

Virtual Headteacher's Report Southwark Children Looked After

Virtual Headteacher

Annual Report January 2017

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The local authority has a responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children looked after (Children & Families Act (April 2014)). In July 2014, government released 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children' which reinforces the local authority's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children looked after and promote the child's educational achievement. There is a clear ambition, at national and local level, to narrow the attainment gap between children looked after and their non-looked after peers.
- 1.2 The Children & Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to appoint at least one person for the purpose of discharging the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children, wherever they live or are educated.
- 1.3 The Conditions of Grant for 2014/15 Pupil Premium gave responsibility for the management of this funding to the Virtual Head. This has provided opportunity to secure fixed-term resourcing at local authority level that will make a real difference to individual children.
- 1.4 The Schools' White Paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere, published 17 March 2016, states the intention of extending the remit of Virtual School Head-teachers to promoting the educational achievement of children who are adopted or subject to special guardianship.
- 1.5 The remit of Southwark's Virtual School includes the authority's duty to provide education other than at school (EOTAS). This area of work is not included in this report which focuses specifically on the education of Southwark Looked After Children. The gains made by including EOTAS commissioning within the Virtual School are particularly beneficial where children are on the edge of care.
- 1.6 The Virtual School is mindful of the Rees Centre report 'The Education Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data' (November 2015) and the subsequent Joint Policy Paper from The Association of Directors of Children's Services 'The Educational Achievement of Children in Care' (December 2015). Both documents inform the strategic planning and operational delivery of Southwark Virtual School.
- 1.7 Strong working relationships within and beyond Southwark have been maintained during episodes of restructuring and high staff turnover. LAC Education Advisors are co-located with Care Practitioners. The Virtual School's aspiration for best possible education provision and improved outcomes for CLA is shared at every level of practice and management.
- 1.8 Southwark Virtual School is responsible for 462 children looked after in the school age range Reception to Year 13. Learners in the school attend 270 schools across 64 local authorities. The school's work includes those children who have been placed for adoption until the court makes the adoption order giving parental responsibility to the adoptive parents.
- 1.9 Priorities for the Virtual School in 2015/2016 remained:
 - Advocate for the best possible education provision for Southwark's children looked after, in multi-disciplinary contexts
 - Secure rapid, appropriate education provision at times of placement change
 - Support and challenge schools to be ambitious for every child looked after
 - Track pupil attainment and attendance, focussing on pupils' academic progress and raising alerts regarding those at risk of disengagement
 - Increase the quality of Personal Education Plans to improve education outcomes

2. Changing Educational Landscape

2.1 Destandardisation of assessment within secondary schools has meant that tracking of progress is more difficult for the looked after cohort, where learners are placed in different schools and across different local authorities. This is compounded by varying in reliability in schools' assessment data as they establish individual assessment processes. The impact for the Virtual School and Looked After learners is a greater demand on LAC Advisor time, as the PEP meeting becomes one of the only reliable processes in moderating the data shared by schools regarding' students progress.

A destandardised system is far more difficult for non-specialists to navigate, making specialist educational intervention critical to educational advocacy for the child.

2.2 Changes to accountability measures for schools, specifically the move from 5 A* - C including English and Maths to Progress 8 are generally positive for the majority of learners as schools are incentivised to ensure that every learner makes progress in line or in excess of peers that have the same starting points rather than focussing resources on key groups, particularly those on the C/D borderline in core subjects.

2.3 Looked After Children are often subject to external factors which mean that they do not, on average, make progress in line with their peers. The Virtual School has found this progress measure has had an impact on how willing schools and academies are to retain these students if they are not successful. This can often be complicated further for students that have special educational needs. Situations like this need powerful advocacy from specialist advisors who understand all of the relevant legislation and are able to challenge senior school staff in a professional and effective manner.

2.4 The Progress 8 measure has also had the generally positive impact of ensuring that schools offer a broad, balanced and generally academic curriculum. The measure encourages schools to focus on core subjects first, but also increases the status of EBacc qualifications. This curriculum change, could, however have an impact on the most vulnerable students, where a more vocational or arts based curriculum may have been the most appropriate. This needs the intervention of specialist staff, advocating for the child, where curriculum options are chosen in the transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4.

2.5 The new national funding formula will place unprecedented pressure on the budgets of some schools, this is likely to impact on the funding available to Southwark Virtual School as a proportion of Pupil Premium has been left unclaimed by schools previously. Some of these funds have been used to employ specialist LAC Education advisors in order to navigate the changes to schools systems on behalf of LAC in their caseloads and is bound to have a detrimental impact on the experiences and outcomes for learners.

3. Virtual School Remit and Structure

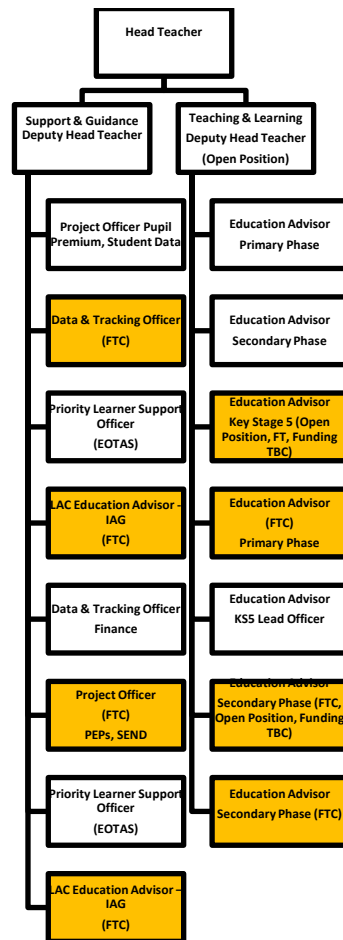
3.1 Southwark Virtual School was restructured significantly in 2015/2016 in order to address the increasingly complex educational landscape. Pooled Premium Funds were also used to establish a number of Fixed Term Posts including 4 LAC Education Advisors, 2 CIAG advisors and 2 Project Officers.

3.2 Restructuring for 2016/2017 has been relatively minor, but has involved loss of capacity in some areas. The role of Associate Headteacher has been removed, and two fixed term LAC

Education Advisor posts are vacant as post holders have left the service and funding for new appointments is being agreed.

- 3.3 A permanent Key Stage 5 lead role has been established. The post holder is responsible for coordinating CIAG and Key Stage 5 LAC Education Advice. There are a number of Fixed Term Contracts due to end in August 2017.

2016/2017 Virtual School Structure

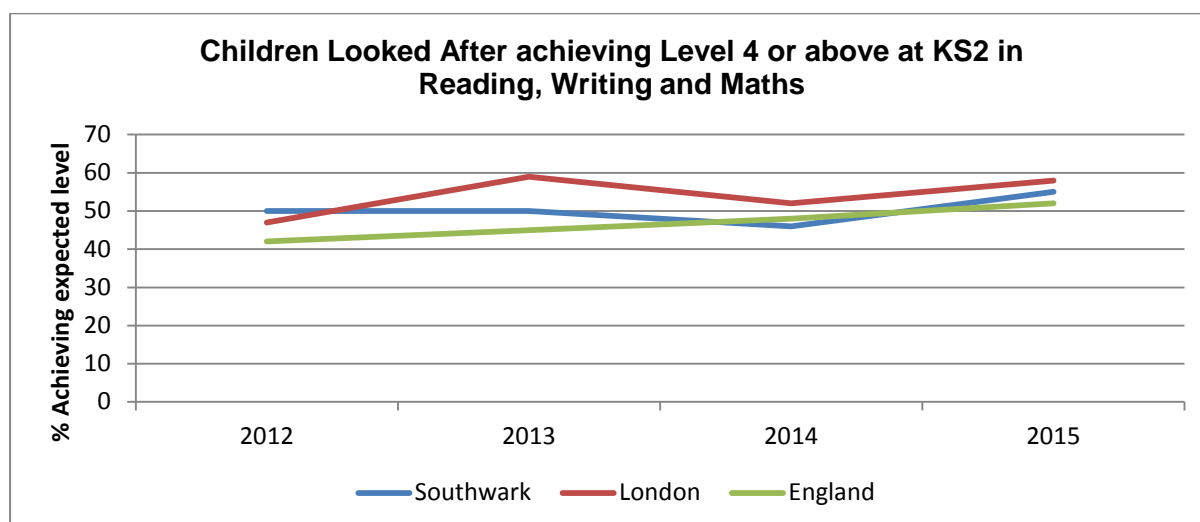


4. Performance Information

LAC Attainment – Key Stage 2

Percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving Level 4 in Reading, Writing and Maths

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Southwark LAC	50	50	46	55
London LAC	47	59	52	58
England LAC	42	45	48	52



- 4.1 Key Stage 2 Attainment was markedly higher in 2015 than 2014, with 55% of Year 6 LAC students achieving expected levels in Reading, Writing and Maths: an increase of 9% from the previous academic year. This followed National and London trends, but with a more significant increase compared with increases of 4% and 6% respectively. There was a small drop in the percentage of learners achieving a level 4 in Reading. As a result, there was an increased focus on Reading for children of Primary School age in the academic Year 2015-2016 with appropriate level books being given to pupils at PEP meetings and work with Foster Carers to encourage reading for pleasure. The percentage of students achieving the expected levels in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling also increased from 50% to 55%.

LAC Progress – Key Stage 2

Percentage of Year 6 pupils making 2 or more levels progress in Key Stage 2 in 2015

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Southwark	71.40%	71.40%	81.00%
England	82%	84%	77%

4.2 The percentage of students making two or more levels of progress in Maths was above that of all LAC students nationally. Reading and Writing are below that of LAC pupils nationally. Pupil Premium Funding has been used to fund a primary LAC Advisor post for 2015-2016 in order to improve outcomes in the Primary Phase. There has also been an increased focus on literacy in the primary phase using the Pupil Premium funded “Letterbox” resource to support reading and writing development.

Percentage of Students Achieving Expected Levels in 2016

	Percentage of Students Achieving Expected Standard - 2016			
	Reading	GPS	Writing	Maths
Southwark LAC	52	40	61	40
England All	66	72	87	70
Gap	14	32	26	30

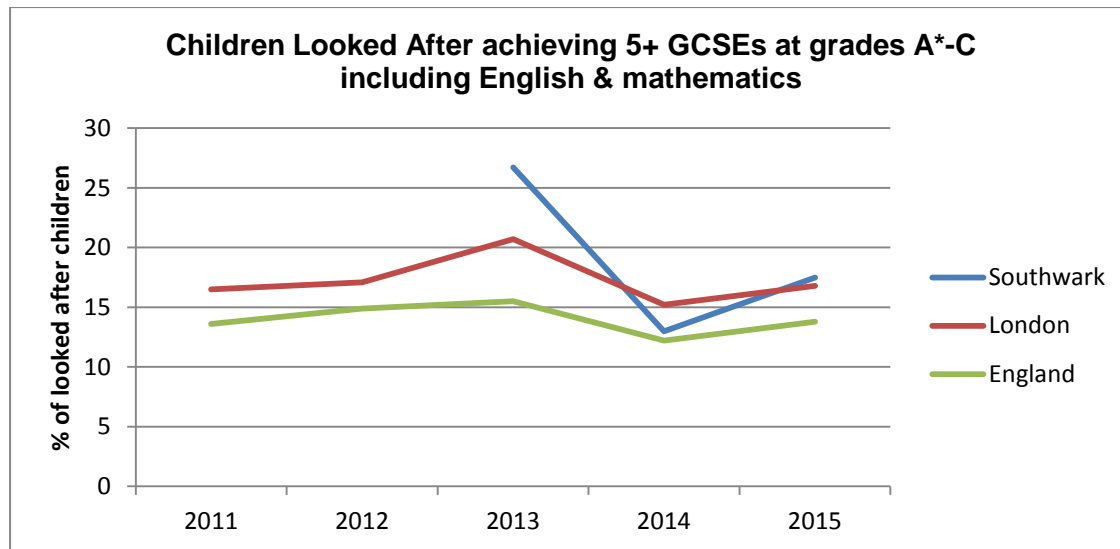
	Percentage of Students Achieving Expected Standard - 2015			
	Level 4+ Reading	Level 4+ GPS	Level 4+ Writing	Level 4+ Maths
Southwark LAC	61.9	47.6	61.0	61.9
England All	89.0	80.0	87.0	87.0
Gap	27.1	32.4	26.0	25.1

4.3 Results for Key Stage 2 are not directly comparable between academic years 2015 and 2016 because of a change in assessment methodology. It is, however, noteworthy that the gaps

between pupils achieving expected levels are closing or stable in most cases. In the case of Reading the gap has almost halved: strategies used in 2015-2016, described in more detail earlier, have had an impact. Raising attainment and progress levels in Key Stage 2 Mathematics is a focus for the academic year 2016-2017 with Pupil Premium funds being used to distribute specialist software to students that have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The usage of this software is then monitored by LAC Advisors to ascertain where further intervention is necessary.

Note: DFE published data for 2016 LAC outcomes are unavailable until March 2017

LAC Attainment - GCSE



	2013	2014	2015	2016*
Southwark (LAC)	26.7	13	17.5	20.7
London (LAC)	20.7	15.2	16.8	Published March 2017
England (LAC)	15.5	12.2	13.8	Published March 2017

4.4 GCSE Outcomes for Southwark Looked after Children improved significantly in 2015. The percentage of students achieving 5 A*- C including English and maths was 4.5% higher than the previous academic year compared with an improvement of only 1.6% for both London and England Looked after Children. There was a further increase of 3.2% in 2016; 20.7% of Southwark Looked after Children achieved 5 A*- C including English and maths.

4.5 These improvements are largely due to an increased focus on supporting Year 11 pupils with English and Maths in the academic year 2014- 2015 and 2015 -2016. This has involved some targeted, Pupil Premium funded supplementary home tuition, where gaps have been identified using the PEP process. This has also led to increased numbers of students achieving A*-C in both English and maths in both academic years.

There was also some modest improvement in overall outcomes excluding English and Maths as shown in the chart below.

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Southwark (LAC)	42.2	19.6	20	20.7
London (LAC)	39.9	19.9	21.8	Published March 2017
England (LAC)	37.2	16.3	18.3	Published March 2017

Note: DFE published data for 2016 LAC outcomes are unavailable until March 2017

**Unvalidated Data*

Performance of Southwark LAC Students in and out Southwark borough provision

Key Stage 2 Attainment - 2016

	% Achieving Scaled Score of 100+			
	Reading	Writing	GPS	Maths
Attending School In-Borough	53	53	41	35
Attending School Out of Borough	43	50	36	36

Key Stage 4 Attainment – 2016

	Percentage of Southwark LAC			
	5+ GCSE A* - C	5+ GCSE A* - C EM	EM A* - C	5+ GCSE A* - G
Attending School In-Borough	42.9	35.7	35.7	57.1
Attending School Out of Borough	15.8	15.8	21.1	36.8

4.6 Comparisons between Southwark LAC educated in and out of Southwark Borough show that students educated in borough consistently outperform Southwark LAC out of borough. The gap is much more apparent at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 2 where students educated in borough outperform out of borough students on every measure by at least 15%. This is also true in previous academic years

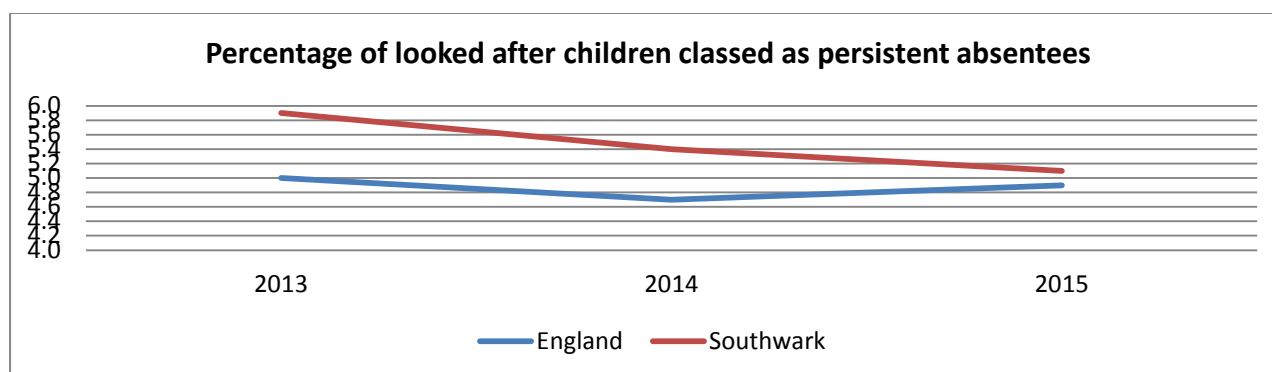
Attendance

4.7 Published SFR data shows that persistence absence has fallen significantly since 2013. This does not follow the national trend for LAC which showed an increase in persistent absenteeism in 2015.

4.7.1 2016 data is not comparable to data from previous years as the threshold for Persistent Absenteeism has changed from attendance below 85% to attendance below 90%. Measuring Southwark performance using projected figures is difficult without data for England LAC, released with SFR Data in March 2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016*
England	5	4.70	4.90	Released March 2017
Southwark	5.90	5.40	5.10	13.9%

*Projected based on numbers of children in care for 12 months or longer.



4.7.2 A groups analysis shows Persistent Absenteeism to be highest in Year 11 following the national trend, these students are prioritised by LAC Advisors above others wherever possible, because of the impact on end of Key Stage outcomes.

4.7.3 Raising attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism remains a priority for the academic year 2016/2017 with the establishment of a Persistent Attendance Panel involving Social Care Colleagues and LAC Advisors.

Exclusions

	2012	2013	2014	2015
England	11.32	9.77	10.25	Released March 2017
Southwark	16.06	13.46	10.96	10.42*

*Unvalidated Data

4.7.4 Fixed term exclusions have steadily decreased since 2012, which is not in line with national trends. There is some evidence to suggest that figures for 2016 will be significantly higher, for Southwark and nationally, with many education providers reporting that a larger percentage of their cohort are arriving with more complex issues that are resulting in general behaviour issues. As a result, a priority for the academic year 2016/2017 is intervene early with any student that has a record of Fixed Term Exclusions from the previous academic year, at the very least, prioritising the PEP over others.

5. Key Stage 5

5.1 The Virtual School was restructured in 2014/2015 adding capacity in Key Stage 5, with the addition of a fixed term LAC Advisor and two CIAG specialists straddling KS4 and KS5. This specialist, skilled team has increased EET levels from 51% to 84% as shown below. This has been in the context of regularly receiving new (NEET) young people to the cohort, most of which are either unaccompanied asylum seekers or young offenders.

EET Figures December 2016

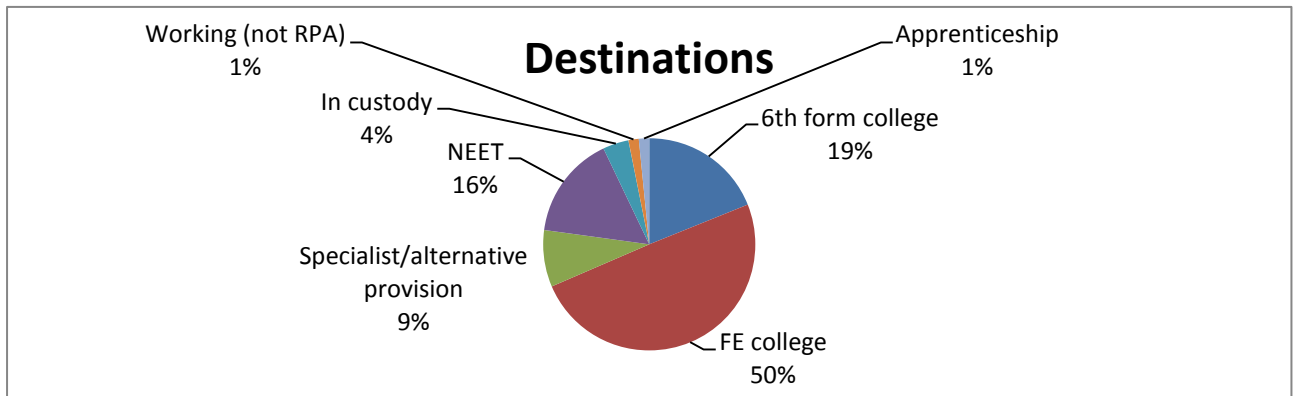
Year	Total no. of yp	EET	NEET	EET %
12	48	44	4	91%
13	79	63	16	80%
KS5 total	127	107	20	84%

5.2 All EET Figures are high compared to national figures for LAC and also compare favourably with figures for all students nationally. Year 13 EET figures are below those of Year 12, this follows the national pattern. The gap, however is small, and this is a result of the continuing support and careers advice Year 12 students receive, helping them to stay in education for Year 13 or find a more suitable alternative. There are a number of factors contributing to high levels of engagement for LAC in Southwark, both in helping young people find and choose the right opportunities and then in supporting them to remain in appropriate provision when they are there.

5.3 The team use a wide range of contacts and networks to ensure that they source appropriate opportunities and use out of provision PEPs where necessary to support this process. Where progressing into education, Information, Advice and Guidance officers ensure that the young person is placed at an appropriate level, on a course that they have a genuine interest in.

5.4 Young people are supported to remain in education, with a high volume of PEPs being completed and LAC Advisor attendance at disciplinary and/or progress meetings. Good links between LAC Advisors and Social Care means that both teams can make early interventions where issues arise that may impact on a young person's progress or placement.

Destinations of Year 12 and 13 Students



5.5 The Key Stage 5 team has forged strong relationships with external agencies to provide opportunities for our for Looked After Children at Key Stage 5. This is evident in the range of destination opportunities taken by young people. A large percentage of young people elect to stay in education, illustrating the quality of the support, advice and guidance that they have received in Key Stage 4. The numbers in both Year 12 and Year 13 accessing Level 3 courses is particularly encouraging when compared to national trends. The team will be working closely with university widening participation teams to arrange HE experiences for all of these students as well as working closely with schools and colleges to ensure UCAS applications are of a particularly high standard and that the young people are well informed about their choices and entitlements going forward, into higher education.

6. Pupil Premium 2015/16

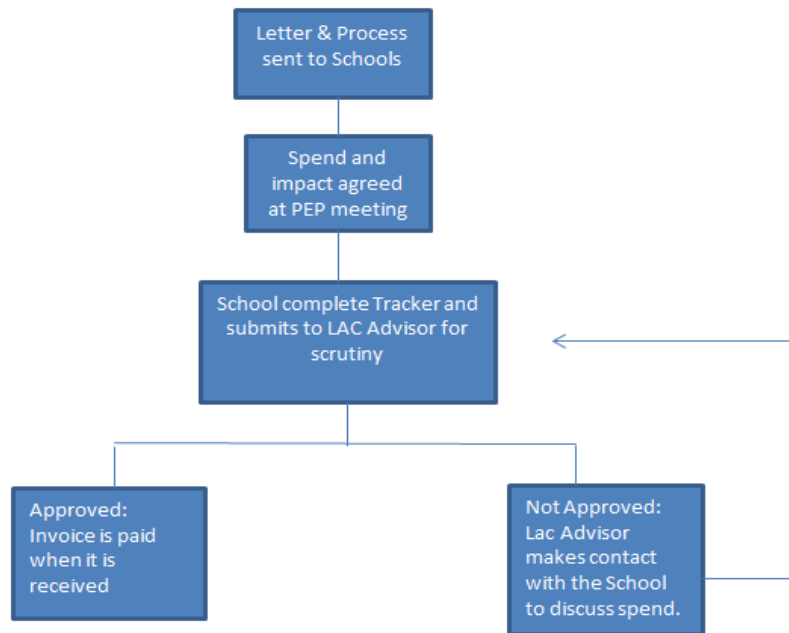
6.1 VSHs are responsible for managing [pupil premium](#) funding for the children they look after and for allocating it to schools and alternative provision settings.

The VSH must:

- make sure that the method you choose for allocating and spending the funding is simple so that looked-after children can benefit from the funding without delay
- make sure that schools, AP settings and early years providers spend their pupil premium funding for looked-after children to help meet the needs identified in the children’s personal education plans (PEPs)
- make sure that any pupil premium funding that you have not passed on to an educational setting or spent by 31 March is returned to DfE
- be able to demonstrate how the pupil premium and EYPP funding you are managing is raising the achievement of your looked-after children

6.2 The Southwark process for pupil premium delegation is shown below; the aim is to keep the process simple for schools at the same time as introducing a process for dialogue and accountability as well as linking to the PEP process. This process works best and the spend

has the most impact where LAC Advisors have the capacity to continue the dialogue with schools.



As at the 10th August 2016, the Virtual School has 343 children of statutory school age and eligible for Pupil Premium LAC.

The breakdown of children claimed for is as follows:

NCY	No. Pupils PP LAC Paid	Total No. Pupils in NCY	%
R	5	9	55.6%
1	8	13	61.5%
2	18	20	90.0%
3	13	19	68.4%
4	21	26	80.8%
5	22	31	71.0%
6	20	32	62.5%
7	12	29	41.4%
8	23	38	60.5%
9	15	37	40.5%
10	16	39	41.0%
11	19	50	38.0%
Total	192	343	56.0%

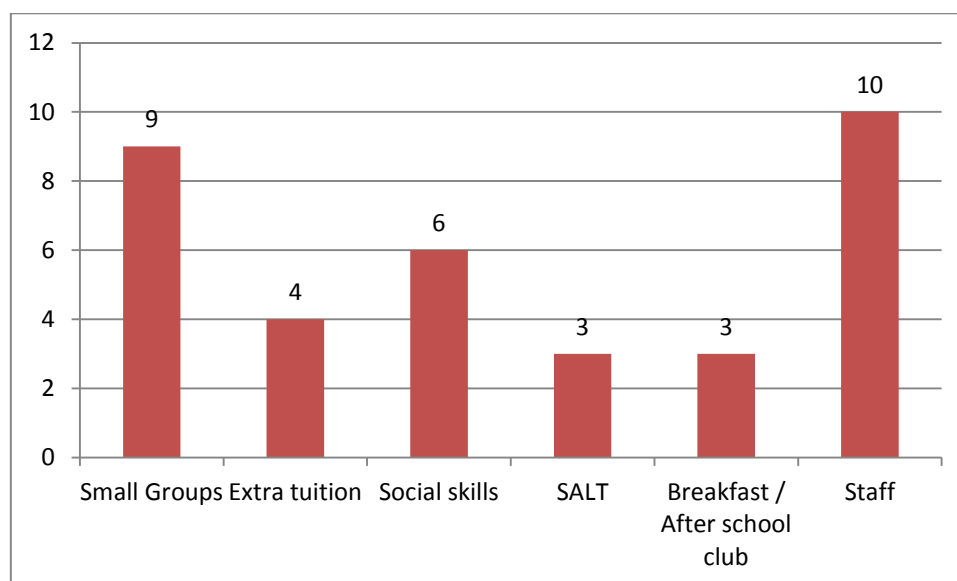
As in previous years, the highest take up of Pupil Premium LAC is within Key Stages 1 and 2, the lowest within Key Stages 3 and 4.

There has been a rise in 2015/16 of the total proportion of children where Pupil Premium LAC has been claimed. Last academic year the total claimed was 36.2% rising in 2015/16 to 56% of all LAC pupils.

A total of £285,870 has been claimed within 2015/6 which includes those children who have left care after their school has claimed Pupil Premium.

Claims so far in the financial year 2016/2017 show a much higher claim rate than 2015/2016 and this is expected to rise further given the pressure that the new national funding formula for schools is likely to have on school budgets.

Use of Pupil Premium LAC in Yr6



6.3 The use of staff from Pupil Premium varied within this year group from adult support within classrooms to partially using the funding to pay for a Teaching Assistant. One school indicated that they intended to use the funding for one-to-one support at lunchtimes to help support positive relationships with peers. In total 61% of applications for Pupil Premium LAC in this year group involved requesting money to pay for support staff within the school.

Half of schools applied for funding to support some kind of behavioural or therapeutic intervention within this year group. These interventions range from support from a Learning Mentor, reflexology and buying equipment to manage levels of stress.

Use of Pupil Premium LAC in KS4

6.4 The use of Pupil Premium within this Key Stage seems to have more of an educational focus than the Year 6 group. Some schools wished to use the funding for specific areas e.g. Music production, off-site hairdressing course, Athletics programme. Other schools indicated that they wished to use the funding for an out of hours study centre or 1:1 mentoring. Additional tuition was indicated on 58% of applications for the funding despite this being available through the Virtual School.

Use of Pooled and Unclaimed Funding

6.5 The guidance for Virtual School Head-teachers, published July 2014, allows for the pooling of some funds by the Local Authority. The guidance is clear that these pooled funds and any

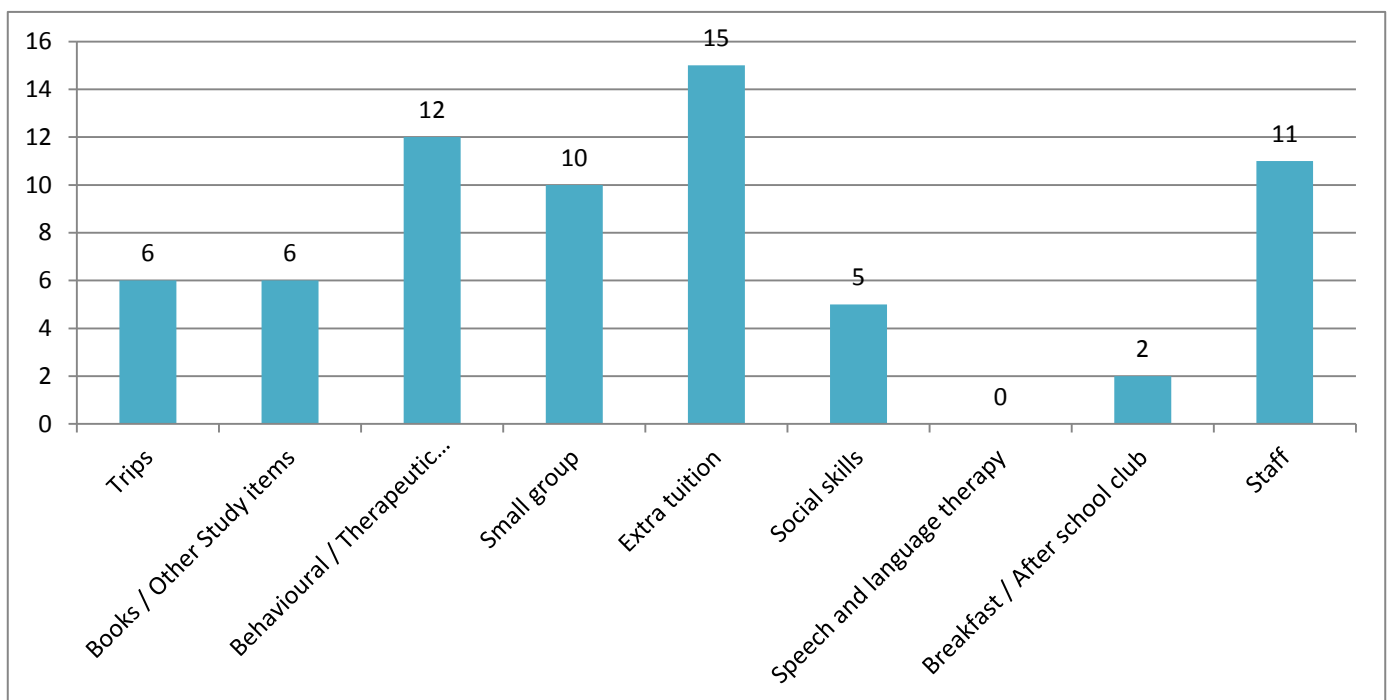
retained funds must be used for the benefit of all Children Looked After by the authority, and more specifically to:

- improve the way you determine the learning targets in children's PEPs, so that PEPs are always useful and relevant
- encourage looked-after children to be more involved and interested in their education

The Virtual School, has, therefore used the majority of these funds to create some Fixed Term Posts: A PEP Project Officer, 4 LAC Education Advisor Posts and 2 LAC Specific Careers, Information Advice and Guidance Officers. These have had significant impact on PEP completion rates, outcomes and experiences for LAC Students, and EET figures respectively.

Southwark Virtual School has also commissioned interim alternative provision for Looked After Children that do not have a school place. This can often be the case where children are moved outside of borough at short notice and is particularly true in Southwark as so many of our LAC, 57%, are placed out of borough.

Other funding has been used to fund Letterbox, a resource pack shared with carers to help them support their primary school child with Literacy and Numeracy. Some of this funding has been used for cost effective tablet and software packages in the financial year 2016/2017. These are particularly effective for Looked After Children, who tend to have gaps from different Key stages in their knowledge and skills.



There is a far greater pressure on this funding stream going forward, as the national funding formula puts further pressure on school funding.

Use of PP LAC in KS4

7. Impact of Fixed Term Posts

LAC Education Advisors

7.1 Pupil Premium has been used to fund 4 Fixed Term LAC Advisor Posts. These have had the following impact:

- Mitigating for Looked After Children not having a school place. This could have been for a variety of reasons, the child may have been moved out of borough or there may be specific issues that mean that the child is not able to attend the named school. LAC Advisors have reduced the amount of time, on average, that a child is out of school. This involves navigating cross borough admissions procedures where children are moved as well as advocating for the child where schools would prefer that they attended elsewhere. This is an issue that is requiring increasing attention as schools' performance is judged more rigorously using new accountability measures.
- Ensuring that PEP meetings are a useful way of improving the educational experiences of the child
- Introducing accountability and dialogue for schools regarding delegated Pupil Premium funds in order to have maximum impact on the experiences and outcomes of the LAC
- Impact on educational outcomes for Year 6 and Year 11 students

Project Officer Posts

- Improved PEP completion rate, moved from 48% to 84%
- Improved tracking of Children Missing Education and efficiency in organising interim provision. This will of course, reduce almost inevitable gaps and knowledge held by LAC learners but also has safeguarding implications for young people who are particularly vulnerable to CSE or Youth Offending.

CIAG Officers

- Engaging young people in education by discussing their pathways using their abilities and interests. This is evident in greatly reduced NEET figures.

8. Virtual School Priorities 2016/2017

As a result of the current educational context, and the successes and areas for development of the academic year 2015/2016, priorities for the Virtual School going forwards are:

1. To reduce the number of instances and the amount of time where LAC spend outside of suitable education placements by:
 - Introducing accountability for schools and academies by reducing unofficial exclusion
 - Rapidly securing suitable provision at times of placement change
2. To work collaboratively with Social Care in order to ensure that 100% of PEPs are completed in a timely manner and that these PEPs have a genuine impact on the experiences and outcomes of Looked After Children
3. To make earlier intervention using accurate performance, attendance and exclusions data.