

# Virtual School

## Virtual School Headteacher Report Academic Year 2021/2022



Report prepared by Vivien Tetley and colleagues in the Leicester City Council Virtual School

### Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the educational outcomes and attainment of our Looked After Children during the academic year 2021/22. It considers their achievements and the support provided by the Virtual School Team to achieve the best learning outcomes for our Looked After Children.

### Context

The Virtual School contribute to increasing the educational performance of our looked after children in order to:

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress for children in care across all key stages;
- Improve school attendance and reduce suspensions and exclusion;
- Improve the quality of Personal Education Plans and;
- provide and support a range of opportunities to widen horizons and raise achievement.

*Our aspiration is that all our looked after children and young people;*

- attend a good or outstanding school and learn
- have a voice that positively impacts on the services they receive
- have accurate and timely assessments of their needs, as well as specialist support when it is needed to help them to make good progress in their learning and development, wherever they live
- where they do not attend school, they have access to 25 hours per week of good quality, registered provision appropriate to their level of ability and aspirations. They are encouraged and supported to attend the provision and there is regular review of their progress
- where they are missing from education, work with other professionals to take action to improve their attendance
- have social workers, residential staff, carers and schools who support them to enjoy what they do and to access a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities
- have access to a range of cultural opportunities
- have stability in care and education placements
- receive recognition for their achievements and have their successes celebrated
- engage with the Aim Higher Reach Further programme to encourage all to achieve their potential and for our most able to present them with opportunities to progress into higher education or another appropriate pathway
- for those who are leaving care, provide with appropriate support and guidance to ensure they can progress to further education, higher education, training or employment as appropriate to their aspirations.

### Summary of Key Priorities for 2021/2022

- To narrow the achievement gap between our looked after children and their peers
- o Improve proportion of looked after children achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- o Improve proportion of children achieving expected standards in all areas at KS1 and KS2
- o Continue to increase the number of year 11 students completing GCSE, with a focus on English and Maths
- o Improve outcomes at Key Stage 4
- o Improve outcomes and reduce drop-out for young people pursuing Level 3 courses in schools or Sixth Form Colleges
- o Improve attendance
- o Aim Higher Reach Further Programme to enthuse learners and accelerate their progress and raise aspirations
- Improve quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs and PEP meetings), including student voice
- Maintain high level of PEP compliance
- Support foster carers and Designated Teachers to better support our looked after children with their learning

### Notable Achievements in 2021/2022

- *There have been no permanent exclusions of Leicester CLA during 2021/22*
- *In Early Years, Leicester's CLA have significantly outperformed CLA nationally, with 8.3% achieving 'greater depth' in writing compared to 2% of CLA nationally and 8.3% achieving 'greater depth' in reading, writing and maths compared to 1% of CLA nationally*
- *Leicester's young people have been subject to fewer fixed term suspensions than CLA nationally, with an exclusion rate of 7.58% compared to 10% for CLA nationally*
- *According to FFT's national attendance tracker for 2021-22, our CLA at both Primary and Secondary school achieved higher attendance than all pupils nationally. Our primary cohort achieved an average attendance of 97% compared with 92.8% for all pupils nationally and our secondary cohort achieved average attendance of 93% compared with 89.7% for all pupils nationally. This is a terrific achievement!*

## Pupil Characteristics

Numbers of school age children and young people looked after has decreased slightly this year.

|       | Early Years | R  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | Post 16 | TOTAL |
|-------|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------|-------|
| 20/21 | 122         | 24 | 19 | 22 | 27 | 32 | 45 | 31 | 38 | 43 | 45 | 47 | 57 | 78      | 630   |
| 21/22 | 126         | 16 | 24 | 17 | 25 | 25 | 35 | 46 | 34 | 40 | 48 | 45 | 53 | 85      | 619   |

This shows us the spread of how many children and young people in each school year were looked after at some point during the school year. For some young people this is long term but there are others whose care journey is short. This demonstrates clearly the numbers are higher in secondary education and these are the young people whose care journeys are generally longer and more complex.

This information about the numbers of children and young people entering and leaving care during 2021/22 shows clearly that children up to the age of 5 are the group where care journeys are shorter.

| Age         | Into Care | Left Care |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| 0           | 37        | 0         |
| 1           | 15        | 11        |
| 2           | 9         | 19        |
| 3           | 6         | 10        |
| 4           | 7         | 9         |
| School Year | Into Care | Left Care |
| R           | 6         | 6         |
| Year 1      | 8         | 7         |
| Year 2      | 5         | 1         |
| Year 3      | 5         | 3         |
| Year 4      | 2         | 4         |
| Year 5      | 7         | 5         |
| Year 6      | 3         | 5         |
| Year 7      | 7         | 4         |
| Year 8      | 4         | 1         |
| Year 9      | 6         | 3         |
| Year 10     | 7         | 5         |
| Year 11     | 12        | 3         |

## Virtual School Headteacher Report 2020/2021

The table below shows an increase in the number of young people with Education, Health and Care Plans this year, but it is likely this is the result of more accurate recording in Local Authority systems, particularly for those young people placed out of the area.

| SEN CODE *      | Mar-17 | Jun-17 | Mar-18 | Jun-18 | Jul-19 | Jul-20 | Jul-21 | Jul-22     |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|
| N (no SEN)      | 48%    | 45%    | 51%    | 48%    | 51%    | 48%    | 46%    | 41%        |
| K (SEN Support) | 37%    | 38.50% | 35%    | 36%    | 34.53% | 35%    | 31%    | 34%        |
| E (EHCP)        | 15%    | 17%    | 13%    | 17%    | 14.00% | 17%    | 23%    | <b>25%</b> |

\*Information correct at 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022

### Number of children with SEN in each year group (Correct at 01/08/2022)

| SEN Status             | R        | 1         | 2        | 3         | 4         | 5         | 6         | 7         | 8         | 9         | 10        | 11        | TOTAL number | Total % of LCC | Total % CLA   |
|------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| CLA in Year Group      | 16       | 24        | 17       | 25        | 25        | 35        | 46        | 34        | 40        | 48        | 45        | 53        | 408          | 0.7%           |               |
| ALL LCC in Year Group  | 4446     | 4666      | 4751     | 4824      | 4863      | 4996      | 5012      | 4544      | 4446      | 4434      | 4358      | 4256      | 55596        |                |               |
| E All LCC              | 80       | 145       | 147      | 151       | 169       | 208       | 179       | 199       | 158       | 182       | 164       | 210       | 1992         | 3.50%          |               |
| K All LCC              | 423      | 514       | 576      | 677       | 703       | 677       | 755       | 590       | 616       | 538       | 444       | 416       | 6929         | 12.50%         |               |
| E (CLA)                | 1        | 6         | 0        | 4         | 2         | 13        | 13        | 5         | 7         | 13        | 18        | 19        | 101          |                | 24.70%        |
| K (CLA)                | 5        | 6         | 4        | 13        | 14        | 9         | 18        | 16        | 14        | 16        | 12        | 13        | 140          |                | 34.20%        |
| <b>TOTAL SEN (CLA)</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>241</b>   |                | <b>58.90%</b> |

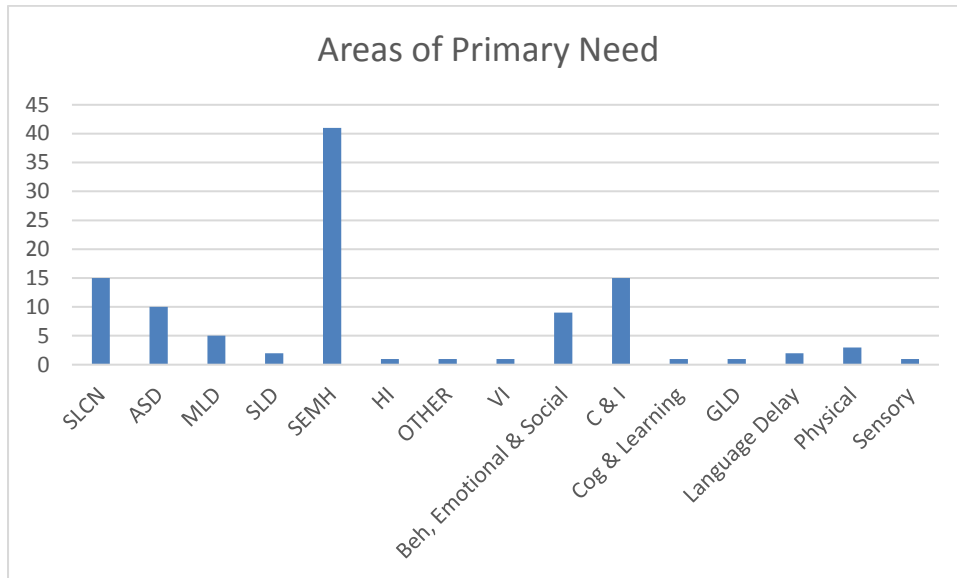
This data indicates that CLA represent 0.7% of the whole Leicester cohort. 58.9% of our CLA have some level of special need. This is a very high proportion compared with figures for all Leicester children with an EHCP (3.5%) and all Leicester children with a known learning need (12.5%), although in general, the prevalence of SEN in CLA is higher than for the total population.

This information tells us that there has been a 2% increase in the number of our young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan. In part this is attributable to a piece of work completed to improve the recording of young people with an EHCP, particularly those placed outside Leicester City, although there have been plans completed that stalled during the pandemic and this will also likely be a contributory factor.

It remains clear that there is a higher concentration of young people with Education, Health and Care Plans in secondary education at present. 63% of these young people are placed in Special School settings where their needs can best be met.

41 of the young people with EHCPs are educated in City settings.

Young people categorised as 'K' receive additional support with their learning, but this is managed within the normal bounds of a mainstream school and may include some 1 to 1 support or a learning intervention to address a short term or specific issue.



It is clear that by far the greatest primary need for those CLA with EHCPs is in the area of social, emotional and mental health needs. This differs from the national trend, where from data published in 2019 the most common area of primary need was Autistic Spectrum Disorder, which is double the rate of the second place need of Speech, Language and Communication Needs with SEMH coming in third. Given the early life experiences of our CLA and the trauma they have experienced, this is not a surprise to us but does highlight why there may be a national shortage of specialist places for young people with SEMH needs.

| Gender | Jun-17 | Mar-18 | Jun-18 | Jul-19 | Jul-20 | Jul-21 | Jul-22 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Male   | 56%    | 56%    | 56%    | 53%    | 54%    | 54%    | 55%    |
| Female | 44%    | 44%    | 44%    | 47%    | 46%    | 46%    | 45%    |

This table shows us that although there has been a small change in the last 3 years, the gender balance of our CLA cohort remains more than 50% male.

| Ethnicity                           | Dec-17 | Mar-18 | Jun-18 | Jul-19 | Jul-20 | Jul-21 | Leicester<br>All<br>pupils<br>July<br>2021 | Jul-22 |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|--------|
| ABAN - Bangladeshi                  | 0.25%  | 0.25%  | 0.23%  | 0.00%  | 0.25%  | 0.20%  | 0.00%                                      | 0.80%  |
| AAF - Asian African                 | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.30%  | 0.60%                                      | 0.40%  |
| AIND - Indian                       | 5.90%  | 6.40%  | 6.44%  | 5.64%  | 4.42%  | 4.60%  | 32.10%                                     | 3.61%  |
| AOT – any other Asian background    | 3.19%  | 2.96%  | 2.76%  | 2.71%  | 3.19%  | 3.50%  | 5.60%                                      | 4.01%  |
| APKN - Pakistani                    | 2.70%  | 2.71%  | 3.22%  | 2.71%  | 2.70%  | 1.70%  | 4.20%                                      | 2.00%  |
| Bangladeshi                         | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 2.60%                                      | 0.00%  |
| BAOF - other Black African          | 0.49%  | 0.49%  | 0.46%  | 0.45%  | 0.49%  | 1.50%  | 1.40%                                      | 0.80%  |
| BLB – Black/Black British Caribbean | 1.97%  | 1.97%  | 1.61%  | 0.90%  | 1.23%  | 1.10%  | 0.80%                                      | 1.00%  |
| BLF – Black/Black British African   | 0.49%  | 0.49%  | 0.46%  | 0.45%  | 0.74%  | 0.90%  | 4.40%                                      | 2.20%  |
| BLG – Black/Black British Other     | 1.97%  | 1.97%  | 1.84%  | 1.58%  | 0.74%  | 0.90%  | 0.00%                                      | 0.60%  |
| BSOM - Somali                       | 0.98%  | 0.99%  | 1.15%  | 1.35%  | 0.25%  | 0.70%  | 3.00%                                      | 0.20%  |
| CHE - Chinese                       | 0.49%  | 0.49%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.30%                                      | 0.00%  |
| MWBA – Mixed White/Black African    | 2.46%  | 2.46%  | 5.98%  | 1.58%  | 0.00%  | 0.50%  | 1.20%                                      | 1.00%  |
| MBO                                 | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.25%  | 0.10%  | 0.00%                                      | 0.00%  |
| MOTH - any other mixed background   | 2.70%  | 2.22%  | 2.30%  | 3.39%  | 3.44%  | 4.00%  | 2.10%                                      | 3.61%  |
| MWAS - White/Asian                  | 3.44%  | 3.45%  | 3.45%  | 4.06%  | 5.65%  | 4.60%  | 1.90%                                      | 4.61%  |
| MWBC - White/Black Caribbean        | 2.70%  | 6.16%  | 5.98%  | 5.64%  | 4.91%  | 5.50%  | 2.10%                                      | 4.81%  |
| OEO – Other Ethnic Origin           | 3.44%  | 0.49%  | 0.46%  | 0.68%  | 1.23%  | 1.10%  | 2.60%                                      | 1.20%  |
| NOT – Information not obtained      | 1.47%  | 0.74%  | 1.61%  | 3.84%  | 4.42%  | 5.50%  | 0.80%                                      | 1.20%  |
| REF – Refused                       | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.23%  | 0.00%  | 0.30%  | 0.50%                                      | 0.80%  |
| WEN - White English                 | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.25%  | 0.36%  | 0.00%                                      | 1.00%  |
| WBRI - White British                | 57.74% | 58.13% | 58.16% | 58.69% | 58.23% | 57.70% | 23.70%                                     | 60.04% |
| WEUR - White European               | 3.44%  | 3.45%  | 3.68%  | 2.93%  | 2.95%  | 3.50%  | 6.00%                                      | 3.41%  |
| WIRI - White Irish                  | 1.47%  | 1.48%  | 1.61%  | 0.45%  | 0.49%  | 0.20%  | 0.10%                                      | 0.80%  |
| WOB - White other British           | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.00%  | 0.45%  | 0.00%  | 0.30%  | 0.10%                                      | 0.20%  |
| WOW – White other                   | 0.98%  | 0.99%  | 1.15%  | 0.23%  | 0.25%  | 0.30%  | 1.70%                                      | 0.80%  |
| WROM                                | 1.23%  | 0.99%  | 0.23%  | 1.13%  | 0.98%  | 0.70%  | 0.10%                                      | 0.80%  |

This data tells us that there have been small fluctuations in some groups, but numbers of CLA may be too small to make this significant. It is clear, however, that the CLA population is not reflective of the population for all of Leicester.

## Achievements and Outcomes

### *Narrowing the Achievement Gap*

In 2022, assessment of children and young people's learning has returned to pre-pandemic models with young people sitting tests and exams that are externally marked and verified. Like those who have preceded them, the young people in the key year groups have all felt the impact of the pandemic on their lost learning but have prepared as best they could to return to the examination rooms.

### School Readiness

The Virtual School Officer with responsibility for the Early Years children attends PEPS for children from aged 2 upwards, where the child is registered in an Early Years setting or from birth if the child has significant learning needs requiring the support of a range of professionals. The assessment of the needs of this cohort in Early Years settings has improved the transition to Reception with schools better prepared to meet the needs of those learners requiring additional support.

School readiness is discussed in PEP meetings each term, generating the following information;

| School Readiness 2022   |   |                  |
|---|---|------------------|
| Key Areas   | Mini Goals  |                  |
| Settle happily when parents/carers are not there                                      | I can play with my friends at pre-school                  | 56%              |
|   | I can find another grown up if I am sad                   | 88%              |
| Separation and Independence: feel secure, say how they feel and ask an adult for help | I can say how I feel                                      | 50%              |
|   | I can ask for help with something if I need it            | 63%              |
| Play with others and begin to share   | I can take turns in a small group                         | 56%              |
|   | I can name two of my friends                              | 63%              |
| Enjoy exploring new things and make choices   | I can help load the trolley in the supermarket            | Not asked in PEP |
|   | I can choose my own clothes to wear                       | 81%              |
| Listen, talk and understand   | I can follow three instructions at once                   | 19%              |
|   | I can use sentences of 4-5 words                          | 38%              |
| Enjoy rhymes, songs, stories and books  | I can sing my favourite nursery rhymes and do the actions | 50%              |
|   | I can tell my own story using pictures in a book          | 31%              |
| Walk, run, climb and balance  | I can hop   | 75%              |
|   | I can jump forwards with two feet together                | 81%              |
|   | I can try a new food                                      | 81%              |



|  |                                    |                  |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Eat, chew, try different foods and drink from a cup    | I can help to set the table        | 81%              |
| Use the toilet, wash their hands and clean their teeth | I can brush my teeth all by myself | 88%              |
|  | I can wipe my own bottom           | Not asked in PEP |
| Begin to dress themselves                              | I can do up a button on my clothes | 31%              |
|  | I can move a zip up and down       | 88%              |

The impact of this work will be monitored as these children start their school careers through the numbers achieving their Early Learning Goals at the end of their Reception year. However, it is already clear that these children are experiencing fewer issues in the Reception year than may have been experienced by their peers in previous years when this work was not undertaken.

## **Example of intervention work by the Virtual School to support attainment in Early Years**

### **Forest School Programme**



Professionals and carers are very clear that the impact of the pandemic on our youngest learners has been significant, with a particular reduction in their language and communication skills as a consequence of not being able to mix freely with other children and not being able to access groups that would normally have run. In order to address this, we designed this Forest School programme to focus on and develop these skills that included modelling behaviours to carers so that the impact went far beyond the sessions themselves and became embedded in daily life.

In the spring and summer of 2022, we delivered a Forest School Playgroup to a small group of pre-school 3 year olds and their carers. This ran for the whole of the summer term at a local nursery which has an outstanding Forest School space. It was based in a forest setting in the countryside to give the children an authentic experience of the natural world beyond the urban environment. The outcomes we were hoping to achieve were; developing literacy and communication in line with the EYFS framework, exploration and supported risk taking in a natural setting, development of confidence and self-esteem through hands-on experiences, strengthening the bond and encouraging healthy interaction and play between child and carer and creating a supportive environment for carers to network. We gifted them a selection of story books, set in the natural world, and used these as a basis for each session. Healthy

interaction and play between child and carer and creating a supportive environment for carers to network. We gifted them a selection of story books, set in the natural world, and used these as a basis for each session.

**What did you, as a carer, appreciate about the sessions?**

*"Meeting other carers and getting a break",*

*"I was able to watch how R interacts with other children and I had a better idea of what he likes and doesn't like to play with. I had a better understanding of his abilities and challenges",*

*"Meeting new people",*

*"Watching him grow from week one. By the end he was very confident in his surroundings. Made new friends and enjoyed the experience",*

*"I've introduced a lot of the activities into our own garden... such as the mud kitchen and bug houses",*

*"We have now have 2 bug hotels in our garden so far. So we can keep exploring nature. We will be adding more things to encourage wildlife"*



## Key Stage 4

### Improving KS4 Outcomes

Key Stage 4 qualifications changed in 2017 with GCSE English and Maths scored numerically from 1 (low) to 9 (high). Course content was also expanded and increased. Whilst there is no direct correlation with previous grades, a 4 is considered a 'low C grade' and a 5 a 'good C grade'. All GCSEs are now marked on the 9 – 1 scale and revised courses have been reported as more challenging for all learners, placing increased pressure on schools and learners.

### GCSE Results Analysis 2022 (collected by the Virtual School)

| GCSE Outcomes                  | All Leicester LAC 2018 | Leicester LAC 2018 in care 12 months at 31/03/2018 | Leicester City All 2018 | National all LAC 2018 | All Leicester LAC 2019 | Leicester LAC 2018 in care 12 months at 31/03/2019 | Leicester City All 2019 | National all LAC 2019 | All Leicester LAC 2020 | Leicester LAC 2018 in care 12 months at 31/03/2020 | Leicester City All 2020 | National all LAC 2020 | All Leicester LAC 2021 | Leicester LAC 2018 in care 12 months at 31/03/2021 | Leicester City All 2021 | National all LAC 2021 | All Leicester CLA 2022 | Leicester CLA in care 12 months at 31/03/2022 | Leicester City All 2022 | National all CLA 2022 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cohort                         | 50                     | 42   |                         |                       | 46                     | 45   |                         |                       | 60                     | 47   |                         |                       | 58                     | 41   |                         |                       | 53                     | 39  |                         |                       |
| English 4+                     | 20%                    | 24%  | 69.90%                  | 15%                   | 35%                    | 35%  |                         |                       | 32%                    | 32%  |                         |                       | 33%                    | 32%  |                         |                       | 30%                    | 46%   |                         |                       |
| Maths 4+                       | 10%                    | 12%  | 60.10%                  | 11%                   | 22%                    | 22%  |                         |                       | 24%                    | 13%  |                         |                       | 17%                    | 17%  |                         |                       | 16%                    | 28%   |                         |                       |
| 5 GCSEs at 4+ (inc Eng and Ma) | 6.70%                  | 9%   |                         | 13%                   | 13%                    | 13%  |                         |                       | 15%                    | 11%  |                         |                       | 14%                    | 12%  |                         |                       | 16%                    | 28%   |                         |                       |
| Basics (Eng and Ma at 4+)      | 8.90%                  | 12%  | 56.10%                  | 7%                    | 17%                    | 17%  | 55%                     | 65%                   | 15%                    | 13%  |                         |                       | 16%                    | 15%  |                         |                       | 23%                    | 31%   |                         |                       |

2022 has been another difficult year for our Key Stage 4 young people. The closure of schools in March 2020 mid way through their Year 9 learning followed by repeated episodes of school closure, bubble closure and illness have all impacted on the quality of teaching and learning and particularly on the confidence and mental health and well-being of these young people. Formal examinations have been resumed this year and results based on these. We are very proud of these learners, their achievements and their resilience in challenging circumstances are testament to their commitment and endeavour.

A significant feature of this Year 11 cohort is the proportion of them with Education, Health and Care Plans at 37%. 10 (19%) of the cohort did not follow a GCSE based curriculum:-

- 4 attend a Special School and did not sit GCSEs or equivalent
- 1 young person was in a hospital setting and was not well enough to take any exams
- 2 young people were on roll at mainstream schools but only attended vocational settings and took no qualifications
- 1 young person was newly arrived in the UK and took no exams
- 2 young people had no place in a Special School and took no qualifications

This year there has been an encouraging increase in the number of the young people who had been in the care of the local authority for more than 12 months at 31/03/2022 who achieved outcomes. However, the proportion achieving 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above, including English and Maths, has risen slightly again for all young people in care, but the number achieving a Grade 4 or higher in Maths has decreased. It is likely that this is attributable to a combination of pandemic impact on learning and learning styles but will be monitored closely in the next year.

Learners from different minority groups did perform at different levels this year, but the numbers in those groups are too small to draw any firm conclusions about this.

As previously stated, 37% of this cohort have an Education Health and Care Plan. A further 25% of this cohort are recognised as having additional needs, but the young person's needs could be met within their mainstream school. 38% of this cohort have no identified additional learning need.

Of the young people who achieved Grade 4 or higher in both English and Maths, 17% have additional learning needs; 58% are identified as white British, with 8% in each of Mixed white and black African, Pakistani and black/black British Caribbean and 16% from any other Asian background.

Of the 13 young people who achieved 5 passes at grade 4 or above, 15% have some additional learning needs. 62% identify as White British, 38% of this group identify as other mixed heritage.

Of the 12 young people who achieved 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above, 83% had attendance of 90% or higher, 50% had attendance of 95% or higher. Of the young people who achieved a Grade 4 or above in both English and Maths, 83% had attendance of 90% or higher, 50% had attendance of 95% or higher. Of those 28 young people who did not attain 5 GCSE passes at Grade 4 or above, 50% had attendance of 90% or higher

**Example of intervention work by the Virtual School to support attainment at KS4**

**Case Study:** Student N, Year 11

**SEN STAGE:** EHCP

**Tuition support overview:**

**Tuition Began:** 25/02/2022

**Tuition end:** July 2022

**Subject(s):** Maths

**Tutor:** NT

Student N required tuition in Maths due to low ability in the subject and although she made excellent effort in lessons, she finds most maths topics a huge challenge. Her cognitive ability is in general, quite low. This meant that solving problems beyond simple maths operations have always been a real struggle for her.

NK also had low attainment and ability in English.

It was deemed appropriate to try 1:1 tuition through the Virtual School to improve her progress and attainment through a more focused session of support in both English and Maths.

The original focus was on GCSE maths, (for which she was being entered by her school) and working towards achieving a grade but it became clear to her tutor that this may not be achievable and there needed to be an alternative for her. As with most secondary schools, hers was unable to offer any other qualification than GCSE so the Virtual School were enter her for a Functional Skills qualification through the Adult Learning Centre in Leicester.

**Notes:**

It became apparent quite quickly that a GCSE qualification was potentially out of reach for Student N. At best, she may achieve a Grade 1 but not the grade 4 which is considered by many to be a 'pass'. So we started to work through functional maths and the skills required for this qualification. This is a much more appropriate qualification for students like Student N as it related to 'real-life' and uses maths which applies to everyday calculations and problems. More often than not, she engaged well with this type of work and made good progress during each session.

**Outcome:**

With the extra support that was in place for her, on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Student N achieved a pass in Functional Skills Maths at Entry Level 3 with City and Guilds. She was over the moon! The confidence boost this gave her during a time when she was also sitting GCSE examinations at school was highly significant. She was very happy indeed to have achieved this qualification and we were proud to have been able to support her towards this outstanding result.

Student N has ambitions to go to college and she is a determined, hard-work young woman who we're sure will continue to achieve her ambitions and overcome challenges as she has done throughout her time in secondary education.

**Previous attainment level:**      *Maths GCSE - Grade U*

**Final attainment:**                      ***Functional Skills Maths Entry Level 3 – PASS***

***Maths GCSE - Grade 2***

**Other support provided by the Virtual School**

Student N was a shy, quiet young pupil in Year 7 but was very happy to be involved in extra-curricular clubs and activities run by the Virtual School. This included enrichments sessions at 'Soft Touch' where she was able to complete an artwork project and also make friends with other pupils in care. It really helped her confidence and she then started to regularly attend other enrichment activities. Together with the support she has received from the Virtual School regarding her progress and education she has been able to thrive, make friends, become more confident both socially and in her studies too.

**Feedback from staff**

"Hi Nick, she has returned to school really happy and told us the news. Thank you so much for enabling this and for all the work you have done with her.

"What brilliant news- made my day!!"

"Just fabulous! Well done N and thank you to the team involved in making this happen.

"Well done all for putting our young people front and centre, as they deserve"

## Destinations for Post 16 young people

*Improve outcomes for L3 & Reduce drop-out*

| Post 16 Destinations 2022 | 2019<br>No. | 2019%  | 2020<br>No. | 2020%  | 2021<br>No. | 2021%  | 2022<br>No. | 2022<br>% |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| Cohort size               | 46          |        | 60          |        | 58          |        |             |           |
| Level 3 course            | 10          | 21.73% | 8           | 13.33% | 8           | 13.79% |             |           |
| Level 2 course            | 10          | 21.73% | 17          | 28.33% | 9           | 15.51% |             |           |
| Level 1 course            | 9           | 19.56% | 11          | 18.33% | 14          | 24.13% |             |           |
| Remain at Special School  | 4           | 8.69%  | 6           | 10%    | 14          | 24.13% |             |           |
| Secure/Health setting     | 0           |        | 4           | 6.66%  | 0           |        |             |           |
| Apprenticeship            | 1           | 2.17%  | 3           | 5%     | 1           | 1.72%  |             |           |
| Job                       | 1           | 2.17%  | 0           |        | 0           |        |             |           |
| Traineeship               | 1           | 2.17%  | 0           |        | 5           | 8.62%  |             |           |
| NEET                      | 10          | 21.73% | 11          | 18.33% | 7           | 12.06% |             |           |

Information provided by Connexions, October 2021. Updated information will be available in November 2022.

**Work Readiness**

All schools have a statutory duty to provide information, advice and guidance to their students from year 7 upwards. In year 10 and 11 this should increase significantly to start to prepare their students for making well informed decisions for post-16 transition and the world of work. The framework to support schools to deliver this is based on the eight Gatesby Benchmarks. In using these benchmarks schools should address the needs of each pupil and link the curriculum learning to careers, provide encounters with employers and offer experiences of workplaces.

For those who are looked after by LCC, additional information, advice and personal guidance is provided from year 10 upwards. This recognises not all will have had the right level of support from the school at which they were on role, especially if there have been changes/unsettled placements. By the summer of term of year 11, the aim is for all to have an offer of learning for post-16. The vast majority of the CLA young people in this cohort will have an offer to stay in full-time education, mostly in a college or a school setting but the offer may be with a training provider, and for a small number it may be a specialist placement for their SEND needs. Even if they are staying in a school 6<sup>th</sup> form or going onto a full-time college course, the activities that are done with our young people should start to increase their work readiness, for example, decision-making, independence and the understanding of a broader range of options.

The support with IAG and preparation for work continues with our post-16 CLA cohort and intensifies for those who are NEET. PEPS will continue with this cohort and are offered even if the young person is dis-engaged so that the individual will know that when they are ready it will be not too late to form a career

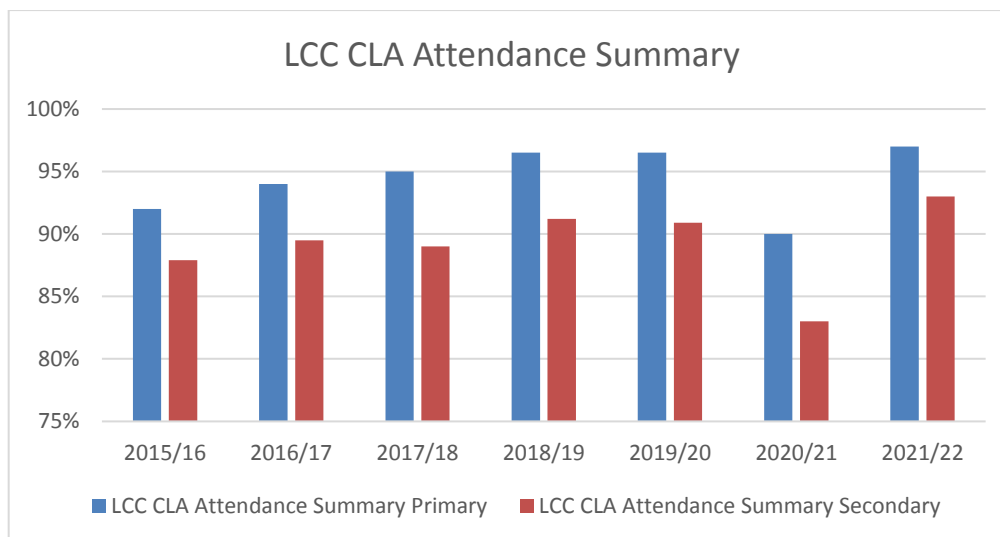
plan. As part of the planning for post-18 work and learning there is more work done around interviews, applications and the local labour market.

As well as the additional IAG referred to above, our care leavers and CLA from year 10 were offered a chance to meet with an employer this year. This employer was either linked to an area of work they wanted to get into, or an area they wanted to find out more about. The aim of the contact was to help individuals improve their understanding of different job roles, gain knowledge of how to apply for jobs, gain a contact with an employer, improve their confidence and refine their thoughts about their future careers. Ultimately this should help to prevent some of our young people becoming NEET or act as a step towards re-engagement.

‘Get Inspired’ is a project managed by LCC, with funding from ESF. It is just underway and will provide intensive support into work or learning for those who are age 16-24 and NEET especially if from a priority group. One of the groups we are prioritising are those who are looked after or have left care. It will allow additional resource to bridge the gap around work readiness and allow activities to be done with providers and employers to help increase the chances of a sustained transition.

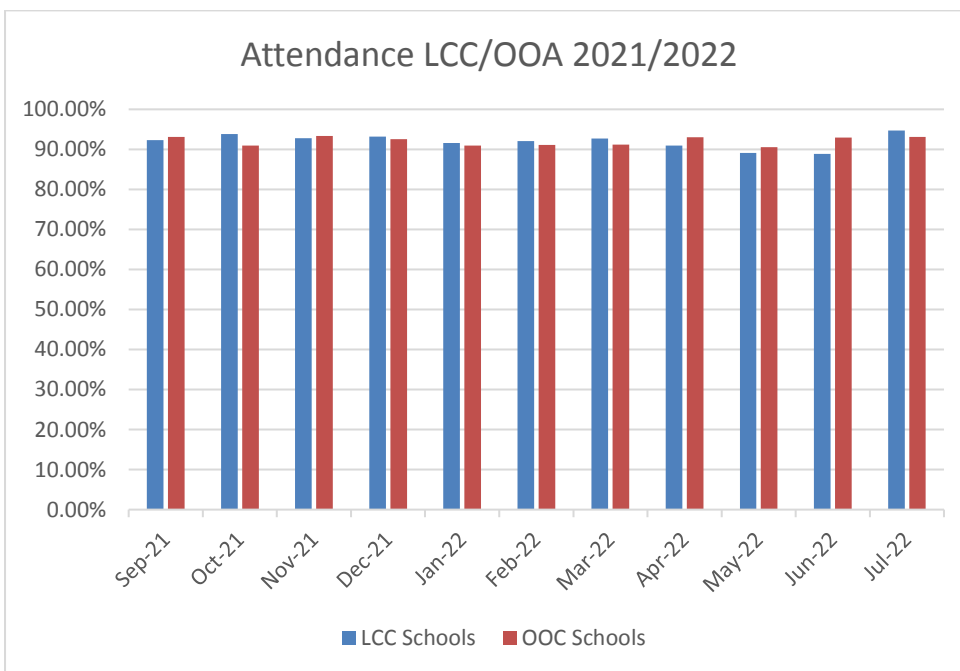
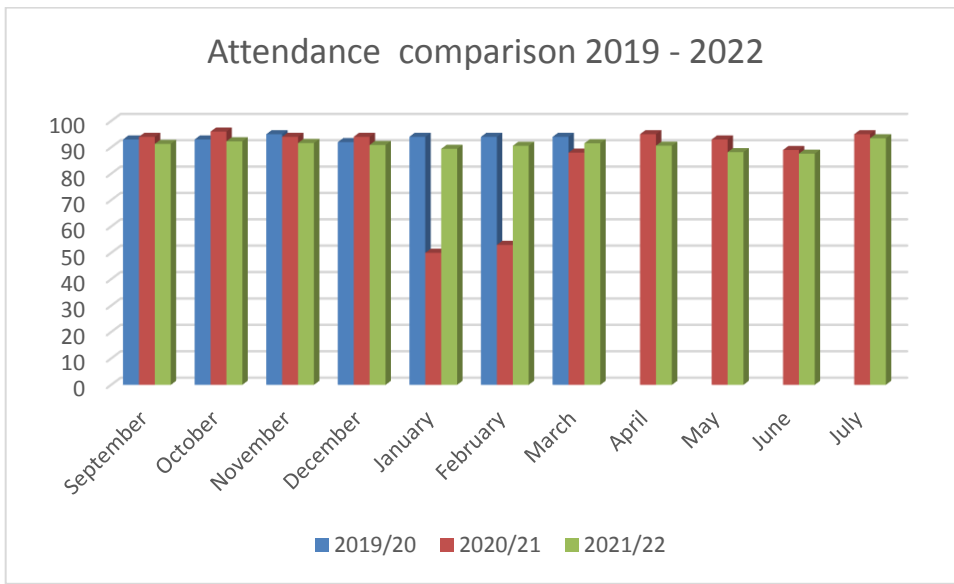
## Attendance and Exclusions

### *Improve Attendance*



2021/22 has been a year where the attendance of our CLA continued to recover from the pandemic. Attendance remains higher in the primary phase than secondary, but it is pleasing to note that whilst primary attendance has returned to pre-pandemic levels, secondary attendance is higher in 2021-22 than it was before 2020.





There is no difference between attendance rates in and out of area this year with both City and out of area schools averaging 92%.

## What is the impact of coming into care on the school attendance of these children and young people?

Comparing the attendance for the year prior to coming into care and the year they came into care, the following is noted about these 35 learners who all attended schools in Leicester City:

- 1 CLA maintained their attendance at the same level
- 5 had no attendance the previous year – 3 were not of statutory school age, 2 were newly arrived
- 10 young people improved their attendance
- 19 had their attendance fall

| Difference    | Attendance rises | Attendance falls | Notes   |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|---|
| 0 – 5%        | 1                | 8                |   |
| 6 – 15%       | 3                | 6                |   |
| 16 – 30%      | 4                | 2                |   |
| More than 30% | 2                | 3                | 2 learners whose attendance fell more than 30% were placed temporarily out of the area and it was too far to travel to school until they returned to the area |

Of those whose attendance fell, 36.5% were Key Stage 1 and 2 and 30% Key Stage 3 and 4

Of those whose attendance rose, 26.5% were Key Stage 1 and 2 and 7% Key Stage 3 and 4

## Higher overall absence leads to lower attainment at KS2 and KS4

The Department for Education (DfE) published [research](#) in 2016 which found that:

- The higher the overall absence rate across Key Stage (KS) 2 and KS4, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4
- Pupils with **no absence** are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A\*- C or equivalent including English and mathematics than pupils that missed 15-20% of KS4 lessons

### Attendance Headlines for 2021/22

33 (8%) young people achieved 100% attendance

99 (23.5%) were persistently absent – meaning their overall attendance fell below 90%

Average attendance for the whole cohort was 90.7% for the school year. This is higher than the previous year when the pandemic, related illness, school and bubble closures left young people at home but is not yet back to pre-pandemic levels when average attendance was around 94%.

**Attendance 2021-22**

There are many reasons why our young people may miss school. We always aim for and encourage 100% attendance and in 2021/22, 33 young people achieved this.

| Reason for non-attendance 2021/22 | % Missed CLA              | % Missed ALL Leicester | ALL CLA (Days) | ALL LEICESTER (Days) | KS1&2 CLA (Days) | KS1&2 ALL LEICESTER (Days) | KS3 CLA (Days) | KS3 ALL LEICESTER (Days) | KS4 CLA (Days) | KS4 ALL LEICESTER (Days) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Holiday (days)                    | Information not available |                        |                |                      |                  |                            |                |                          |                |                          |
| Authorised Absence (days)         | 5.70%                     | 5.27%                  | 4586           | 1,347,425            | 1841             | 570,028                    | 1091           | 290,834                  | 1654           | 358,125                  |
| Unauthorised absence (days)       | 3.80%                     | 2.59%                  | 3026           | 660,948              | 483.5            | 274,339                    | 719.5          | 193,306                  | 1823           | 142,267                  |
| Suspension (days)                 | 0.30%                     |                        | 215.5          |                      | 15               |                            | 123            |                          | 77.5           |                          |
| Total                             |                           |                        | 7827.5         |                      | 2339.5           |                            | 1933.5         |                          | 3554.5         |                          |

This data tells us that the most common reason for absence from school in 2021/22 was authorised absence, meaning that it was considered as absence for a legitimate reason. Both authorised and unauthorised absence for Leicester’s looked after children is higher than for all children and young people in Leicester, reversing the trend from the previous year. Unauthorised absence in Key Stage 4 is higher than from reception to Year 9 due in some part to 10 young people with more than 50 days each of unauthorised absence caused by their refusal to attend their education setting.

Absence caused by fixed term suspensions is highest at Key Stage 3 and this mirrors the picture against all young people in Leicester, with learners in Years 8 and 9 in particular struggling to settle back into school post pandemic. 10 Key Stage 3 students had more than one fixed term suspension during the year. 7 learners were subject to 3 or more fixed term suspensions with this highest number of suspensions being 6. 6 of the 7 students subject to more than 3 suspensions have all, for various reasons, since moved on to new schools.

**Exclusions 2021/2022**

**Reduce Exclusions**

There have been no permanent exclusions of Leicester CLA during 2021/22

The Virtual School Team was able to support pupils at risk of suspension. Team members attended PEPs, worked with pupils, their carers and schools to seek solutions which avoided suspension. These included increased support in school, managed moves and time spent in alternative provision settings to address the reasons the suspension may have occurred.

The VST Learning Mentors provided support to pupils at risk of suspension. They successfully worked alongside school mentors, residential staff, carers and other support staff to establish pastoral support systems and personalised programmes to enable everyone to remain on track. In some cases, Pupil Premium Plus funding was used to appoint 1:1 support staff to enable a young person to remain in school, settle and make progress. In schools where numbers

## Virtual School Headteacher Report 2020/2021

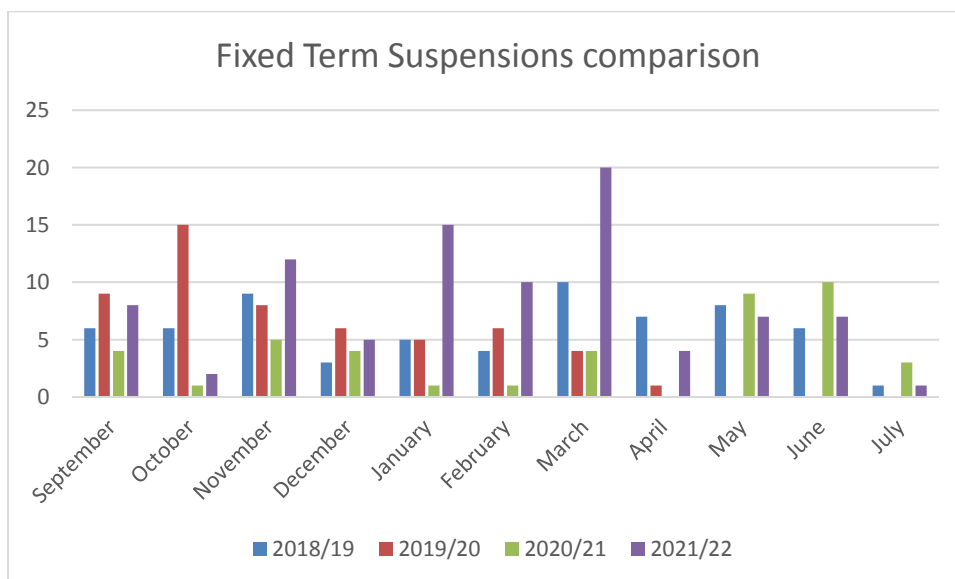
of CLA are high, the Virtual School has funded or part-funded a mentor to work specifically with our children to ensure they have appropriate support to keep them in school and learning.

51 pupils received a fixed term suspension during 2021/2022. Of these 51 young people, 18 of them were suspended for a fixed term on more than one occasion. 2 young people were each subject to 6 separate fixed term suspensions. Both of these young people have since moved on to new settings better able to meet need.

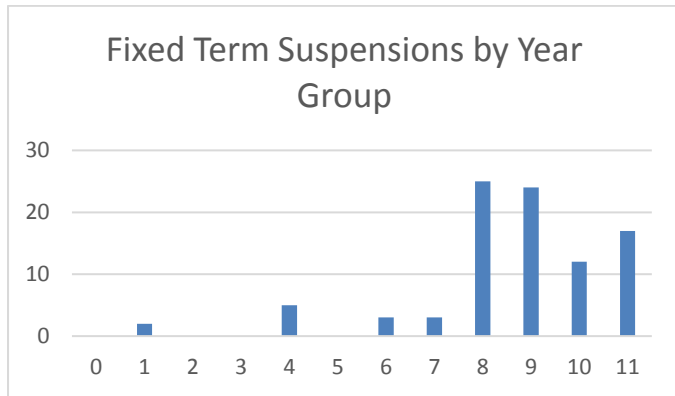
The total number of days lost to fixed term suspension was 215.5. This figure represents a very significant increase from the previous year but does mirror suspensions for all pupils in Leicester.

| Year     | Number of pupils excluded | Total number of pupils in cohort | %      |
|----------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|
| 2009/10* | 52                        | 309                              | 16.80% |
| 2010/11* | 45                        | 281                              | 15.70% |
| 2011/12* | 25                        | 248                              | 10.10% |
| 2012/13* | 28                        | 244                              | 11.40% |
| 2013/14* | 27                        | 208                              | 13.00% |
| 2014/15* | 18                        | 283                              | 6.30%  |
| 2015/16* | 27                        | 403                              | 6.70%  |
| 2016/17  | 46                        | 410                              | 11.00% |
| 2017/18  | 34                        | 446                              | 7.60%  |
| 2018/19  | 44                        | 448                              | 9.80%  |
| 2019/20  | 33                        | 464                              | 7.00%  |
| 2020/21  | 31                        | 418                              | 7.41%  |
| 2021/22  | 51                        | 418                              | 12%    |

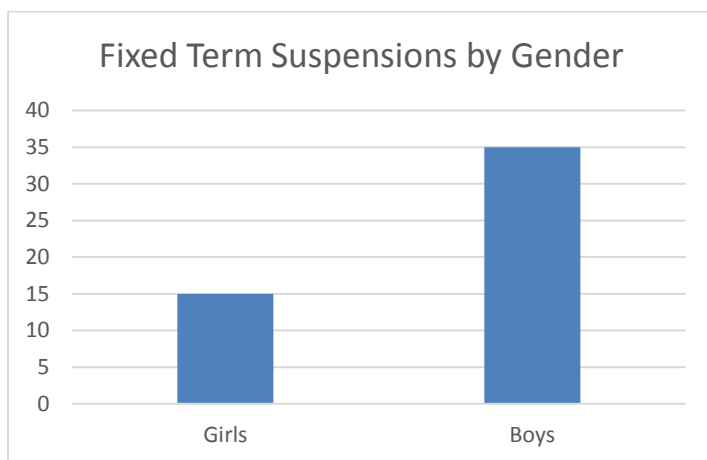
\*note – these figures are for CLA in Leicester City schools only



This graph shows that fixed term suspensions have risen this year with a particular increase in January and March 2022.



This graph shows that there are key year groups where suspensions are higher – Years 8,9, in the most part, are the areas with the highest percentages of fixed term suspensions. This mirrors the picture for all young people in Leicester as it is thought that these are the two year groups that have experienced the least transition into secondary education and are presenting as challenging.



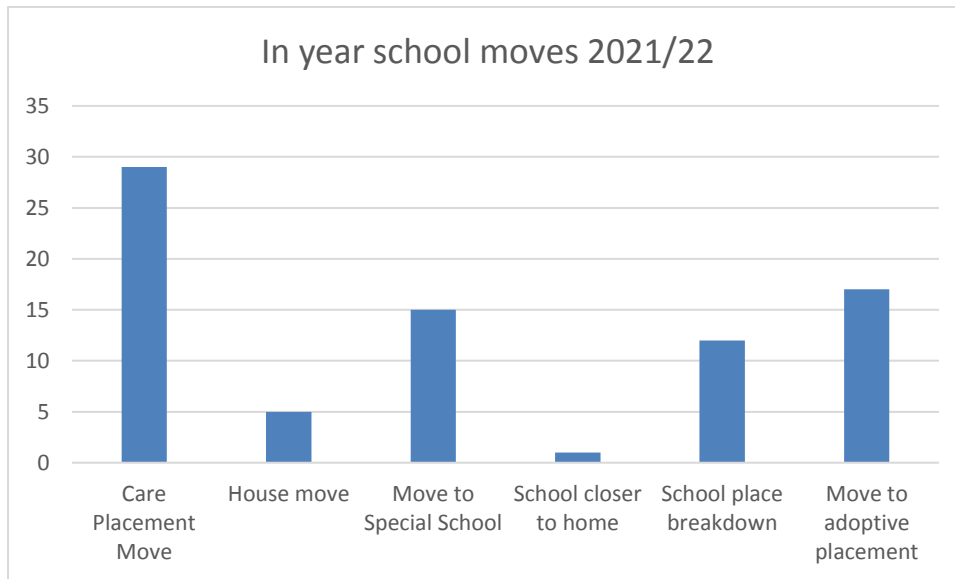
This shows quite clearly that boys are much more likely to be suspended than girls. The balance between the two in the overall CLA population is almost even.

The Target 25 group monitors the provision and plans for CLA who do not have a full time offer of 25 hours of education as well as attendance and suspensions. Target 25 is a multi-disciplinary group with knowledge and understanding of the learners and the challenges they may need to overcome. The Authority’s commissioning officer also attends. Together the group provides a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable looked after children.

There is a further monthly meeting chaired by Deputy Mayor Cllr Russell and attended by Senior Officers of the Local Authority, Service Managers from Education Welfare, Social Care and Special Educational Needs; this group monitor not only the young people at risk of not having a full time education, but also actions and plans around young people who may have been suspended from school or whose attendance falls below 95%, taking a solution focussed approach to resolving the barriers for each learner.

## In Year School Moves

Moving to a new school during a school year should be avoided whenever possible. However, sometimes factors beyond our control mean that children or young people move to new placements or move to alternative settings that are better able to meet their needs following statutory assessment.



There were 79 school moves in total, meaning that 19% of our young people were subject to a school move during the school year. However some young people moved multiple times across the year bringing the actual percentage of young people with school moves down to 13%.

37% of all the moves were due to a change in placement.

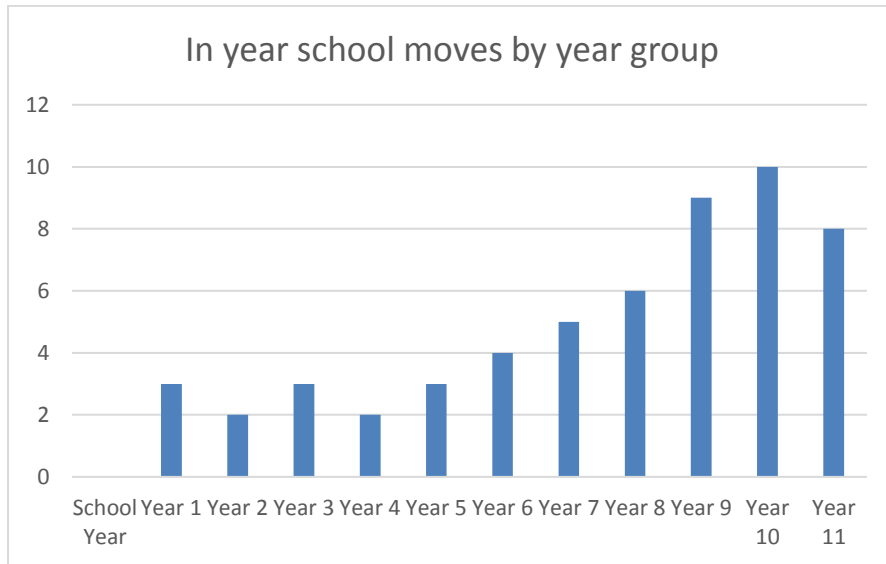
19% of the moves were young people moving to a school better able to meet their needs.

Excluding those children and young people who moved on to adoptive placements, of those young people who moved schools during the school year, 7 young people moved more than once.

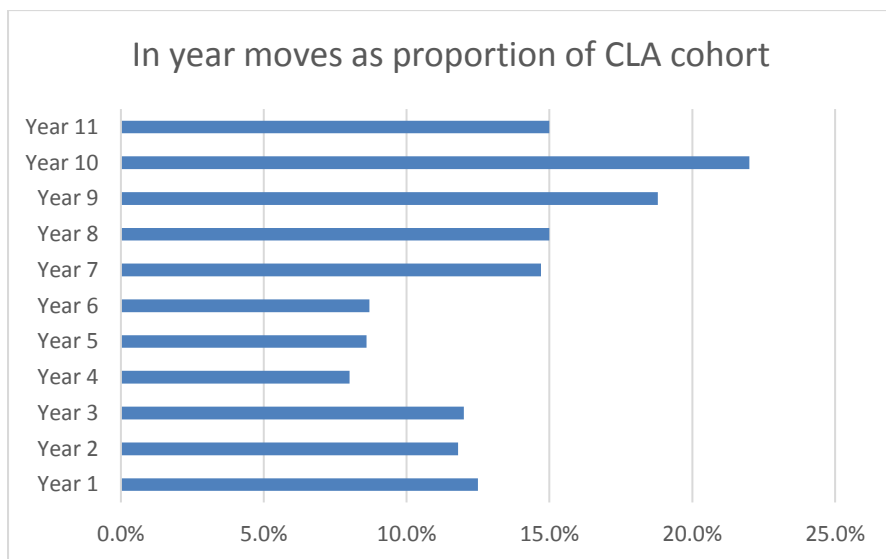
- 1 young person had 2 placement breakdowns and moved twice
- 2 young people moved placements then were ordered by the Court back to a placement with a parent
- 1 young person moved when brought into care then moved to a kinship placement
- 1 young person had to move care placement for their own safety
- 1 young person moved due to medical needs
- 1 young person moved due to a house move then the breakdown of their school place

This graph shows that 49% of the school moves were for young people in either Year 9, 10 or Year 11.

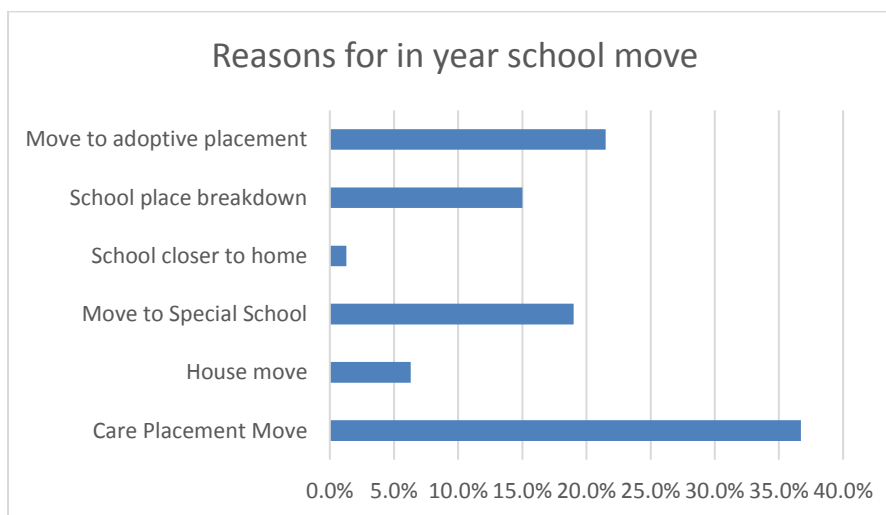
69% of the moves were for young people at Secondary School.



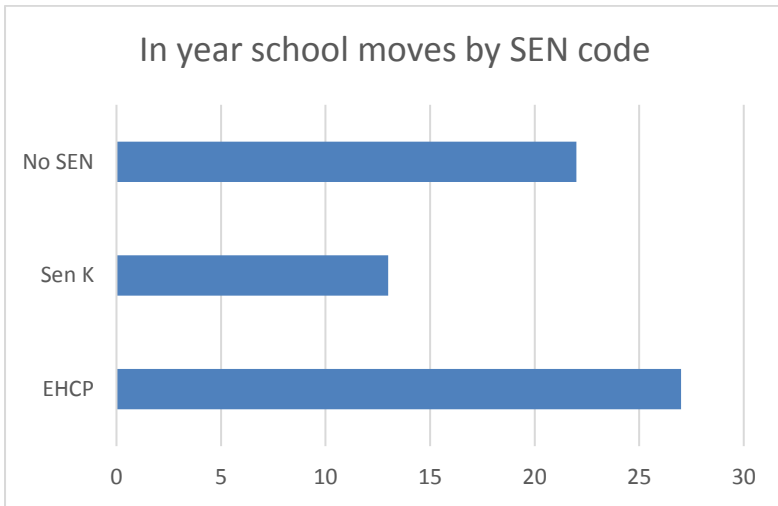
This graph shows that students in Years 9, 10 and 11 were more likely to be subject to an in year move of school during this academic year.



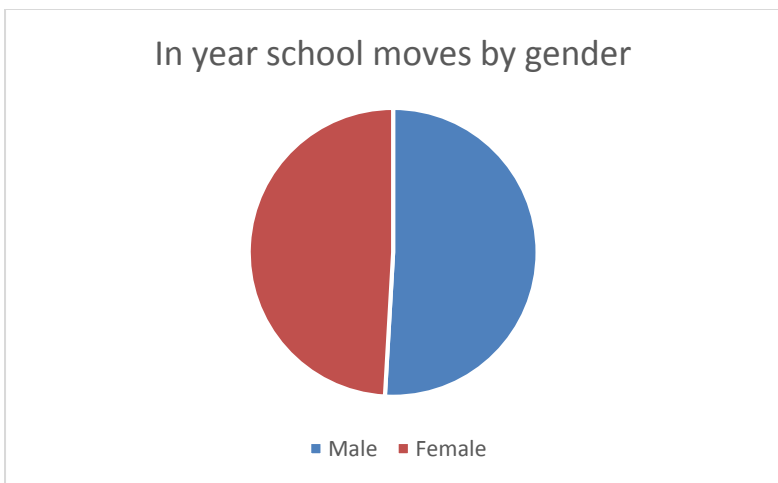
This data shows the number of young people subject to an in-year school move as a proportion of the number of LCC CLA young people in that year group during this academic year. Proportions are highest in the secondary age range but particularly in Years 9 and 10 where continuity towards GCSE or other qualifications is key.



Clearly the most common reason for an in year school move is when a young person has a placement move and needs to transfer to a school closer to the new placement.



It is clear that the largest proportion of school moves are for young people with EHCPs. 52% of the moves for young people with EHCPs were to move to a school better able to meet need whilst 40% were due to a move of care placement.



In year moves are balanced almost exactly across both genders this year, but given that the cohort is made up of more males than females, the proportion of girls subject to moves is higher.



## **Children and Young People Previously Looked After**

The Children Previously Looked After Officer was appointed in October 2020. The CPLA Officer is responsible for providing information, advice and guidance with regard to CPLA young people in Leicester City.

After addressing the limited understanding of CPLA in terms of pupil identification via schools Census, and funding, schools are now showing a much clearer understanding of the process and how to distribute the funding.

Alongside this much work has been completed with the LCC Post SGO(Special Guardianship Order)/adoption support worker, to ensure that carers of adopted, SGO or CAO (Child Arrangement Order) children are fully aware of their rights. Joint meetings are now commonplace and all final PEPs are attended by the CPLA Officer to ensure carers have the most up to date information about how they are able to access educational support should they need it. This has now progressed to school meetings with CPLA carers, initially at Overdale Junior and Infant Schools to ensure that line of advice and guidance is still there once a court order has been signed and a child is adopted. This is to be extended in the future to a Trust wide carer meeting with the hope that other schools and Trusts opt into the need for developing communications with carers. To further ensure carers have up to date information the Virtual School have also redesigned their webpage making it much easier to access information.

On the wider context, Leicester City CPLA officer was a driving force in the creation of the first regional CPLA meeting. This was used to discuss national changes and the impact that could have locally as well as the shared challenges faced across the East Midlands for CPLA.

## Enrichment Activities

The Virtual School Enrichment Programme exists to provide additional educational, cultural and social opportunities, outside of school, for our young people who are looked after. The broad aims are to create opportunities that give these young people qualifications, aspirations, cultural capital, confidence, self-esteem and life skills that will help them overcome their experiences and live full and successful lives.

We have mainly focussed on the two school transition points, Year 6 and Year 11.

**The Year 6 Transition Programme** is run, in large part, by the Educational Psychology team who made contact with all of our Y6 students and ran a combination of on-line and in-person events which helped them think about and prepare for the move to secondary. The emphasis of the EWE Programme is on mental health and emotional resilience. The final event took place at King Power stadium in partnership with Leicester City Football Clubs Community Team.

In addition to this, Virtual School ran a full day of transition activities for a smaller group of 9 children who were selected according to additional needs. We had a fantastic time at a venue called New Leaf Triangle, which is a Leicestershire-based Alternative Provision with a specialism in SEHM and SEN. The children had contact with animals, loads of wide-open space to play on, the forest school area and traditional tepees. We played games which made the most of the space and which focussed the children on thinking about the challenges and excitements ahead of them and got them thinking about coping strategies. We got some positive student voice about how useful the day had been and a strong message about how great it had been to make new friends. Watching the friendships form over the day and seeing how easily they bonded and identified with each other was a privilege. There are big plans to build on the success of this day and make it more available to the whole of the year group.

One of the stated aims of this project was to reduce the number of and incidences of fixed term suspension for young people in Year 7. The number of young people continues at the reduced level but the number of days has increased due to one young person's involvement in an incident judged serious by school. This young person has since moved schools to a setting better able to meet their needs.

|                                  | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| No of Y7 young people excluded   | 9       | 5       | 2       | 2       | 2       |
| No of days lost to Y7 exclusions | 52      | 24      | 7       | 2       | 17      |
| No of Y7 exclusions              | 15      | 11      | 3       | 2       | 3       |

**The Year 11 Transition Programme** included;

A social meet up at Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre with 17 of our YP to re-establish relationships that had been lost over Covid and games to help us get to know where our YP were with their post-16 plans.

A university experience day, attended by 8 YP and led by the Pathways team who tailored it towards CLA YP, partnering them with Student Ambassadors and providing information about the various grants, bursaries and support available.

College Visits to mainstream and alternative provisions, attended by 4 to 8 YP, which focussed on introducing our YP to the sites, courses and staff who would be supporting them and encouraging them to consider their options

The Tall Ships Sailing Residential, a unique and unforgettable experience for five of our YP, where we spent five days with the Tall Ships Youth Trust sailing around Portsmouth, living aboard a sailing boat, learning to sail, navigate, work as a team, cook, clean and gain a qualification with the RYA. Friendships were formed, fears over-come, skills were learned, many laughs were had, and confidence and resilience grew. Without exception, they worked hard, respected each other and the crew and showed extraordinary bravery and tenacity over the week. One YP is hoping to attend again next year and complete the next level of training and act as a mentor to the next cohort. Here is some of the student voice we collected;





*"It is a good trip to get you out of your shell",*

*"one of the best things I have ever experienced",*

*"Even people I didn't think I would get on with, I did. We all worked together",*

*" I loved it! I want to volunteer (for Tall Ships)",*

*"Overall, I think the tall ship that I like makes me feel more enjoyable because I have never been on a boat or sailed and that changes my life forever",*

Over the Summer we have collaborated with Curve Theatre to deliver two projects; a Billy Elliott Day, where some of our Y10 and Y11 YP came for a tour of the theatre, took part in some theatre workshops and then had a meal and saw the show in the evening. I think we were all blown away by the performance and we identified some YP to put forward for bursaried places on Curve CYCC theatre programmes, which start in September.

The second was a five day series of workshops with a local, care-experienced Poet, Ty'Rone Haughton, with his company Literati, who led a small group through imagining, writing and performing their own Spoken Word pieces to a small audience of carers and professionals. We were blown away by their bravery and talent, in their confident performance and in the open and honest sharing of their stories. They made a connection with a local art venue, made friends with other CLA YP and learnt the unique skill of writing and performing which will give them a therapeutic tool for the rest of their lives. In addition, they learnt how to present to an audience, manage their anxieties and hone their writing skills, all of which will be invaluable to them. We hope to continue this collaboration with Curve and Literati next year. Here is some student voice from this project.

**You have learnt a new skill this week, how could this help you in the future?** *"...to write more stories and more poems, I want to be an author" "it lets out my feelings, writing gets it out of me", "it makes you go to a different kind of world, ,makes you see the world in a different way", "it helped me prepare and think about what ...[I'm]..going to say", "it's [writing] one of my coping mechanisms now", "I feel more confident and open to other people's thoughts", "there's no right or wrong way, if you make mistakes, it's ok"*

## Work of the Virtual School

### Personal Education Plans

#### *Maintain PEP Compliance / Develop Systems to Secure Information Sharing*

Virtual School Officers, under the guidance and direction of the Team Leader and Virtual Head, aim to attend Personal Education Plan meetings (PEPs) for as many young people as possible. Each young person should have a PEP meeting each school term. As it is impossible for Officers to attend all, priority is given to meetings about young people who are new into care, those whose circumstances are judged to be complex as well as children and young people in key transition years – Year 2, Year 6, Year 9 and Year 11. During the pandemic all PEP meetings moved online and as the blended model of working has continued this year, officers have been able to attend more PEP meetings as they are no longer travelling between schools. Some PEP meetings are happening face to face in schools and are attended by someone from the Virtual School Team where there is good reason to do so.

Since January 2017, we have been using eGov's, ePep, a secure online platform for our Personal Education Plans. Meetings are chaired by school, who set smart learning targets for the young people with the aim of accelerating progress. All PEPs are quality assured by either the Virtual Head or Virtual School Team Leader. Whilst we always aim for all our children to have a current PEP, our rate of compliance remains high at an average of 98% during the school year 2021/22.

### Letterbox Club

This was provided for 153 CLA during 2021/22.

During 2021/2022 the Virtual School enrolled all its looked after children in Years 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 in the Letterbox Club, a national scheme run by Book Trust, a national charity. The club is managed in partnership with the University of Leicester and was first conceived and set up by Leicester City Council's Virtual School Team.

The project explores ways of improving the educational outlook for children in care by providing them with educational materials and reading material. Each child receives a parcel once a month for six months, with an additional parcel at Christmas. Each parcel is addressed to the child at their home and includes a letter personalised with the child's name, two reading books and stationery items such as pencils, an exercise book or drawing book, a bookmark and a maths game. Sometimes the child receives a CD to accompany one of the books. The books chosen include a mixture of fiction, poetry and non-fiction, with good levels of illustration and aimed at the "interest age" of each cohort of children. The mathematics games focus on number and arithmetic and are provided at a suitable level for the age of the children.

## Emotional Wellbeing in Education Project

During 2021-2022 the *EWE* Project worked with:

- 89 schools and settings;
- 43 primary schools,
- 23 secondary schools,
- 12 special schools and
- 11 alternative settings such as Children's Homes.
- In total the project supported 138 looked after children and young people

This academic year saw the EWE team reconnect with schools in person by offering face to face therapeutic sessions and staff consultations. All of our EWE 1:1 individual and group interventions were delivered back in schools :-

- ❖ The *Waves* intervention provides CiC with opportunities to understand and manage their feelings that follow their multiple experiences of transition, loss and change.
- ❖ The *SPACE* programme focusses on increasing young people's positive thoughts, emotions, and wellbeing.
- ❖ The EWE *Theraplay* model is an attachment-based intervention which supports relationships in school supporting the child to be regulated and ready to learn.
- ❖ The *CREATE* programme supports CiC to communicate and express themselves through art and creative activities.
- ❖ The EWE *Children's Wellbeing transition initiative* is a universal offer for all Year 6 CiC supporting their transition from primary to secondary school, increasing wellbeing and the child's sense of belonging.

We continue to provide staff support through training and consultation. In addition to this, we have been available to provide staff emotional containment as they reconnect with CiC post-pandemic.

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing holistic support for CiC, our post Covid work highlighted an area for further development. We noticed an increase in the number of placement moves for the children on our caseload, a trajectory which Social Care have also noticed. This led to us working closely with a small group of foster carers to explore their own emotional wellbeing needs.

## Reading For Pleasure Project

Reading for Pleasure has been a piece of work undertaken by one of our tutors. This project has focussed on our own residential homes and improving both access to and enthusiasm for reading;

**Residential homes:**

- VST have continued to work collaboratively with all residential homes this year, to enhance the provision of reading materials and thus raise the profile of reading for pleasure within our young people.
- All residential homes have received a substantial number of books, individualised according to the ever-changing needs of the young people.
- Netherhall and Barnes Heath have substantially improved their resources for their young people with SEND needs, including audio books, picture books and dual language appropriate texts.
- Netherhall and Barnes Heath have also received a selection of Story Sacks with multi-sensory resources to aid their provision for the YP there.
- Many of the homes have worked on improving their 'reading areas' and creating displays to make 'reading' more prolific and visual to the young people. Staff favourite texts have been shared and made a part of daily conversations etc.
- One home now continues to have regular visits to the local shop, to purchase magazines based upon their young people's interests and hobbies. This was inspired by VST signing them up for a subscription to 'The Week' newspaper.
- Many ESOL books have been ordered and are used by the YP in the homes
- 'Match of the Day' magazine subscription set up for Wigston Lane and Dunblane Avenue.

**Feedback from residential home managers:**

*"Hi Jenny*

*The young people are really enjoying the story sacks.*

*Regards*

*Sue "*

*"Hi Jennifer,*

*Those (story sacks) look fantastic! I would love to have them all! 😊*

*Regards*

*April"*

*"M got his book today he was made up and was full of thank you's and that he will be 'reading that'.*

*Thanks*

*Loretta "*

In October 2021 local author Bali Rai visited 2 of the residential homes to deliver a workshop based around raising the profile of reading for pleasure. He worked with 3 young people and thus, was able to provide a individual bespoke service for them.

One of the Young People shared a love for Liverpool FC with him and as a result had a copy of the Jamie Carragher autobiography hand delivered to him by Bali. I am told he has really enjoyed reading it 😊 I also ordered another football book for both homes to have a copy of which Bali recommended to them-about football.

Another Young person had read one of Bali's text 'Game on' and so enjoyed chatting with him about the story etc This was particularly impressive given that the young person had limited English!

Bali left signed copies of his books with the homes and I am told they have enjoyed looking at them since the workshop.



Leicester's very own author Bali Rai visited the home on 20.10.21 and chatted to young people and staff about reading for pleasure and discussing the young peoples ambitions.. Bali kindly left us some of his books.

**Here's a bit about Bali.**  
I was born in Leicester in 1971 and grew up in a multicultural, multi-racial community close to the city centre. As a child I dreamt about three things – playing football for Liverpool FC, being Bob Marley and becoming a writer.

Reporters: Rajiv Hansrani, Callum Thorn & Editor: Baz Thandi

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## World Book Day 202

- In March 2022, VST held a World Book Day competition. Entrants had to design a bedroom for a character from their favourite story.
- We received 7 entrants and the standard was high 😊
- The winning entry was a child from Whitehall Primary School, who had really taken the time and effort to create a 3d model and had written the following description

*"I have chosen to design a bedroom for Belle from Beauty and the Beast! I really enjoyed reading this book because I liked the lesson from the story. The prince gets a second chance and this made me feel hopeful. That there is room for change and good things can happen if you try your best and believe in yourself"*



*My character has a bed that is comfortable as my character likes to read a lot and she can do this in bed. She also enjoys hanging up photos and she has a big window in her room as she likes to gaze out at the sunrise or sunsets.*

*She also has a forever rose in a vase because it reminds her of the prince. I hope you like my design."*

All of our CLA were sent a £10 Book Token for World Book Day to enable them to choose a book of their own to read and enjoy.

## **Bullfrog Arts**

This year, Bullfrog Arts have worked with:-

- Over 100 young people
- 4 young instrumentalists
- 10 young people on the Philharmonia project
- 4 schools on the Singing Project
- 1 Special School for the Taiko Residential
- 10 young leaders
- 3 settings to develop the Taiko Tots programme

The Virtual School commissions work by Bullfrog Arts, who have been engaging the most vulnerable children and young people of Leicester City in high quality arts activities this year. Using singing and music, the work focuses on improving emotional health, well-being and self-efficacy and is unique to Leicester. All the work is carefully tailored to meet the needs of the individual and support the creative, expressive and musical ability of those they work with. Bullfrog Arts staff are skilled musicians, teachers, social workers and creative practitioners who are specialists in working with Looked After Children and supporting learners who have experienced trauma and loss in their lives. The Bullfrog approach has been proven to help children and young people regulate stress, improve self-confidence, build resilience and nurture a positive sense of self-image and worth.

Taiko drumming is a Japanese art-form that is very engaging, quick to learn and can be especially beneficial to students who have difficulty regulating their emotions or who display challenging behaviour. It is a spectacular and very accessible medium with a rich cultural legacy that has the additional benefits of engendering confidence, team-work skills, concentration and the ability to regulate emotions amongst students.

Bullfrog Arts have worked on several strands, as agreed with the Virtual School this year. These include: -

- Bullfrog Taiko, working with individuals to develop self-regulation and emotional resilience
- Bullfrog Taiko residential, with young people and staff from Tatlow Road Residential Home
- Bullfrog Performance Group
- Rock School project
- Singing Project, working with 5 schools this year to train the adults around the children to sing with them and embed singing into routines
- Fostering Voices, an opportunity for Foster Carers to meet weekly and sing together and share experiences
- Peripatetic music teaching, delivering one to one music lessons for young people to develop emotional resilience, delivered to five young people this year

- Bullfrog Orchestra, a partnership project between Bullfrog Arts and the Philharmonia, fusing Taiko drumming with orchestral music, delivered to 10 young people this year

### Use of Pupil Premium Plus funding

In 2021/2022, the Pupil Premium Plus allocation was £2345 for each young person who had been in care for 12 months up to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

The Virtual School continued with the practice of using up to £400 per pupil as a pooled resource to fund a range of core activities delivered by the Virtual School, including Aim Higher Reach Further, Bullfrog Arts Interventions, Educational Psychology support and one to one tuition.

Schools now request Pupil Premium Plus funding, linked to smart learning targets, in a child's Personal Education Plan. There is an expectation of this relating to issues identified in attainment data so that impact of the funding might be measurable. Sometimes, funding is for staffing or additional staffing and the impact of this might be the young person remaining in their education or avoidance of exclusion.

### 1:1 Tuition

Virtual School tutors worked with 57 different young people in 2021/22

In 2021/2022, young people from all key stages benefitted from personalised 1:1 tuition. This is agreed during PEP meetings or by referral from a learner's school, with tuition usually focussed on core subjects, to support the young person achieving their target grade or to make them feel more confident in English or Maths. Tuition usually takes place at home, outside the school day. Some may have just an hour a week of tuition to develop confidence and address underachievement in one area of the curriculum, whilst others may have more intensive tuition to address gaps in their learning usually associated with their education before coming into care.

The Virtual School employs 2.6 tutors who work during term time to deliver bespoke learning support to our young people. Delivery is now a mixture of virtual and face to face, according to need. Working in this way means that these tutors can teach more pupils than when they were travelling between schools. The Virtual School still has cause to use tutors from Agencies, because need outstrips supply all the time, but the following information shows the impact of the tuition provided.

Analysis of the impact of the Virtual School tutors is very clear in recognising the difference they make to our young people.

#### Overall annual tutor impact

- 47.2% made 1 level of progress
- 29.7% made 2 or more levels of progress
- 20.2% awaiting final progress data
- 2.9% made no progress

The impact our tutors have is very clear. Furthermore, we have begun a new stream of work this year by working in partnership with the Adult education Centre, who have acted as an exam centre for us so that we could enter young people for Functional Skills examinations. It may be that they have no access to qualifications because they have no school place or it may be that they need a confidence boost to support their attainment in other areas. Our pilot project this year saw 5 young people entered:

- 2 pupils took functional skills maths level 1. Unfortunately both failed but will be taking entry level 3 papers in early autumn
- 1 pupil took entry level 1 English and passed
- 1 pupil took entry level 3 maths and passed
- 1 pupil took entry level 1 maths and passed

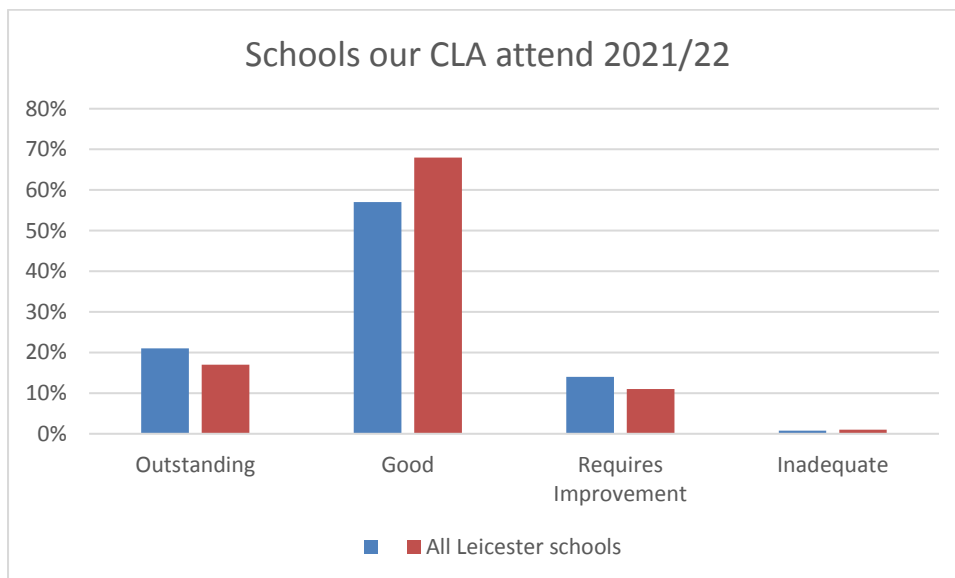
Going forward, we plan to extend the scope of this project and would very much like to support more of our young people to achieve Functional Skills qualifications in the coming year as these are very rarely offered by schools and can be crucial to ensuring our learners have succeeded in a qualification to support their ongoing progress.

### About the schools our pupils attend

#### *Quality of provision attended*

It is our aim for all our Looked After Children to attend an OFSTED registered school that is at least good. However, there are several factors that need to be considered when identifying a school, including proximity to the home address, friendship bonds and a school's capacity to support vulnerable learners. There may also be situations where a school judged by OFSTED to be less than good is the most appropriate place for the pupil to be educated and where a young person comes into care already placed at a school judged inadequate, it may be more damaging to move them to another school than to leave them where they are when that school place is the one element of stability in a child's life.

Our young people of statutory school age attend 201 different schools and establishments.



This shows that the schools attended by our CLA are broadly in line with the proportion of schools in these categories in Leicester City. The key difference is the proportion attending a school judged as 'good' by OFSTED although these are smaller disparities where CLA attend schools judged either 'outstanding' or 'requires improvement'.

### Leicester City Council Virtual School

Leicester's Virtual School Team is managed by the Virtual School Head, Vivien Tetley. Leicester City's Virtual School is a member of the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH).

The Virtual Head meets termly with Virtual Heads from the East Midlands region. These meetings give the opportunity to remain abreast of national developments and to be briefed by Ofsted on key messages. They also provide opportunities to share good practice and reflect on both strengths and areas for development. This information is disseminated to the virtual school team, schools, carers and social workers as appropriate.

A team manager is responsible for the operational management of the team and we have a Senior Virtual School Officer who is responsible for our response with regards to young people who are previously looked after.

The rest of the team consists of five officers, one mentor, one project officer/mentor, one administration assistant (0.6) and an Information Officer (0.6) and 2.6 tutors. Virtual School officers and tutors work during term time only. VST officers are responsible for ensuring that each child has an up to date and effective Personal Education Plan, as well as providing advice, support and challenge to social workers, carers and schools in order to ensure that each child is making good progress at school. Each officer has a caseload of schools and is expected to develop a positive working relationship with each school in order to support both the school and the CLA children placed there. Each officer is responsible for tracking and monitoring the attendance, progress and attainment of children in the schools they oversee. The officer will also ensure where issues arise with a child's education these are resolved quickly and effectively. The work of the officers is overseen and supervised by the Team Manager.

APPENDIX A: Monthly Data return Information, 2020/2021

| Monthly Key Indicators   | Sep-21 | Oct-21 | Nov-21 | Dec-21 | Jan-22 | Feb-22 | Mar-22 | Apr-22 | May-22 | Jun-22 | Jul-22 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number of LAC of school age  | 391    | 395    | 405    | 399    | 400    | 399    | 401    | 397    | 409    | 409    | 407    |
| No. of LAC with concerns regarding school place  | 79     | 73     | 83     | 77     | 113    | 84     | 83     | 88     | 104    | 92     | 85     |
| % LAC with concerns regarding school place   | 20%    | 18%    | 20%    | 19%    | 28%    | 21%    | 18%    | 22%    | 25%    | 22%    | 21%    |
| No. of LAC with Less than 85% Attendance   | 54     | 47     | 55     | 53     | 80     | 57     | 58     | 61     | 64     | 63     | 64     |
| No. of LAC with Less than 85% Attendance/CITY schools  | 25     | 22     | 27     | 25     | 30     | 26     | 24     | 37     | 40     | 36     | 27     |
| No. of LAC with Less than 85% Attendance/OOC Schools   | 29     | 25     | 32     | 28     | 50     | 31     | 34     | 24     | 24     | 27     | 37     |
| No. of LAC with Less than 90% Attendance   | 72     | 58     | 73     | 67     | 103    | 75     | 73     | 75     | 89     | 78     | 78     |
| No. of LAC with Less than 90% Attendance/CITY Schools  | 33     | 27     | 34     | 30     | 38     | 35     | 28     | 40     | 56     | 44     | 37     |
| No. of LAC with Less than 90% Attendance/OOC Schools   | 39     | 31     | 39     | 37     | 65     | 40     | 45     | 35     | 33     | 34     | 41     |
| No. of LAC with Less than 95% Attendance   | 93     | 99     | 105    | 103    | 150    | 120    | 106    | 104    | 118    | 105    | 88     |
| No. of LAC with Less than 95% Attendance/CITY Schools  | 46     | 49     | 50     | 42     | 65     | 49     | 45     | 54     | 74     | 57     | 36     |
| No. of LAC with Less than 95% Attendance/OOC Schools   | 47     | 50     | 55     | 61     | 85     | 71     | 61     | 60     | 44     | 48     | 52     |
| No. of LAC with Fixed-term Exclusion/Monthly   | 6      | 2      | 11     | 5      | 16     | 9      | 19     | 5      | 7      | 7      | 1      |
| No. of LAC with Fixed-term Exclusion/Cumulative  | 6      | 8      | 29     | 34     | 50     | 59     | 78     | 83     | 90     | 97     | 98     |
| No. of LAC with less than 25 hours education per week  | 7      | 15     | 10     | 10     | 10     | 9      | 10     | 13     | 15     | 14     | 7      |
| % of LAC reported by school via PEP on trajectory to meet target set by school                           | 67%    | 68%    | 68%    | 67%    | 66%    | 67%    | 67%    | 67%    | 67%    | 67%    | 66%    |
| % school age Children in Care with current Personal Education Plan (Statutory school age only) (VH info) | 98%    | 98%    | 98%    | 99%    | 99%    | 98%    | 99%    | 99%    | 99%    | 98%    | 96%    |
| % of PEPS QA'd as 'on target'  | 57%    | 63%    | 66%    | 60%    | 73%    | 78%    | 64%    | 74.00% | 74%    | 76%    | 69%    |
| % of PEPS QA'd as good or outstanding  | 12%    | 28%    | 26%    | 19%    | 14%    | 17%    | 18%    | 16.00% | 15%    | 11%    | 14%    |
| No. of PEPS quality assured by Virtual Head  | 107    | 185    | 120    | 61     | 86     | 98     | 150    | 276    | 182    | 117    | 247    |