

Decision Maker: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE

Date: 1 February 2023

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: BROMLEY VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22
‘A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH TO TEACHING VULNERABLE CHILDREN INCLUDING THOSE IN OUR CARE’

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Chief Officer: Richard Baldwin, Director of Children, Education and Families

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

- 1.1. To provide the Scrutiny Committee with a regular update on the performance of the Virtual School for children in care and children previously in care currently adopted or cared for under a Special Guardianship Order.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1. The Committee to note and comment on progress made towards the actions identified in the Corporate Parenting Strategy as laid out in the outcomes and evaluation section of this report.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. See Section 13.
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
 3. Budget head/performance centre: N/A
 4. Total current budget for this head: £ N/A
 5. Source of funding: N/A
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: No Executive Decision
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: N/A
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All Bromley children in care.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 See Bromley Virtual School Annual Report 2021/22 at **Appendix A**.

13. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

13.1 Summary of Impact: The academic year 2021/22 was successful in a year when we started to “go back to normal” from unusual times. Leadership and practice goes from strength to strength. We have taken on new duties and developed the current ones. We have recently successfully completed a rigorous audit with very positive feedback for the work we do. The impact on our young people has been positive in terms of improved progress, attendance, and fewer exclusions. Young people and the professionals and parents in our network value the work that we do.

13.2 School placements and placement planning is strong and joined up.

Through good placement planning, the Virtual School has been successful in ensuring a high proportion of children are in good and outstanding schools (95%), and that children who have to move schools do so at the right time and to the right school with the right support.

13.3 PEP compliance and Quality is very strong.

The Virtual School has been successful in maintaining high compliance rates for PEPs of over 90-95%, successful implementation of the new PEP in the social care system, introduction of a complex needs and post18 PEP. We have continued to improve quality through good quality assurance and management oversight. This was recognised in the recent audit in October 2022.

13.4 Use of Pupil Premium is very strong.

The Virtual School uses Pupil Premium effectively and creatively and administers it effectively with minimum administration. It has had a positive impact on young people’s outcomes and well-being.

13.5 Attendance and Behaviour at school is strong.

The Virtual School has been successful in improving absence figures and persistent absence figures and these figures compare favourably to benchmark data. We have improved practice around exclusions (suspensions) and we compare well to national benchmarks. *“The team, in conjunction with schools, has helped improve attendance and reduce exclusions” (Audit feedback 2022)*

13.6 Attainment and progress is strong.

31% of our young people in 2021 achieved English and Maths Level 4+ In 2022 provisional data shows our highest in 5 years and above National progress 8 data. 33% achieved L4 in Maths and English - lower than last year, but we think this is in line with National patterns and reflective of the cohort that sat exams this year. The last 5 years KS4 attainment has been above National for CLA. Although Key Stage 2 attainment data is lower than previous years and below benchmarks, the cohort is a small one with high need, and their progress does compare very favourably with benchmarks. At Key Stage

5 our tracking is good and the Bromley post 16 pilot has made a difference to a number of those young people completing their courses successfully.

13.7 The work on previously looked after children (PLAC) and children with a social worker (CWSW) is very strong.

Virtual school, in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and now the 2021 guidance has been very successful in structuring the roles in the team to ensure expertise and good overview of the journey of the child. Communication with partners has been excellent and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. We know from cross London groups and from our recent audit that we are well advanced with this work. We see from the number of successful interventions, and compliments from professionals and parents the difference we are making strategically and to individual children and families.

We continue to play a significant role in planning and delivering the Corporate Parenting Strategy through membership of the Corporate Parenting Board, the achievement and participation subgroup, as well as attending the health sub-group. The actions identified in the Corporate Parenting Strategy are at the core of our service improvement plan and all the actions and success criteria are addressed in the outcomes and evaluation sections of this report. Our audit found our mantra of “Would it be good enough for your child” to be true.

13.8 Our training offer is excellent, well planned and well thought out and is delivered by expert and engaging staff.

Training is integral to what we do. In 2021-22 we have delivered quality training to many groups of professionals locally, regionally, nationally and globally! Our audit report said: *Whole-school training on trauma-informed practice has been well received by schools in helping teachers respond in the classroom to the impact of trauma on children’s lives*

13.9 Management and Leadership is strong. Management oversight is good, we have good Quality

Assurance and a strong monitoring and evaluation cycle which involves the whole team in evaluating what we do and improving both systems process and improving practice. The staff team are strong, experienced, and committed to their work.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Policy Implications, Financial Implications, Personnel Implications, Legal Implications, Procurement Implications
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