

Item No. 6a.	Classification: Open	Date: 3 September 2014	Meeting Name: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub- Committee
Report title:		Education Performance of Children in Care	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Merril Haeusler, Director of Education	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The sub-committee is requested to note the report on the educational performance of looked after children.

Introduction

2. The Looked After Children (LAC) Education Team exists to support the highest possible education outcomes for Southwark looked after children.
3. The team provides guidance and support for care and educational professionals and related services, to ensure best practice.
4. The team's key priority remains pivotal: to champion the educational needs of children looked after through systemic approaches to pupil tracking, supporting a co-ordinated system of support for children looked after.
5. Southwark's LAC Education Team builds effective relationships with schools, social workers, carers and multi-agency professionals. Working collaboratively in multi-agency contexts, the team maintains a focus on the educational needs and aspirations of the looked after child. Education Advisors hold schools to account for pupils' education attainment and progress.

Progress

6. Pupil performance data is published by the DfE each autumn. The DfE calculates performance on the basis of those pupils who have been in care for at least 12 months continuously as at 31st March. The most recent DfE published data relates to academic year 2012/13.
7. In 2012/13, Southwark LAC attainment remained at, or above, national averages for Looked After Children.
8. In summer 2013, 26.7% of the cohort achieved 5 A* - C GCSEs including English and maths. This exceeded national (15.3%) and London (20.8%) LAC results.

9. Key Stage 2 attainment remained consistent over the last two years, at near to, or above, national LAC outcomes. 71% of the cohort achieved Level 4 in reading (63% nationally), 57% in writing (55%), 50% in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (45%) and 57% in maths (59%).
10. In all areas except maths Key Stage 2 outcomes were higher than looked after children nationally, however Southwark outcomes were lower than London's.
11. During this academic year, over one third of the looked after cohort had statements of SEN (compared with the national incidence of 2.8% of all pupils). Depending on the nature of their special educational need, some pupils with a statement may demonstrate significant attainment gaps with their peers. These pupils are not expected to achieve national age-related expectations at end of Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 4.

Narrowing the Gap

12. A systemic approach to the collection of pupil attainment data has significantly improved pupil tracking, leading to uniform 'RAG-rated' education attainment information per individual pupil. This informs a clear account of individual pupil progress.
13. Education Advisors prioritise school-based Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings of those pupils with the greatest drift from expectations. Advisors challenge schools to ensure that a range of strategies are deployed to close the attainment gap.
14. The LAC Education Team maintains the profile of education with Foster Carers via its inclusion in periodical newsletters, direct mailing and training provision, so that Carers are reminded of the pivotal contribution they make to attitudes to learning and the impact they can have on education outcomes.

Priorities for 2014-5

15. The LAC Education Team will improve the systemic collection of attainment and progress data, to support the analysis of pupil underachievement, particularly in English and mathematics.
16. The Team will bring greater influence to care placement decisions, reducing disruption to education and increasing children's access to high quality, appropriate provision.
17. The Team will design a rolling programme of education updates for social care practitioners, contributing regularly to Social Care Practice Groups meetings, maintaining a clear focus on education issues.
18. Pupil destination data, collected at end of Yr 11, will be used to track learners moving to Key Stage 5, to raise engagement with employment, education and training.
19. The LAC Education Team will reinvigorate the impetus to narrow the attainment gap through close monitoring of Personal Education Plans and schools' judicious spending of Pupil Premium (LAC).

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Key characteristics of the cohort
Appendix 2	2013/14 Key Stage 2 outcomes – unvalidated data

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Merril Haeusler, Director of Education	
Report Author	Liz Britton, Priority Learners Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	20 August 2014	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes/No	Yes/No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team/Community Council/Scrutiny Team	26 August 2014	