
Meeting of the Children’s Corporate Parenting Board 21st July 2022

Report of the Director of Children’s Services

Dudley Virtual School Update Report

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to update Children’s Corporate Parenting Board on the developments of Dudley Virtual School

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that Members: -
 - Note and comment on the contents of this report and consider progress made

Background

3 Highlights of the Academic Year 2020.21

At a very challenging time in education, the proactive and positive work and influence of the Virtual School continued over the academic year of 2020.21 including:

Key Stage Four Outcomes

There is an upward trend of outcomes for our children at Key Stage Four over the past three years.

Post 16 Outcomes

In Year 13, 76% (6) achieved one or more accredited qualification this academic year.

At ‘A’ Level there was 100% pass rate of young people achieving their grades.

In Year 12 Students 72% are moving up a level after their first year of study. There is a rise in number of students who have achieved one or more qualifications, with improvements in Year 12 and 13 learners achieving 4 in GCSE in Maths & English and others achieving Level 1 & 2 Functional Skills.

There is an increase in the number of young people accessing University Destinations through A Level or Level 3 Routes.

The cohort of 2020/21 UASC/EAL Students have all moved up a course level or are accessing vocational courses linked to EAL.

A Post 16 young person who was disengaged from education a little over twelve months ago, has been recognised by a work-based training provider as the Learner Of The Year.

Early Year/Primary

The number of children in Year 1 and 2 receiving Letterbox parcels has doubled this academic year.

The Maths/Numeracy targeted offer went on line during the pandemic maintaining focussed support on four primary children.

XLR8 Transition Summer Programme

The first Year 6 transition programme took place targeting a small group of 6 young people from our cohort.

Arts & Sports Summer Programme

The first Dudley summer learning activity programme was hosted this year in partnership with the Participation Officer/Team, Museums Learning & Access Team and Public Health. This included over 75 attendees over the five days.

Sports Link

This academic year has seen the introduction of a virtual sports offer including training in Yoga sessions for children, carers and Social Workers, Cricket Skills from Worcestershire Cricket Club, and fitness from a Personal Trainer.

Arts Link

The Arts offer has responded positively to the pandemic by successfully moving on-line with over 25,000 websites 'hits' regionally.

DVS Annual Conference



The second annual party was hosted, virtually, to support over 150 professionals learning and understanding of the educational support of children who are care experienced.

All Party-Political Group Consultation

DVS were, alongside children and young people from the Children in Care Council, invited to present to the West Midlands APPG review meeting held in March.

Children In Care Council Partnership PEP Development

The introduction of 'Pep Champions' from the Children in Care Council has enhanced the development of children and young people's voice in Pep's.

PEP Development

The Virtual School have piloted the introduction of the Cultural Entitlement section within the Pep on behalf of the West Midlands Region and to inform national development.

The number of Post 16 Pep's is growing with a particular increase in Year 12.

Not in Employment, Education and Training

There is a downward trend in NEET for Year 12 and 13. The number of young people in Apprenticeships and Traineeships have increased, as have the number of Year 13 students staying in Education and Training. This has also included an increase in young mothers returning to college in Years 12 and 13.

Young people who have not previously been able to access Year 11 and Year 12 are returning to college on increased Level courses due to the success of the Pathways Programme.

There has been an increase in UASC/EAL arrivals but all are accessing appropriate college courses for the new academic year.

Ofsted Feedback

A visit from Ofsted in November, during the pandemic, identified that the Head of the Virtual School has put in place, good systems which ensure effective support to children. Staff have adapted well to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Inclusion

There continues to be no children or young people who are in care permanently excluded from their educational setting this academic year.

4. Academic Outcomes 2020.21



There was a reduced data set of academic outcomes due to the changes across the education system.

(a) Year One

The phonics assessment was postponed from the summer term of Year One until the Autumn Term of Year Two.

Table One – Year One Phonics (Nov 2021 – taken in Year Two) (Unvalidated)

	APS	Working At
National CLA	30.4	66.00%
Regional CLA	30.9	66.00%
All Dudley Pupils	32	75.60%
DVS	33	72.70%

The results indicate that our cohort are performing well compared to all Dudley pupils and those in the care system regionally and nationally.

Key Stage Two

The Key Stage Two data was incomplete in this academic year due to Covid. There was a 68% of the OC2 cohort reported, so this analysis is limited to that number. There were 10 males in this group and 12 females currently reported on.

The full cohort has 38 young people attending 36 different educational settings. There is an upward trend in the all the Key Stage Two areas of Reading, Writing, Maths and the combined Reading/Writing/Maths (R/W/M). The outcomes for 2020.21 were:

Table Two – Key Stage Two Outcomes (Unvalidated & Incomplete)

	DVS	Dudley LA (all schools)	WM CiC	National CiC
Reading	59.1%	75.6%	53.0%	50.0%
Writing	50.0%	68.7%	43.0%	41.0%
Maths	59.1%	69.0%	50.0%	47.0%



RWM	50.0%	60.5%	41.0%	37.0%
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There has been a closing of the gap between Dudley CiC and their peers in the borough in all areas.

Table Three – Key Stage Two Average Progress Score (Unvalidated & Incomplete)

	DVS	Dudley LA (all schools)	WM CiC	National CiC
Reading	+2.20	-0.05	-2.00	-1.61
Writing	+2.61	-0.38	-2.02	-1.88
Maths	+2.85	-0.28	-1.80	-1.80

The male children performed better (-0.23) in Reading than the Dudley Average Progress Score (-0.74) and the regional CLA (-5.03) and national CLA (-2.77). The female children (+4.34) performed better than the males and the Dudley (+0.62), Regional CLA (+0.58) and National CLA (-0.15).

In Writing and Maths, there was a similar picture with the cohort currently being reported outperforming Dudley Schools, Regional CLA and National CLA by both males and females, with females performing better.

Key Stage Four

The results have been collected from the educational settings for Key Stage Four, there has been internal refining to identify the OC2 group (i.e., those that have been in care for at least 12 months on 31st March). There are also two further young people who have just completed Year 11 but are in fact Year 12 so have not been included in this analysis.

Table Four - Context: Full Year 11 Cohort

Boys	Girls
32	18

Table Five: Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (As at end of 20.21)

Pupils With EHC P	Pupils With SEN S	Pupils In Borough Provision With EHCP	Pupils OOB Provision With EHCP	Pupils In Borough With SENS	Pupils OOB With SENS	Pupils Not In Provision With EHCP	Pupils Not In Provision With SENS
1	6	1	0	6	0	0	0
2	3	1	1	3	0	0	0

2	4	2	0	2	2	0	0
3	8	2	1	7	1	0	0
7	9	3	4	5	4	0	0
10	9	4	5	8	1	1	0
13	7	4	9	4	3	0	0
10	5	4	6	4	1	0	0
11	10	6	5	4	6	0	0
12	13	4	8	5	8	0	0
13	9	6	7	3	6	0	0
17	8	6	10	3	5	1	0
101	91	43	56	54	37	2	0

Total CLA Pupils with EHCP (R - Yr 11)	24.46 %	101
Total CLA Pupils with SENS (R-Yr11)	22.03 %	91
CLA Pupils Educated In Borough with EHCP	42.57 %	43
CLA Pupils Educated OOB with EHCP	55.45 %	56
CLA Pupils Not in Education Provision with EHCP	1.98%	2

Table Six: Year 11 OC2 Cohort 20.21 Educational Settings Attended

Dudley		Out Of Area		Other	
Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
17	45	22	55	0	

The number of young people attending alternative providers was been reduced in 2020.21 from the previous year.

In addition to the OC2 group the Year 11 cohort this academic year has included:

- 3 young people who have recently left care
- 2 young person who was in their third year in Key Stage Four (one who secured 8 GCSE/equivalent passes at Grade 4 or above)
- 3 young people who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

- 8 young people who are new to care.

The cohort of young people in our care continues to be distributed across a wide geographical area. This is illustrated by the Year 11 cohort.

Table Seven: Out Of Area Educational Settings Locations

Local Authority	Number
Bedford	1
Coventry	1
Herefordshire	1
Manchester	1
Sandwell	3
Shropshire	1
Stoke	2
Telford	1
Walsall	2
Warwickshire	1
Wolverhampton	1
Worcestershire	3

Table Eight: Year 11 (Key Stage Four) Unvalidated Outcomes 2020.21

Category	2020.2021 Number	2020.21%	2019.20 Number	2019.20%
Eng 4+	19	50	19	33
Maths 4+	17	44.7	13	23
Eng 5+	8	21	11	19
Maths 5+	12	26	9	16
Eng 6+	4	10.5	n/a	n/a
Maths 6+	3	8	n/a	n/a
Eng 7+	0	0	n/a	n/a
Maths 7+	1	2.6	n/a	n/a
Eng 8+	0	0	n/a	n/a
Maths 8+	1	2.6	n/a	n/a
Eng/Maths 4+	14	37	13	23
Eng/Maths 5+	5	12.5	7	12

E-Bacc Achieved	6	15	7	12
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This represents an upward trend, with further improvements from 2019.20, which had built upon the improvement on the outcomes from the academic year 2018.19 where the young people with English/Maths combined at 5+ was 6.1% (7.9% in 2017.18).

In considering those young people who have been following courses leading to GCSE qualifications then outcomes are further improved to 48% of the OC2 cohort achieving Grade 4+ in both English and Maths, with 18.5% achieving grade 5+ in English & Maths.

Table Eight: Year 11 OC2 (Key Stage Four) Unvalidated Outcomes In & Out Of Borough

Category	Dudley		Out Of Area		Other	
	Number	% of Dudley Cohort	Number	% of OOB cohort	Number	%
E/M 4+	9	22.5	10	26	n/a	n/a
E/M 5+	1	2.5	4	10	n/a	n/a
E-bacc	5	12.5	2	5	n/a	n/a
No quals	2		1			n/a

The unvalidated data in Table seven suggests that young people attending Dudley educational settings have improved on the previous year where the OOB young people outperformed those in borough. The focus English and Maths in Pep targets will be continued this year, with a further focus on SMART targets.

Table Nine – OC2 Year 11 Breakdown of qualifications 2020.21 (Unvalidated)

	Grades 9-4
Achieved 8x GCSEs	3
Achieved 7x GCSEs	3

Achieved 6x GCSEs	4
Achieved 5x GCSEs	4
Achieved 4x GCSEs	1
Achieved 3x GCSEs	2
Achieved 2x GCSEs	3
Achieved 1x GCSEs	1

In addition, there were 12 young people who secured a Pass, Merit or Distinction at Level 2 in one or more BTEC subjects. A further young person secured Functional Skills at Level Two in Literacy and Numeracy.

Table Ten– OC2 Year 11 Breakdown of Qualifications Entered 2020.21 (Unvalidated)

	Numbers
Entered for 8x GCSEs/BTEC/FS L2	15
Entered for 7x GCSEs/BTEC/FS L2	3
Entered for 6x GCSEs/BTEC/FS L2	2
Entered for 5x GCSEs/BTEC/FS L2	1
Entered for 4x GCSEs/BTEC/FS L2	0
Entered for 3x GCSEs/BTEC/FS L2	1
Entered for 2x GCSEs/BTEC/FS L2	0
Entered for 1x GCSEs/BTEC/FS L2	3
Achieved 0x GCSEs	7

In the OC2 group there are 17 young people who have an EHCP, 16 of whom attended a Special School, with a further young person attending an Alternative Provision. In this group:

- 2 young people achieved a grade 4 in GCSE English, with a further 1 securing a Functional Skills at Level 2 Literacy.
- 1 young person achieved grade 4 in GCSE Maths, with a further 1 securing a Functional Skills at Level 2 Numeracy.

Furthermore, one young person secured Functional Skills at Level One literacy, and another at one at Entry Level One Literacy. In Functional Skills Numeracy, two young people secured Entry Level One.

A further success story is a young person who was in danger of securing no qualifications, has achieved a grade B in Maths, in a YOI in Wales (equivalent to Grade 6/7) and a Level One in literacy Functional Skills.

A focus on those young people with identified Special Educational Needs (including EHCP's) identifies that of the 27 young people, 14 followed GCSE courses of which:

Table eleven: Year 11 OC2 SEN Group English & Maths (unvalidated)

	Grade 4+	Grade 5+	Grade 6+	Grade 7+
English	9	3	1	0
Maths	9	6	3	1
English and Maths	7	0	0	0

There were 12 young people with identified SEND needs who attended mainstream schools, of which 9 followed GCSE courses.

As in the last academic year, there is a cohort of young people who are following courses leading to Level One or below outcomes. These are very appropriate to their learning needs at this time and can lead to Level Two in future years. There are 15 young people attending Special Schools.

The reporting of the Attainment 8 and Progress 8 will not be possible this year. Similarly, the comparative data with other groups, SEND, local authorities and trends will not be made available.

The academic tracking system that has been developed over the year and has identified the cohort in the following categories:



Table Twelve: Year 11 Tracking Categories

Code	Focus	Detail	OC2 Numbers 2020.21
	4+ E&M	Young People following GCSE courses and baseline data supports securing Grade 4 or above in core subjects	19
	1x4+ E or M	Young people following GCSE courses and baseline data supports securing Grade 4 or above in either English or Maths	3
	GCSE E&M >4	Young people following GCSE courses and baseline data supports securing below a Grade 4 in the core subjects	2
	FS	Young people following Functional Skills qualifications	13
	No quals.	Young people who have been disengaged from education and are at risk of not securing any qualifications	2

A review of the targets (Table Ten) included in the Personal Education Plans (Pep's) identifies that current outcome are similar to the targets for the group of young people who have studied GCSE courses and demonstrated the academic ability to achieve a 'pass' grade. This information has been shared with schools in the training made available for Designated Techers. The first Pep meeting of the year has been used to establish the criteria by which a school sets its targets in order that there is consistency of understanding by the Virtual School.

Table Thirteen: Year 11 Pep Outcomes Targets

Autumn Term 2020				
Group	At expected or above in English number	At expected or above in English %	At expected or above in Maths Number	At expected or above in Maths %
Blue	12	30	12	30

Green	2	5	3	7.5
Amber	3	7.5	2	5
Yellow	2	5	2	5
Purple	0	0	0	0
Spring Term 2021				
	At expected or above in English number	At expected or above in English %	At expected or above in Maths Number	At expected or above in Maths %
Group				
Blue	10	25	10	25
Green	2	5	2	5
Amber	4	10	3	7.5
Yellow	1	2.5	1	2.5
Purple	0	0	0	0
Summer Term 2021				
	At expected or above in English number	At expected or above in English %	At expected or above in Maths Number	At expected or above in Maths %
Group				
Blue	14	35	8	20
Green	3	7.5	2	5
Amber	6	15	3	7.5
Yellow	1	2.5	1	2.5
Purple	0	0	0	0

The number of young people with no qualifications in the two previous academic years has been a real concern. There was a focus on this year during 2019.20 helping with a 44% reduction of the number of young people in this category. In 2020.21, there were three young people in this category, all of whom had experienced a change in residential placement which adversely affected the academic progress and outcomes, not helped by the change in assessment processes with centre assessment grades (CAG's).

The Pathways Programme, a partnership with Juniper work-based training provider, has targeted the disengaged young people in Yar 11 and 12 to be supported by tuition leading to Functional Skills qualifications.

The initial plan was for the Pathway provision to deliver focused learning to this group of young people who were not anticipated to achieve at GCSE level. The pandemic presented challenges for the programme which was addressed by implementing online delivery of the provision. This change in intent presented some barriers however it also enabled the provision to become accessible for young people who are out of borough, disengaged with school and/or currently NEET and lacking the motivation to engage in FE or employment.

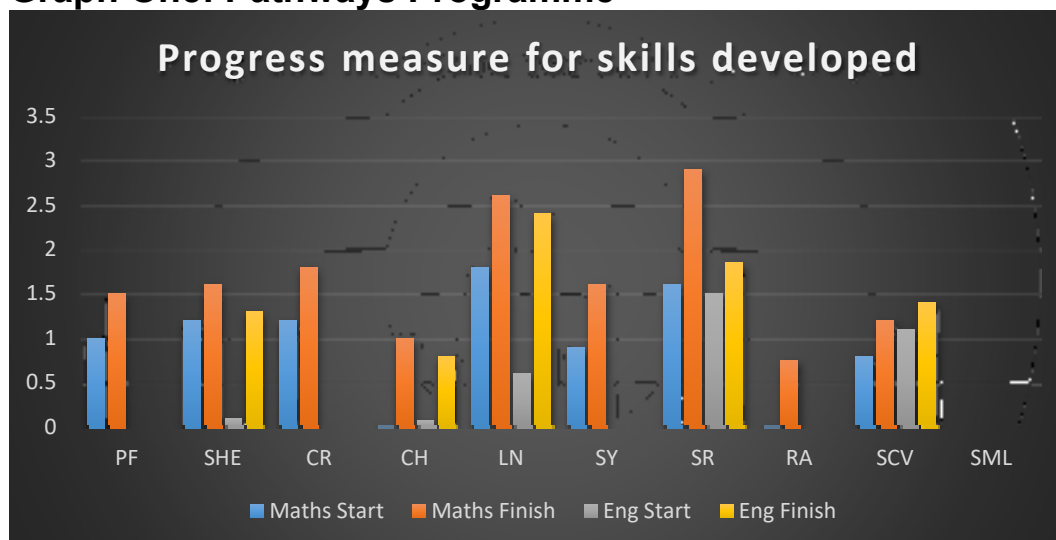
The key progresses identified in the pilot of the provision is the number of young people who have engaged with the provision, and although they may complete the full programme and achieve a qualification, the positive experience and skills developed have aided their transition into FE or employment.

There were sixteen learners who were signed up to the provision, the following outcomes were established:

Nine Learners engaged with the provision online at several stages throughout the provision, seven learners were referred however failed to attend or complete their initial assessments to enable them to have their provision planned.

The Table thirteen shows the skills development of each learner within the time they spent working with us on the Pathway Provision. To give context, where the starting point on 0 or below this indicates a starting level of Entry 1 – Entry 3

Graph One: Pathways Programme



This illustrates that the pathways provision available for them to access enables any gaps in education to be minimised. This offer not only provides academic development, but it too has also proven to help build the young person confidence in working with people, their focus and drive to see their own potential and to drive themselves forward into a positive outcome.

These outcomes have included re-engagement with education, securing paid employment and feeling more comfortable in moving forward into an FE or college placement.

5 **Post 16**

The Post 16 cohort needs to be considered over a three, and sometimes four-year period. There are a number of young people who take longer to navigate their Post 16 pathway due to such issues as mental health problems, changes in educational placements during secondary education, breakdown of residential placements etc – all adversely affecting the continuity of their education. This can, and does lead to disengagement, underachievement in outcomes, a lowering of aspirations and enrolment on inappropriate courses. The VS has embedded excellent relationships to ensure advice and guidance can meet need and the CYP following successful courses.

The cohort attending FE Colleges fall into two categories. The first, those completing Level 2 by the end of the academic year will move to Level 3 if they want a University Course. These young people will be Year 14 before they conclude Level 3 studies so the Virtual School is developing work alongside the Care Leavers Team.

The second group, Level 1 Students who are placed on their courses due to their GCSE Results not being at Grade 4 have to complete another year of GCSE.

The partnership work with HMYOI provision has continued to be developed to ensure that young people who 'on release' can be quickly, and seamlessly re-integrate back into an employment, education, or training pathway.

The transient nature of Post 16 staffing in the educational settings has the risk of reducing continuity in relationships with our young people. All changes are quickly identified, and action, training and support rapidly taken. This is also helping to develop the resilience of our young people to cope with the changes as they are moving towards becoming an independent adult.



The Post 16 cohort for 202.21 was 144 with 65 young people in Year 12 and 79 in Year 13.

In Year 13, 76% (6) achieved one or more accredited qualification this academic year. At 'A' Level there was 100% pass rate of young people achieving their grades. There will be 5% (5) will be attending University via A Level or Level 3 routes set to increase next year. There are 5% (5) of young people in prison and on remand for this academic year. Furthermore, in Year 13 38% of the cohort have confirmed re-enrolment to next level of course representing a significant improvement from the previous two years.

In the Post 16 cohort (Yr. 12 & 13) 4% have an Apprenticeship or Traineeship, whilst 6% have entered employment.

In Year 12 Students 72% are moving up a level after their first year of study. An individualised approach to supporting Year 12 & 13 young parents to return to college has seen all targeted (2%/4). This has resulted in all having been supported with gaining finance and nursery provision for their children for the duration of the course.

There has also been a concerted effort in supporting young people who have followed other courses.

In Year 12 & 13 English and Maths Functional Skills Award gained are:

English

Entry 3 - 5% 5 students

Level 1 – 5% 5 students

Level 2 – 5% 6 students

Maths

Entry 3 - 5% 7 students

Level 1 -5% 7 students

Level 2 -5% 7 students

These are young people who had not achieved GCSE Grades in school
In addition, there are a group of young people who have secured their GCSE in English and/or Maths including:

GCSE Maths Grade 4 or above 6% 9 students

GCSE English Grade 4 or above 7% 10 students

This cohort were young people who achieved 3 or less in school.



Educational Outcomes Development Programmes

The true impact of the pandemic upon the academic outcomes of our young people continues to be reviewed. It is clear that, the academic outcomes indicated in the termly Pep reviews suggest outcomes will be significantly below those of their peers across all age groups. In addition to arranging a full range of interventions, including the National Tutoring Programme for older learners, a more transformational approach to teaching and learning needs to be introduced and developed.

In the Primary Phase, the EEF literacy Programme has been delivered across the schools. They are now looking at their research focus work in consultation with the EEF Research Schools. This programme is being developed in collaboration with other Black Country Virtual Schools as pilot for the West Midlands region. This is significant as between 40% and 50% of our cohort reside out of borough and therefore attend non-Dudley Schools. This will help to raise awareness of not only the cohort but teaching and learning approaches to support their needs.

There are discussions currently underway to plan the introduction of a parallel EEF Numeracy programme to commence in the new academic year.

At the secondary, the Virtual School, in partnership with Challenging Education, has agreed with seven schools about introducing the Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Young people (RADY) for the next academic year. This has commenced now and will allow all the preparatory work to be made for the new Year 7 cohort.

RADY is a long-term 'hearts and minds' programme that eventually becomes habit for every member of staff in school. This programme aims to target teaching and learning through a different 'lens', making things 'feel different' for learners and their families, encouraging children to make accelerated progress and catch up with their non-disadvantaged peers.

The ambition of the programme is for as many schools as possible to embrace and engage with the RADY pledge and ensure that the most disadvantaged youngsters have every chance of attaining as highly as their peers. The programme looks at the challenge where national data shows that the attainment difference between learners in poverty and their peers is stubbornly resilient to improvement. The changes that RADY brings about in a school take



time to impact on learners, often requires changing hearts and minds and tend to be most successful when receiving ongoing support from an expert coach with school leadership experience.

The DVS is supporting a fully funded In-school RADY for the pilot schools. This offers three days in school (one per term) supplemented with remote coaching equivalent to three and a half hours per term. Remote coaching as described above. The programme for visits has been agreed with the schools and could include Visit 1 - Seeing the school's current position and priorities (discussions, observations, interviews); coaching key leaders on RADY and support with whole school launch; SLT session to golden thread the school development plan. Visit 2 - Participation, parental engagement, SEND/ALN; SLT review session on progress with golden thread; practical next steps identified and documented. Visit 3 - Evaluation visit. All aspects of RADY within the school are evaluated alongside school staff. Impact review report agreed, and practical next steps distilled from this.

The schools are:

- Bishop Milner
- Dormston
- Dudley Multi-Academy Trust (4 schools)
- Summerhill

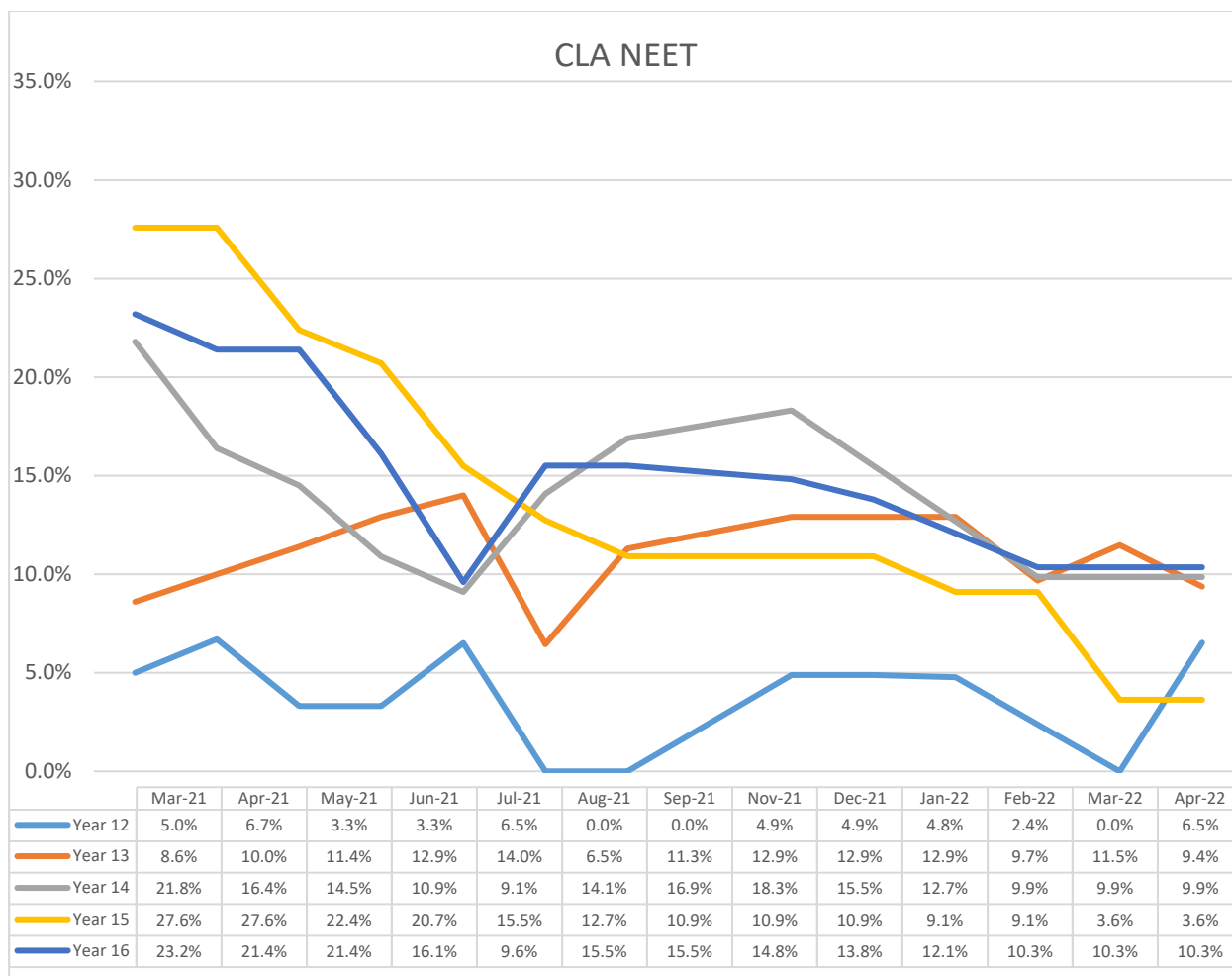
NEET's.

The positive work with our Post 16 cohort to keep them engaged in their employment, education and training continues. The fact that all young people in Year 12 were fully engaged March is a fantastic achievement by our Post 6 advisers.

The forward planning for our Year 11 has been enhanced by a transition focus within the Spring Term Pep meeting, with the summer term Pep meetings being used to ensure all the cohort have been engaged in this and will be able to positively transition next year.

Graph Two: Not In Employment, Education or Training (NEET)





SEND

The SEND and Emotional Well-Being sections of the Pep have featured highly in the Designated Teachers briefings and the e-Pep training this term. This training has highlighted the need for detailed information around the needs of each child or young person and how it can help to secure the most appropriate and effective support.

The informed relationships that have developed between the children and young people and the DVS Education Adviser has helped to identify areas of need for some of our young people where this had not previously been identified. This is particularly pertinent to some older young people where a number of placement changes have minimised the opportunities for any effective assessment to be made.

In the case of younger children, this term has seen a growing number of children demonstrating emotional crisis that their schools have found it very challenging

to support. The partnership with Sycamore Short Stay Centre has provided a great support here in terms of emergency placements that has provided some respite for both the child and the school, allowing some stabilisation of emotions and the capacity to effectively plan a solution-focussed pathway.

The Virtual School continue to work closely with the SEND service. There are a number of initiatives that are being reviewed:

- Joint EHCP, LAC Review and Pep meetings
- Pathway Programme extension to support young people with emotional well-being issues that are potentially preventing engagement with education.
- Data sets

Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health

DVS have taken a leading role in helping to develop a regional, and potentially national, approach to recognising good practice in Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Schools (TIAAS). The West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit, Educational Psychology Services and Virtual Schools all have an ambition to see educational providers adopt attachment aware and trauma-informed whole school approaches. The VRU and West Midlands Combined Authority are also exploring ways to bring senior leads together from across the entire regional system of statutory and voluntary providers to examine ways to facilitate the embedding of trauma-informed approaches. As part of this connected activity, there is an appetite for developing a regional certification model that encourages trauma-informed and attachment aware approaches within education. Such a process could be used as a model for other sectors to follow as part of the WMCA/VRU regional work at a later date.

The vision for this process is that we practice what we preach. If we are seeking to encourage the use of trauma-informed approaches then this process itself must be trauma-informed. This means the vision is as follows:

- A truly collaborative enterprise that recognises and respects the skills, expertise and existing programmes being run in each authority. These are incorporated into the final product rather than replaced. Each locality/authority has an identity and an existing system that this process should add value to.
- A process that understands that past experiences of both collaborative working and partnerships of this nature can influence the way we



approach future exercises such as this one. Professionals may have unconscious or hidden anxieties/concerns about involvement in this exercise. The process should proceed carefully and purposefully, with enough time to explore and unpick any feelings that may arise during the process. Any concerns should be seen, heard, and understood and given the due consideration they deserve.

- The process should embody the core principles of safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. It should be strengths-based and relationship-based with these values evident throughout.
- The vision outlined here may be amended through discussion amongst those involved in the group, but this acts a starting point to set out the vision from the outset around the spirit within which the exercise is to be conducted.

At a national level, the VSHT will be representing Dudley at the national launch of the REES Centre/Alex Timpson Trust research findings, and the Attachment Research Community parliamentary call to action event hosted by Edward Timpson MP – both taking place in June.

Arts Link Programme

The new academic year of 2021.22 continues to see a developing Arts offer for our young people with a growing number of face-to-face activities re-emerging.

Instrumental Lessons

The Autumn Term saw a 100% Year 4 take up plus three out of borough children receiving lessons in their authority.

There have been 34 instrumental lessons delivered across a range of instruments during this academic year despite Covid restrictions. Online instrumental lesson were a challenge for some of the cohort, however it was pleasing to note that with the help of DT's we did manage to teach some children in care online while they were in school.

Out of the 34 lessons:

- 14 children were part of the Year 4 funded lessons cohort
- 8 Year 5 children continued their lessons from the previous year



- 14 children from Year 2 – Year 9 started instrumental lessons after discussions in ePEP meetings

Network Meetings

There has been a strengthening of relationships with Designated Teacher's regarding instrumental lessons. This has been achieved by networking DPA staff, DVS staff, social workers and DT's helping to initiate a more joined up approach to the Arts to create better opportunities.

There have been the introduction two online network meeting this year. One for designated teachers, social workers, and virtual school staff, the second was for foster carers. These were planned to talk about Arts opportunities available for children in care and how to access them. They provide a great platform to raise awareness of the work and have been calendared for the new academic year. This work has initiated more dialogue with virtual school staff and designated teachers talking about music lessons.

Residential Childrens Home Projects

There has been a new focus upon Arts projects in three children's homes across the borough. Covid delayed the start of the project but we managed to get projects off the ground in two of the homes.

- Tipton Road - Edward Davies Singing and song writing workshop.
Provided 4/4 workshops for 4 young people with a range of learning disabilities. Feedback from the home was 'a positive experience for all our young people' and they are looking at ways to progress from the workshop activities to have some studio sessions with Edward. The home were really keen for their young people to engage in the arts and very supportive of children and Edward.
- St James - Bethany Slinn Story telling workshop.
Provided 4/4 workshops for 2 young people. When Bethany started the home only had one child (KR). She did 3 workshops with this child but the last one was cancelled because he was going home to his parents. KR said how much he enjoyed his sessions with Bethany. The last workshop was with a new child. Bethany actually delivered an extra session because she could see that this young person was gaining so much confidence from the workshop.



- Maitland Road - This home didn't have any children in until after Easter and then it was decided that the planned workshops for graffiti art were now no longer suitable for the young people they had in the home.

Evaluation meetings with care home managers is planned for this year to discuss the impact of the sessions, ways they could be improved and built upon.

Holiday Offers

To extend the *Check it out Challenge* online February half term offer the Birmingham & Black Country cluster opted to create a number of online artist sessions over 2 days. A member of staff from each VS was responsible for identifying the art form of each session, selecting an artist (from a selection of pre-vetted experienced artists), and attending and co-hosting the sessions. Sessions offered: Breakin (dance), rapping & beats (music) drawing with everyday objects, mask making and graffiti drawing (visual arts), writing for social media, story play and poems (literature). 87 young people took part in 9 online artist sessions, the majority were young people from the cluster and in addition there were bookings from Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Shropshire and Coventry (bookings were opened to all VSs in the 10 days leading up to sessions).

Feedback included requests for more online sessions. Follow up included Arts Award offer, signposting to Connect & Create creative challenges and receiving updates via Artslink's mailing list. An Artslink Instagram account was launched to track the event, participants from sessions are invited to photograph and submit work to be featured in the online gallery and on Instagram (safeguarding protocols apply to the Instagram content and the young people are anonymised).

There have been other 'Give It A Go' activities over the Spring Term. The Brits Art Show 9 in Wolverhampton was supported by a group of our young people who attended the workshop and visited the Arts gallery. A further cluster event saw a small group of our young people benefit from the 'Let's Animate' programme.

Summer School

As part of the first Virtual School summer school there five days of Arts to a group of children aged 9 – 16 at The Source Youth Centre.



This used DPA instrumental staff and a freelance artist to work with the group on two themed days – a STOMP style junk percussion day linked with eco art and a samba music day linked with carnival mask making. A third day had a graffiti artist working individually with the young people creating their own art work, this was alongside a word poet, Kurly McGeachie and Birmingham’s poet laureate, Dreadlock Alien who worked with the group to write and perform a rap/poem about being in care and their thoughts about what they wish their social workers were like. This was edited using some of their animations. There were two further days supported by the Museums Teams.

The mindset of the Arts days was that everyone there took part – all young people, staff and youth workers and this approach worked well.

Cluster Programme

There was a performance-based Canal Trip in December where 87 people attended over various days leading up to Christmas (41 adults & 46 children). The feedback very positive:

“Wow, today was amazing, we had the most wonderful time.”

“Thank you to all involved on the trip and getting the tickets.”

“Certainly, a memory for us to treasure.”

“It was great amazing time”

During May half term we hosted a face-to-face session at Resonance on a Sunday afternoon with VITAL, a local rapper. This came as the culmination of a series of four online sessions for the Rap ‘n’ Write project. Children were invited from across our Artslink cluster. The afternoon included creating video material to run alongside the rap the children had created during the online sessions and each young person got the chance to record their part of the rap in the studio at Resonance. VITAL edited the material together and has been shared across Artslink. From participants.

“I can’t get my feelings out when I talk. This is easier it means I can say what I’m feeling.”

“We want loads more of this cos it’s good and we can say what we want to say.”

Layers Of Legacy Project



The Layers of Legacy face to face session took place during October half term at African Caribbean Centre in Dudley.

This project was developed to celebrate important figures in Black History. This required children and young people to watch leading videos and 'create something' as a response to what they have seen. This was in any Art form, ie pictures, photographs, poems, songs etc.

Arts Award Discover At Home – update

The Arts Award is an ongoing offer via Artslink and supported by the Dudley Arts Ambassador and the Dudley Participation Officer. The focus on developing the Arts Award continues with five young people already completing this and a further five near completions.

Other Developments

A new initiative in using the Arts as an intervention for pupil struggling with school at Red House Glass Cone in conjunction with Kate Figgitt has been implemented to help prevent a permanent Exclusion.

There are two Arts Ambassadors now trained as Arts Award Assessors for Explore and Bronze awards

The Children in Care Awards were an excellent platform to share and celebrate the engagement of our children and young people in the Arts, with twenty-two performing during the evening. This has certainly given them the 'taste for treading the boards', with a Performance Platform now being planned for July 13th, exclusively for our cohort.

At a national level, Dudley Virtual School are a part of the national pilot by the Arts Council to develop the kite mark for Virtual Schools. In addition, DVS were represented at the national launch of the 'My Creative Track' offer of cultural entitlement for our young people, with follow-up discussions with Ofsted, Dfe, NAVSH and the Association of School & College Leaders (ASCL).

Sports Link

The parallel programme, focussing on Sport was introduced in September 2020. The initial phase has seen a number of organisations and partners approached to develop an offer including: Sports4Life

- WBA Foundation



- Active Black Country
- Basketball England (Signposting to clubs)
- Wicketz Cricket

Due to the impact of Covid19, sessions both outdoors and indoors for sports were postponed until safe after lockdown.

This academic year of 20.21 has been used to pilot a number of sporting opportunities

Yoga & You:

Yoga and You offered online sessions after school hours to keep young people (and carers) engaged and fit regardless of the restrictions. The sessions were a success, with children and young people who attended regularly started to build up relationships and confidence with the instructor. Sessions ran for young people in care Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Later, in the year, sessions for carers were organised and ran Tuesdays and Thursdays. These although not child based, deemed to be quite popular. There were over 150 participants in this programme which provided a potential exit route to private sessions.

October Half Term 2020:

In October half term, Wicketz hosted a session for beginners and for anyone who was interested to attend at the Dudley Leisure Centre. In total 8 young people attended this event and really enjoyed it.

February Half Term 2021

In February Half term, a range of online sporting activities were made available for our cohort. These sessions included:

- Embracing PE
- Beginners' fitness with Gwen
- Intermediate with Gwen
- Yoga and You
- 60 Second Challenges
- Talk with Bernardo Pezo

During the week, there was a total of 37 within the Birmingham & The Black Country, with the activities that were pre-recorded being readily available on the WMCiC Foundation website after the week.



This work has now been consolidated by a partnership with Active Black Country.

Workforce Development

Dudley Virtual School, in the academic year of 2020.21, were involved in organising and/or hosting 36 separate formal training sessions. One to one and informal training carried out by individual members of staff also take place regularly on an ad hoc basis.

In addition, the Educational Psychology Service, on behalf of the Virtual School, has provided whole school training on Attachment throughout the year to a number of schools.

A small number of the formal sessions were cancelled or postponed due to Covid related restrictions but, despite this, training was delivered to nearly 600 designated teachers, social workers, carers and other professionals.

Nurture Provision

This Public Health led initiative has focussed on Primary schools in phase 1 and 2. This initiative has been connected with the Attachment Aware Schools programme via the Nurture and Resilience Group.

The proposal to extend the Nurture and Resilience Project to Phase 3 y6/7 Transition was postponed until the new academic year due to the pandemic .

This programme has been recognised at a national level with the ARC Timpson Award for Collaborative Programmes.

DVS Annual Conference – Nurturing Educational Success For Children In Care

This on-line event took place on Thursday 9th July 2021. This targeted Designated Teachers, Senior Leaders in charge of Teaching & Learning, Governor's with responsibility for CiC, Social Workers. It featured a focus on an Attachment Aware & Trauma Informed School, led by Stuart Guest (Head Teacher of a Primary School) and a second on being Care Experienced from Luke Rogers (Care Leaders).

Supporting Foster Carers

There continues to be a developing offer to support Foster Carers around the education of our young people. This calendared programme includes:

- Arts
- Numeracy



- Emotional Well Being
- Personal Education Plans
- DVS Advice & Guidance For Supporting the home education of children in care
- Love To Learn Bulletin – a bulletin circulated during the lockdown periods for Carers providing learning tips and resources, plus emotional well-being links.

The DVS Website hosts a range of learning resources and links to many sites for all ages.

Post 16 Development

There has been very focussed work around developing the e-Pep across the Post 16 cohort. This has been co-ordinated through the Lead Education Adviser in partnership with the Connexions PA, and integrates Career Guidance, SEND focussed work (specifically around EHCP's), and EET pathways.

The Post 16 workforce is a very transient group so the support and/or training that is required is continual and very much individualised to meet the needs of the changing staff.

Youth Offending Service Development

The Virtual School has supported the YOT Team to further develop PEPS and greater information of the educational engagement which identify the progression of YP in HMYOI and a better understanding of how to support them on release to access appropriate pathways and maximise their opportunities in education, training and work opportunities.

Training Offered By DVS

The Virtual School continues to offer a full training programme to Designated Teachers, School Governors, Social Workers, health Professionals, Education workforce.

Finance

6. The developments within this report are supported by the Pupil Premium Plus Grant. This provides £2345 per young person in care. The financial plan is reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure targets are met.



Law

7. There are no direct implications arising from the contents of this report.

Risk Management

8. There are no direct implications arising from the contents of this report.

Equality Impact

9. This report highlights the impacts made for Children in Care. It includes some consultations with children and young people in developing the offer.

10 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

11 There are no human resources/transformation implications.

Commercial/Procurement

12 This report has no impact on trade and/or customer base.

Council Priorities and Projects

13 This report supports the Council priority to become Child Friendly.

In particular this report supports the aim for Dudley to be a place where everybody has the education and skills they need, and where outstanding local schools, colleges, and universities secure excellent results for their learners.

14 This report integrates with the Corporate Parenting Issue.



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