Virtual School

Annual Report November 2016

'You were so helpful, committed and encouraged me so much!'

The final sentence of a text from a year 11 student after receiving her GCSE results

Contents

Executive Summary

For reporting purposes, both to the Department of Education (DFE) and internally, the progress and performance of children in the care of North Yorkshire County Council is based on those who have been in care continuously for a minimum period of 12 months.

The progress and achievements of those in the Early Years, Further Education and Higher Education is included within the full report. This executive summary covers the achievements for those aged seven (Key Stage 1), aged eleven (Key Stage 2) and those aged sixteen (Key Stage 4).

Longitudinal and progress analysis is more challenging this year. It is not appropriate to provide comparative data to previous years due to the introduction of a new curriculum and different assessment criteria in the primary phase.

Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, 88% of the children in our care attended a school judged good or outstanding by OFSTED. The Virtual School is confident that all children attended a school where they could make good progress.

88% of the children in our care attended a school judged good or outstanding by OFSTED
63% of the children were working at the expected standard in mathematics
88% of the children were working at the expected standard in reading
50% of the children were working at the expected standard in writing

63% of the children were working at the expected standard in mathematics, 88% in reading, 50% in writing and 38% attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. National figures are not yet available for children in care for 2016.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, 90% of the children in our care attended a school judged good or outstanding by OFSTED. Due to a significant number of the cohort who have a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEND) or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), attainment for both the whole cohort is provided in addition to performance for those without a statement of SEND. For the full cohort: 32% were working at the expected standard or better in mathematics; 52% in reading; and 47% in writing. The combined figure for all three subject areas is 32%. Performance for those without a SEND statement/EHCP increases to: 38% in mathematics; 62% in reading; and 56% in writing. The combined figure being 38%.

> **Attainment results for all children in 2016 were significantly lower than the results achieved by all children in 2015, this was due to a new curriculum and more challenging assessment process.**

In terms of progress, based on prior attainment at Key Stage 1 (for those with a statement of SEND /EHCP both P levels and teacher assessment has been used) 76% of children made expected progress in Reading, 71% in writing and 61% in mathematics. Had the assessment process remained the same as in 2015 the Virtual School would have expected these percentages to be higher still.

Key Stage 4

In Key Stage 4, 83% of the children in our care attended a school judged good or outstanding by OFSTED. In common with the Key Stage 2 results due to the high number of

the cohort with SEND /EHCP, attainment is provided for both the cohort as a whole and for those without a statement. Including all 37 in the cohort, 24.3% achieved 5 A*-C at GCSE including English and mathematics. **This is the strongest attainment figures ever achieved by children in the care of NYCC.** The same percentages were achieved for 5 A*-C without English and mathematics. When focusing on the 24 without a statement of SEND/EHCP, this percentage increases to 37.5%.
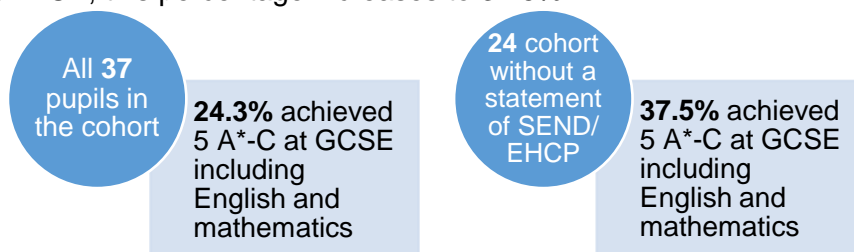
All **37** pupils in the cohort

24.3% achieved 5 A*-C at GCSE including English and mathematics

24 cohort without a statement of SEND/ EHCP

37.5% achieved 5 A*-C at GCSE including English and mathematics

The results for the key indicator of achieving both English and mathematics GCSE at grade C or above: In the full cohort of 37, 27% achieved this indicator. When focusing only on those without statements 41% achieved the indicator. Overall within the full cohort of 37, 32% achieved a grade C in English and 50% of those without a statement of SEND. 54% of the full cohort achieved 5 A-G at GCSE and 83% of those without statements of SEND 56% made good progress based on prior attainment at KS2 (including at P level.) For those without a SEND/EHCP, the percentage was 54%. For this year the new Progress 8 measure has not been applied.

Attendance and Exclusions
The attendance rate of all children in care attending North Yorkshire maintained schools was 96.26% and the small number attending academies had an average attendance of 94.81%. The overall attendance rate for those of primary school age was 97.26% and 95.31% for those of secondary age. Attendance for those placed outside of North Yorkshire's boundaries was also strong at 96.2%.

The overall attendance rate for children in our care of primary school age was **97.26%**

The overall attendance rate for children in our care of secondary school age was **95.31%**

There have been no permanent exclusion of children and young people in our care. A total of 17 children and young people attending schools in North Yorkshire were fixed term excluded in the last academic year. This equates to 2.7% of our children in care population.

Voice of child/ young person
The wishes and feelings of each pupil are captured on their Personal Education Plan (PEP), where there is a section to be completed by each child or young person. Further strategies to capture the voice of the child are included in section 7. The PEP has been improved this year to ensure it further enhances a child's outcomes.

Celebrating success
The Virtual School once again held a 'Graduation Day' for those successfully completing year 11, year 13 or graduating from University. Seventeen young people and an invited guest attended. Thirty children and young people were supported through our positive activities scheme, receiving a grant of up to £250 and it is very pleasing to highlight that 101

children and young people in our care received a letter and voucher to acknowledge their achievements.

1   Introduction

This is the statutory annual report of the Virtual School Head and Virtual School for North Yorkshire County Council. This report highlights the work of the Virtual School, the Local Authority and partner agencies to improve outcomes for children in care from the early years up to targeted care leavers aged 25. The report covers progress and attainment at all key stages. It further covers destinations post 16 and, most importantly, how the voice of the child and young person is considered to influence practice.

2   Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the activity of the Virtual School Head Teacher, the Virtual School and the 2016 educational outcomes of children in care. It reflects on achievements and identifies areas of development to achieve the best outcomes for children in our care.

Data contained in this report, is for children who were in the care of the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) for a year or more as at 31 March 2016.

3   Contextual Information at a National and Local Level[1]

3.1 Numbers in Care

Nationally, there were 69,540 children in care at 31 March 2015, an increase of 1% compared to 31 March 2014 and an increase of 6% compared to 31 March 2011.'[2] This is in contrast to the figures for those children in the care of North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC). The number of children in the care of NYCC has fallen from 469 in 2011 (a high was reached of 495) to 411 at the 31st March 2016. This includes 16 who are in care due to the short breaks legislation (75 day rule). The reduction in numbers is primarily due to a strategic approach to target resources at those at the 'edge of care' through the Prevention Service, including Family Intervention and the 'No Wrong Door' approach.

> **Nationally, the number of children in care, nationally, has increased steadily over the past seven years.**

> **The number of children in the care of NYCC has fallen.**

3.2 Care Placements

Nationally the majority of children in care are placed with foster carers. In 2015, the number of children in foster care continued to rise; of the 69,540 children in care at 31 March, 52,050 (75%) were cared for in a foster placement[3]. These percentage figures are similar in North Yorkshire.

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[1] Please note the latest available figures nationally are for 2015
[2] Department for Education statistical release updated 30th March 2016
[3] Source: Department for Education

Nationally   **North Yorkshire**

69,540 children looked after at 31 March 2015

52,050 (75%) were cared for in a foster placement

411 children looked after at 31 March 2016

303 (73.8%) were cared for in a foster placement
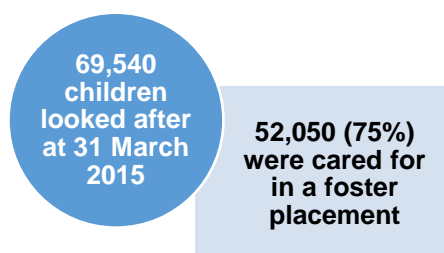
On the 31st March 2016 there were 411 children in the care of NYCC, of which 303 were living in foster care, this equates to 73.8%. When analysing the 303 living in foster care, only 17 were placed through an Independent Foster Agency and so consequently 94.4% of NYCC children in care, living in foster care, were living with NYCC foster carers. 69 children were placed with Family and Friends Foster Carers (equivalent to 24.4%, compared to 13.3% nationally). The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPF) Benchmarking Club average comparison is 58%.

The numbers placed with NYCC foster carers, is significant both for communication and the training of foster carers but also because of what research tells us.

One of the key findings in the November 2015 research 'The educational progress of looked after children in England: linking care and educational data'[4] related to the time spent in care concluded that:

> **Young people who have been in longer term care do better than those in need but not in care and better than those who have only been in short term care- so it appears that care may protect them educationally.**

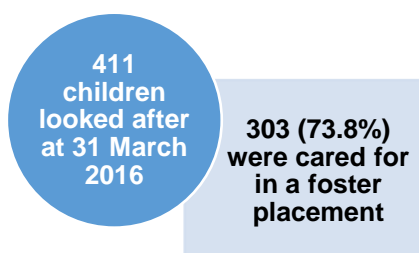Children whose final placement was in foster or kinship care, did better at GCSEs than those in residential care or other types of placement. To some extent this reflected the length of the final placement – the longer the placement, the better the outcomes.

3.3 Where Placed

Nationally

77% of children are placed within 20 miles of their home

Locally

84% of children in the care of NYCC are placed within North Yorkshire boundaries
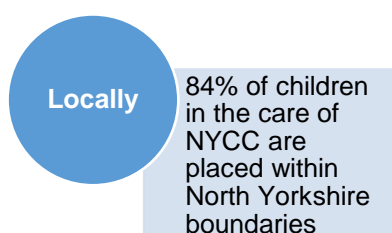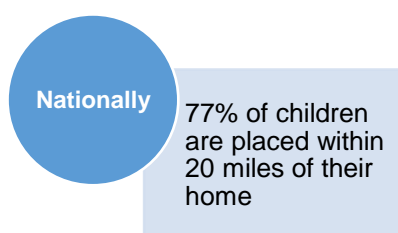
Nationally out of the 69,540 in care, some 53,500 are placed within 20 miles of their home (77%). With reference to local authority boundaries, 37,440 (54%) are placed inside their own local authority boundary[5].

For those in the care of NYCC, at the 31st March 2016, a total of 66 children and young people were placed outside of North Yorkshire's geographical boundaries. This equates to 16 % of NYCC children in care. This includes a small number who are placed with NYCC foster carers out of authority.

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[4] Rees Centre, University of Oxford and the University of Bristol

[5] Source: Department for Education

3.4 National Age Profile of those in Care

Nationally, the age profile of children in care has been changing slightly over recent years.

There has been a fall in the last two years in the numbers of children aged 1-4 years in care at 31 March 2015 reflecting higher numbers leaving care (around 8,500 each year) than entering care (just under 6,000 each year)[6]. This may be in part due to the success of adoption agencies.

Nationally (2015)

aged 1-4 years	aged 10+ years
fall in the number children in care	rise in the number of children in care

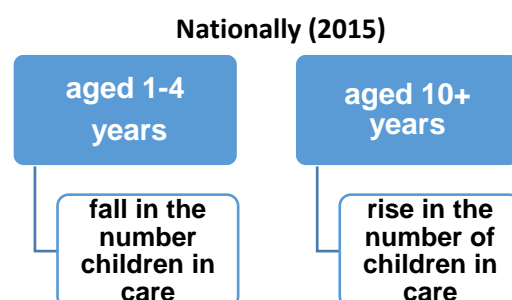For children aged 10 years and older we have seen a rise in the numbers in care, with 12,120 starting in 2013, increasing to 13,870 in 2015. Over a third of children in care are aged between 10 and 15 years old.

There has been a smaller increase in those ceasing to be in care, resulting in just over 3,000 more children aged 10 and over being in care at 31 March 2015 compared to 2013. Therefore, nationally there is a greater number of older children in care this year[7].

These are important findings for the Virtual School and the local authority.

> **Resources targeted at families through the prevention service and edge of care team can reduce the numbers in our care for more than 28 days.**

For those entering our care, we must plan their education provision at the same time as we plan their care placements. This is particularly crucial for those aged 14-16 (Key Stage 4). It is imperative that social workers and the Virtual School work closely to avoid any unnecessary changes in care placement or school and that when transitions are necessary young people are supported. This was another key finding from the Rees Centre research – the negative impact of placement and school changes specifically around years 10 and 11. It is a key role of the Virtual School to positively influence school and care placements.

Nationally

March 2015: **60%** of children were in care due to a care order ▶ This is a **5%** increase when compared to 2014 ▶ And an **8%** increase when compared to 2011

At 31 March 2015, 42,030 (60%) children were in care under a care order (either an interim or full care order), a 5% increase compared to 2014 and an 8% increase since 2011. A further 19,850 (29%) of children were in care under a voluntary agreement (Section 20 of the Children Act 1989). This number and percentage has increased steadily since 2013.

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[6] Source: Department for Education

[7] Source: Department for Education

3.5 SEND and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

Nationally, 2.8% of the total pupil population of children nationally have a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEND) or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Children in care are:

| 4 times | • more likely to have special eductational needs than all children |
| 10 times | • more likely to have a statement of educational need or an EHCP |

Nationally, this equates to 9,630 children in care (27.3%). In 2015, 61% of children in care had a special educational need, compared to 50% of children in need and 15% of all children. When reviewing primary need, social, emotional and mental health was the most frequently for children in care.

In 2016, there are 48 young people of secondary age in the care of NYCC with a statement of SEND/EHCP (30.9%). For those of primary age in the care of NYCC the number is 16, this represents 16.4%. The highest single cohort of children in the care of NYCC with a statement of SEND is year 11, where 13 out of 37 young people in our care have an EHCP, this represents 35.1%. For those of post compulsory school age, including those who turned 18 during the last academic year, 29 young people have an EHCP.

4   The Role of the Virtual School

As Corporate Parents, the Virtual School and Virtual School Head have a leading role in promoting the educational achievement of children in its care. However, to successfully meet the aspirational targets we have set involves a collective responsibility between the local authority, partner agencies and all schools. Education that encourages high aspirations and individual achievements, with a minimum disruption, is central to improving immediate and long term outcomes for children in our care.

4.1 Structure Chart
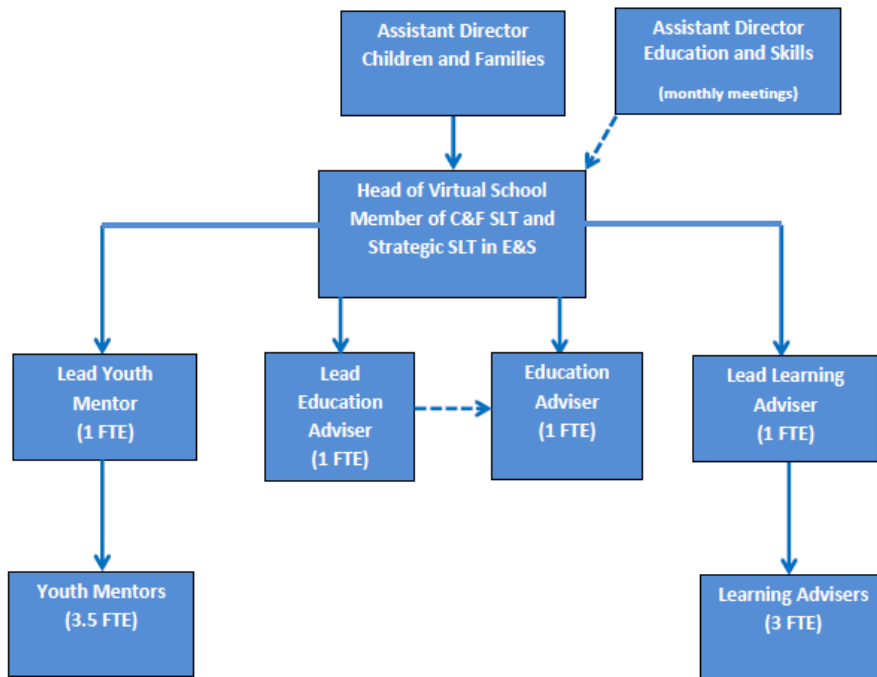
5   What are the Virtual School and Local Authority's Priorities to Improve Outcomes?

The Virtual School's priorities for improvement are directly linked to the targets included within the overarching CYPS Young and Yorkshire plan as well as the local authority and partners' targets set out in the Looked After Children Strategy.

The main areas of focus are on:

- **Attainment and Progress** (Early Years to HE)
- **Leadership and Management** (all monitoring of standards including PEP and Pupil Premium)
- **Developing Strong Effective Partnerships** through training both within and external to NYCC
- **Provision and Interventions** ensuring all young people access 25 hours provision in a good school. Staff are all trained in emotional need and attachment/trauma

6   Who does the Virtual School Report to and how is it accountable?

The Virtual School is structurally within 'Children and Families' but has very close working relations with both 'Education and Skills' and 'Inclusion'. The Virtual School self-evaluates

against its own service plan, the local authority post OFSTED action plan and the over–arching local authority 'Looked After Children Strategy'. Reporting arrangements and challenge are provided through its own 'Management Committee that includes: three head teachers; county councillors, including the lead member for children and families; a social care manager and two foster carers. The Virtual School Head reports regularly to: the Management Committee; Children and Families Senior Leadership Team; Children and Young People's Service Senior Leadership Team; and the Looked After Children Members Group on performance and impact. Regular meetings are held between Virtual School staff and a Lead Adviser within Education and Skills in the same way as head teachers of maintained schools are supported and challenged.

The Virtual School Head is a member of the Children and Families Senior Leadership Team and the extended Education and Skills Leadership Team. For 2016-2017 the NYCC Virtual School Head has been elected as the first Chair of the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH). Key priorities and roles are available at www.navsh.org.uk. Significant work this year has included: establishing a national association with charitable status; influencing the DFE and OFSTED's methodology around measuring outcomes for children in care so there is a robust means of measuring progress based on recent research, demonstrating what impacts most on educational outcomes for children in care; and engaging with Children in Care councils.

7 How does the Virtual School Ensure the Voice of Children and Young People Influences Practice?

The wishes and feelings of each pupil are captured on their PEP where there is a section to be completed by each child or young person. Children in care also have the opportunity to have their views captured through Your Voice and also through the LAC review process

As an example of how the Virtual School responds to the young person's voice, a pupil had written on their PEP views sheet, that they wanted help with maths. School stated that the pupil was disrupted by having a Learning Adviser (LA) in school, so at that day's PEP, it was decided that availability pending, a LA would work out of school time, at the foster placement, with school having oversight. By the end of the day, this was set up so Maths catch up is now being delivered in the home, by a LA, as a direct result of the pupil's request.

All Youth Mentors are trained in the use of the Rickter assessment tool and this is used to capture the wishes and feelings of each young person they work with as it measures social and emotional well-being.

The Virtual School undertook some research with children and young people at a Celebration event in the summer of 2015 which highlighted some young people were either unaware or unsure of what a PEP is. As a result of this some changes were made to the PEP guidance document provided to social workers and designated teachers to ensure that children and young people are better involved in meetings and receive regular feedback on targets set.

Young people also said they were unsure of what the Virtual School is and what it does so a leaflet is being devised which will be sent out to all children in care. The information about the Virtual School on the NYCC website has also been updated.

The Virtual School contributes every quarter to the "You Said, We Did, They've Done" document which is coordinated by the NYCC Participation officer.

Last year a member of the Young Person's Council participated in a Virtual School interview process for an additional Youth Mentor and her views were taken into account in the selection process.

The Virtual School also attended a Young Person's Council meeting in the autumn to seek views about a new programme being developed as part of the Careers project called Next Steps. One idea which was shared by the young people was for the programme to include some information about benefits and other support available to young people when they leave care. Subsequently this was put into the Next Steps programme.

An evaluation of the Next Steps group has concluded that there is a need for additional targeted careers work, either on a group or individual basis with a small number of pupils(10 -12) moving into year 12 who may be at risk of becoming NEET. One indication is that the provision of NEET services and support across North Yorkshire is patchy and consequently the Virtual School has received a number of requests to work with young people who have become NEET. The Virtual School is currently able to support some of these young people where they have already been working with them pre 16 but alternate support needs to be identified for the others. This includes providing access to specialist careers advice post 16. Further work is being undertaken in this area

Also a new leaflet being produced to provide information about HE support was shared and views sought with the young people about what should be included and how it should be presented.

8   Who is on the Roll of the Virtual School?

8.1 Numbers on Roll

There has been a further reduction to the number of children and young people who are in the care of NYCC since last year's report. Current figures (31 March 2016) show 395 in care with a further 16 due to short breaks indicating 411 in total.

The numbers in brackets relate to how many of the children in the year group are fully in care by virtue of short breaks. Please note the very small cohort in year 10.

Primary School

Year Group	Numbers
Pre-reception	82
Reception	14
Year 1	9
Year 2	12
Year 3	10
Year 4	12 (1)
Year 5	15 (1)
Year 6	25 (1)

Secondary School

Year group	Numbers
Year 7	27
Year 8	25 (2)
Year 9	42
Year 10	17 (1)
Year 11	44 (5)
Year 12	48 (3)
Year 13	13 (2)

8.2 Identifying a Wider Cohort that the Virtual School Supports

Identifying the numbers in the care of North Yorkshire at a fixed period is not representative of the numbers supported by the Virtual School. Although there were 411 children in our care at the end of March 2016 there were 613 in our care at some point between April 2015 and the end of March 2016.

8.3 Those Placed in North Yorkshire by other Local Authorities

Through diligent tracking we have much better intelligence information on those children in the care of another local authority, placed in North Yorkshire, than in previous years. There were 232 children from 53 different local authorities placed in North Yorkshire (31st March 2016), a significant number of whom attend a maintained school or academy in North Yorkshire. The highest placing authorities are not surprisingly geographical neighbours, York and Leeds. All placements in North Yorkshire should be planned with the local authority informed prior to the placement. This is not always the case and we are experiencing an increasing number of placements at independent residential homes. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board is monitoring this increase closely.

8.4 Those Adopted from Care

With specific reference to those who left care under an adoption order and who are of compulsory school age: The January 2016 school census figures indicated 342 children were attending schools in North Yorkshire. The DFE have indicated that the numbers adopted

> **There is a proposal in the Children and Social Work Bill 2016-17, currently progressing through the House of Lords to include all those adopted from care within the remit of the Virtual School Head. This will not be as the 'Corporate Parent', however.**

from care are much higher than the census indicates. Adoptive parents may choose not to inform schools that their child is adopted from care. In such cases the pupil premium plus payment for those adopted from care will not be claimed by schools on their census.

For the 2016/2017 Academic year 'Adopted from Care' will be renamed to 'Post Looked After Arrangements' (PLAA) to more accurately reflect the data being collected as Adopted from Care was causing confusion.

8.5 Special Guardianship

The January 2016 census also confirmed that 76 children attended schools in North Yorkshire and had a Special Guardianship Order, 39 had a Residence Order and 3 a Child Arrangement Order.

In summary, all the children and young people named may not be on the Virtual School roll for reporting purposes, but our support in different forms may extend to 1305 children and young people rather than 411.

9   How well have our Children and Young People Achieved?

9.1 Early Years

During the last academic year, 17 children have been monitored and supported by the Virtual School, with 13 children in the care of NYCC who met the DfE continuous care status reporting criteria for a minimum of 12 months from 1st April 2015 until the 31st March 2016. Two children had their admission to school deferred so no assessment was completed as this will be reported next year. Another child has not been assessed, due to significant special educational needs resulting in low attendance in school. The information presented is therefore based on 10 children.

Assessments are carried out throughout early year's settings following the EYFS profile. A Good Level of Development (GLD) is defined as having achieved the age expected level in Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional, Physical Development, Literacy and Mathematics.   These goals are described and scored as Emerging (1), Expected (2) or Exceeding (3). A GLD is regarded as achieving a total of 24 points, reaching the expected level (2) in each of these 5 areas. This is calculated from breaking down the 5 areas.

Communication & Language

Physical development

Personal, social & emotional development

Literacy

Maths

40% of the children achieved a Good Level of Development. The range of scores achieved by the cohort is between 17 and 38.

> It is interesting to note that the three children who achieved the highest points were all autumn born girls, and 1 spring boy missing achieving GLD by 1 point due to not reaching expected levels in writing. The three children who achieved the three lowest scores are all summer born boys. This follows a national trend and a particular area that is being focused on within the local authority via the Early Years Closing the Gap Strategy, in which schools are looking at meeting the needs of summer born boys through equality and differentiated teaching styles within the curriculum.

For the Virtual School two areas to focus on are reading and writing with only the four children who achieved a GLD reaching expected levels. The Virtual School is beginning to address this through the Imagination Library which is referenced further on in this report.

When looking at the achievements it is pleasing to note that 80% of the children in the cohort achieved the expected level of development in 'Managing Relationship'. This is a vital life skill and a positive area for children in care to have a strong basis for the future. This 80% figure was also repeated in the technology section of the EYFS, another key life skill.

4 out of the 10 children achieved a good level of development against the development bands (40%)	This compares favourably to 30% in 2015 and 27% in 2014	For all children in North Yorkshire the percentage who achieved a good level of development was 70% in 2016 (66% in 2015)

9.2 Early Years Case Example

Case Study R (Early Years)

R had delays in his development due to a medical condition. It was agreed that he would maintain his place at his early years setting rather than starting in a reception class with his peers. The setting received support from the social worker, foster carers and Virtual School to apply for an education health care plan using the single point of access. The setting continued to enhance in all areas of the EYFS by putting regular reviews and planning small step targets using a multi-agency approach. The decision was taken that as R was making progress in line with his peers at the setting, he would continue to defer his schooling by a year.

Through multi-agency meetings, plans were put into place to allow additional visits to his new school with extra support for his first two weeks. This helped to offer continuity of provision and ensured a positive transition.

9.3 Key Stage 1 Nationally

The assessments were based for the first time on a new curriculum, which had been taught to this cohort during the two years of Key Stage 1. The increased demands of the new curriculum inevitably meant that assessments were more challenging than in previous years. This year's Key Stage 1 teacher assessment results are not comparable with previous years.

A range of judgements were used to differentiate between pupils working below the national standards (working towards, pre-key stage, below, P scales).

9.4 Key Stage 1 NYCC Children in Care

There were ten children who had been in the care of NYCC for 12 months or more from 1st April 2015 until 31st March 2016. Of the ten, one child attended a private independent school where the school did not complete the assessments; however, that individual is making good progress. A

The majority of pupils in the care of NYCC were assessed as working at the national expected standard (EXS).

second child with an EHCP has been kept in the year group below his chronological age so consequently has not been subject to assessments. The results presented are based on 8 children.

88% of children attended a school judged as good or outstanding	**88%** of children working at the expected standard in Grammer Punctuation Spelling

9.5 Progress

When reviewing progress it is important to note only 50% of the cohort were in care when early years assessments were made. When reviewing the 8 children in total, 6 made expected progress, based on prior attainment, 1 child did not make expected progress and 1 exceeded expected progress[8].

9.6 Key Stage 1 Attainment

(95% of national results included)	NYCC LAC	National LAC	North Yorkshire All children	National All children
%EXS+ Reading	87.5%	National LAC figures available Dec 2016	72.3%	74.0%
%EXS+ Writing	50.0%		63.2%	65.5%
%EXS+ Maths	62.5%		70.4%	72.6%
%EXS+ Science	87.5%		84.1%	81.8%
RWM combined	38.0%		56.6%	60.3%

The table above highlights that 87.5% of children in care across North Yorkshire are working at or above the expected standard in reading (to achieve the expected standard a scaled score of 100 has to be achieved). This figure is above the national average (74.1%). Similarly children in care in North Yorkshire outperformed pupils who are not in care in science and are performing above the national average (81.8%). There were no children in our care who achieved the new standard for working at a greater depth of study. This equates to a scaled score of 110 or above.

9.7 Key Stage 1 Three Year Trends

The chart below highlights the percentage of children in care achieving a level 2+ in the independent areas of reading, writing and maths, in addition to a combined score for all three. It should be noted that in providing performance trends the tests in 2016 differed to previous years so data is not really comparable.

Attainment of North Yorkshire Children in Care at the end of Key Stage 1

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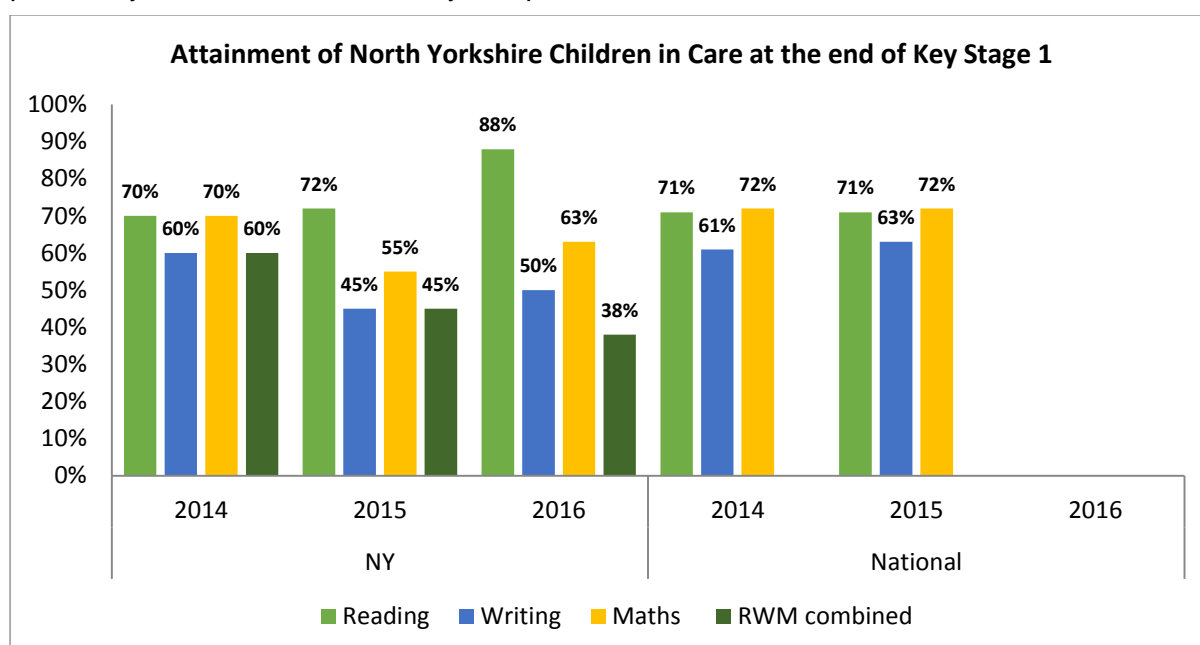
[8] Pupils who have met the national standard (at Key Stages 1 and 2) are described as "working at" the expected standard (EXS), whilst pupils who have achieved a higher standard are described as "working at greater depth" (GDS).

9.8 Key Stage 1 Case examples

Case Study S (Year 2)

At S's PEP the class teacher was worried that he would not reach expected attainment at the end of year 2. It was agreed at the PEP to allocate a Virtual School Learning Adviser to work with S in the classroom. S is a capable boy, however he is very easily distracted and needs constant reassurance.

A Learning Adviser (SW) worked with S in the class for two terms helping him to concentrate on tasks and giving him encouragement to stay on task. Initially S needed to spend quite a bit of time outside of the classroom to help him to concentrate and manage his emotions. As the weeks went on S spent less time out of the classroom and managed to work independently on tasks. S was supported by the Learning Adviser to do his year 2 assessments in a small room with minimal distractions rather than with the rest of the class. S managed to meet the expected standard for year 2 and has grown in confidence, S will continue to be supported by the Virtual School for a short time with his transition to a year 3 class as in the past he has struggled with transitions.

9.9 Key Stage 2 Nationally

The reading, mathematics, English and grammar, punctuation and spelling tests were more difficult than in previous years and were based on a new curriculum. This curriculum had been taught to this cohort for only 2 of their 4 years in Key Stage 2. This year's Key Stage 2 test results are also not comparable with previous marks. Test results are presented as scaled scores in a range between 80 – 120, with 100 or above representing the threshold for achievement of the new national standard.

For writing, schools were required to submit teacher assessment judgements, which could take account of achievement in writing from across a range of cross-curricular pupil work. The 2016 Interim Key Stage 2 Teacher Assessment Framework determined how teacher assessment judgements were to be made.

A range of judgements could be made to differentiate between pupils working below the national standards (working towards, pre-key stage, below, P scales).

9.10 Key Stage 2 NYCC Children in Care

There were 22 children who had been in the care of NYCC from 1st April 2015 until 31st March 2016. Of the 22, three children did not take the tests. One with an EHCP had been placed in a year below their chronological age group; another child was placed in Scotland; whilst the third attended a private independent school. A further 3 children who attended specialist provision are shown separately for comparative purposes (in line with DfE practice in the March 2016 statistical release).

18 out of the 20 children (not counting the one child at independent school and the one attending a school in Scotland) attended a school judged good or outstanding by OFSTED when they were last inspected (90%).

9.11 Key Stage 2 Attainment

Attainment of all NYCC children in care at the end of KS2

Legend:
- Excluding children with a statement of SEN (EHCP)
- Including children with Statement SEN (EHCP)

Chart values:
- Achieved the expected standard in RWM: 38% / 32%
- Achieved the expected standard in Reading: 63% / 53%
- Achieved the expected standard in Maths: 38% / 32%
- Achieved the expected standard in Writing (TA): 56% / 47%
- Achieved the expected standard in GPS: 63% / 53%
- Achieved the expected standard in Science (TA): 69% / 58%

Performance of all children nationally and for children in the care of North Yorkshire

% working at or above	NYCC Children in Care	National LAC	2016 all children nationally Provisional NCER	National Provisional NCER (SFR)
Reading test (scaled score of 100+)	62.5%	National LAC figures available Dec 2016	64.7%	65.6% (66)
Maths test (scaled score of 100+)	37.5%		66.1%	69.7% (70)
Writing teacher assessment (working at expected standard or working at greater depth)	56.3%		72.6%	74.0% (74)
Reading, writing, maths combined (attainment floor 65%, awaiting progress figures)	37.5%		51.1%	53.2% (53)
English Grammar Punctuation and Spelling test (scaled score of 100+)	62.5%		68.2%	72.4% (72)
Science teacher assessment	68.7%		81.9%	81.2%

9.12 Progress

In terms of progress, based on prior attainment at Key Stage 1 (for those with a statement of SEND/ EHCP (both P levels and teacher assessment has been used) 76% of children made progress in Reading, 71% in writing and 61% in mathematics. This is in part through additional targeted support by schools and the Virtual School.

9.13 Key Stage 2 Case Examples

Case Study L (Year 6)

L became looked after in May 2015 whilst he was in year 6. This was very difficult time for L as it coincided with him sitting his year 6 SATs and starting his transition to secondary school. A request was made for a Virtual School worker to support L as he had had two fixed term exclusions. Despite his ability, L did not manage to sit his year 6 SATs and did not meet the expected standard. The Learning Adviser worked with L at Secondary School for two terms and with support he managed to access a reduced timetable. As the weeks went on L managed to access more of the curriculum with support.

L had one exclusion early on in the academic year and this was managed internally by the school and the Virtual School Learning Adviser.There have been no further exclusions. At a multi-agency meeting, CAMHS suggested that L should repeat his year 7, as the year had mostly been settling him in a new placement and new school. Education and social care staff were in agreement. L is very happy at the prospect of repeating year 7 as he now feels confident in school and will be in a good place to access the full curriculum next year.

Case Study R (Year 6)

R, a very quiet girl, focussed on her work, with a stable Foster Carers and school placement.

School have worked hard on developing R's confidence through numerous methods. She was a House captain, voted for by her peers and she was encouraged to perform in school productions, which she did.

Foster Carers have sought to develop her sporting prowess by taking her to weekly running training and almost weekly competitions.

All staff at the school were doing their utmost to accelerate her academic progress in order for her to meet the new, harder year 6 SATs expectations set by the government in 2016.

One of our Leaning Advisers undertook 1:1 comprehension interventions with R for two terms, with an aim to equip her with strategies to improve reading comprehension. This was achieved and R, improved her reading ability by 18 months reading comprehension progress in 8 months..

R also received the year 6 Rainbow Readers books, which were sent directly to her home.

Although R narrowly missed out on meeting the new harder year 6 thresholds. She has however progressed to a stage where she has the skills to allow her to function successfully and develop still further at Secondary School. She has the potential to do very well in the future.
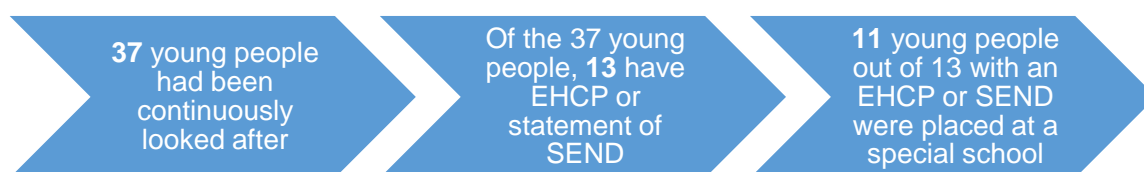
9.14 Key Stage 4 Nationally

Progress 8 and attainment 8 are new measures introduced during the 2015-2016 academic year. The young people do not get to know their progress 8 score with their GCSE results from their school. However, a school calculates its own progress 8 scores by counting every

pupil on roll within the cohort. It has been difficult for the Virtual School to obtain accurate individual scores from all the different schools on progress 8 so consequently progress will be presented for those achieving at least 3 levels of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. For those attending special schools, progress is also shown though 'P' levels and teacher assessment.

9.15 Key Stage 4 NYCC Children in Care

There were 37 young people who had been in the care of NYCC for a minimum continuous period of 12 months from 1st April 2015 until 31st March 2016 in the year 11 cohort. Out of the 37 young people 13 had an EHCP or a statement of SEND. Focusing on those with an EHCP or a statement of SEND, 11 were placed at a special school and only two young people attended a mainstream school.

| **37** young people had been continuously looked after	Of the 37 young people, **13** have EHCP or statement of SEND	**11** young people out of 13 with an EHCP or SEND were placed at a special school

9.16 Key Stage 4 Attainment

In presenting the attainment results they are presented in two formats: The first includes all 37 young people in the 12 months cohort; the second, only the young people without a statement of SEND or Education Heath Care Plan - 24 young people are included in this analysis. This includes a young person who has spent a significant amount of time during year 11 in secure accommodation.

There were a further 15 young people who had been in the care of NYCC at some point in year 11. Two of these young people, who entered our care in September 2015 and February 2016, achieved more than 5 A*-C at GCSE including English and mathematics.

Including all 37 in the cohort 24.3% achieved 5 A*-C at GCSE including English and mathematics. **This is the strongest attainment figure achieved by children in the care of NYCC.** The same percentages were achieved for 5 A*-C without English and mathematics. When focusing on the 24 without a statement of SEND/EHCP this percentages increases to 37.5%.

The attainment 8 figure for the 24 in the cohort ranged from a high of 67 down to one student who only completed functional skills. The median for the 24 being 37.

Children in Care- Key Stage 4 Nationally and North Yorkshire
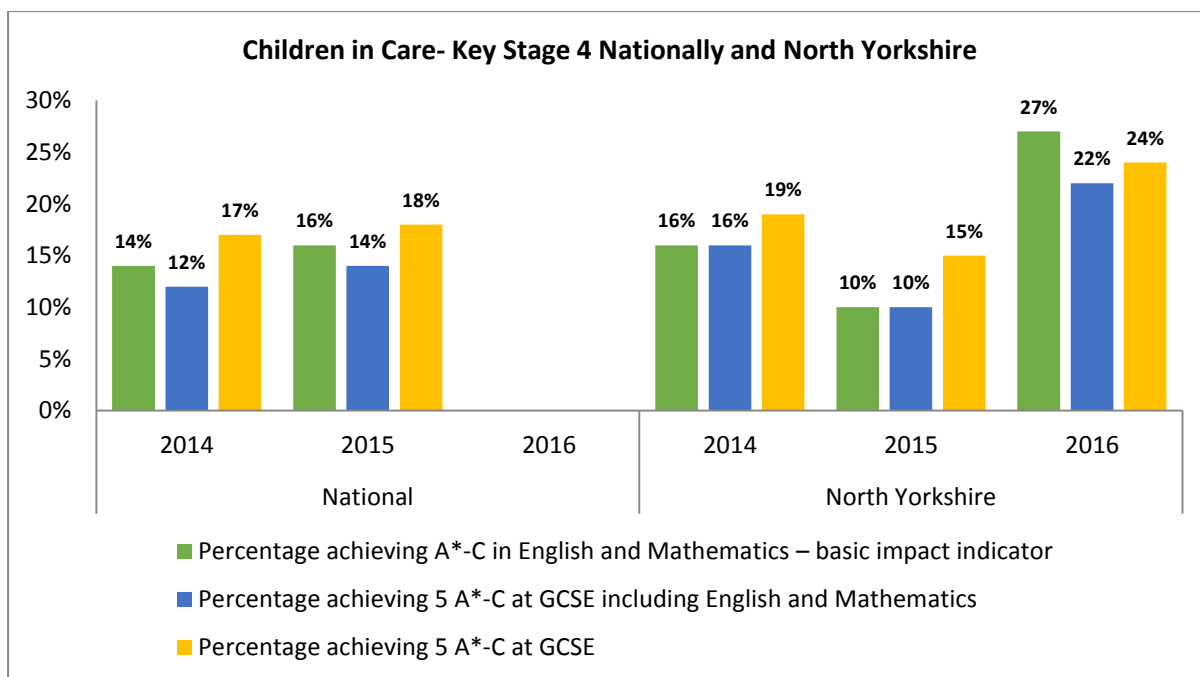
Children in Care	National			North Yorkshire		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Number of children eligible to sit GCSE	4800	DfE SFR	National figures available Dec 2016	43	41	37
Percentage achieving A*-C in English and Mathematics – basic impact indicator	14%	16%		16%	10%	27%
Percentage achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE including English and Mathematics	12%	14%		16%	10%	24.3%
Percentage achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE	17%	18%		19%	15%	27%
Children in need						
5 A-C including English and maths		15%				
5 A*-C without English and maths		18%				
All children						
Percentage achieving A*-C in English and Mathematics – basic impact indicator	58.9%	59.2%	62.8%	62.9%	64.9%	66.9%
Percentage achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE including English and Mathematics	56.6%	57.1%	57%	60.1%	62.4%	60.8%
Percentage achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE	64.1%	64%	N/A	69.5%	70.6%	N/A

The results for the key indicator of achieving both English and mathematics GCSE at grade C or above show: in the full cohort of 37, 27% achieved this indicator. When focusing on

those without statements 41% achieved the indicator. Overall within the full cohort of 37, 32% achieved a grade C in English and 50% of those without a statement of SEND.

54% of the full cohort achieved 5 A*-G at GCSE and 83% of those without statements of SEND

The majority, 30 out of 37 (81%), of those in the year 11 cohort attended a school judged good or outstanding by OFSTED. It is important to note in a very small number of cases a young person was educated off the site of the school. In such cases it was the role of the designated teacher to monitor progress and attendance.

9.17 Progress

The percentage of the full cohort making good progress is 56% (including at P level). The number of those without a statement of SEND/EHCP making good progress 54%. This is based on levels and teacher assessment of children with SEND (not progress 8).

9.18 Key Stage 4 Case Examples

Case Study C (Year 11)

C is an academically able year 11 girl with social, emotional and mental health needs who entered care during Y9.

At the end of the Autumn Term of year 11 an unavoidable change of educational establishment became necessary. Transition was supported by a Youth Mentor and a Learning Adviser from the Virtual School.

An alternative provider in the new location worked creatively together with C's original school, a local secondary school and the locally based Virtual School Learning Adviser to provide a bespoke package of support.

A tailor-made timetable enabled C to continue her studies despite the fact that not all the examination boards were catered for in the local area.

For the remainder of year 11, C remained on roll at her original school where responsibility for examination entries was retained.

The support package, in place from January until the examinations, included lessons with the alternative provider, the local secondary school and a minimum of six hours per week with the Learning Adviser.

The Learning Adviser liaised with C's teachers at her original school to enable completion of a AQA Geography course. Without this support, C would have been unable to continue with this qualification.

The Youth Mentor supported C throughout year 11 post-16 education.

As a result of this multi-agency package and C's hard work, she was able to sit all her GCSE examinations allowing her to progress onto a Level 2 Equine Studies course.

Case Study R (Year 11)

R has worked with various members of staff from the Virtual School team over the years with issues relating his educational, emotional and social needs.

R always found it very difficult to settle into a school environment and struggled to make and maintain friendships with his peers.

As a result he was assigned a Youth Mentor, someone who he could work closely with to help build his confidence and self-esteem and to look at future career options. Working weekly on a one to one basis R was able to build a trusting relationship and to express his thoughts and feelings in a safe and confidential environment.

R was invited to take part in numerous activities including a trip to Edinburgh as well as attending an Inspire Project visit to York St John University last year which was to encourage R to aim high and consider University in the future.

R also showed an interest in the Army Cadets and with encouragement from his Youth Mentor he was able to attend. R went on to gain the accolade of "Best Cadet" whilst he was there.

In Year 10 R chose to do his work placement at RAF Leeming where he achieved "Student of the Year" something he is still exceptionally proud of.

Despite suffering severe anxiety R managed to sit his GCSE's and achieved 5 A*-C's including Maths and English.

R would admit at times things have not always been plain sailing and he has valued the support of key people in his life including key staff members at school and his family support worker.

However he has said that his Youth Mentor was one of the biggest helps and influences in his life, and he always felt better for seeing him.

Currently R is studying a Level 3 qualification in Public Services and is looking forward to a career in the Armed Forces.

9.19 Key Stage 5 Achievements and Areas of Further Participation

Since 2014, all young people are required to stay in some form of education until they are 18. In 2015 the DfE introduced new statutory guidance for the provision of careers guidance and inspiration in schools. This now requires schools to secure independent careers advice for students as well as providing a range of activities which help to prepare them for working life, including greater contact with employers, motivational speakers and increased contact for pupils with further and higher education providers. Young People are becoming better informed about their options for post 16 learning and there is a now a high take up of further education.

Of the 55 young people in our care, at some point in 2016, who completed year 11:

- 48 have moved into full time further education or training
- 7 are Not in Education, Employment or Training

During 2015-2016 there were 15 children in care who completed apprenticeships in a range of areas from hairdressing to pharmacy work. Apprenticeships and vocational work continue to be strongly promoted as a viable alternative to traditional academic routes and are successful for many young people.

The Virtual School reviews post statutory school age PEPs to monitor the progress of all young people aged 16 -18, including those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) We signpost to the Prevention Service and No Wrong Door those without provision to help them gain access to suitable training or employment. The post 16 PEPs are also an effective method of ensuring that young people are accessing the 16-19 bursary

which is paid by central government via schools and colleges and is used to support learning through funding course costs such as equipment and travel.

The Virtual School offered "Independent Living" workshops over the summer break to young people coming to the end of their education and provided practical advice and support around careers, job searching and budgeting as well as skills for managing whilst living independently. The Virtual School is also involved in a "Next Steps" group, aimed at supporting those who are at risk of becoming NEET in conjunction with the Youth Justice Service, NYBEP and No Wrong Door. More information on this group is included in the Careers Advice section.

In response to feedback from the Young People's Council the Virtual School has developed information regarding further education and options which has been added to the website and will continue to be developed along with a forthcoming review of the further education policy.

Case Study Further Education

In 2013 two brothers moved to a temporary care placement approximately 35 miles away from their school whilst a permanent placement was sought.

Both Brothers were settled in the education provision with established friendship groups and were clear that they wanted to stay in the local area to their education provision and friendships. Whilst this was a very reasonable request from the brothers this proved to be challenging to find a placement that could offer two teenage boys aged 13 and 15 a placement together on a permanent basis. A respite placement was extended as the brothers were settled although it was not a permanent option and was still approximately 50 minutes' drive away or one and a half hour bus journey from area where their school and friendship groups were. A taxi was put in place to maintain the education provision and whilst this was a fairly long commute to and from school it was a much preferred option to disturbing the education placement. A permanent placement was found through our own residential team.

The brothers are now 16 and 18, are still in the same placement, they have maintained their education provision and further expanded their friendship groups. Both Brothers have been successful in their education and are making the transition to a sixth form college and to university respectively. Although the 18 year old is going to university he has a staying put arrangement in place so that he can come home on holidays and breaks from university.

9.20 Higher Education Participation and Achievements

A total of 14 care leavers enrolled on university courses at the start of September 2015. They attended a variety of universities, mostly across the north of England, with one continuing studies at Cambridge University. However, three young people left their course during this period. Reasons for this were sought and will be analysed to look at how we can better support our current and prospective care leavers through higher education.

Destinations of these graduates are: postgraduate study; working as a social worker in the mental health service; and work placement in the psychology service within NYCC (which we are helping to arrange). The young person who is

Summer 2016 **3** care leavers graduated from university with bachelor degrees

One obtained a first

The others each gained a 2:1

continuing as a post graduate, has been awarded a prestigious scholarship by the Chinese government to study a two year master's degree in Economics and Chinese Development at Beijing University. This is a huge achievement; this young person acknowledged that the support she received from NYCC has been instrumental in her getting this far.

During the last year, the Higher Education Policy was reviewed and updated in line with

> **Links with universities have been maintained, with information about their outreach projects, (which inform and give young people experiences of university), have been advertised on YPC Twitter and Facebook accounts, and with foster carers.**

current legislation and practice. This is now available to staff via the intranet, which they can share with young people, foster carers and Staying Put providers. We are currently in the final stages of producing an HE leaflet which details financial arrangements for care leavers. This has been produced in consultation with the Young Person's Council (YPC). The YPC have been updated on latest developments within higher education and the current finances available to care leavers from student loans and NYCC's higher education bursary.

The Virtual School has also arranged its own outreach activities in partnership with local universities making use of the Higher York funding initiative, including:

Autumn Term 2015

• HE workshops for years 7-9, delivered by the University of York in collaboration with the Virtual School, at the Street, Scarborough. Informal series of workshops for young people to speak to current students, take part in activities exploring university life and think about routes to university.

Spring Term 2016

• HE and FE Campus Bus Tour for years 11-13. Arranged by the University of York with the Virtual School. Young people were given a mini tour of York and York St John Universities, as well as Askham Bryan College and York College. They were transported between each site by a private bus, staffed by the Virtual School and mentors from the Universities. They got to see the vocational and academic options available, learnt about student finances, and even saw a lamb being born! It was a very inspiring day.

The Virtual School delivered training to the Leaving Care Team around higher education and the changes to the HE policy. A twilight training session for foster carers also took place in the Scarborough locality, with guest presentations from: Yorkshire Coast College about their FE and HE courses and outreach work that children in care can access; and the University of Hull Scarborough Campus, about The Children's University and High Five project, both of which encourage children to get involved in extra-curricular activities and learn more about university as something they can aspire to. Foster carers also learned more about the support offered by Leaving Care Team, including the NYCC HE bursary.

Meetings have taken place with Higher York Collaborative to look at other HE activities that can be delivered and ways of engaging children in care with these events, such as using technology (e.g social media and Skype) to achieve this. This will continue as well as new links being forged with the new University Technical College (Scarborough) and Coventry University Scarborough Campus.

> **The Higher Education Lead within the Virtual School continues to provide support and guidance to social workers and Leaving Care Personal Advisers around HE generically and on a case by case basis.**

Discussions have taken place between the HE Lead and HR to make NYCC's Graduate Talent Pool more accessible to care leavers as they graduate. Placements will now be individually tailored and arranged much faster.

Looking towards the new academic year, the HE Lead attended the Fostering Conference (Sept 2016) and further twilight training session for foster carers across all localities will be arranged. Now that the Leaving Care Team does not pick up young people up until they reach 17 years 6 months, the LAC social workers have a greater responsibility to guide, advise and inform fostered children and their carers about further and higher education. Training workshops will therefore be delivered across all LAC teams.

Work by the HE Lead will also focus on increasing the number of young people accessing higher education, by looking at the barriers to going to university, and the reasons people have left their courses early. Plans are afoot within the Virtual School and Leaving Care team to ensure all young people receive appropriate careers advice prior to applying to university. Work is currently being undertaken to re-brand the corporate mentoring scheme into a work taster scheme, so that young people can trial careers before embarking on university, as well as gaining experience whilst at university.

University outreach activities will continue to be promoted as well as our own HE events for young people.

10 How the Virtual School and Local Authority has Monitored, Supported, Challenged and Intervened to Improve the Educational Outcomes for Children in Care

10.1 The importance of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)

PEP monitoring has been further strengthened this year with the Virtual School team now finalising 100% of PEPs drafted by social workers. This decision has streamlined the process of completed PEPs being uploaded onto the data base Liquid Logic Computer System (LCS). A further aim is to give designated teachers the opportunity to upload their own school tracking for a child in the care of NYCC, attending their school, directly onto the LCS system.

A new education section for the PEP has been developed for key age groups, Early Years, Primary and Secondary and will be available from September 2016. The post compulsory school age PEP introduced in September 2015 is now embedded in practice.

The new education section has taken into account 'assessment without levels', schools have the opportunity to determine how best to assess their pupils and this needed to be recognised within the PEP. Schools are required to show the progress that is being made by each pupil, particularly progress in English and mathematics. It has been noticeable in the last year that the quality of target setting from schools has been more relevant and in many

cases more aspirational. Senior Advisers within Education and Skills are currently working alongside the Virtual School to provide greater scrutiny on the quality and aspirational nature of targets.

> **The timeliness of PEP completion for the last year is 83%. The target for academic year 2016-17 will be to increase this to 90% or better. As schools and foster carers currently cannot access the LCS system it is important that copies of the final PEP report are forwarded to them within two weeks by the social worker.**

The Virtual School has written and distributed guidance on the completion of the PEP for the benefit of: social workers; designated teachers; foster carer and parents as well as other professionals. Advice is provided at an age appropriate level for children and young people. The Virtual School encourages children and young people to attend their PEP but acknowledges the most important factor is the child or young person's wishes and feelings are noted and influence decision making. The PEP guidance sets out minimum requirements before a PEP should be finalised, this includes specific advice to social workers:
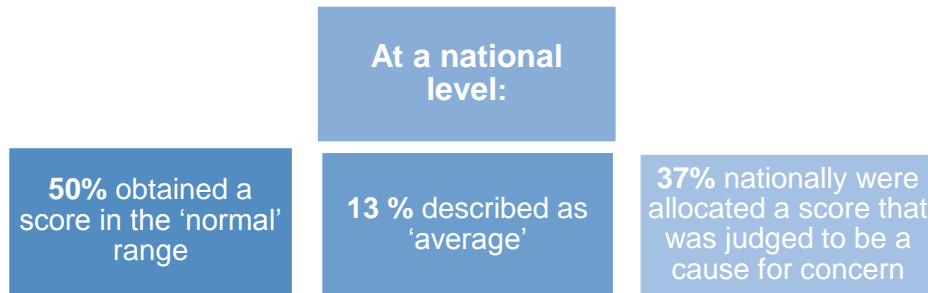
- Has the education section been completed by school with aspirational targets and attached to the care aspects of the PEP on LCS?
- What is the Pupil Premium being spent on?
- What is the cost breakdown?
- What is the impact on learning? (increased progress? If not what other plans are in place?)
- Has the current attainment for the child/ young person been shared?
- Is the child/ young person working in line with age related expectations? (Please be discrete if the young person is at the meeting and not working at age expected levels. Use judgement for special schools).
- What progress has been made since the last PEP? (expected/ exceeded/ below?)
- Have school identified any barriers to learning?
- What steps have been taken to minimise/ remove these barriers?
- Is attendance good (above 95%) or below the threshold classed as persistent absence (90%)?
- What steps have been taken to improve attendance?
- What is the young person's view? Do they feel safe in school? What is going well?
- Would they benefit from any help in school?
- Has the SDQ score been shared with school? Have school been encouraged to complete the SDQ from their knowledge and understanding?

10.2 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)[9]

Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires were introduced as a screening tool to assist in measuring the emotional and behavioural health of children and young people. All Local Authorities are required to provide information on the emotional and behavioural health of children in care.

The scoring range is between 0-40. On an individual basis a score of 13 or below is normal and 17 and above is a cause for concern, between 14-16 is borderline cause for concern and normal. The data highlights:

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[9] DfE Statistical First Release December 2015

At a national level:

50% obtained a score in the 'normal' range

13 % described as 'average'

37% nationally were allocated a score that was judged to be a cause for concern

We have now created a process in North Yorkshire whereby the young person's score on a SDQ is shared with schools at a Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting. Where the score is above 14, a school should complete a SDQ on a young person and the scores from the foster carer, young person (where appropriate) and school can be triangulated. At the PEP meeting there will be a discussion about intervention and support and what will be the next steps.

10.3 The Distribution and Impact of the Pupil Premium

The Virtual School has published guidance on the distribution of the £1,900 Pupil Premium for children in the care of North Yorkshire. Advice has also been provided for parents of children adopted from care. Funding of up to £1,900 per looked after child is allocated by the Virtual School Head to the establishment where the pupil is on roll at the start of each term. In instances where NYCC has commissioned an educational residential placement at an Independent Special School, the Pupil Premium is included within the overall arrangements. North Yorkshire County Council received £651,700.00 for 2015-2016. This is solely for the benefit of children in care. All other aspects of the Pupil Premium grant are paid directly to schools.

Schools have been reminded that one of the main purposes for the Pupil Premium grant is raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and ensure good progress.

The final spring term installment of £634 depends on the school satisfying the Virtual School Head that a number of criteria have been met. These include:

Has the Designated Teacher undertaken termly monitoring of the education section of the PEP?

Can the Designated Teacher itemise and demonstrate how the Pupil Premium funding has been spent and the impact that it has made on the individual? (including whole school strategies and the individual's pupil premium spend)

Is the Pupil Premium being used effectively to ensure the individual child makes progress?

A final payment may, therefore, not be paid for all children in care. Any payment not allocated to schools was redistributed to areas of high need or to assist those in care accessing alternative provision. Additional funding has been provided through a 'service level agreement' to fund an additional 0.5 FTE Educational Psychologist to increase

intervention and support to children in our care. Funding has also been provided to assist with the local authority, nationally recognised, local authority 'No Wrong Door' programme. This has been specifically around screening speech and language needs.

> **The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) was introduced last year; the funding equates to £302.10 per eligible child per year and is part of the government's wider initiative to raise the attainment of disadvantaged children. In North Yorkshire this funding is distributed in 3 installments and settings have been asked to complete case studies to inform the DfE about how the funds have been spent.**

A Graduate Officer in the Virtual School undertook extensive research into the impact and effectiveness of the Pupil Premium for children in care in North Yorkshire schools in 2015. An executive summary has been shared with schools. The full research report, including executive summary, can be requested from elac@northyorks.gov.uk. The study looked into mainstream primary and secondary schools, special schools, the PRS and a variety of Early Years settings.

The study looked into which members of staff have control of the Pupil Premium in the school, how the school consults with foster carers and young people about strategies and funding, what schools believed to be effective and what they actually spent the funding on.

10.4 The Importance of Training, Advice and Communication
10.4.1 Training
The Virtual school ran 2 training sessions at Allerton Court Hotel, Northallerton for those teachers new to the post of designated teacher for LAC.

Take up remains on the low side due to schools' funding issues but there was a full contingent from a newly opened children's residential home within Northallerton.

Next academic year, we are trialling some twilight sessions throughout the county for all secondary school staff together with their feeder primaries.

The Virtual School ran a joint multi-agency conference with the NYCC Safeguarding board on social, emotional and mental health issues at the Pavillions, Harrogate.

This was very well attended and very successful. Feedback was excellent and another conference will be planned for 2017.

10.4.2 Website
By Easter 2016, the Virtual School had a fully re-written and updated website, complete with all the latest forms that young people, schools, social carers and foster carers would need.

http://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=13569
It contains advice, links to other organisations within the NYCC and nationally.

Hopefully now, it will make it easier to update and tweak as the national items alter and all out of date website material connected to the Virtual School is disabled.

10.5 How good is the Attendance of Children in our Care?
The attendance data presented is based on those children and young people attending mainstream schools within North Yorkshire's geographical boundaries. This data excludes those who are in nursery classes and year groups 12 and 13 as well as those placed out of authority. This is the same process as used for the monitoring of attendance of children at special schools. For these children and young people the Virtual School concentrates on

PEP monitoring and direct contact by Virtual School staff with designated teachers in schools.

For comparative purposes the data presented is in the same format as previous years as this allows for the analysis of longitudinal trends. Attendance data on all children in care attending North Yorkshire maintained schools indicated an overall absence rate of 3.74%. This is down from 3.86% last year, the 3.99% in 2014 and 5.17% in 2013.

It is important to highlight the Department for Education interpretation of persistent absence changed in September 2015 to 10% of possible session rather than the 15% of total sessions it had been up until this date. This has had an impact on the number of persistent absences recorded.

The actual attendance rate of all children in care attending North Yorkshire maintained schools was 96.26% and the small number attending academies had an average attendance of 94.81%. The overall attendance rate for those of primary school age was 97.26% and 95.31% for those of secondary age.

There were 66 children in NYCC care educated out of authority between 2015 and 2016. From this 34 were placed in mainstream schools, 25 at Secondary School and 9 at primary schools. The attendance rate of children at a mainstream school is good overall with a 95.1% attendance rate for those in secondary school and 98% for those in primary.

96.3%	• actual attendance rate of all children in care attending North Yorkshire maintained schools
94.8%	• attendance rate of all children in care attending North Yorkshire acadamies
97.6%	• attendace rate of all children in care attending North Yorkshire primary schools
95.3%	• attendace rate of all children in care attending North Yorkshire secondary schools
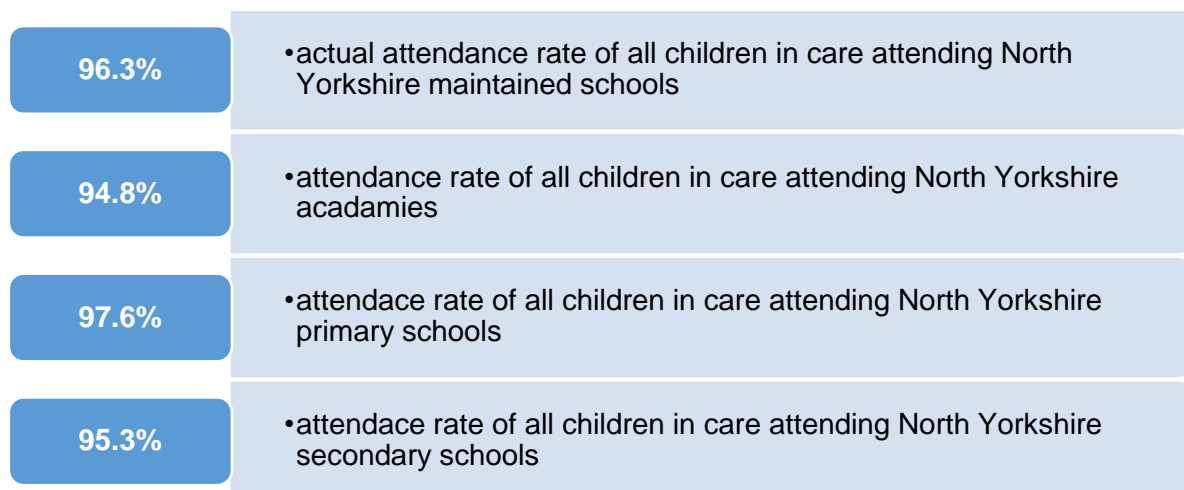
When analysing all young people on roll in North Yorkshire's maintained schools in 2015 the absence percentage in primary schools was 4.14% and in secondary schools 4.74%. This compares to 2.74% for children in care of North Yorkshire of primary age and 4.69% for those of in the care of North Yorkshire of a secondary age.

In summary the attendance rate for those children in care attending North Yorkshire schools is better than for all children attending North Yorkshire schools.

The persistent absence for 2015 was of 2.88%. This was based on the previous criteria of attendance below 85%.

As previously stated the criteria is now below 90%. The persistent absence rate applying the new criteria for primary and secondary school children in care combined for 2016 is 11.11 %. This breaks down to 7.02% at primary age and 15.0% at secondary age. The persistent

absence combined total for all children attending NYCC primary and secondary schools is 9.02 %. The primary figure being 7.13% and the secondary one being 11.28%

10.6 Securing Timely Admissions and Supporting Transitions

The Virtual School works with designated teachers and social workers primarily through PEP planning to assist transitions to a new school.

For most children in our care who are changing schools at the end of an academic year, a solid transition plan will be in place; support will have been identified, new relationships will have been initiated and the impact of change will have been minimised.

What has been described is usually the case for children in care who live in stable placements and where admissions forms are completed in the year before they are needed. However, there is another group of children in care and those adopted from care who may have a very different experience.

There is no requirement for schools to give children in care any priority for in year admissions and there is no requirement to have any provisions in the Fair Access Protocol that relate to the admission of children in care or children formerly in care.

> **There is nothing in legislation or in the School Admissions Code that gives any advantage to children in care for in year transfers between schools other than the powers of direction.**

It is important to acknowledge that children in care who have suffered from trauma and attachment related issues can, and will, present challenges in school. In the best case scenarios, head teachers often welcome discussions with a Virtual School Head Teacher where support, resources and strategies to meet needs can be agreed. There may be a case of additional resources being provided through the Pupil Premium grant.

Mid-year admissions can be challenging. The Local Collaborative Panels and Pupil Referral Services play a vital role in securing good educational provision. The Virtual School has continued to rigorously monitor those young people who await a school place or are out of school for any reason. In the vast majority of cases admission to a new school is negotiated rather than a direction letter being required. It is also important to note that with approximately 230 children in the care of other local authorities placed in North Yorkshire. Assistance is often required to secure a school place either through the School Admissions Code or the SEND Admissions process.
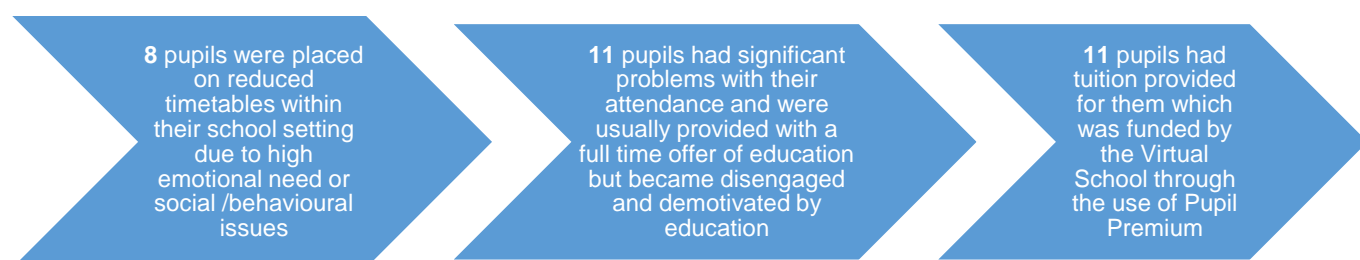
10.7 Strategies to Support Full Time Provision

The Virtual School monitors and tracks all children and young people in care who are not receiving 25 hours of education

In the last academic year 35 pupils were not in receipt of 25 hours of education at any one time this equates to 5.7% of the total number of children in our care. The highest number of young people being in year 11:

- 16 pupils were in year 11
- 6 pupils in year 10
- 8 pupils in year 9
- 3 pupils in year 8
- 2 pupils in year 6
- 1 pupil in year 2

Of these, 11 pupils had been in care more than 12 months and 25 pupils had been in care less than 12 months. It is clear from this analysis that the greatest challenge for the local authority and the Virtual School is ensuring that the educational needs are met for those teenagers new to care. It is another example of why expanding the 'No Wrong Door' approach' to include our Pupil Referral Services is so important.

Analysis of each individual story shows the following: 8 pupils were placed on reduced timetables within their school setting due to high emotional need or social/ behavioural issues: A further 11 pupils had significant problems with their attendance and were usually provided with a full time offer of education but became disengaged and demotivated by education. Providing a mentor or key member of staff to develop a good working relationship with the young person is crucial in such instances. The Virtual School provided a youth mentor to 12 young people during the year and further 6 were supported by a learning adviser from the Virtual School team. On three occasions an individual case was so complex a youth mentor and a learning adviser worked with a young person.

8 pupils were placed on reduced timetables within their school setting due to high emotional need or social /behavioural issues ▶ **11** pupils had significant problems with their attendance and were usually provided with a full time offer of education but became disengaged and demotivated by education ▶ **11** pupils had tuition provided for them which was funded by the Virtual School through the use of Pupil Premium

Although an alternative provision curriculum should be co-ordinated and monitored by a school designated teacher, for children in care, on 5 occasions the lead was taken by the Virtual School, due to the young person being at risk of permanent exclusion. This was half the total number of cases where the Virtual School supported alternative curriculum provision.

11 pupils had tuition provided to them which was funded by the Virtual School through the use of Pupil Premium. This was focused almost exclusively on maths and English support.

10.8 Reducing Exclusions

Nationally, fixed term exclusions are more than five times as likely for Children in Care than for all children. Children in Care are also more likely to have a fixed term exclusion than Children in Need (one and a half times the rate). Nationally, 1 in 10 Children in Care had at least one fixed period of exclusion in 2014, up very slightly from 9.77% the year previously.

For North Yorkshire's Children in Care and attending a school within North Yorkshire's boundaries, there were 4 children of primary age fixed term excluded (1%) and 15 of secondary age (4.3%). A total number of 39 days were lost due to exclusion for those children of primary school age, mainly due to one child, and 35.5 days were lost for those of secondary school age.

Fixed term exclusions are more than **five times** as likely for children in care

Nationally, **1 in 10** children in care had at least one fixed period of exclusion in 2014

Across North Yorkshire, **4** children of primary age were fixed term excluded and **15** of secondary age

Fixed term exclusions from 1st September 2015 to the 26th July 2016 (full academic year) are shown below. This data does not include NYCC children in care attending schools outside of North Yorkshire. In a small number of cases Virtual School staff have supported these cases that have presented some of the most challenging circumstance for the team.

Primary school	Boys			Girls		
	Excluded	Total exclusions	Total days lost	Excluded	Total exclusions	Total days lost
North Yorkshire	4	6	31	1	1	1.5
Other Local Authority	1	7	18.5	0	0	0
Totals	5	13	49.5	1	1	1.5

Secondary school	Boys			Girls		
	Excluded	Total exclusions	Total days lost	Excluded	Total exclusions	Total days lost
North Yorkshire	10	36	69	2	3	5.5
Other Local Authority	5	10	43	2	4	8
Totals	15	46	112	4	7	13.5

When compared to girls, boys have a higher proportion of days lost to fixed term exclusions at both primary and secondary school. At secondary school the proportion of days lost to fixed term exclusions is higher for boys when compared to other local authorities, in contrast to girls whose figure is lower when compared to other local authorities.

10.9 Avoiding Permanent Exclusions

In North Yorkshire there has not been a permanent exclusion of a child or young person in our care since 2011. There have been occasions where a permanent exclusions has been considered but either a head teacher has reconsidered the options available to them

Nationally the rate of permanent exclusions for children in care is around twice as high as the rate for all children, but continues to be less than the rate for children in need.

or a decision has been rescinded before governors have met. In some cases the outcome has meant a change of school or educational provision.

There have been no permanent exclusions at both primary and secondary schools since 1st September 2015 to the 26th July 2016.

As a Virtual School we have analysed cases where a permanent exclusion would most certainly have been issued if we had not intervened. We concluded there were 12 cases where this would have occurred. This is quite shocking and if it were repeated throughout all England's local authorities would have meant potentially 1,800 children in care being permanently excluded

10.10 Intervention Projects
10.10.1 Imagination Library
The Imagination library has been funded for a two year period for children in care aged two, three and four. This year a total of thirty-four children have received a book in the post each month to support their learning and help promote early childhood literacy. As an extension to this project funding has been secured through the Early Years Improvement Partnership to offer literacy packs of the same books and support material with suggestions for activities connected to the books theme and developing the child's learning in all areas of the EYFS, these will be given to the child's nursery, school or childcare setting within the autumn term 2016.

10.10.2 Rainbow Readers
The Rainbow readers has run again this year for pupils in year two, six and nine. We have sent out parcels of books and stationary for a six month period to a total of sixty-three children. We continue to evaluate the project on a rolling programme through evaluation forms. All forms returned included positive comments from both the young people and the carers. A suggestion from a previous year evaluation was to allow the young people to choose a book to receive in their final parcel, with eleven young people making a personal choice this year.

Comments included:

'I liked the book and getting a parcel from the postman'

Foster carers observed: 'L has taken great delight in getting and investigating his parcel and this in turn encourages his reading skills.'

The year 6 pupils also benefit from receiving a Transition Box, which contains items valuable for them starting Secondary School. One of the Learning Advisers takes charge of these interventions as part of her portfolio area.

10.10.3 Inspire
The Virtual School continues to work in conjunction with York St. John University to offer placements to students undertaking a "Counselling, Coaching and Mentoring" degree. This year 8 Students started the project which aims to match York St. John students to some of the children in our care.

The aim of the project is to provide a mentor to children who would not usually qualify for Youth Mentor support and also for them to learn about and aspire to reaching Higher

Education. The student mentors are supported by the Virtual School and must attend a training session as well as supervision sessions.

10.10.4 Careers Project

The Virtual School has been part of the NYCC careers project since Sept 2015 with the aim of developing and enhancing careers education and support for children in care and reducing the number of young people becoming at risk of being NEET (Not in education, employment or training).

The Virtual School monitor PEP forms to ensure that children in our care are receiving careers information, advice and guidance at key points in their academic career. Schools have a duty to provide independent careers advice and the Virtual School advocates for those young people not in receipt of this, so they have access as soon as possible. Where a young person is educated outside of mainstream education, we ensure that they receive guidance from the school to which they are enrolled.

A small number of young people mainly in Years 10, 11 and 12 have missed out on good quality careers advice through their individual circumstances and vulnerability.

To address these needs the Virtual School worked in conjunction with partners from North Yorkshire Business Enterprise Partnership (NYBEP), No Wrong Door and the Youth Justice Service in Harrogate to develop a programme of 4 sessions for groups of up to 5 young people to promote employability skills, work readiness, and provide information about post-16 options. As part of the programme the young people spent time at Harrogate College and met 2 employers.

> **The Virtual School is working toward a nationally recognised quality mark from CareerMark. We are currently in the process of collating evidence of how the Virtual School promotes careers education, guidance and support in an integrated way within its work with young people.**

4 young people participated in the group. 3 of the young people completed the programme successfully and achieved a level 1 in employability qualification. Since then all 3 young people have chosen to start a college course.

10.10.5 Summer Activities

During the summer the Virtual School organise educational activities for young people. This summer we held a 3 day music workshop at the Forum in Northallerton, with the help of NYMAZ who supplied the instruments. NYMAZ is a youth music development charity which champions the transformative potential of music for children and young people. A PhD music student from York St John University expertly led the sessions as a part of her PhD research. For the three days we were joined by nine young people all of whom did not currently play a musical instrument but had an interest in music and singing. Day one was an assault on the senses whilst all nine young people enjoyed experimenting with the drums electric guitars, keyboard and microphones. As the three days progressed, with the skill of the music student these enthusiastic bangs and strums turned into a polished musical performance entitled "Bang Strum!" At the end of the three days the young people held a polished performance for the carers which was well attended and produced a CD of four songs with their own original lyrics. At the end of the three days the young people were excited about continuing with a musical instrument and were all going to enquire when they returned school.

Quotes from the young people included:

> "I didn't like the fact that it had finished!"

> "I enjoyed making music and making songs up!"

This was an enjoyable and successful activity and one which we hope to repeat again.

Children enjoyed a fun day of art and creative activity delivered by Art Therapy Yorkshire, in collaboration with The Virtual School in August 2016. The workshop took place at The Street, Scarborough, and was targeted at upper primary (ages 8- 11), in the care of NYCC. Six young people participated in the day. The morning session focused on individual likes and dislikes; a time to explore themselves. The children then began creating their own 2D and 3D islands, including the things that they would take with them to a desert island. Lunch was included and provided by a local café, followed by a short walk to Peasholme Park where the children collected natural artefacts to use in their island designs back at The Street. They were each given a sketch book to keep, and they were encouraged to make sketches of things in the park as we walked around. Once back at The Street the children continued their island designs. Throughout the day the children got to experiment with different media and were able to let their imaginations run free. Everything created was around personal liking and identity. At the end of the day the young people invited their foster carers to view the work they had done, and were able to take it home with them. Feedback from the day was very positive:

> "We have a lovely piece of artwork on the playhouse wall which is a lasting reminder of the fun they had as well as great to look at"

> "Thanks for a well planned and fun-filled day. The girls had a great time. …They are still talking about what they did almost a week later. We'd definitely like to be involved in any future events."

11 How is the success of children and young people celebrated?

11.1 Graduation Ceremony
The Virtual School hosted its sixth Graduation Ceremony for children in care and care leavers. This annual event was held on 13 July and was well attended, with 17 young people and their guests, along with County Councillors and staff from across the authority. Virtual School staff spoke about each young person's journey and achievements, which at times was quite emotional. The awards were then presented by Cllr Janet Sanderson and the guest speaker, Carrie Wilson, who is care experienced.   After the formal award ceremony and photographs at County Hall a celebratory meal was enjoyed at Allerton Court Hotel.

11.2 Resource Panel

A Resource Panel Meeting is held monthly and looks at exclusions and any additional support that may be required around education.

It also looks at other sources of support:

Positive Activities Fund (PAF) – a total of £4,916.15 was awarded to 30 children and young people. Amounts applied for varied from £47.00 for swimming lessons up to the maximum £200, examples of which are grants for riding lessons, a guitar starter kit, protective clothing and equipment, cake decorating lessons and many other activities.

Achievement awards – over the last academic year 101 letters and vouchers have been sent to young people. Most received £10 vouchers, £20 was awarded to a young person whose education was turned around and subsequently became the first head girl of The Rubicon Centre and £50 to a young person with outstanding achievements in gymnastics both nationally and internationally. Year 11 achievements were also rewarded. These awards were based on level of achievements and ranged from £10 to £40. The total amount of vouchers awarded in the last academic year was £1,595.

Funding for IT equipment – 18 young people benefitted from IT equipment. This consisted of 18 laptops and a digital camera that was required for A-level photography.

12 Summary and Recommendations

In terms of attainment and progress this has proved to be a successful year for a significant number of children in the care of NYCC. Attainment at KS4 was the most successful in the last 15 years. The majority of KS2 made expected progress. The Virtual School and local authority continues to celebrate the success of children and young people in our care. We are becoming more flexible in the way we listen to the views of young people and how we respond to their requests. This report has demonstrated how we monitor, support, challenge

and intervene with children in our care aged 0 to 18 and with the support of the leaving care team and SEND teams up to the age of 25.

Awareness needs to be drawn to the increasing number of CiC who are unaccompanied asylum seekers and the increase in number of CiC placed in NY by other local authorities. Careful consideration needs to be given when considering the resources that will be required to meet need.

That this annual report is noted by Executive Members, LAC Members CYPLT and the Virtual School Management Board.