

Decision Maker: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 20 March 2024

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

Title: BROMLEY VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT
2022/23: 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.
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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 4.
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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 2022/23 at **Appendix A**.

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

4.1 The academic year 2022/23 was a successful year, building on the previous 2 years developments under the new Virtual School Headteacher. Leadership and practice go from strength to strength. We have developed the new duties further and integrated them into our team, and wider across Children's Services and partners. At the time of completing this report we have just taken part in the OFSTED ILAC inspection in which our strengths have been firmly validated. The impact of our work on outcomes for our young people continues to be strong. Young people and the professionals and parents in our network value the work that we do.

4.2 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. 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 must move schools do so at the right time and to the right school with the right support.

4.3 PEP compliance and Quality is very strong.

The Virtual School has been successful in maintaining high compliance rates for PEPs of over 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 ILACS inspection.

4.4 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.

4.5 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 2023 ILACs inspection report read: "Attendance is good and improving"

4.6 Attainment and progress is strong.

The OFSTED ILAC inspection report (2024) states "Children in care in Bromley achieve well in school". 29% of year 11 students achieved English at Level 4 and 33% achieved level 4 in Maths. The combined scores are 21% as a number of our young people have specific learning needs such as dyspraxia and dyscalculia which affected their ability in the other subject. Attainment and Progress at Key Stage 4 are broadly average. At Key stage 1 and 2 pupils achieved significantly above the average, but progress was lower, although

caution should be taken with these very low cohort sizes. At Key Stage 5 we have improved our EET figures (those in Education, Employment and Training) in year 12 and 22% of young people achieved a Level 3 qualification, with 3 more young people continuing into year 14 on Level 3 courses. 8 young people went on to Higher Education, with 2 further taking a gap year.

4.7 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. In 2023-4 we appointed a further advisor on an interim basis but meet the demands of the new role, and this has since been made permanent which has meant that we have been able to engage with adoption and SGO teams well and move forward the DESTY and Virtual Reality Headsets programme. Communication with partners has been excellent and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. We know from two DFE visits – one to look at attendance and one to look at the work of the Virtual School that we are considered to be well advanced in this work. Outcomes for Children with a social worker compare positively with the National data and we have reduced permanent exclusions. 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.

4.8 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 2022-23 we further expanded our offer and we continue to deliver quality training to many groups of professionals locally, regionally, nationally. The “attachment and trauma informed schools” offer was launched at the end of the year and that has taken off well in 2023 – 2024. The ILAC inspection found that “the dynamic virtual school provides strong support to children and practitioners”

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

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. We continue to play a significant role in planning and delivering the Corporate Parenting Strategy through membership of the Corporate Parenting Board. The leadership of the achievement and participation subgroup by the Virtual Head has launched the co-production training programme for schools. We also contribute to Support and Stability Corporate Parenting Sub Group.

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