

## **APPENDIX 1**

# **Virtual Headteacher's Report Southwark Children Looked After**

**Virtual Headteacher**

**Annual Report January 2018**

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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, the 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, wherever they live or are educated. 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 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 children looked after. The gains made by including EOTAS commissioning within the Virtual School are particularly evident where children are on the edge of care.
- 1.3 Southwark Virtual School is responsible for 448 Looked After Children (LAC) from reception to year 13, attending approximately 220 schools and colleges across England and Wales.
- 1.4 This report outlines improved education outcomes for children in care to Southwark as at Summer 2016, referring to most recent published data (DfE 'Outcomes for Looked After Children 2015/16'). In some places within this report, internal analyses complement national level data.
- 1.5 In a climate of evolving education policy, the Virtual School acknowledges the challenges faced by pupils, professionals and carers to achieve best possible education outcomes throughout a child's journey through the care system. It is the Virtual School's aim to remove barriers to learning, securing a supportive learning environment where our pupils can thrive.
- 1.6 We are generally pleased with the most recent set of published results which show an improvement on 2015 outcomes.

In 2015/16, notable highlights were:

### **Key Stage Two**

- CLA Writing. 2<sup>nd</sup> highest progress score nationally
- CLA Reaching expected standards in writing. 5<sup>th</sup> highest attainment score nationally

### **Key Stage Four**

- CLA Progress 8. 9th highest score nationally
- CLA Attainment 8. 13<sup>th</sup> highest score nationally
- Almost 90% of Key Stage 4 leavers transitioned to Education, Employment or Training (Highest % EET recorded by Southwark Virtual School. No national data to compare with)

### **Sixth form**

- An unprecedented number of Year 13 learners (11) were offered higher education places.

1.7 Although most of the 2016/17 results are pleasing, there is much more to be done. This report outlines Southwark Virtual School's 2017/18 priorities as we seek to narrow the education gap with non-looked after peers.

## **2. A changing education landscape**

- 2.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 became an act of parliament in April 2017. The Act sets expectations about the provision of information and advice to promote the educational achievement of previously Looked After Children.
- 2.2 Statutory Guidance relating to the Children and Social Work Act 2017 was subject to consultation at time of writing. New duties will apply to children who leave care as a result of: adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders and children adopted from state care abroad. These additional duties will require the expansion of Virtual Headteacher and Designated Teacher roles to ensure previously Looked After Children receive support to help them achieve their full potential.
- 2.3 Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance (September 2016) strengthened the expectations on schools to safeguard pupils. This includes appropriate safeguarding responses to Children Missing Education and more specifically a requirement on all school staff to be aware of: the legal status of children looked after, issues around safeguarding children looked after. The guidance increases prominence of the Designated Teacher role. Significantly there is tighter regulation on the removal of pupils from school roll. From 1 September 2016, all schools in England have been required to inform their Local Authority when a pupil is added to, or removed from, the school's admission register. The environment of increased accountability has resulted in the Virtual School receiving more timely notifications of school placement changes.
- 2.4 From 2016, primary schools have been held to account for both the progress and attainment of their pupils. The new progress measures recognise schools doing well with a challenging intake and identify those schools with a high attaining intake that are not doing enough to stretch the most able. The Virtual School uses periodical progress data to underpin its professional support and challenge to schools. Approximately two thirds of primary phase children looked after attend schools outside of Southwark.
- 2.5 Recent changes to secondary headline performance measures and GCSE grades are reflected in the DfE's published CLA data reports. Four of the secondary headline measures are included in DfE CLA performance data at Key Stage 4:
  - Progress 8 – Progress across a suite of 8 subjects since Key Stage 2
  - Attainment 8 - Attainment across 8 GCSE subjects
  - The percentage of pupils achieving Grade 5 (in the new grading system), or better, in GCSE English and maths
  - The percentage of pupils entered for, and achieving, the English Baccalaureate (taken from GCSE English, Maths, Science, a language, Geography or History)

- 2.6 Changes to the education landscape include evolving funding arrangements. The DfE announced its definitive proposals for a national funding formula for schools in England from April 2018 and a new formula for allocating high needs funding to schools. Changes to funding formulae may impact on Southwark Virtual School. In a climate of perceived budget reduction, schools' claims to Pupil Premium (LAC) may increase whereas a proportion of Pupil Premium (LAC) has been left unclaimed by schools previously.
- 2.7 In October 2017 the DfE announced an increase in 2018/19 Pupil Premium (LAC) Grant. Southwark Virtual School will maximise its use of this external grant to secure best possible outcomes for Southwark children looked after.

### **3. Virtual School – the pupil cohort academic year 2016/17**

- 3.1 Approximately 450 children were in the Virtual School at any point in time during 2016/17. Of these, approximately 245 children had been in 12 months+ continuous care as at the end of March 2016. DfE published data is based on the performance of this smaller cohort of children and young people.
- 3.2 At the end of the academic year 2016/17 the geographical spread of our pupils remained similar to that of previous years. Approximately 73% of children looked after were placed outside of Southwark.
- 3.3 The proportion of all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities was slightly higher in Southwark Virtual School (59%) than London (58%) and national (57%).
- 3.4 32% of pupils in Southwark Virtual School had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement. This is higher than London (29%) or national (27%). The majority of these pupils' needs were met within a mainstream school environment. 27% of the Southwark cohort had special educational needs or disabilities but were without an EHCP. This is lower than London (29%) or national (30%).

#### **Virtual School – structure**

- 3.5 The Virtual School supports the learning outcomes of Looked After Children via an assiduous focus on education needs, advocating for the best possible education provision for each child. Working with a range of professionals and partners, the Virtual School uses a range of strategies to remove barriers to learning and improve education outcomes. These include:
- Securing rapid, appropriate education provision at times of placement change, including the commissioning of interim Alternative Provision
  - Tracking pupil attainment and attendance; focussing on pupils' academic progress and raising alerts regarding those at risk of disengagement
  - Securing the best possible placements for pupils with high risk factors and/or poorest academic progress
  - Commissioning interventions to increase literacy and numeracy skills and improve attitudes to learning
  - Supporting the development of Personal Education Plans (PEPs).

3.6 A portion of centrally pooled Pupil Premium (LAC) grant has been allocated to employing specialist LAC Education Advisors on a fixed-term basis. The outcomes achieved in 2016/17 are due, in part, to the effort, persistence and expertise of Virtual School officers, working closely with schools, carers, other local authorities and social workers.

3.7 In 2017, the Virtual School:

- deleted the Data and Tracking Officer post following the development of systemic tracking mechanisms, re-allocating Children Missing Education (CME) duties to the Project Officer
- extended fixed-term contracts until end August 2018 of remaining Pupil Premium (LAC) funded officers

3.8 The Virtual School's reliance on fixed-term contracts has incurred a loss of high calibre specialists. Although Southwark Virtual School attracts a strong applicant field, the School has experienced a level of staff churn (45% of pupil premium funded roles) when post-holders secure full time permanent positions elsewhere. Staff turbulence directly affects relationship building within and beyond the School which can impact on pupil outcomes.

Virtual School organisational structure:

Southwark Virtual Headteacher CLA and Alternative Provision (AP)		
Deputy Headteacher Support and Guidance (CLA and AP)		Deputy Headteacher Teaching and Learning CLA only
Project Officer (CLA and AP)		Education Advisor (Primary)
Priority Learner Support Officer (Not CLA)		Education Advisor (Secondary)
Priority Learner Support Officer (Not CLA)		Education Advisor (Key Stage 5 Lead)
Data and Tracking Officer (Not CLA)		Education Advisor – fixed term (Primary)
Project Officer – fixed term (CLA only)		Education Advisor – fixed term (Secondary)
Information Advice and Guidance Officer – fixed term (CLA only)		Education Advisor – fixed term (Secondary)
Information Advice and Guidance Officer – fixed term (CLA only)		Education Advisor – fixed term (Key Stage 5)

Shaded posts are fixed term to end of August 2018, funded by Pupil Premium (LAC).

#### **4. Ofsted report, 2017**

4.1 In March 2017, Southwark Virtual School was scrutinised as part of Ofsted's inspection of Southwark's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

4.2 In their report, published June 2017, inspectors found that:

- Managers of the virtual school understand well the strengths and areas for improvement of the service and are taking effective action to tackle these. Overall, most children looked after attend a good school regularly, receive good support and make positive progress
- The virtual school effectively supports and challenges the quality of provision of children's education for those who are looked after
- Education advisers in the virtual school provide good challenge to schools when they do not evidence sufficiently the progress that children are making. They act as effective advocates for children, leading to more timely assessments of their educational needs.
- The virtual school maintains a sound oversight of children's progress and attainment, particularly of those who are at risk of under-achievement and those who have poor school attendance

4.3 The Ofsted findings are pleasing however the attainment gap between CLA attainment and their non-looked after peers remains unacceptably high. This remains the key focus of Southwark Virtual School.

#### **5 2016 Outcomes**

5.1 DfE performance data is published in March, seven months after the end of the previous academic year. As a result, this report refers to 2015/16 outcomes, the most recent published data available. Performance data for academic year 2016/17 becomes available in Spring 2018.

5.2 We are very pleased with the majority of outcomes achieved by Southwark children looked after in 2016.

5.3 Generally, pupils attending schools inside Southwark performed better than pupils attending outside Southwark. Unusually, this was reversed in 2016 at Key Stage One. We would expect this to be a very rare occurrence.

5.4 Changes in assessment methodology means that year on year comparisons are not possible.

**5.4 Key Stage One** Pupils reaching the expected standard (2016)

	Reading	Writing	Maths	Science
Southwark	20%	20%	33%	30%
England CLA	41%	34%	40%	59%

5.5 Southwark pupils at Key Stage One performed less well than national CLA.

5.6 Just over half of pupils (53%) in this Key Stage were educated within the borough.

5.7 Pupils attending schools outside of Southwark performed better than those within. However 60% of children looked after, educated within the borough, are children who have SEND, almost double the SEND profile of pupils educated outside the borough (33%). A higher proportion of children attending schools within the borough (71%) had previously attracted FSM than children outside of the borough (51%).

5.8 Key Stage One outcomes for *all* children attending Southwark schools compared more favourably with national averages. The performance gap between Southwark children looked after and all Southwark children at this age phase remains a challenge for the Virtual School.

5.9 Pupils enter the system at low starting points and much work is done by the Virtual School to improve outcomes in this early phase. The impact of this work is demonstrated in 2016 Key Stage 2 progress outcomes, described later in this report.

**5.10 Key Stage Two** Pupils reaching the expected standard: reading, writing and mathematics combined (2016)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Southwark LAC	50%	50%	46%	55%	30%
London LAC	47%	59%	52%	58%	32%
England LAC	42%	45%	48%	52%	25%

5.11 The 2016 Key Stage Two assessments were the first which assessed the new, more challenging national curriculum, introduced in 2014. 30% of Southwark children looked after reached expected standards in combined reading, writing and maths, 5% above England CLA. The ‘combined’ gap with London CLA narrowed to 2%. Measured via a different methodology, the ‘combined’ gap with London CLA was 9% in 2013.

5.12 When these attainment results are looked at by individual subject, Southwark children looked after achieved well in most areas. At 65%, writing attainment is 19% above national CLA performance, the fifth highest reported national outcome and second highest in London. At 57%, reading attainment was 16% above national CLA, the 11<sup>th</sup> highest reported national outcome. At 39%, performance in maths is not as strong, trailing national CLA by

2%. The improvements in Key Stage Two reading and writing attainment outcomes are mostly contributed to by judicious use of Pupil Premium (LAC). We have appointed skilled LAC Education Advisors as effective advocates for our children looked after.

5.13 There was a 28% gap with between LAC and all Southwark pupils (combined score, reading, writing, maths). This academic year, there has been an increased focus on maths in the primary phase, to ensure that the attainment difference is diminished further.

#### 5.14 Average Progress Scores (2016)

	Reading	Writing	Maths
<b>Southwark</b>	1.1	3.6	0.6
<b>England</b>	-0.5	-1.1	-1.3
<b>London</b>	0.7	0.1	-0.3

5.15 At Key Stage 2, Southwark CLA progress across all three subjects compares favourably with both London and national CLA outcomes. Progress performance is above national averages achieved by *all* children, i.e. better than those who are not in care. In terms of CLA outcomes, the Virtual School was very pleased that maths progress (0.6) compared well with national CLA (-1.3) and London CLA (-0.3). Southwark CLA made better progress than all Southwark children in reading and writing but not in maths.

5.16 Our data shows that girls performed stronger than boys at Key Stage 2 in all subjects. Children looked after attending Southwark schools achieved better progress than all Southwark children in reading and writing but performed less well in maths.

#### 5.17 Key Stage Four Attainment and progress outcomes, combined (2016)

	% achieving A* - C in both English and Maths	Average Attainment 8 score per pupil	Average Progress 8 score per pupil
<b>Southwark</b>	20.8	28.5	-0.58
<b>London</b>	20.8	23.2	-1.02
<b>England</b>	17.5	22.8	-1.14

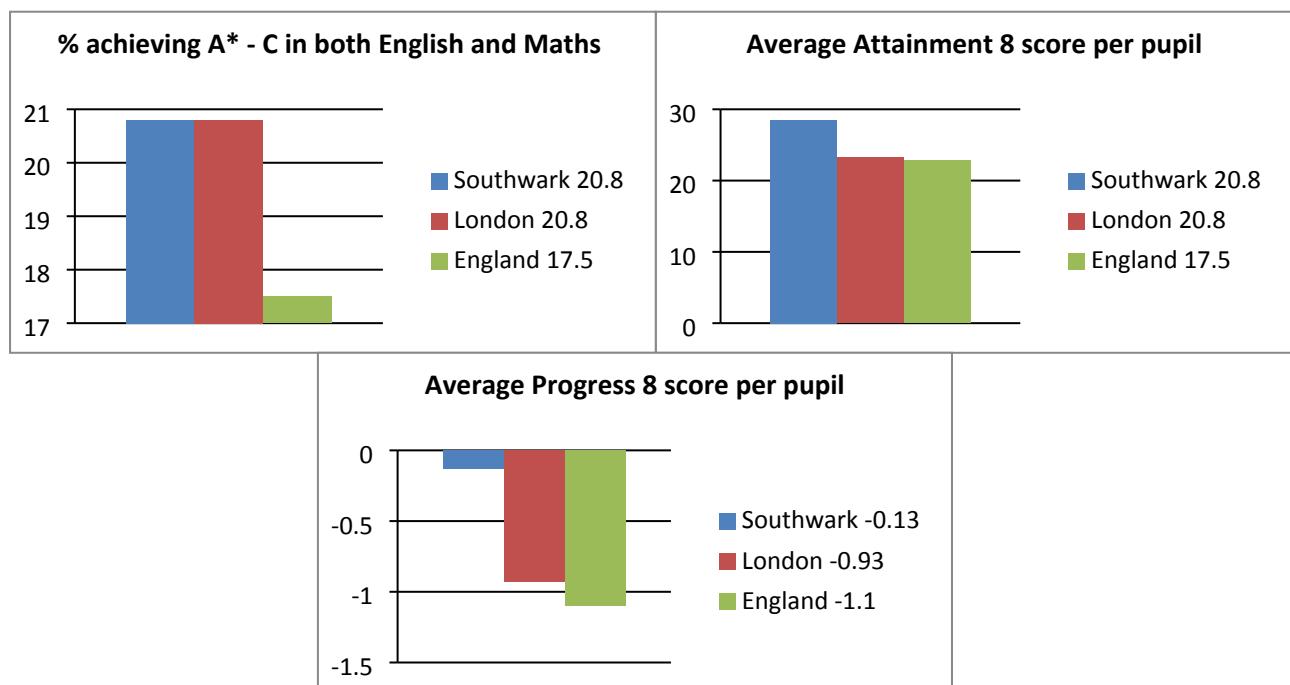
5.18 Southwark CLA equalled London CLA in their attainment of both English and maths GCSE and in all other measures performed better than London and national CLA.

5.19 Southwark CLA Attainment 8 was significantly above London and national CLA performance. With an average score of 28.5, pupils in care to Southwark for 12 months or more secured better attainment averages than those who had been in care for a shorter period (average score 18.1).

5.20 In terms of Progress 8 measures, Southwark CLA outperformed London and national CLA. Children in care to the authority for 12 months or more secured better averages (-0.58) than those who had been in care for a shorter period (-1.55). At KS4, children looked after educated outside of their home authority achieved better progress but poorer attainment than pupils educated within Southwark.

5.21 Diligent support and challenge from LAC Education Advisors contributed to 2016 CLA outcomes. Funded interventions include Supplementary Home Tuition, which has been central to enabling our children looked after to make better progress than London, or national, CLA. Flexible and targeted support is particularly important to older entrants to care, especially at Key Stage 4.

#### Charts: Key Stage Four Performance compared with London and national CLA (2016)

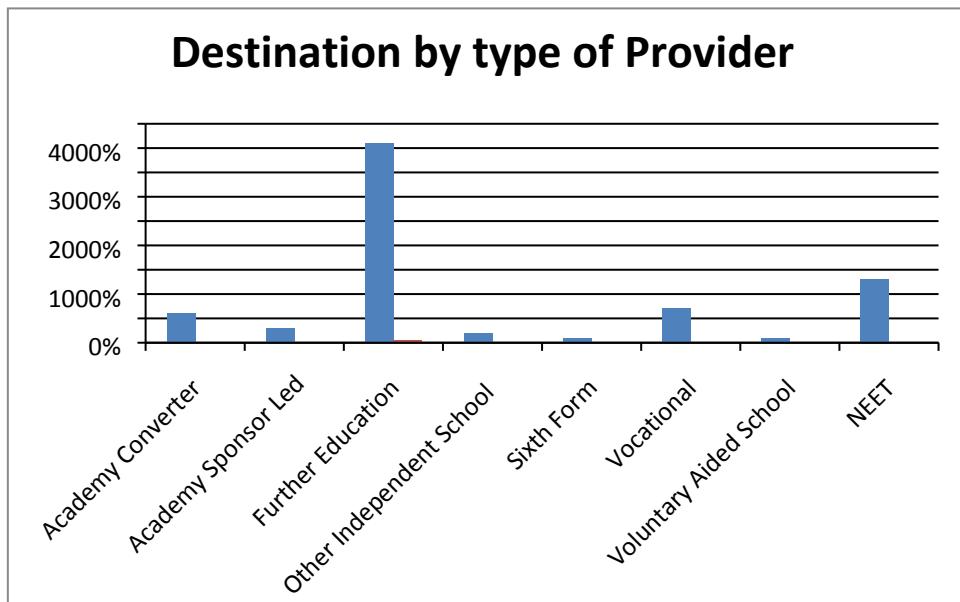


## **6. Beyond Key Stage Four, 2016/17 and 2017/18**

6.1 Our strong Key Stage Four destination outcomes are a direct result of our NEET prevention strategy managed by the Virtual School's KS5 Lead. Information, advice and guidance (IAG) is delivered early in Year 11 by a skilled, qualified IAG officer and transitional arrangements are developed in partnership with Social Care and Southwark Choices to ensure all young people have an action plan.

- 6.2 For the first time, in 2016/17, Southwark Virtual School supported all Year 13 children looked after. This included providing support specifically for learners in their approach to University places. The Virtual School maintains a focus on education during times of typically high turbulence in a care-leaver's life.
- 6.3 We are pleased to report that, in 2016/17, eleven of our young people achieved the grades needed to secure University places, a higher number than in previous years. This was achieved through targeted use of Pupil Premium (LAC), providing skilled education-related support, delivering 1-1 tuition to best effect students' transition to A level study and again at the point of exam entries.
- 6.4 At the start of this academic year, 91% of Southwark children looked after in Key Stage Five participated in Education, Employment or Training. This is within reach of Southwark's general participation figures (95.3%). Just over half (55%) of our Key Stage Five looked after cohort entered Further Education either at FE colleges or school 6<sup>th</sup> Forms while a minority opted for vocational training.

Chart: 2017 Post-16 destinations by provider type.



## 7. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

- 7.1 PEPs bring together a range of professionals, the Looked After Child, their teachers and Carers in order to make educational decisions, set targets and monitor progress. PEPs are a key driver in ensuring our pupils receive good quality education provision that is suited to their needs. PEPs are an holistic tool to improve attainment and engagement.
- 7.2 In 2016/17 we targeted resourcing to support PEP completion rates. We worked alongside Social Care to work with a new tracking system to ensure PEPs were recorded, monitored and tracked on a cyclical basis.

7.3 We saw a ‘First PEP’ completion rate of 66% and 88% for ‘Review PEPs’. This academic year we have amended our PEP window to maximise opportunities for Social Workers and schools to assess pupil progress and intervene in a timely manner.

7.4 As well as our 2017/18 plan to work with Social Care to increase PEP completion rates, we will review the PEP template this year to improve its usability.

## 8. Behaviour and attendance 2016/17

### Fixed and permanent exclusion by gender (2016/17)

	Fixed Term Exclusion 2016/17	Permanent Exclusion 2016/17
Female	12	0
Male	29	3

8.1 Exclusion from school can compound an already disrupted education history. Evidence shows that poor social and emotional wellbeing predicts a range of negative outcomes in adolescence and adulthood.

8.3 It is clear from our data that mental health, social and emotional difficulties has had an adverse affect on the pupil’s ability to maintain the expected standards required in school. This unusually high number of permanent exclusions is a reflection of the increasing social, emotional and mental health challenges which our young people are presenting with.

8.2 During 2016/17, 41 pupils received a Fixed Term exclusion and 3 received permanent exclusions. A majority of pupils receiving a fixed term exclusion were male. All permanently excluded pupils were male.

8.3 The Virtual School has worked hard to avoid a number of Fixed Term Exclusions, providing support and challenge to schools. The School has used Educational Psychologists to secure rapid assessment of pupils’ educational needs and to challenge schools to find more appropriate ways of supporting pupils. We have raised Designated Teachers’ understanding of the in-school challenges faced by children looked after.

### 8.4 Persistent Absenteeism, percentage of pupils with less than 90% attendance, 2016

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Southwark LAC</b>	11.2%	10.7%	12.0%	7.7%
<b>London LAC</b>	10.8%	9.8%	10.5%	10.1%
<b>England LAC</b>	10.1%	8.9%	9.0%	9.1%

8.5 Southwark's rate of persistent absenteeism (PA) improved in 2016, in contrast with the national PA trend. The School has introduced an attendance protocol, meeting regularly with social workers and other key agencies to agree an attendance improvement action plan. Attendance is tracked by the Pupil Premium (LAC) funded Project Officer.

## 9. Pupil Premium spend

9.1 Pupil Premium Grant of £1900 per pupil is allocated to local authorities annually based on the number of children in 12 months' continuous care as at March. The Conditions of Grant for 2014/15 Pupil Premium gave responsibility for the management of this funding to the Virtual Headteacher.

9.2 In 2016/2017, the total allocated fund was £739,000. Southwark retained £400 per pupil and pooled resources to maximise benefits to the cohort and provide targeted interventions. Funds were specifically used to:

- Secure one-year fixed-term resourcing at local authority level with the employment of 4 specialist Education Advisors for Primary, Secondary and Post 16 pupils. 2 Information Advice and Guidance Officers and 1 Project Officer.
- Commission a bespoke online learning programme, Wey Ecademy, to secure swift access to education for pupils without a school place due to care placement changes, especially for those pupils who are placed in remote areas of the country where 1-1 tuition cannot be secured.
- Commission Educational Psychologists who are able to assess our pupils across the country.
- Purchase digital revision resources, Nimbl, to mitigate for the changes in placements or missed schooling. The tool maximises the opportunities for pupils to catch up on school work and stretch high attaining pupils.
- Purchase LetterBox literacy resources for primary aged pupils targeted at their specific reading age. Packages are delivered directly to our pupils and include reading and writing materials as well as stationery.

Ofsted commented that:

*Children benefit from additional support provided by new posts in the virtual school, funded by the pupil premium grant. This is leading to improvements for children looked after, for example, in the attainment of those at key stage 4. Education advisers in the virtual school provide good challenge to schools when they do not evidence sufficiently the progress that children are making. They act as effective advocates for children, leading to more timely assessments of their educational needs. They also liaise effectively with professionals, including those outside of the local authority area, so that children are placed in settings that best meets their needs*

## 10. Virtual School priorities 2017/18

10.1 In order to continue to improve our impact, the Virtual School will:

- 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
- Deliver careers information, advice and guidance to all children looked after within and beyond Southwark in partnership with Southwark Choices and Social Care.
- Improve our response to the growing social, emotional and mental health needs of children and young people on the roll of the Virtual School. This will include greater use of strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) data to identify children that need support and secure appropriate interventions leading to a reduction in incidences of challenging behaviour.
- Extend the transitional support model offered to fostering services for pupils in all key stages so that through training and on going support, a basic level of knowledge about curriculum and assessment is shared at the pupil's entry point.