing and maths. Progress in maths also exceeds all Thurrock non-looked after children. The area for development in terms of progress would still be reading although reading results have increased year on year since 2016.

#### **Pupils with SEND 2018 Key Stage 2 Data**

For pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) who had been in care for 12+ months, their attainment across a three year period has improved. In 2016 and 2017, no pupils with SEND achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined. In 2018, 50% of CLA pupils with SEND achieved the expected combined standard. In terms of progress, Thurrock Children Looked After with SEND are making better progress than national and Thurrock pupils with SEND. Although there was a dip in progress in 2017, overall our pupils with SEND compared to similar pupils is good.



Graph detailing progress comparisons against pupils with SEND 2016-2018.

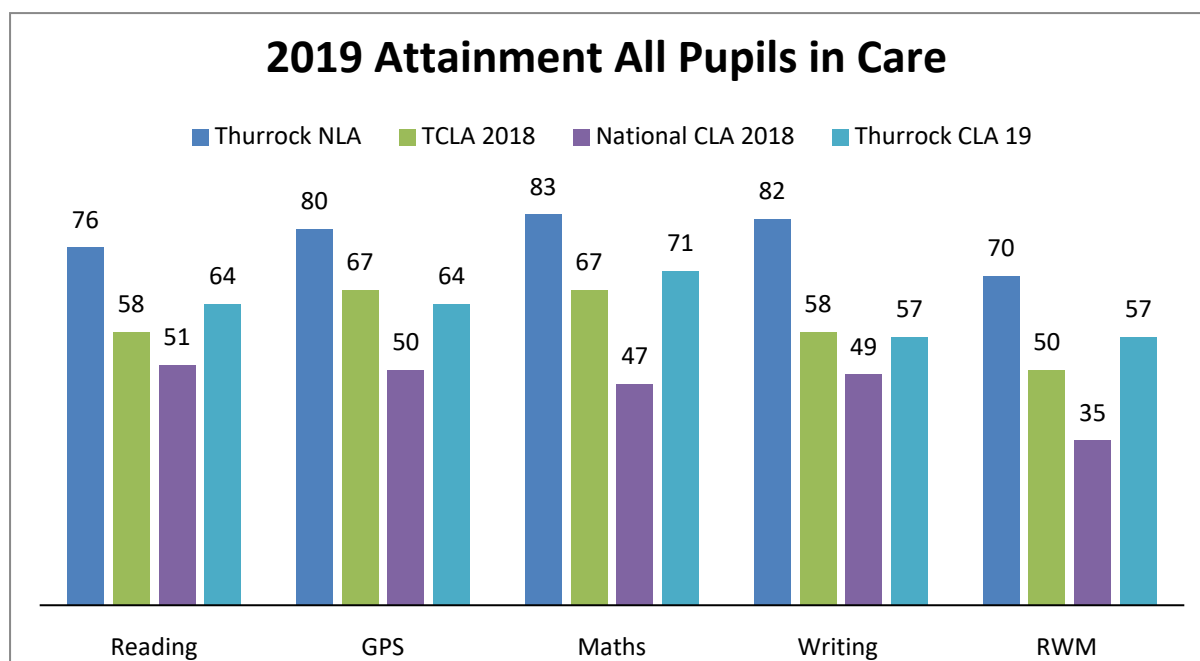
In 2018 our pupils with SEND made excellent progress. When comparing Thurrock CLA to National non-CLA and National non-SEND, our CLA with SEND are making more progress from KS1 to KS2. In reading this progress is +2.4 points above national, in writing it is +2.58 points progress and in maths it is +4.23 points. This is excellent progress and clearly demonstrates what can be achieved with high aspirations and a supportive environment. This data demonstrates that the gap has been closed against non-looked after children and that our children with SEND are making accelerated progress.

### **Key Stage 2 SATS 2019** **Non-Validated Data**

The cohort size for 2019 was 14 pupils. There were 3 pupils who were disappiled from the SATs this year. These all had an EHCP. Only 1 pupil had been in care for less that 12+ months and this pupil achieved expected in all area. This data may change when the validated data becomes available later in the year.

For Thurrock CLA the statistics for those achieving the expected standard were as follows: reading 64%, GPS 64%, maths 71% and writing was 57%. The graph below illustrates the comparisons with non-CLA nationally in 2018 and all pupils in Thurrock for 2019 results.





Graph of Indicative Results Comparison for National and Thurrock Non-CLA [2019]

The indicative results show that there have been improvements in reading and maths and RWM combined. There has been a slight decrease in GPS and writing. Thurrock CLA are closing the gap overall for RWM against Thurrock all children. National data for CLA and non-CLA 2019 is not yet available for comparison at the time of this report.

#### Prior Attainment for the 2019 Cohort

Current data would suggest that children made expected progress based upon prior achievements in KS1. This will be available when the progress data for validation is made available by the DFE later in the year.

Monitoring and tracking was extensive for this cohort of pupils. Schools were required to provide termly tracking data and evidence how pupil premium plus was supporting learning and progress.

The Year 6 cohort contained 7 pupils [50%] out of the whole cohort had SEND needs.

Prior attainment at Key Stage 1 for this cohort was broadly in line the outcomes for KS2. For reading at KS1 71% achieved the standard, 50% achieved writing and 57% achieving the maths standard. Maths has been the biggest area for progress as now 71% achieved the standard in KS2 compared to their previous outcomes at KS1.

The length of time in care varied for this cohort between 2007 and 2019. The table below illustrates this:

Period when entered care	Number of pupils [% = of total cohort size of 14]	Met expected KS2 standard RWM [% of those in this period]	Met expected KS1 standard in RWM	Expected Progress [% of those in this period]
2019	1 pupil [7%]	1 pupil [100%]	1 pupil [100%]	100%
2018	2 pupils [14%]	0 pupils	1 pupil [50%]	0
2017	1 pupils [7%]	0	0	
2016	0			
2015	2 pupils [14%]	1 pupil [50]	0	50%
2014	2 pupils [14%]	1 pupil [50%]	1 pupil [100%]	100%
2013	2 pupils [14%]	2 pupils [100%]	2 pupils [100%]	100%
2012	2 pupils [14%]	2 pupils [100%]	2 pupils [100%]	100%
2011	1 pupil [7%]	1 pupil [100%	1 pupil [100%]	100%
2007	1 pupil [7%]	0	0	100%

This data would show that there is a strong correlation between prior attainment and achieving the expected standard. The length of time in care has also had an impact on those pupils with the exception of those who have SEND needs.

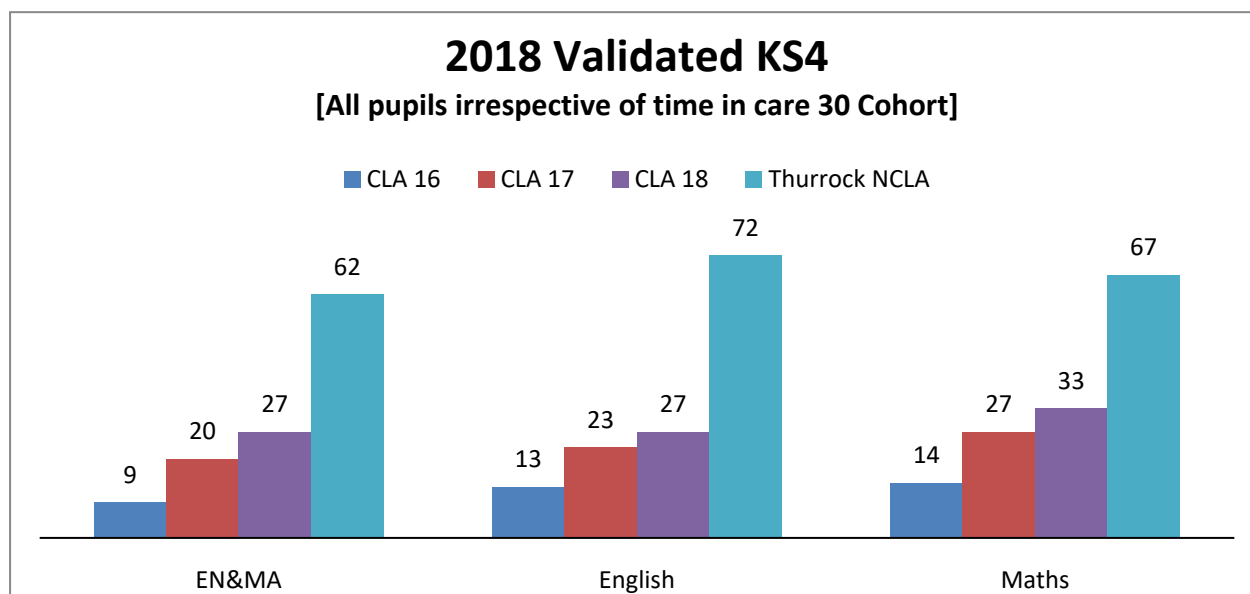
#### **Planned Action by the Virtual School in response to the 2019 data**

- Attendance at PEPs or Quality Assurance visits to the schools to check pupil progress
- Identification of those who did not achieve Expected and support transition into Year 7
- Provision of Literacy Book Trust resources for Primary phase pupils
- Support for those pupils in Year 7 who have SEND to ensure that the provision is matching need.
- Provision of Year 6 tuition from October 2019 for those children currently in Year 6

## Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2018

### Validated results

The data for the whole cohort which was presented in the January 2019 report details all pupils' achievements for points 4 and above, as this was in line with Thurrock schools and the data they were presenting. This is detailed in the graph below.



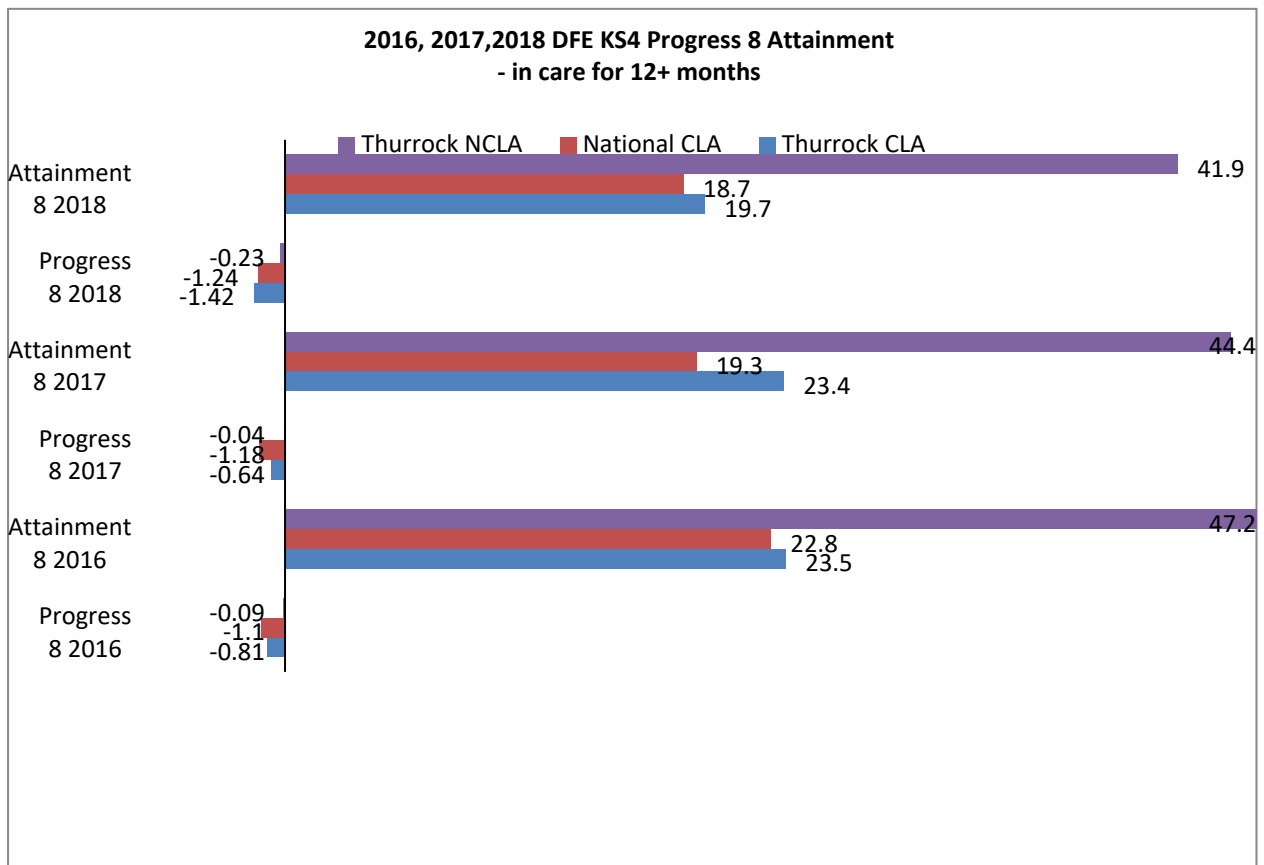
For those pupils in care for 12+ months the cohort size was 23 children (not all of them took GCSEs for reasons explained in the previous Corporate Parenting report dated January 2019).

The Department for Education has provided data for those children who have achieved a point 5 or above. This is a point above that originally reported, as point 4 has previously been the accepted standard. This standard has now been raised to point 5.

In 2018, Children Looked After for 12+ months figures show that:

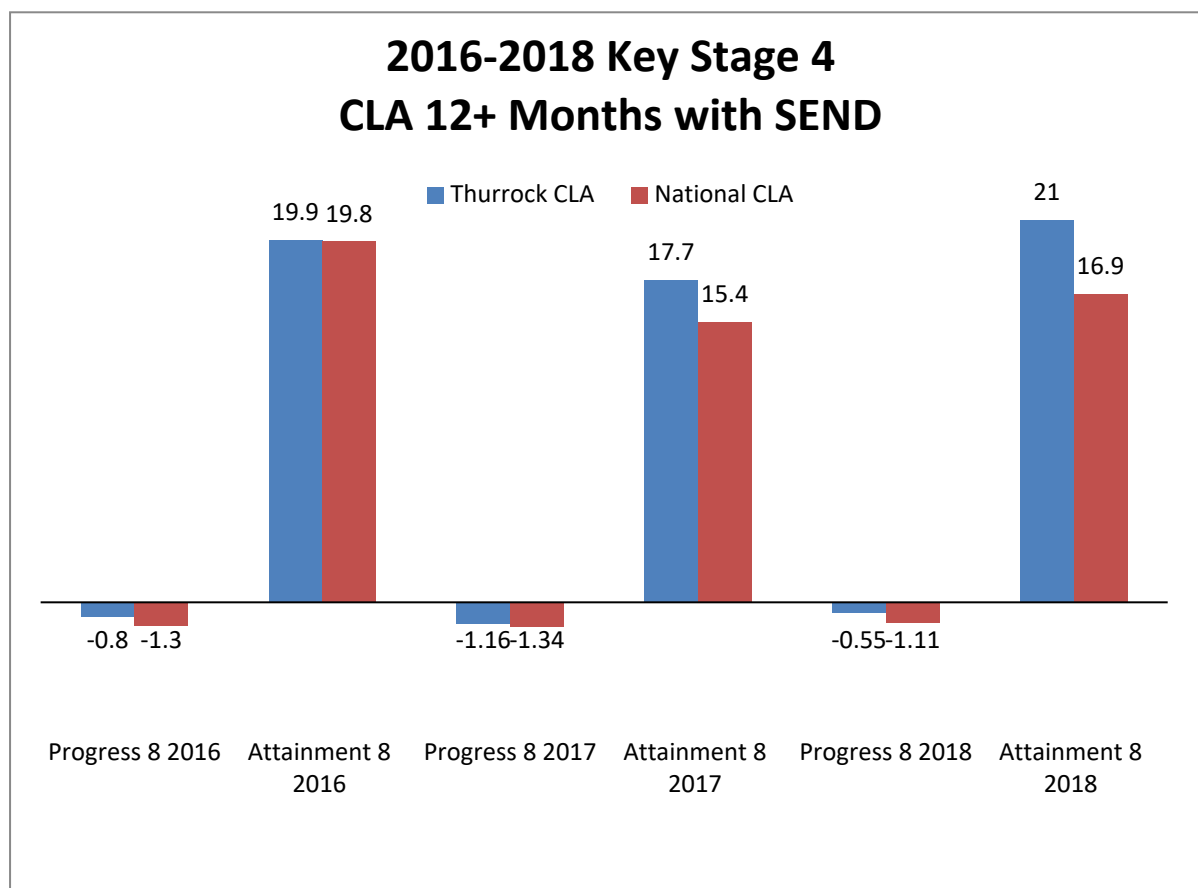
- 13% achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of point 5 or above. This is 5% above the national CLA figure.
- For English, 22% achieved point 5 or above. This is 6% above the national CLA figure.
- For maths, 17.4% achieved point 5 or above. This is 5% above the national CLA figure.

The graph below details the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 data trend for CLA for 12+ months. It shows the 3 year trend against Thurrock non-CLA and National CLA



This set of data needs careful analysis. Our pupils are performing better in their GCSEs than national children looked after and our data is improving. However, in 2018, the Attainment 8 and Progress 8 data score has declined compared to the previous two years. This trend is in line with Thurrock non-looked after. The CLA decline is despite the overall data trend showing an upward improvement in those achieving GCSEs. The academic data for 2018 showed better outcomes for CLA pupils achieving GCSEs in English and maths, however, a number of children could not have their progress scores calculated by the DFE because they did not have prior attainment in Key Stage 2 to compare to. This meant that although they achieved high GCSE grades of point 5 or above, their progress score was 0 due to no prior attainment. The data has also been affected by the increase in standards for achieving point 5 or above. The expected standard prior to this was point 4 or above.

Thurrock CLA pupils with SEND have achieved well in 2018. There was a decrease in attainment and progress in 2017 compared to 2016 but this was recovered in 2018. The pupils in the Virtual School for Thurrock who are CLA have performed consistently above national CLA with SEND. The three year trend is outlined in the graph below.



Thurrock CLA with SEND are also closing the gap against national non-looked after without SEND.

- The Attainment 8 gap has reduced from -33.3 in 2016 to -24.8 in 2018.
- The Progress 8 gap has also been reduced from 0.86 in 2016 to 0.42 in 2018.

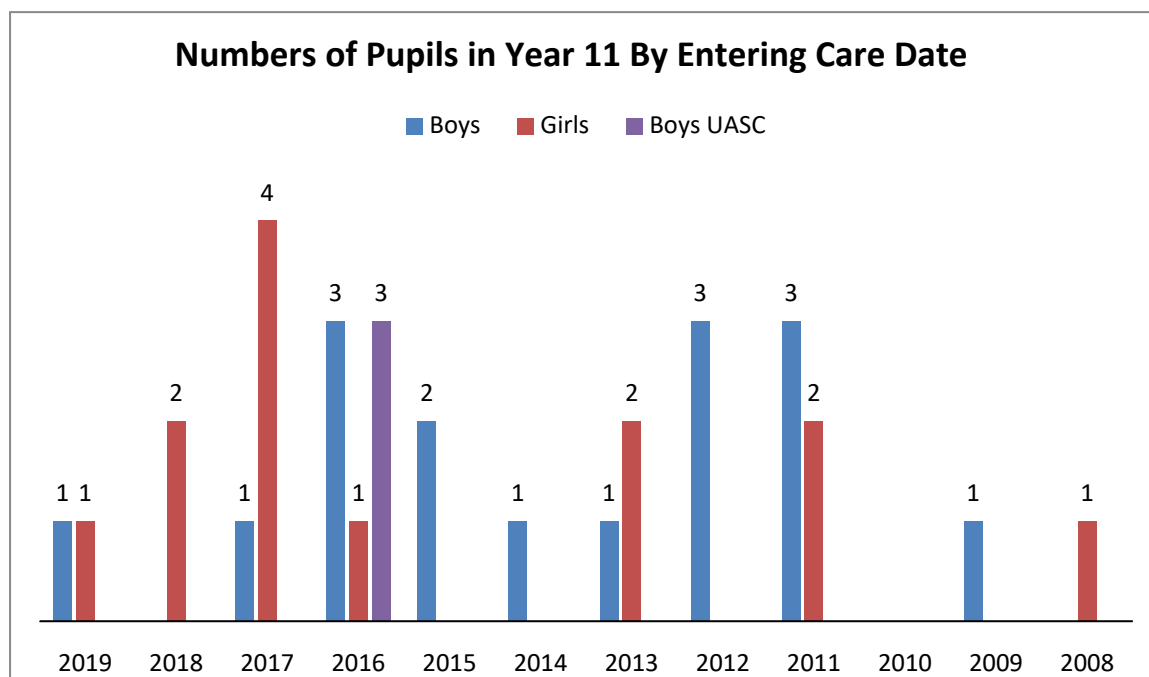
This means that our most vulnerable groups are making good progress and reaching good attainment compared to others.

## Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2019

### Non-Validated Results

The following section of this report includes the 2019 data for GCSE. Progress 8 and Attainment 8 is not being reported in the following section due to the availability of data at the time of this report being compiled. This will be reported later on when this becomes available.

The GCSE information used for this report is currently Non-Validated data.



The graph above shows the period when various pupils in Year 11 became looked after. Potentially the length of time in care will affect educational outcomes.

When adolescents come into care during this time it is usually unplanned and in an emergency situation. This makes it extremely difficult for placements and education to be found in parallel. In the vast majority of cases when a young person is without education, it is extremely difficult to provide them with a school place. Schools are reluctant take a Year 11 pupil into their school citing the reason that they are not able to match their GCSE modules. This is even more difficult for those who have no English language.

When a young person is taken into care it is often an extremely traumatic time for them. This would potentially affect their ability to perform in the GCSE exams as their focus may be elsewhere. The lateness of them coming into care also means that services have not been able to support education as extensively prior to them entering care. They may not be in full time mainstream education before becoming looked after, their attendance could be poor. They may have missed significant parts of schooling and are therefore trying to catch up. If they do attend a school prior to becoming looked after, they may not have been entered for qualifications due to their

ability or previous educational performance. All of these factors should be considered when looking at the achievements of these young people.

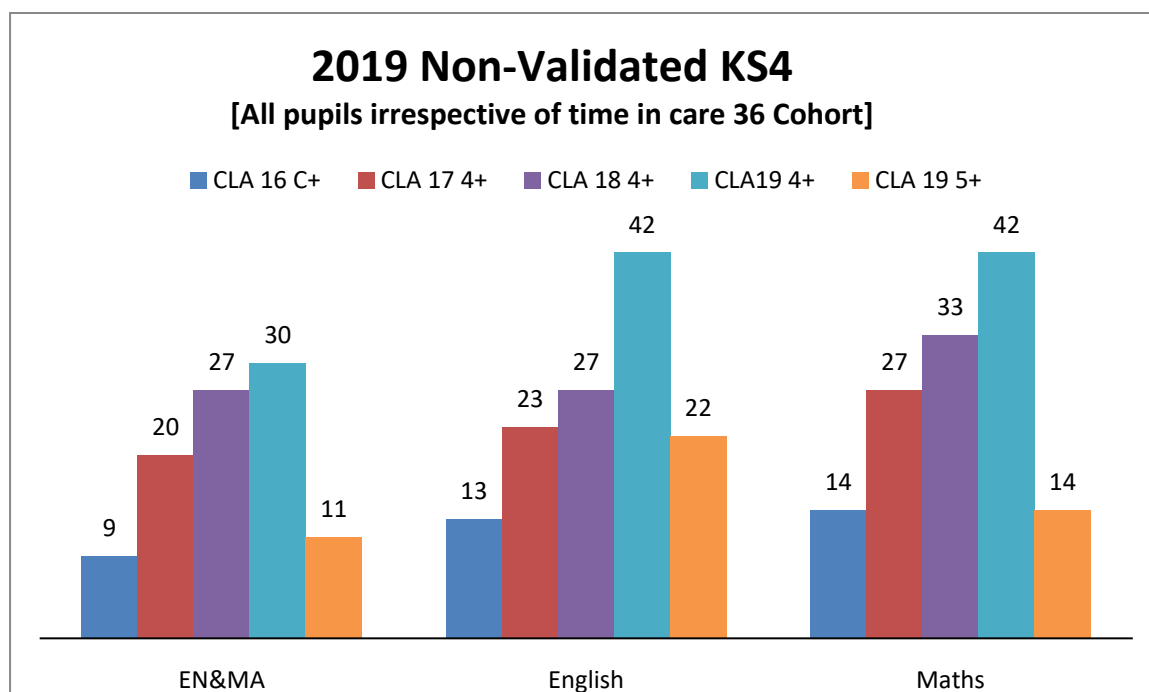
Key Headline Data [Cohort of 36]:

- There were a total of 36 pupils in the year 11 cohort and 29 pupils [80%] were eligible to take GCSEs in English and maths. This has been the highest proportion of the cohort eligible to take GCSEs over a five year period.
- 11 pupils [30%] achieved English and maths combined for the equivalent of grade C [point 4] or above
- 15 pupils [42%] achieved English at grade 4 or above
- In Maths, 15 pupils [42%] achieved the expected standard or above.

More pupils have achieved Grade 4+ than in the previous 3 years indicating an upward trend.

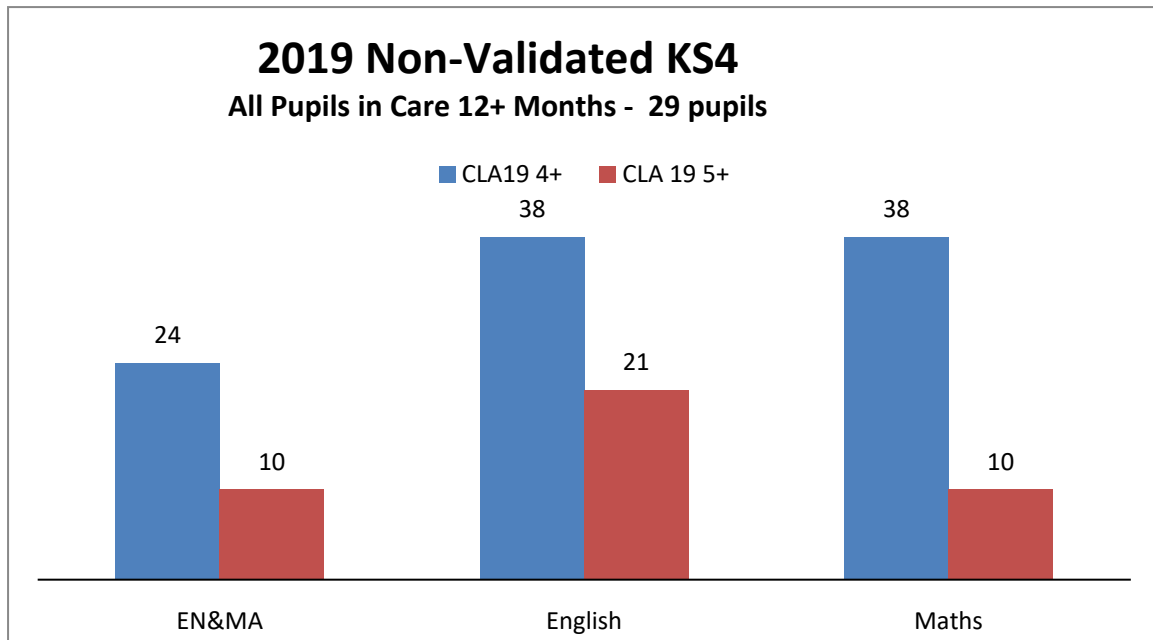
Grade 4+ has made good improvements. More improvement is needed for pupils to achieve grade 5+ as this has remained the same in English but slightly declined in maths and combined from the 2018 validated data.

### **GRADE 4 + and 5+ - all children in year 11 – 36 in total in cohort**



### **Indicative Attainment for All Pupils in Care 12+ months**

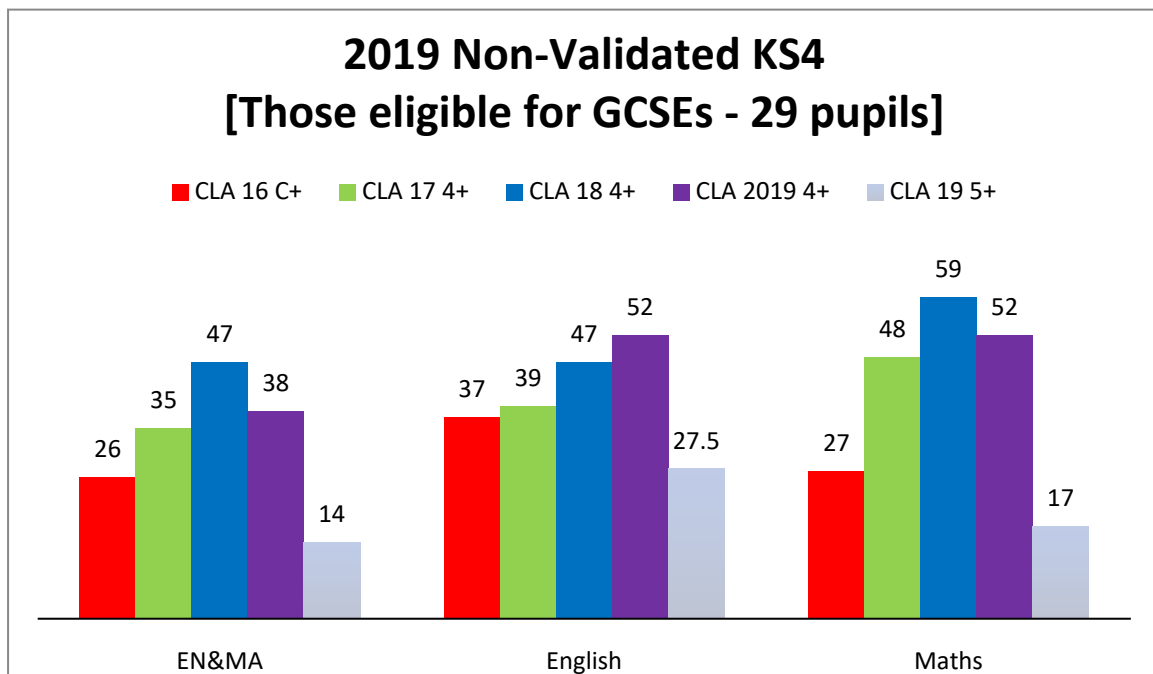
In total there were 29 pupils who had been looked after for 12+ months. Not all took GCSEs. The data below reflects the attainment of the whole cohort of pupils in care 12+ months.



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

In the year 2018/2019 there were 29 pupils eligible for GCSE exams. This was 12 more pupils eligible to take GCSEs than the previous year. This meant that 80% of the cohort were working within the standards for GCSEs.

The following table depicts the indicative attainment for these 29 pupils

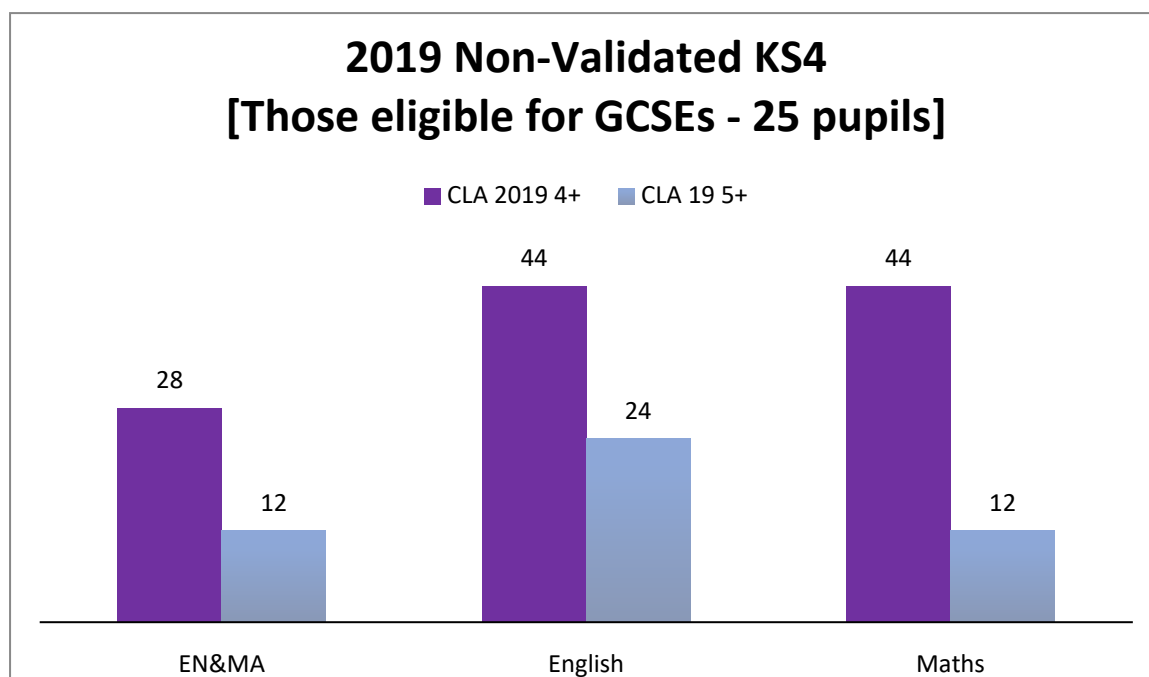


Improvements have been made for attaining grade 4 and 5 in English. An area for development would be maths. However, this will be in line with the national picture due to the changes in the maths exam this academic year.

There is no current national data available for comparison in this report.



### Cohort of children in care 12+ months eligible to take GCSE – 25 pupils



#### **Additional Information for Key Stage 4 Cohort**

There are specific reasons as to why not all of the 36 pupils were able to sit GCSE qualifications. It is important that this report includes these young people and accounts for their educational outcomes

20 pupils [55%] of our year 11 pupils looked after by the local authority attended a provision that was out of borough. This is a reduction from the previous year of 7%.

There were 8 [22%] students attending specialist provision. Specialist provision includes alternative provision, residential specialist schools, and SEND schools. These placements matched the needs of the pupils at that time, based upon their social care and educational needs. Where possible these students sat formal qualifications which included GCSE, BTEC, functional skills or Entry Level exams. However, due to the nature of their needs, not all were able to sit either English or maths GCSE combined. It is important to note that these students obtained positive outcomes for them based upon their needs and their academic level or educational ability at the time.

A total of 7 students [20%] did not sit formal GCSE qualifications. This is a reduction compared to the previous 2 years of data.

3 pupils did not sit any formal qualifications. 2 of these pupils have high SEND needs and it was not appropriate for them to take exams. 1 other pupil attended a PRU and was a school refuser. This pupil became CLA in March 2019 and despite numerous interventions, was a school refuser. This pupil has now returned home. 2 pupils took entry level qualifications.

Additionally 13 pupils [39%] of the cohort had SEND needs with 7 pupils [20%] with EHCPs. These students did not achieve above grade 4 in their exams if they were eligible for GCSE. Those students who have SEND Support took qualifications matched to their individual needs with some able to sit GCSEs. Despite not reaching grade 4 or above, they did meet their target grades to enable them to enrol at colleges for post 16 courses.

At the beginning of the academic year only 8.3% of the now Year 12 cohort are NEET at the beginning of the term.

### **Planned interventions as a result of 2019 data**

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

We are continuing to:

- Attend Year 10 and Year 11 PEP meetings
- Ensure that schools provide robust Pupil Premium Plus information
- Link the quality of the PEP with release of Pupil Premium Plus funding
- Provide additional home tuition from the summer term of Year 10 Summer 2019 and for current year 10, summer 2020
- Triangulate data predictions with further evidence such as work sampling
- Access exam stress counselling where necessary
- Provide support for Post 16 pathways
- Targeting tuition for particular students who are on the cusp of 4/5/C grades which will be additional to that received by the Pupil Premium Plus in school
- Complete home visits for particularly vulnerable students
- Provide intensive pastoral support alongside their school for high priority cases for those at risk of poor performance due to social and emotional difficulties.
- Provide Year 11 with revision stationary packs for the start of the autumn term

In addition we are:

- Providing termly Designated Teacher Forums, social worker forums and termly foster carer forums to promote the educational outcomes of pupils by communicating key messages and training and to provide information advice and guidance for individual cases
- Supporting social care to minimise the change of school or college when there are placement changes

### **Key Stage 5 2018**

Our pupils in years 12 and 13 continue to be supported by the Virtual School Post 16 Education Adviser. There have been some real successes this year in Key Stage 5,

with 5 pupils starting university for the academic year 2019 and 1 pupil deferring for the following year. Pupils have achieved a range of A-Levels and Level 3 equivalent qualifications. 16% of our cohort acquired Level 3 equivalent qualifications. Other pupils have achieved Level 2 qualifications and their equivalent. The aftercare team continues to support our pupils and the Virtual School assists where required.

## 12. Summary of Analysis for all Key Stages

### Key Headlines of Actions from All Data Collections

What are we doing as a result of this year's performance?

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

## 13. Case Studies and Positive feedback

**Case studies provide some insight into the individual work that is complete by members of the Virtual School to improve outcomes for children and young people.**

### Case Study- Yr7/8

#### Overview/ Summary

J became CLA in 2017. J has been placed with the same carers since coming into care and is settled in placement.

#### School experience

He repeated year 6 in primary due to his specific learning needs and the amount of schooling he had missed before becoming CLA. Chronologically he is now year 9 but is attending as year 8. He has an EHCP to support his additional needs. J was consistently working below ARE but making steady progress. There were concerns about social skills and some behaviour issues. He has attended secondary school since the start of year 7.

At the end of the second term of year 7 school staff were raising concerns about disruptive behaviour in certain classes. There were a number of meetings related to

the EHCP, support in place and what additional support could be given. The EHCP was updated to reflect the current situation and the VS commissioned an Education Psychologist [EP] visit to assess J's current needs as he had not been seen since being in primary school.

Virtual School were requested to support school directly and it was agreed to make weekly visits to do work with J around his social skills, friendships, general relationships and managing his trauma and attachment issues in school. This was done in conjunction with school, VS, carers, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and Designated Teacher.

VS met with J initially to talk about the purpose of the visits and to see if he was happy for this to go ahead. He was and has been thoroughly engaged throughout the term.

Work mainly consisted of getting to know how he felt about school, friends, staff etc. We worked on memory and recall skills as this was raised by the EP following her visit. We did some informal social story work, looked at managing behaviour skills and generally discussed how things had gone in the week between visits.

In the months that the work was taking place school were reporting that J had improved his behaviour and there were fewer incidents of being taken out of class and seen by Head Teacher. He appears more settled in class, he is now making better friendships and is working well.

Following on from the EP report another meeting will be held to ensure the school is meeting the recommendations made within the report.

Staff are reporting that J is improving within lessons and is able to stay in lessons more and do his work especially in lessons which had previously been a challenge for him.

#### Social Care Views

Social care are pleased that J is getting consistent support and that the situation is improving for him at school. They are satisfied that his needs are being better supported following several meetings to look at provision within school.

#### Foster Carer Views

Foster carer feels that J is more settled. She reported directly to VS that J has commented at home that he looks forward to the visits in school and she feels he has made a strong connection during this time.

#### Child Views

J had some good relationships with certain members of staff. He tended to struggle with some staff and found their different teaching styles difficult.

He responds really well to being given responsibility and likes to feel helpful.

He is now engaging more in lessons, he is still experiencing some issues but the incidents of disruption are fewer. VS will continue to support with visits into the coming school year and it is expected that the visits will gradually decrease as J is more able to manage his own needs and emotions within the setting.

### Case Study- Y5

#### Overview/ Summary

X is currently living in a 52 week residential, therapeutic placement in Kent. X has been known to Thurrock LA since 2015 (although previously removed in 2011 short term). X has two other siblings, X is the middle of the three. Concerns further escalated and in Jan 2017. Interim Care Orders were granted. X moved into the therapeutic placement based in Kent in July 2017.

#### School experience

X attended a mainstream primary school prior to moving to Kent. She then attended a school based provision within the setting which had a very bespoke and individualised curriculum. X was able to learn in an environment which was supportive and nurturing. The home also set up rigorous support for assessing attainment, emotional behaviour and development. The home, social care and Virtual School [VS] supported the move to apply for an Education Health Care Plan [EHCP] in order to support X going back into a mainstream school. VS co-ordinated the application and evidence and submitted the application to Thurrock SEN. The residential provision sourced schools in the area and made an application. X started at the new school in Feb 2019 and was granted an EHCP in March- April 2019.

To date X is excelling in the mainstream setting and has expressed an interest in sitting the 11+, which VS and social care have also supported.

#### VS Support/ Views

As well as the above support, VS have supported at LAC Reviews, PEPs and all information gathering meetings for the EHCP application. VS also led the outcomes meeting to further gather the information needed for the EHCP.

X is a lot more settled than when she first started at the home and has come a really long way. X was really excited about starting at a new school and it is what she wants.

VS have supported the EHCP from the start and will continue to support as X moves through the school education system.

#### Social Care Views

As a corporate parent support for X is high at the setting both educationally and residentially. The home is structured and X is supported well. X has received a high level of support and the plan to move her to a school has always been an outcome. Social care have supported the EHCP application in order to contribute to the process and ensure social care needs are highlighted. X's significant harm and trauma from early childhood has and does impact on her social and emotional needs significantly. Social care have supported X's step into school and want her to develop her skills in all areas so that she achieves everything she can academically and emotionally.

### Foster Carer Views

X is in residential, therapeutic care. She seems happy there and contributes to all the routines that the care home brings. She does activities like dance at the weekends. She has just started at a mainstream school and so far (as this is very recent), it seems to be going well. X is extremely happy to be in school as this is what she wanted.

X enjoys reading and becomes immersed in books. She remembers facts and dates and discussions with X are interesting. She speaks very well and is able to converse confidently and frankly with adults.

### Child Views

X has had a very smooth transition into mainstream school. She has now been at the school for 4 weeks (three of which were parts of the day). This is what X wanted and she is extremely happy. She has made some friends and is working well. School are very supportive and understanding. X is very diligent with her work and strives to do her best. Academically X is where she needs to be, school are keen to extend her levels exceeding where she needs to be. X does rise to a challenge and will want to do her best and be the top at everything. X is beginning to recognise when she is feeling a certain way. She is able to talk about her differences and difficulties when she is calm and regulated.

## **Examples of Positive Feedback**

### **Direct Comments in an email from a foster carer.**

Thought you might like an update on ..... I know he is now 18 and no longer "looked after" but I wanted you to know I've been informed he has passed his functioning skills level 2 maths and English (written and speaking). We are so proud of how far he has come, I'm confident the pass was aided by the additional tuition VS put in place, his tutor was brilliant. He has also passed the level 2 carpentry course. These grades mean he has secured the place on his motor mechanic course. We are so proud of him and he is a much loved member of our family. Thanks for all your support over the years.



### **Direct Comments in an email from a Headteacher regarding support for a Previously Looked After Child.**

I just wanted to thank you for the support that you have offered me with regards to .... I was really impressed with how helpful the VSHT was when I initially rang through to the Thurrock Virtual School Team. She was so warm and willing to go out of her way to offer some support. She then contacted you almost immediately and your response was quick too - a really impressive response, one which is sadly not often seen! It was then a pleasure to meet with you earlier this week to discuss the EHCP application for..... You are obviously very knowledgeable about the process and about how to gather the evidence needed. I really felt that you were working alongside me and would continue to support us with the application until we were successful in accessing additional support and funding for .... I really appreciate it. Thank you for then sending through the paperwork that we'd discussed which will strengthen our application. Please pass this email on to Keeley with my thanks.

#### **14. School Improvement Priorities**

These are detailed in the Virtual School Improvement Plan which is updated at the start of every academic year. Priorities are identified and actions are detailed related to SMART targets which form the basis of the Virtual School's work across the academic year. The aim of this document is to promote the raising of educational outcomes for all of our Children Looked After. This is reviewed every half term and reports to the Governing Body detail progress towards each priority. These can be found in additional documents which are produced termly for the Governing Body.

#### **Key Priorities for 2018/2019 were**

To improve achievement of all pupils by:

**[KP 1] Improving the attainment and progress of Children Looked After (CLA) to be in line with or above the national average outcomes for CLA for all Key Stages**

*Please refer to attainment and progress of year groups in sections above.*

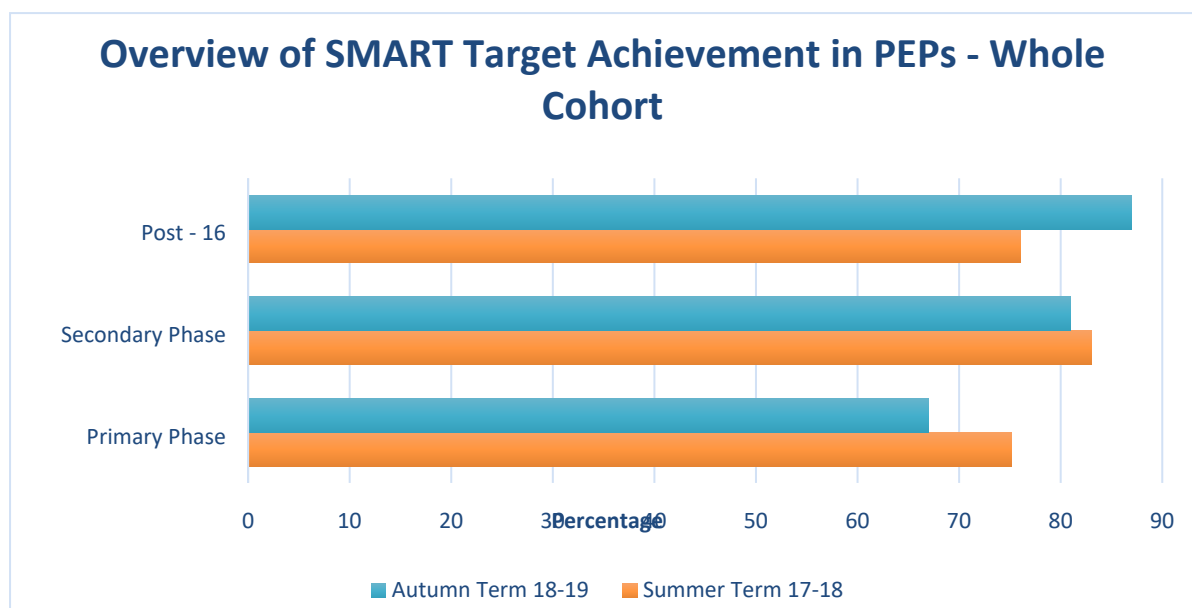
**[KP 2] Improving the attendance of CLA to maximise educational outcomes**

*Attendance rates have improved this academic year compared to the previous year. Unauthorised absence has reduced. Please see data in above sections.*

**[KP 3] Improving the progress of CLA pupils in each cohort as evidenced through quantitative data and soft outcomes**

*The team have worked extensively on this target to evidence data which focuses on the production of measurable outcomes. An example of this tracking can be seen below. The attainment of individual goals can then be*

**compared for each child and each year group. The impact of this is that interventions can be matched to meet need and accelerate progress.**



#### **Impact:**

- Provisions are assessing needs and interventions are matching these needs
- Targets are supporting achievement of children and young people
- Poor progress can be challenged
- Effective deployment of the pupil premium is in place

#### **What Next?**

- Continue to embed this process and use this for data analysis across the year. Smaller measurable steps should enable better progress longer term
- Challenge pupil progress during school based visits
- Continue to support schools and colleges with the development of highly effective targets.

#### **[KP 4] Raising the profile of mental health and interventions to support the outcomes of CLA**

During the academic year the team have successfully embedded the Strengths Difficulties Questionnaire [SDQ] process into every child/young person's Personal Education Plan [PEP]. It is now an expectation that the teacher completes the SDQ section every term in line with our PEP review process. The SDQ is a system used whereby certain questions are answered by professional and the young person. A score is created which is intended to highlight those children/young people at risk of developing social, emotional or mental health difficulties. A score above 17 should provide professionals with the indication that intervention is needed from the appropriate service. There is an SDQ Policy which is in place and being used by the Virtual School. This is shared with schools, colleges and social workers.



There is now a greater focus on discussing mental health and emotional well-being during the PEP process and this leading to swifter action in terms of sourcing the appropriate support for children and young people.

Virtual School staff have attended the Mental Health First Aid training so that they are able to provide information, advice and guidance to schools and identify support pathways for the children.

The Trauma and Attachment course delivered by the VS team, covered key aspects of mental health and how this impacts on behaviour. Phase leaders are tracking SDQ scores for pupils in their phase and comparing scores across the year. This will enable triangulation of scores alongside that of social care and this can be addressed at SDQ panel which is held every fortnight.

Examples of impact can be seen below with specific pupils: **details have been anonymised**

Name	School Year	SDQ score	Comments/ Discussion	Impact/ Outcomes
XY	4	22 (AUTUMN term score)- Spring Term 19 – score decreased by 3 points.	School identified pupil as a huge concern as part of PEP meeting. Detailed discussion about behaviours at anxiety at home and at school. XY is at risk of being permanently excluded. Discussions about support in place at school- SEN funding to support an adult in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ EP went into school to assess XY.</li> <li>➤ ABC Behaviour (from Havering) coming into work with child.</li> <li>➤ 1:1 targeted and intensive support (Zones of Regulation).</li> <li>➤ School applied for interim funding to pay for an adult to support pupil during the day.</li> <li>➤ Access to the schools Nurture Provision.</li> <li>➤ Social care to refer to Pediatrician and re-refer to EMWHS (as last referral unsuccessful).</li> <li>➤ School collecting evidence to support a future EHCP application.</li> </ul>
1234	Y1	16 in autumn – score reduced to 13 following term assessment	Very traumatic early life, has been settled in school now for over a year and with FC for the last 6 mths. Came into school well below average but is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Adult in place to support pupil in the mornings.</li> <li>➤ Discussions about reducing or changing contact at PEP.</li> </ul>

			<p>closing the gap. Behaviours tend to be seen after contact. Discussion about how best to support child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Play Therapy to begin as a way to support.</li> <li>➤ Intensive SALT has been commissioned.</li> <li>➤ Specialist school place had been sought however, school would like to meet needs in school with specialist help coming in rather than child attending a special school.</li> <li>➤ Inclusive practice.</li> <li>➤ EHCP obtained</li> </ul>
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**Impact:**

- Provisions are assessing needs and interventions are matching these needs

**What Next?**

- **Continue to work with social care and health for triangulation of scores and setting of interventions based on need.**

**[KP 5] Provision of duties relating to Previously Looked After Children [PLAC]**

The Virtual School have developed a system of supporting Previously Looked After Children [PLAC] within the everyday work of the team. The team have been tracking the level of demand and input required.

A PLAC policy has been written which is a signpost for those who may need clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

Designated teachers have been provided with advice and training to support their role for PLAC.

**Impact**

- Greater awareness of roles and duties has been shared to enable better support.
- Successful application for EHCP for PLAC
- PLAC pupil has remained in school when previously at risk of permanent exclusion
- Parents have been empowered to seek advice regarding their child

**What Next?**

- Need to develop ways of sharing information to a broader audience
- VS team need to attend specific PLAC training e.g. with adoption agencies or BAAF
- Development of a PLAC plan on a page
- Commission an independent consultant to assist the team in supporting PLAC.

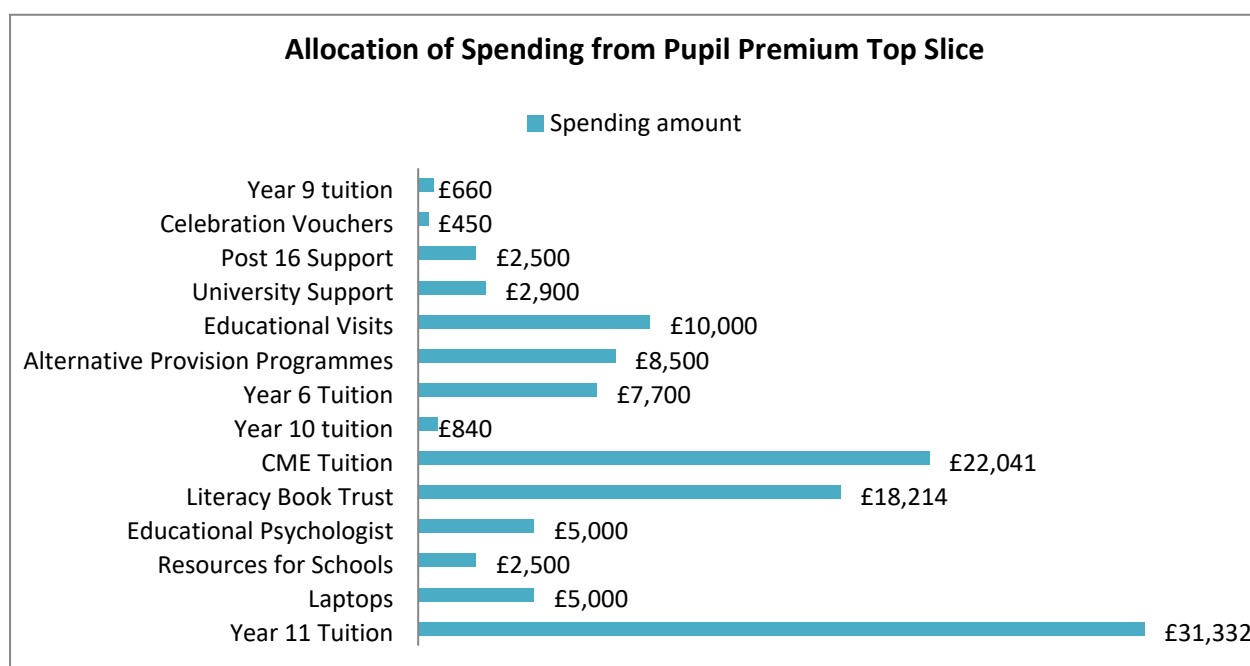
## 16. Allocation and Impact of the Pupil Premium

The management of the Pupil Premium Plus grant for Children Looked After is detailed in the DFE guidance Pupil premium grant 2014 to 2015: conditions of grant and Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities.

The Pupil Premium Plus Policy details the ideology and method behind the allocation of this funding.

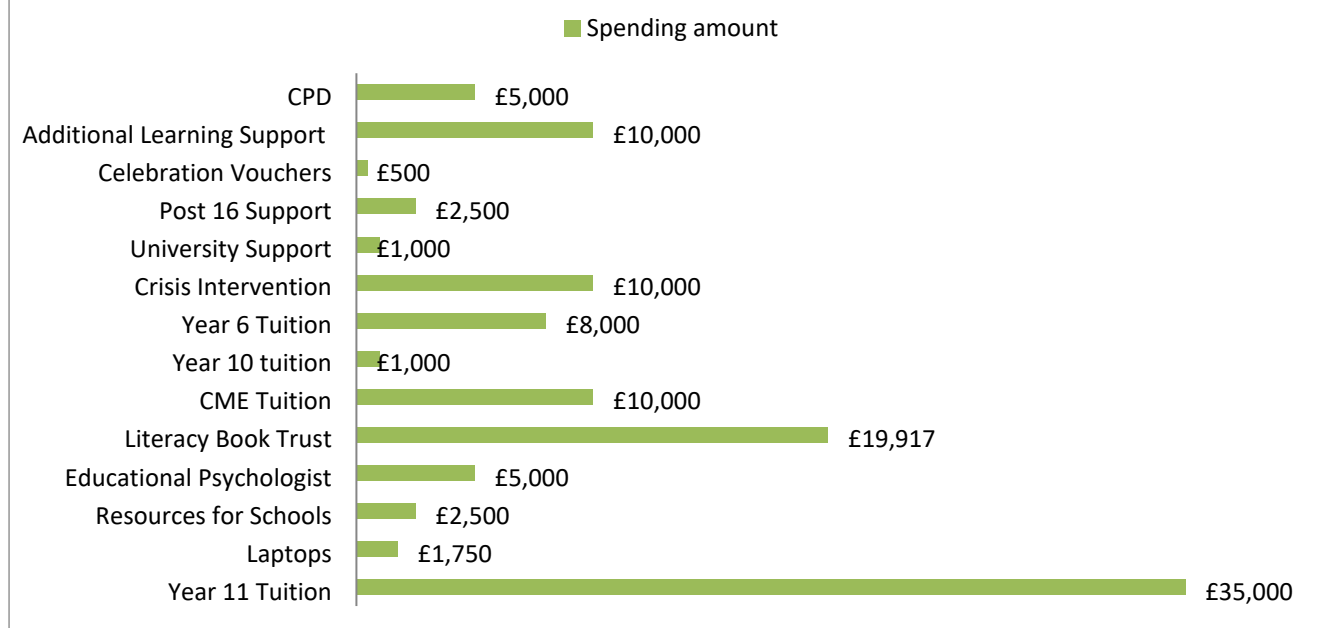
Settings receive £1,800 which is released in three equal installments of £600 every term. The Virtual School Headteacher tracks spending on a termly basis in line with the quality assurance process of PEPS. This tracking centres on how this money is raising the achievement of the child/young person and assesses if funds are being used appropriately. This process, alongside the PEP process is supporting the pupil to have targeted support and intervention which directly affects and plans for his/her academic and overall school achievement with a personalised approach. It is enabling the Virtual School to be updated on progress data and enables discussion with the school to centre on appropriate intervention. This system promotes accountability and improved dialogue in how to raise attainment and achievement and narrow the gap. [Separate Pupil Premium documentation is available on request]. In March 2019 the Virtual School Head Teacher presented a detailed Corporate Parenting report which showed the individual spending for each year group. It also shared the detailed spending of the pupils premium plus top slice and provided a strategy for the spending 2019/2020.

The Virtual School top sliced £500 per pupil for the academic year and used this to provide centralised resources to support the most vulnerable in the cohort.



A detailed report is available as part of the Corporate Parenting documentation from the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019. This report will be repeated next year. There is a separate Pupil Premium Plus Strategy Document 2019/2020 which is available upon request. The forecast for top slice spending for financial year 2019/2020 based upon a funding allocation of 262 pupils is: £131,000. This figure may change when the annual census is completed and the DFE provides the final funding in December 2019.

#### Planned Allocation of Spending from Pupil Premium Top Slice 2019/2020

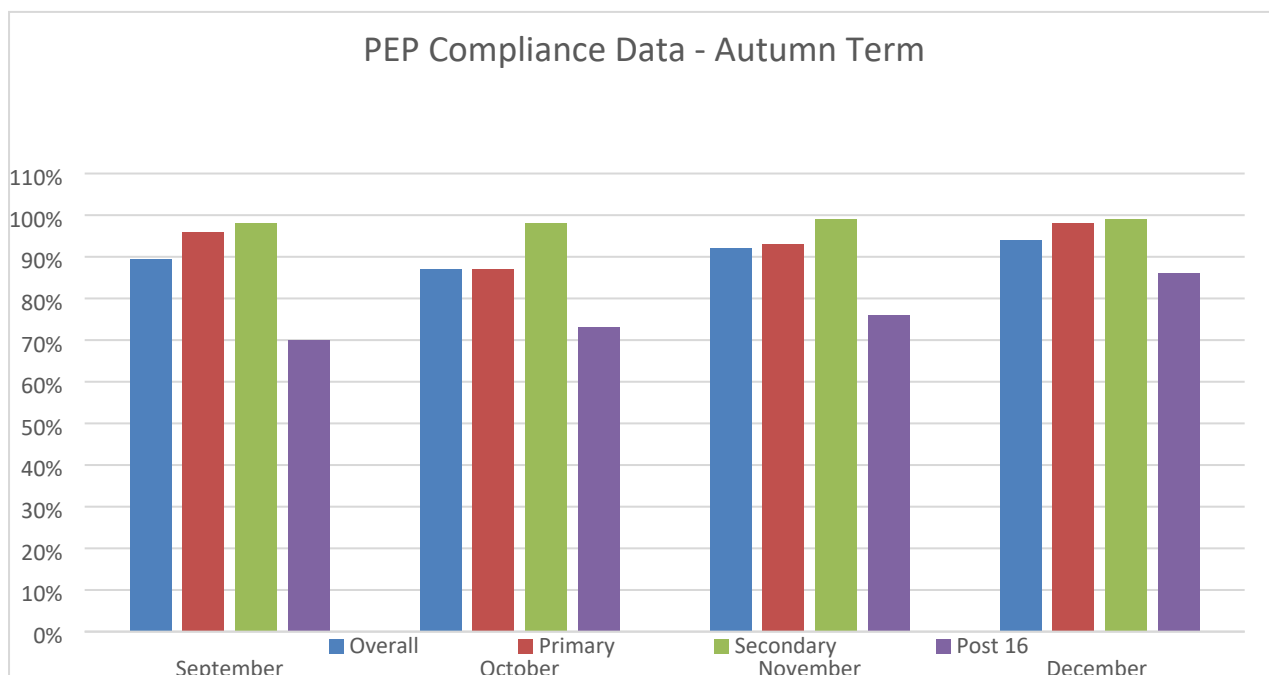


#### 17. Quality Assurance of Personal Education Plans

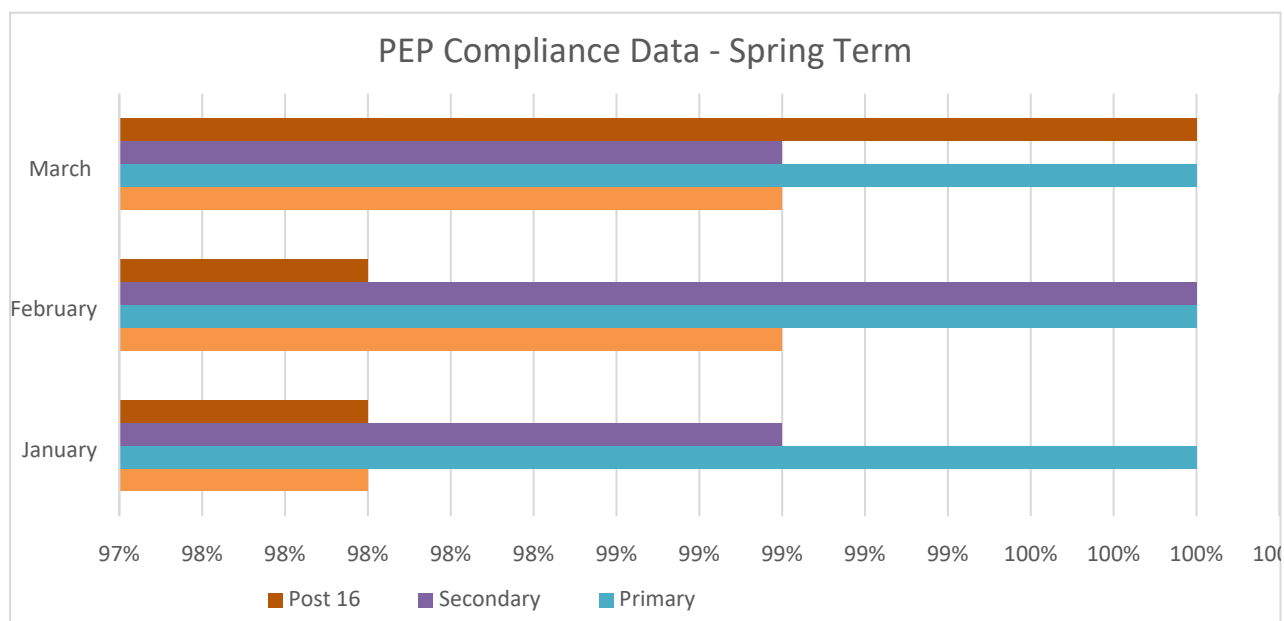
The Personal Education Plan [PEP] is a key document to support the child's/young person's education. Where possible the Virtual School attends specific PEP meetings and particular emphasis has been made on key year groups for the academic year 2018/19 and those who are new into care. This is further detailed in the Roles and Functions of the Virtual School document. It is also important that the Virtual School attends PEP meetings for particularly vulnerable students or when a potential issue has been identified. For example, concern with progress. The Virtual School team is responsible for Quality Assuring [QA] every PEP. We have introduced a specific protocol around PEP quality assurance and this has been shared with those who have joint responsibility for the PEP. PEP compliance rates have improved and now are consistently operating at 95% and above compliance for every child aged 3 to 18 years. A range of documents have been produced to aid the completion of high quality paperwork and the robust procedures have enabled to quality of PEP to improve.

### PEP Compliance Data – Autumn Term

Month	Overall	Early Years - N1/2	Primary	Secondary	Post 16
Sep-18	89.40%		96%	98%	70%
Oct-18	87%		87%	98%	73%
Nov-18	92%		93%	99%	76%
Dec-18	94%	0%	98%	99%	86%

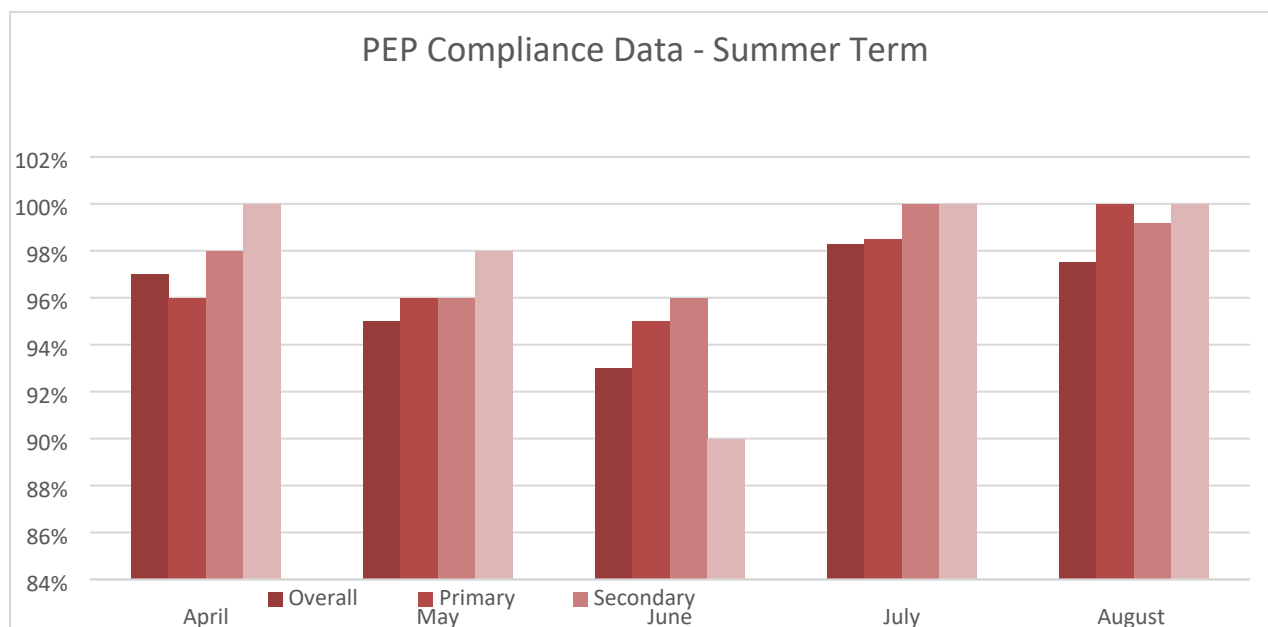


### PEP Compliance Data – Spring Term



Month	Overall	Early Years - N1/2	Primary	Secondary	Post 16
January 2019	98%	67%	100%	99%	98%
February 2019	99%	89%	100%	100%	98%
March 2019	99%	67%	100%	99%	100%

### PEP Compliance Data – Summer Term



Month	Overall	Early Years - N1/2	Primary	Secondary	Post 16
April 2019	97%	67%	97%	98%	100%
May 2019	95%	0%	96%	96%	98%
June 2019	98%	57%	98.50%	100%	100%
July 2019	98%	57%	98.50%	100%	100%
August 2019	97.50%	57%	100%	99.20%	100%

### PEP Quality

Time of Year	% Overall Good Quality	% AMBER	% RED	% NOT YET RAGGED
February 2019	86%	9%	3%	2.5%
May 2019	81%	9%	9%	1%
August 2019	74.10%	10.80%	12.90%	2%

At the end of August 2019, there were 31 children/young people who had a poorly graded PEP. The reason for this is due to not meeting the criteria standards that are in our Quality Assurance Guidelines. A PEP is rated as red if there are no minutes or if the PEP lacks the child's views. This is an issue which needs to be addressed in the forthcoming academic year.

What Next?

- Quality of PEPs remains a focal point for improvement. In the forthcoming year the VS will continue to provide PEP training and support to social workers, schools and colleges.
- PEP Surgery meetings will continue and social care managers will hold their teams to account for the social worker responsibilities of the PEP.

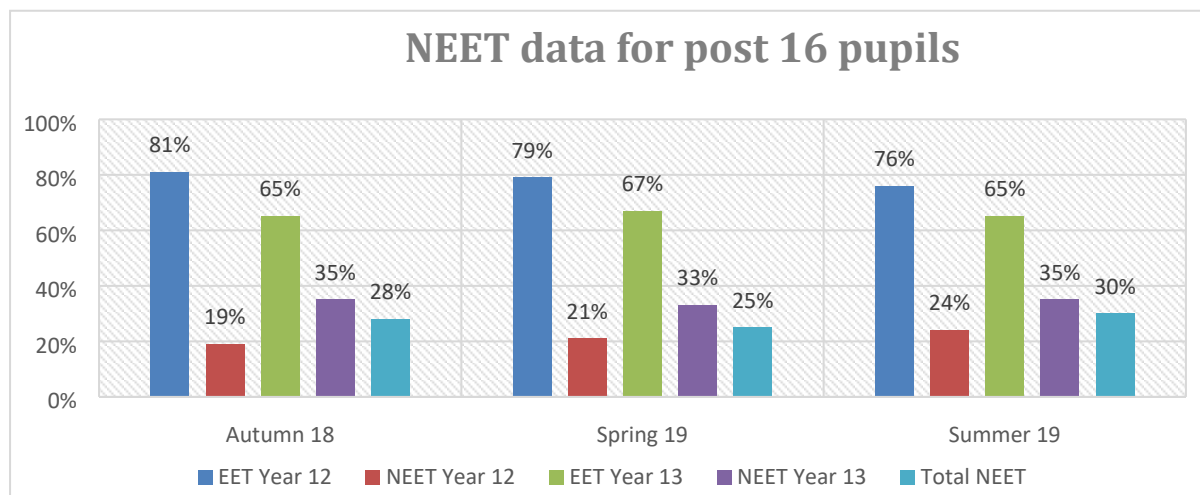
## 18. **Post 16 Update**

The Virtual School supports pupils who have left Year 11 and are moving onto the next stage of their education. Pupils take a variety of paths either through level 1, 2 or 3, FE or HE qualifications. Others combine apprenticeships with obtaining qualifications. Every pupil is supported appropriately to create the next step that is suitable for them. Conversations regarding post 16 pathways are discussed in Year 10. Transition is discussed before the student leaves Year 11 and students are supported with applying for college positions and courses. After the students receive their qualifications they are further supported to apply for places again if they were unsuccessful with their original choice and all can access support from the Virtual School 16+ Education Adviser if necessary with activities such as applying for a bursary, receiving additional tuition, interventions and attendance at disruption meeting with colleges and employers. Further Education Personal Education Plans are put in place for every student, even those without an educational placement. The Virtual School works closely with the aftercare team to support pupils in Year 13 and beyond. In the Year 2018/19, 12 pupils are currently in university with a further 5 starting in 2019/2020.

## 19. **Not in Education Employment or Training [NEET]**

The Virtual School closely monitors any post 16 young person who has CLA status and who is NEET. They are monitored fortnightly and the Post 16+ Education Adviser works with the young person, social care, personal advisors and local colleges and businesses to create the best possible opportunity for the young person to be placed in education, employment or training. Thurrock Council's aim is to have no NEET Looked after Children. NEET data is provided to the Virtual School Governing Body every term as part of the Headteacher's report. The NEET and EET figures supplied in the graph below are specifically only for the children in the Virtual

School cohort and would therefore see high in comparison with the national figures. In the summer term, data for those who are NEET but taking part in engagement activities, as defined by the DFE, have been included.



### What Next?

- For the forthcoming academic year, the Post 16 Educational Adviser will be individually case working with the NEET young people to actively reduce the amount of NEETs there are. This will be coordinated with the Inspire Youth Hub services as a resource.

### 20. Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

This year has seen a decreased demand for the Virtual School team to support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children [UASC]. The Eastern Region sharing protocol arrangements have enabled young people to be transferred to boroughs with fewer numbers than Thurrock. The number of UASC coming into Thurrock has not reduced, however, they now move to other boroughs. Our existing UASC pupils continue to do so well in their colleges and schools and those who have been with us for over 12 months are making good progress with their English. The impact of this has been substantial as it enabled UASC to access education and ultimately progress onto more academic Level 1 and 2 courses. One of our UASC students has just achieved A\*, A, A in his A 'levels.

### 20. Virtual School Governing Body

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



The members of this GB 2018/19 were:

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

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

Headteacher: K Pullen [Virtual School]

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

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

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

Out of Borough School Representative: D McKeown [HT The Deanes School]

Post 16 Education Representative: K Kozlova-Boran – Service Manager Learning and Careers

Social Care Representative: L Froment – Service Manager Children Looked After Services

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

The purpose of the Governing Body is to hold the VSHT to account and to ensure that clear and regular lines of reporting are in place. The VSHT prepares a range of documentation for the GB to approve and to question the strategy and decisions made by the VSHT. For example: attendance policy, PEP protocol, Pupil Premium Plus Policy, safeguarding policy, Quality Assurance of Provision process.

In addition the VSHT reports to the Corporate Parenting Committee on a regular basis.

21. **Additional Strategies to support the educational progress of Thurrock Children in Care**

**Working in Partnership with other Teams in Thurrock Council and out of borough councils**

The Virtual School works with a range of teams within Thurrock to enable the best possible outcomes for our CLA. These include School Improvement and Inclusion, Social Care, Special Educational Needs including Educational Psychologists, Fostering, Health, Admissions and Education Welfare. This cohesive approach works together around the child/young person to create a supportive, knowledgeable level of service aimed at serving the best interest of the CLA.

The Virtual School also works with the relevant teams in other boroughs for our CLA who are placed out of borough.

## **Foster Carer Forums**

These provide opportunities to share good practice, provide key messages and obtain valuable feedback and insight into the factors affecting the CLA. The VSHT has been meeting at Foster Carer support groups to provide key information about Pupil Premium Plus and Electronic Personal Education Plans. Foster carer forum meetings started in Spring Term 16 and will continue to happen once per term. These covered a range of topics including using EPEP. In addition the VSHT attends new foster carer forums and provides induction training.

Additionally this year, as part of action research, the VSHT conducted a series of intensive training sessions for a group of volunteer foster carers. This provided 16 hours of training on educational matters. This course of action is planned for the forthcoming academic year and the VSHT has written a Corporate Parenting report to be presented in September 2019 detailing the impact of this training approach.

## **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.

This year the VS team provided a day of free training to all designated teachers on trauma and attachment. Each participant received a resource bank of books providing them with strategies to support trauma and attachment within their schools. This action is planned again for the forthcoming academic year and a large conference is planned inviting professional guest speakers.

## **General Support for Foster Carers and Designated Teachers**

The Virtual School provides a range of telephone and face to face advice and support and prides itself on being able to deliver a good level of service. Our approachable manner enables us to have good relationships with these key professionals to enable us to work together for the best outcomes of our pupils.

## **Social Worker Training and Support**

The Virtual School adopts a flexible and responsive approach to the support and training needs of our social workers. The Virtual School Head attends briefings and team meetings with social care to disseminate good practice.

## **Liaison with Schools**

This is a vital part in supporting the CLA as the Virtual School works closely with in and out of borough schools to ensure that pupils are supported within their educational placement. We offer support and advice on a range of areas such as behaviour, raising attainment and narrowing the gap. The Virtual School provides

challenge and makes schools accountable to their statutory duties to ensure that pupils are treated and supported appropriately to meet their varying needs. Part of this also includes providing training to school governors.

### **Book Trust Letterbox**

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

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

### **Advice and Guidance for previously looked after children**

The Virtual School also provides advice and guidance for those pupils who were previously looked after. This would be particularly relevant for adopted children and their schools and families to ensure that their needs are appropriately supported. In line with the statutory guidance, the team have met with schools and parents to support the needs of their child/young person.

### **Attendance at PEP Meetings**

Wherever possible and if appropriate, the Virtual School attends PEP meetings to model good practice, raise accountability, monitor the pupils' education and provision and ensure that the PEP process is thorough in supporting the CLA's education. We endeavour to attend the first PEP for every new CLA pupil and attend PEP meetings for those pupils who may be experiencing difficulties in their learning.

### **Tuition Services**

Many schools use tuition as part of their pupil premium spend. There are occasions when additional tuition is needed. The Virtual School commissions the services of Fleet Tuition, Equal Education and Prospero. The One to One Tuition Programme for CLA was created to provide additional academic support for children who are not currently reaching their potential or may be missing school. Generally one-one tuition

is used to help pupils who face academic barriers in any subject and the Virtual School works closely with schools, foster carers, social workers and the pupil to ensure that the right tuition is matched to needs. It is not possible to provide one-one tuition for every pupil and so this resource is targeted to suit needs and support requirements.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

Thurrock Virtual School commissions the services of an external provider called Looked After Call to monitor the attendance of all of our Children Looked After in and out of borough attending schools and colleges. All pupils are monitored on a daily basis. If pupils are not attending school an alert is created to ascertain where the pupil is and why they are not at school. This promotes the safeguarding of our pupils and promotes good attendance. It also enables the Virtual School to monitor any exclusions, attendance or punctuality issues. The Virtual School has a clear Attendance Policy which provides a rationale behind why attendance is given high priority and this can be read in conjunction with this report.

### 22. **Professional Development of VS Staff**

As a Virtual School we take professional development very seriously as it enables us to reflect on our practice and improve our service. The VSHT has been working with the National Association of Virtual School Heads and Bath/Spa University to complete Post Graduate Certificate of Professional Practice linked to Care Experienced Children. This course has been extremely beneficial for developing knowledge and theory which has been put into practice within the service. The VS team have attended conferences or training about matters such as: County Lines, Gang Related Violence; Radicalisation, Trauma and Attachment, Special Educational Needs and the Children in Need review. Course attendance is closely monitored and evaluated as part of the Continuing Professional Development approach and Performance Management processes of Thurrock Council.

### 23. **Author of this report**

Keeley Pullen BA [Hons] PGCE NPQH

Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Thurrock Children Looked After

**Submission date for Governors** Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Submission date to Corporate Parenting Committee** Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020