

Prepare 4 Success Virtual School



Annual Review 2016-2017
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Bath & North East
Somerset Council

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1. Context

1.1 The Annual Review covers the previous academic year of the Prepare 4 Success Virtual School of Bath & North East Somerset for Children in Care and the P4S School Improvement Plan for 2017-2018. This has and continues to be a period of significant change and challenge, both within the authority and nationally.

1.2 Within the authority:

Change:

- The virtual school has a new part time headteacher, Victoria Duke, following the retirement of Mike Gorman in March 2017. The team remains very small with a part time Phase Lead for Year 9 to Post 16, a Phase Lead for Early Years to Year 8 and an admin officer alongside the headteacher. The Virtual School is now called Prepare4Success (P4S), with an identifier or logo designed by a primary child in care.

Challenge:

- Despite growing numbers of children in care in education between nursery and Post 16 provision and additional responsibilities from the Children and Social Care Act for the statutory virtual schools in England, the P4S Bath & North Somerset Virtual School remains the smallest in terms of ratio in the South West and without any means of funding to increase capacity. New ways of working are constantly being investigated or piloted due to this.
- The OFSTED inspection took place at the end of April and commented that:

“Proactive and purposeful partnership work by the virtual school ensures that children looked after progress and achieve well educationally, with effective support in place for every child. However, too many children have recently experienced fixed-term exclusions.

The virtual school works closely and very effectively with schools in and out of the area to ensure that children looked after have a good-quality education, are kept safe from bullying, and that interventions and support strategies are in place so that each child can achieve well. Just over 90% of children are placed in schools which are judged good or better. The virtual school has achieved steadily improved outcomes for children looked after in successive years.

*No children looked after have been permanently excluded from school in the past two years, but the level of fixed-term exclusions has risen and is now high, at 14%. No action plan is currently in place to reduce fixed-term exclusions.
(Recommendation)*

Schools complete detailed personal education plans (PEPs) for children twice a year. The large majority of these plans are highly individualised, very well-informed

by the teachers' and the child's views, and focused on specific needs. However, a minority of PEPs do not include precise targets. Schools use the pupil premium effectively to provide practical support and development opportunities for children. Measurable improvements in educational and personal outcomes for children are evident.

The attainment and progress of most children who have been looked after for more than 12 months are good, and are broadly the same for children who attend schools either in or out of the area. In 2015–16, children's attainment at GCSE level was high. The proportion achieving five GCSEs at A to C including English and mathematics was slightly over double that of children looked after nationally, and well over twice the national rate for English and mathematics at grade C or above. This high level of attainment provides B&NES children with improved opportunities for entry to further education of their choice. Nevertheless, a declining proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds in the academic year so far is engaged in education, employment or training (Recommendation)"*

1.3 Within Education and new publications from OFSTED, the DfE and the Children's Commissioner:

Challenge:

- Reformed and significantly more demanding GCSEs were sat this year in maths and English. Each year more subjects will be "reformed", meaning that for many children in care, with significant gaps in learning or a number of moves to different schools, achieving their potential becomes more difficult
- The new national curriculum and more demanding SATs continued within the Primary Phase. A recent ruling from Ofqual's into the reading test in 2016 found:

"On the balance of evidence presented, it seems plausible that the combined impact from multiple ostensibly negligible challenges – stemming from both question and text factors – may have rendered the 2016 reading test unduly hard to access for at least some pupils."

- OFSTED launched their plan for 2017-2022, with a continued focus on advocating for Children in Care and disadvantaged students to support closing the attainment gap.
- The 2016 DfE publication, "Unknown children, destined for disadvantage," highlights how the gap in progress, development and achievement can be significant (19months in speech and language) before statutory school age is even reached. It includes the research which indicates that:

"The first five years of a child's life are crucial in establishing the way that they think, learn and behave, particularly between birth and the age of three. To be behind after

only 1,000 days of life predisposes some children to a long and difficult struggle throughout the rest of their formal education.”

- The OFSTED 2016 social care annual report also acknowledges the increased difficulties for children in care due to the impact of previous trauma before and possibly during going into care.

“For those with and without special educational needs, their past experiences often have an ongoing impact on their ability to focus on the business of learning. For many children, achieving emotional steadiness is an essential first step before they can learn. Education is not separate, therefore, from work to improve children’s emotional well-being.

Given their experiences prior to becoming looked after, it may take children looked after longer to complete their studies and achieve the GCSE benchmark.”

- However the report also reiterates the recent research showing that settled care, individual focus in school and continued oversight and challenge by headteachers of the virtual schools, can lead to more progress in English and maths than those on the edge of care and “in need”, especially if children go into care at an earlier age.

One area that can cause further disruption to children in care is a lack of stability. The 2017 publication, “A rapid review of sources of evidence on the views, experiences and perceptions of children in care and care leavers” and the linked “Stability Index from the Childrens Commissioner highlights this with:

“There is a growing recognition that stability (or the lack thereof) is at the heart of the challenge faced by children in care. Children often come into care with a history of difficult and/or fractured relationships, often related to trauma, neglect and abuse. Thereafter, they often experience further disruption, with multiple placements, school moves and changes of key social worker. The new, exploratory “stability index” published by the Children’s Commissioner shows that 71 per cent of all children in care experienced at least one of these changes during a 12 month period.

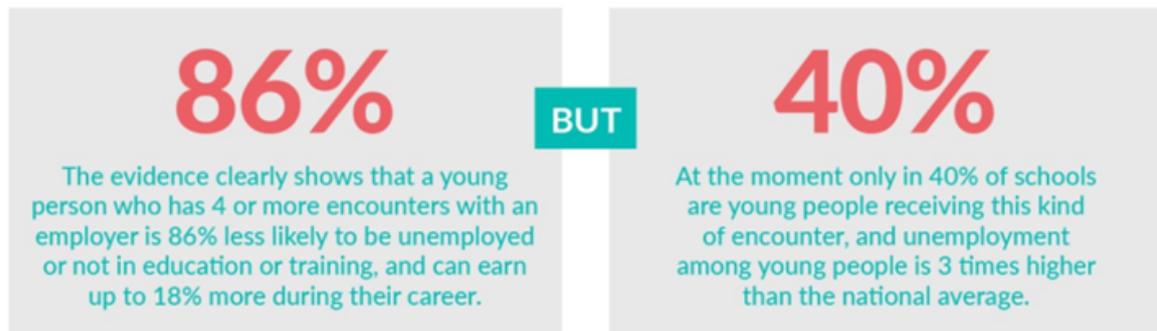
Despite recent improvement, the instability of placements, a high turnover of social workers and a requirement to move schools remain the experience for many children in care. Children in care tell me that being stable and being able to build consistent relationships with carers, friends and teachers is what makes the biggest difference to their lives. That’s why we have developed a Stability Index this year which will become an annual measurement of stability for children in the care of each local authority.”

1.4 Within Careers and Enterprise:

Challenge:

- The OFSTED 2016 social care annual report highlights that there is a gap of 35% between care leavers aged 19-21 being in education, employment and training and those who have not been in care. It highlights the high cost of the situation as well as emphasising that being NEET is not an “inevitable by-product” of being in care. It also comments that only 5% of care leavers aged 19 were in higher education in 2013-4, compared with 33% of all 19 year olds.
- Alongside this, OFSTED have surveyed schools and found that despite employers stating that young people face significant barriers to employment without experiencing activities such as work experience, most schools were no longer able to take the lead in providing work experience or in allowing curriculum time to complete this.
- Careers and Enterprise published the report “What works”, in response to this and the research found that 4 encounters with the world of work from Year 7 to 11, had a significant impact on the likelihood of being in education, employment or training

Encounters with the world of work make a difference



1.5 Within new laws and new statutory guidance, due to be finalised in March 2018, where additional duties must now be led by the Virtual Schools in England:

Challenge:

New duty 1:

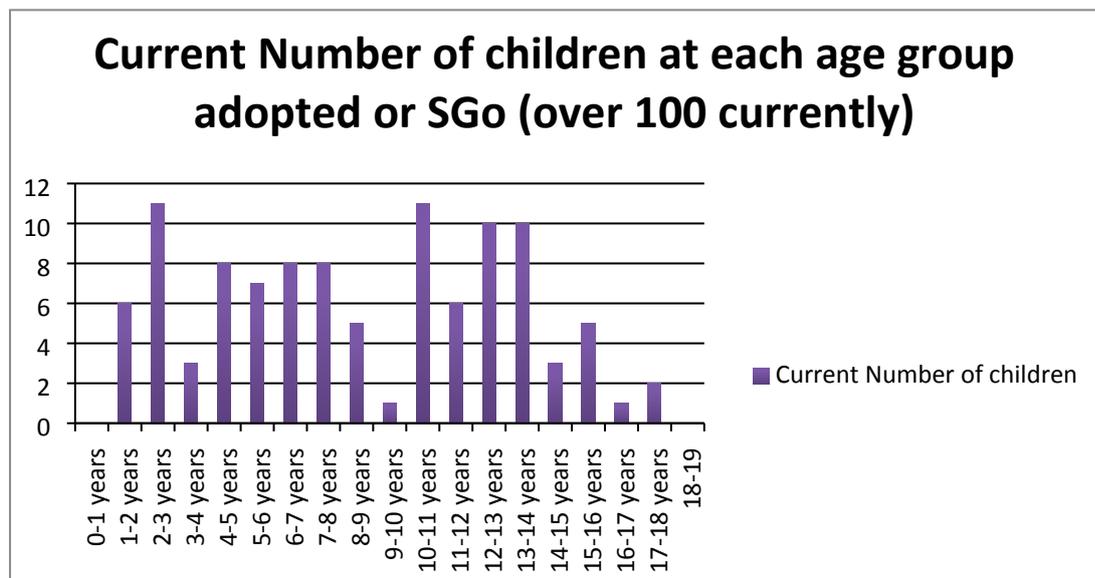
The Children and Social Work Act from April 2017 states that local authorities, i.e. the virtual school, will now be required to promote the educational attainment of children who have been adopted or placed in other long-term arrangements.

There are also additional duties for school.

The headteacher of the P4S Virtual School now has an additional new key role which is to ensure previously looked-after children (Adopted, Special Guardianship

Orders, Care Arrangement Orders), have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential, if they are educated in BANES.

The Virtual School should also ensure they meet the training needs of those responsible for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after children. This may include themselves as headteachers, carers, adoptive parents, designated teachers, other school staff, social workers and IROs. The Virtual School has this duty from when the child becomes eligible for free early education at 2 and conclude when s/he has completed the compulsory years of education.



New duty 2:

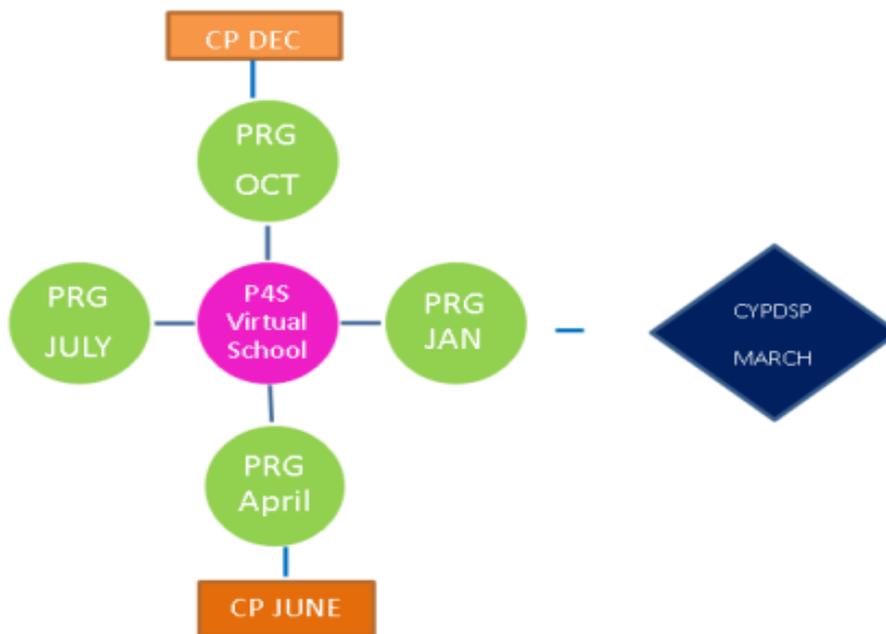
Expectations around children in care have also been strengthened as has the role of the headteacher of the virtual school in relation to this cohort.

The personal education plans are now statutory for those who are below school age and those up to age 18 and must now be reviewed 3 times a year rather than 6 monthly to lead into care plans.

However, although the statutory guidance states that local authorities must ensure “Headteachers of the Virtual School are in place and that they have the resources, time, training and support they need to discharge the duty effectively,” there is no extra funding provided to allow this to happen. Therefore BANES remains with the worst staff ratio within the virtual school within the South West and funding is not available to increase the Headteacher’s hours.

2. Reporting and accountability

2.1 The Prepare 4 Success Virtual School reports to the Corporate Parenting Management Group of the local authority and to the Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel twice a year. The P4S Performance Group (VSPG) meets quarterly and receives reports on key aspects including attainment, exclusions and progress within the School Improvement Plan. There is constant self-evaluation within the virtual school itself.



KEY

PRG: Virtual School Performance Group

CP: Corporate Parenting Members Group

CYPDSP: Children and Young People Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

P4S quality assurance and monitoring, reporting and reviewing processes

3. Profile of children and young people in care supported by the Prepare 4 Success Virtual School

3.1 The number of children in care changes throughout the year but a snapshot in July 2017 the numbers were as follows:

Phase	2015-2016	2016-2017	Current
Number in Early Years/Foundation Stage inc nursery provision	13	15	20
Number in KS 1	5	8	9
Number in KS 2	26	32	33
Number in KS 3	36	27	26
Number in KS 4	35	33	34
Number in Years 12 +	25	55	
Total	140	170	

Numbers and rates of children in care per 10000 children under 18 years old.	2015	2016	2017
National	60	60	62 up
South West	52	53	53 level
BANES	38	42	46 up (most rapid increase)
Bristol	76	73	73 level
South Glos	30	29	31 up
Wiltshire	39	40	42 up

3.2 The number of looked after children continues to increase nationally; it has increased steadily over the last nine years but with a more rapid increase last year. This authority has had the most significant increase in the region.

There remains slightly more males than females and there continues to be a largely white British majority, both locally and nationally. New unaccompanied asylum seekers continue to be placed in BANES but tend to be educated out of authority. Half the children in care are educated outside this authority and are in schools in Liverpool, Wales, Essex and Truro, amongst others. Around a third of the students have special educational needs.

3.3 The Virtual School now works with over 90 schools and settings and this is an increase of 10 from the previous year. There continues to be very close partnership working with the social workers and Managers within the Children in Care/Moving Team, the CFAIT team and the Disabled Children's Team but there is also constant collaboration with the Family Placement Team, the SEND team, Educational Psychologist and Inclusion Team and CAMHS. In addition the P4S Virtual School also liaises with other Virtual Schools to support prioritising the education of children in care. Training and presentations are often delivered in partnership with the Education Transformation Team. Due to the new Childrens and Social Care Act,

there is now a partnership with the 6 regions within Adoption West and the Regional Adoption Agency to strategically plan and deliver new statutory provision.

4. Attendance

	Absence 2015	Auth.	Unauth.	PA	Absence 2016	Auth.	Unauth.	PA
National CiC%	4.0	3.0	1.0	9.0	3.9	2.9	1.0	9.1
BANES CiC%	4.1	3.1	0.9	11.8	3.2	2.8	0.3	No validated data

4.1 The DfE now defines persistent absence (PA) as less than 90% attendance. The main difficulties arising are due increasing numbers of very complex students with complex EHCPs and the time needed to find very specific care placements and education provision. Consultation times for schools to respond to SEND services is statutory and can begin over again if a school feels they cannot meet needs. These highly complex placements also tend to break down more often than others and finding a new provision is very difficult. There are a number of these students in the current year 10 cohort. The other difficult area concerns some children coming into care at a late age after permanent exclusions have already happened.

5. Exclusions

	Permanently excluded 2014	At least 1 FTE 2014	Permanently excluded 2015	At least 1 FTE 2015	Permanently excluded 2016	At least 1 FTE 2016
National CiC Care %	0.12	10.25	0.14	10.42	Will be validated in March 18	Will be validated in March 18
BANES CiC %	0.00	9.72	0.00	16.67	Will be validated in March 18	Will be validated in March 18
All BANES pupils %	0.04	1.88	0.04	2.00	0.07	2.43

5.1 Within this authority, fixed term exclusions for Children in Care rose by over 6% which was the second highest in the validated performance data within the South West in 2015. However data is not received for 2016 until March 2018.

6. Achievement and Attainment

6.1 Unvalidated Outcomes 2016-2017

Early Years Foundation Stage (unvalidated)

(Figures shown for those of our Children in Care who count within performance indicators)

Indicator	England 2016	Statistical Neighbours 2016	LA 2016	England 2017	LA 2017	Children in Care 2017 (1 child)
% achieving a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)	69.3%	71.2%	68.9%	70.7% (150 LA's)	72.3%	0%

Key Stage 1

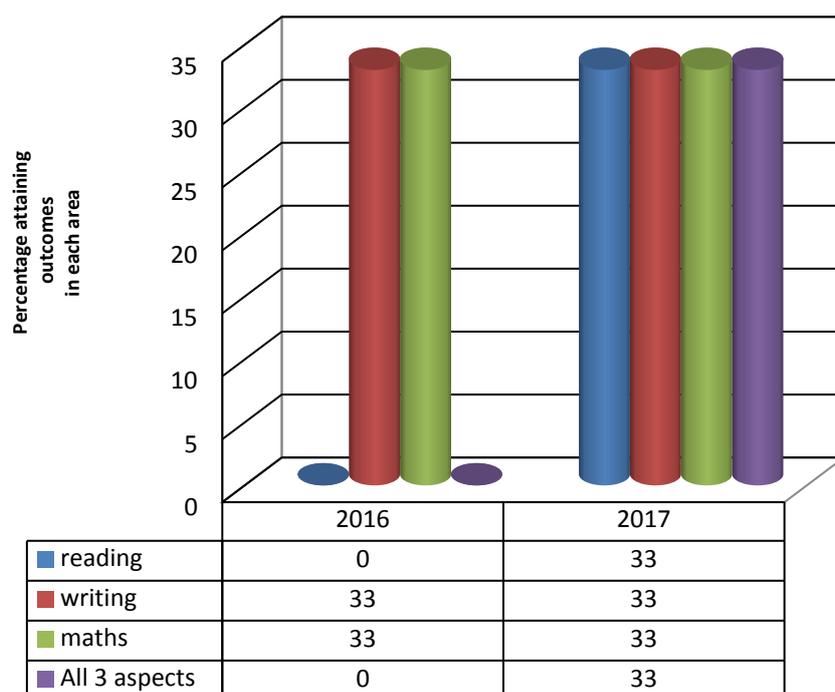
Key Stage 1 % reaching or exceeding expected standard		2015-16	2016-2017 (Unvalidated Children in Care)
<i>Number of eligible pupils</i>		2	1
<i>Number with statements/EHC plans</i>		0	1
<i>Number at special schools & unable to access National Curriculum</i>		0	0
Reading	LA CiC	50	100
	LA all pupils	74	77
	National CiC		
	National all pupils	74	76
Writing	LA CiC	100	100
	LA all pupils	65	68
	National CiC		
	National all pupils	65	68
Maths	LA CiC	100	0
	LA all pupils	73	75
	National CiC		
	National all pupils	73	75
All 3	LA CiC	50	0
	LA all pupils		
	National CiC		
	National all pupils		

There were only 2 pupils in the qualifying cohort in 2016 and 1 in 2017 so analysing trends is less meaningful. The pupil in 2017 only just missed reaching the expected standard in maths and had a scaled score of 99.

Key Stage 2

% reaching or exceeding expected standard in KS2		2015-16	2016-17
<i>Number of eligible pupils</i>		3	6
<i>Number with statements/EHC plans</i>		1	
<i>Number at special schools and unable to access National Curriculum</i>		1	1
Reading	LA CiC	0	33
	LA all pupils	71	78
	National CiC	41	
	National all pupils	66	71
Writing	LA CiC	33	33
	LA all pupils	71	76
	National CiC	46	
	National all pupils	74	76
Maths	LA CiC	33	33
	LA all pupils	68	75
	National CiC	41	
	National all pupils	70	75
Reading, Writing & Maths	LA CiC	0	33
	LA all pupils	54	63
	National CiC	25	
	National all pupils	54	61

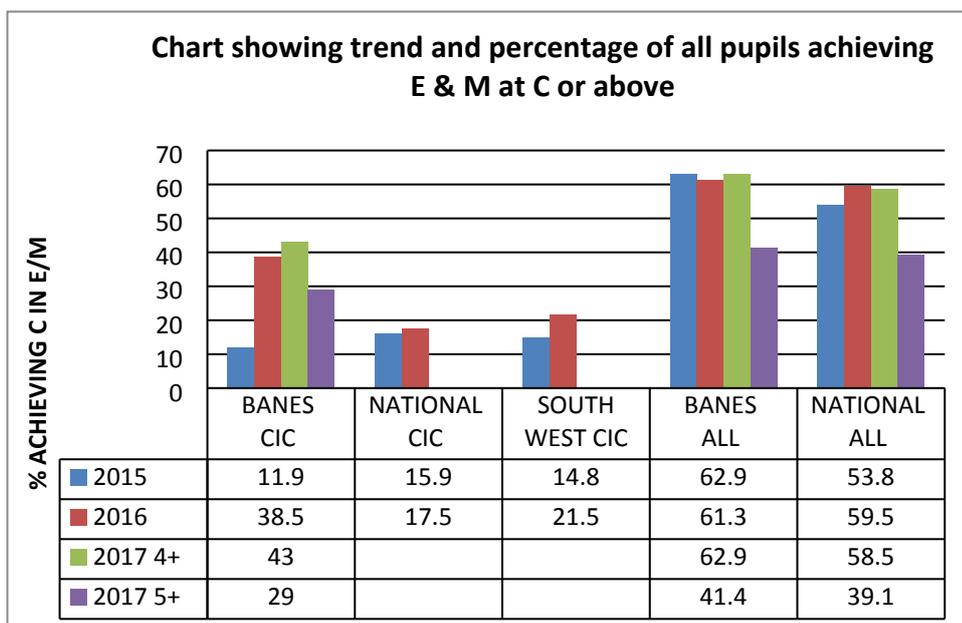
Chart showing the outcomes from KS2 of the Children in Care for whom BANES is responsible



Key Stage 2	Gap between Children in Care & all pupils (Mainstream) in BANES 2016	Gap between Children in Care & all pupils (Mainstream) in BANES (unvalidated) 2017
Gap in reading	52.3 ppts	44.7ppts
Gap in writing	8.3ppts	42.8ppts
Gap in maths	8.7ppts	42.1ppts
Gap all 3	54.3ppts	29.9ppts

Although the numbers of pupils in care for over a year has doubled in 2017 in KS2, the numbers are still very small with 3 in 2016 and 6 in 2017. 1 pupil in 2017 was educated within a special school and has an EHCP and was withdrawn from sitting SATs.

Key Stage 4



Due to the changes in education, 2017 outcomes are from the new reformed GCSEs which have new grading criteria as well as more demanding content and testing.

There were 14 students, with 1 educated in a special school and dis-applied from GCSEs, 1 on roll at a PRU and 1 educated at ALP but on roll at a mainstream school

Key Stage 4	Gap between all Children in Care & all pupils in BANES (un-validated) (14 students)	Gap between mainstream Children in Care & all pupils in BANES (un-validated) (12 students)
2016 C Grade	22.8 ppts	21.1 ppts
2017 4+ low C	19.9 ppts	22.6ppts
2017 5+ high C	12.4 ppts	15.7 ppts

6.2 OFSTED judgements in Term 6 of 2016-2017

Outstanding	22%
Good	63%
Requires Improvement	14%
Inadequate	1%

7. Finance

7.1 The Virtual School Joint Agency Panel budget

This budget was set up to support children in care where greater funding than the Pupil Premium Plus funding was needed. The criteria for this has been revisited and in future this fund will be mainly used to support transition for a larger number of children in care, as this is an area of key difficulty for this cohort.

The funding was already spent for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 when the new headteacher started in April 2017. This has, however, allowed a greater analysis of how this funding was spent.

In 2016-2018, the funding has been allocated to 6 students for the purpose of:

- Enabling an able KS4 student to attend a high achieving alternative provision for year 10 and 11
- Preventing a permanent exclusion with alternative provision
- Therapies for 2 different Post 16 students
- Supporting a primary student to have needs met in mainstream education
- Alternative provision for a year 11 student to enable her to take some qualifications

7.2 The Virtual School General Budget

This was £10,000 but is no longer in place due to the Administrative Assistant being paid previously by the CICMOT Team, now being paid for by the virtual school from April 2017.

7.3 Pupil Premium Plus

This funding is provided by the government to help raise standards of educational achievement for looked after children. £1900 was provided per child from 4 to 16 only to the Virtual School. £400 was top sliced to commission an educational psychologist one day a week, commission Welfare Call to support attendance and exclusion tracking, meet the educational needs of students waiting for school provision, top up for high needs students, free training for schools and the Letterbox Scheme for all primary and some secondary students.

In order to ensure that the most effective use of pupil premium plus for each individual, a new policy has been created and shared with schools based on national research by the EEF and local analysis. Personal Education Plans are moderated to ensure quality and that they meet expectations and needs.

Every child is different and individual needs will always be discussed at PEP meetings. But in order to support attainment as much as possible, the following guidance is provided for Pupil Premium Plus decisions. It is recommended that SENCos and DTs collaborate where a child has funding for SEND needs in place. All decisions will be made through the PEP moderation process by the virtual school.

Expected expenditure of 75% (£1125) of the £1500 a year	Expenditure of the other 25% (£375) could be spent	Impact measures expected	Not recommended due to little evidence of impact on academic progress or not meeting statutory guidance
<p>75% should be used on specific strategies to improve English and maths. English also includes communication for children in care with SEND needs but this should not be requested where EHCP funding is provided to meet this need.</p> <p>Specialist teacher support on a 1 to 1 basis is the preferred option to accelerate progress</p> <p>Research findings on strategies and costings, using the EEF site</p> <p>https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit</p>	<p>Transition planning including extra days at a new school with a key member of staff.</p> <p>Strategies to support holistic progress, aspiration and self esteem</p> <p>Music tuition</p> <p>Enrichment activities</p> <p>Sports coaching</p> <p>Teacher support in other subjects</p>	<p>75% There should be clear data evidence of progress towards or above expected standards through standardised tests or assessments from the start date of the intervention</p> <p>25% There should be evidence of progress. Examples could be teacher comments on more confidence answering questions, taking on bigger roles within activities, volunteering for responsibility, certificates etc</p>	<p>Kit or equipment</p> <p>ICT hardware</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Support already offered within school core offer</p>

Examples of spending of pupil premium plus this year include:

PP+ has been spent in providing a 1:1 support worker for a child in Reception. This adult has enabled the child to develop trust with an adult and work on her key academic skills. P4S Virtual School have also provided an Educational Psychologist report and started the process of an EHCP application based on her emotional needs. At the latest EP visit the improved progress with behaviour and engagement in learning was evident and has now a pride in her work. She is able to accept responsibility in some tasks and responds to praise.

In Key Stage 1 The funding was used to enable exceptional progress from Reception to KS1 and 'close the gap'. PP+ was spent on an effective transition support to the new school and provision of a quiet room where her emotional needs could be met. The EHCP was revised to make sure that there was 1:1 experienced adult support at all times of the day for her.

1:1 support was funded for a child in Key Stage 2 to enable him to excel in maths, rather than just reach expected standards. It also enabled his gift to be stretched outside of the classroom, Support for emotional needs was also in place to support with barriers in sustaining relationships with peers.

Funding in Key Stage 4 tends to be spent on 1 to 1 tutoring to enable greater success at GCSE.