

Local Members' Interest
N/A

## **Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

### **Pupil Premium Plus Policy**

#### **Recommendation/s**

1. That the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee request the Governing Body of the Virtual School to take note of any matters that arise from discussion around this paper to inform future reviews of the Staffordshire Pupil Premium Plus Policy.
2. That Committee members who are members of school governing bodies take note of governors' responsibilities in relation to Looked After pupils and explore how pupil premium plus is being used to accelerate the progress and attainment of Looked After pupils in their school.

#### **Report of Ben Adams, Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills**

### **Summary**

#### **What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?**

3. One of the recommendations of the Working Group on Children Missing Out On Education was for the Select Committee to receive an account from the Virtual Headteacher of how effective the mechanisms had been in operating the Pupil Premium Plus Policy.

### **Report**

#### **Background**

4. Pupil Premium Plus is a government grant to support and promote the education of children and young people in care. From 1 April 2014 each looked after child (LAC) of school age is allocated £1,900 to support their education. Children and young people will be eligible as soon as they enter care. Pupil Premium Plus must be used to improve educational outcomes and raise attainment.
5. The Virtual School Head Teacher is responsible for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating Pupil Premium Plus funding to

benefit children looked after by Staffordshire Local Authority, wherever they are placed.

6. How the grant is to be used must be clearly identified in each young person's Personal Education Plan [PEP] in consultation with the designated teacher and the social worker, plus contributions from the carer and other relevant professionals.
7. In Staffordshire the Pupil Premium Plus strategy was developed in partnership with the Governing Body of the Virtual School. The governing body has representation from the Corporate Parent Panel, Senior Leadership Team, School Improvement, Entrust, each of the schools forums, social care and carers of Looked after Children. The Governing Body reports to the Corporate Parent Panel. Regular review and oversight of the use of this funding is undertaken through these governance arrangements.
8. The governing body agreed to the majority funding being devolved directly to schools on a termly basis so that schools can plan confidently knowing that they will receive funding to support the needs of Looked After Children. The remainder of the funding is held centrally to fund whole population initiatives e.g. Letterbox (a reading initiative that is delivered in partnership between libraries and the Virtual School to promote reading in the home environment.) or to offer enhanced support to Looked After Pupils at particular risk of poor educational outcomes e.g. risk of exclusion.
9. Where funding is directly devolved to schools they are required to return a termly plan identifying how the funding has been used and the impact that it has had on improved education attainment. Each plan is reviewed and agreed by the Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Looked After Children. Example included at Appendix 1.
10. School governors have a key role to play in ensuring pupil premium plus is being used to accelerate the attainment of looked after children. The plan requests that a copy of the annual report to governors outlining outcomes for looked after children in the school is sent to the Virtual School as a part of the process.
11. The returns are collated on a central tracker which gives an overview of progress and expenditure for children looked after to Staffordshire. Example included at Appendix 2.
12. Model provision plans are posted on the virtual school website and individual feedback has been given by the Virtual Head Teacher. The quality of the returns has generally improved but this is still a key area for development.
13. An area of particular challenge has been the significant amount of Virtual School capacity required to ensure pupil premium provision plans are returned for looked after children educated out of the county.

14. The revised audit process for the virtual school now includes the Pupil Premium Provision plans as part of the Personal Education Plan review process.
15. Personal Education Plans are individually written and saved on the social care IT system Care Director, Pupil Premium Provision Plans are individually written and saved on the education IT system Capita. The manual collation of provision plans and PEP information to support tracking and whole population data is time consuming and bureaucratic. Plans to move to an electronic process for 2015-16 are slow to progress due to the current on-going change programme arising from implementation of Care Director. Changes need to be completed in order to link Care Director and Capita systems to populate education and care data into the electronic e-pep system. This is a key area of development to support the Virtual Head Teacher in meeting statutory duties in relation to the monitoring and tracking of Looked After Pupils.
16. Central funding in 2014-15 has been used to offer additional GCSE tuition, Letterbox Reading Scheme for Year 1,3,5 and 7, fast track educational psychology support , launch of a self-assessment framework for schools in promoting the education of Looked After Children and additional top up funding for children at particular risk of poor educational outcomes.
17. The GCSE tuition had low uptake from schools and the strategy is currently being revisited.
18. The Letterbox reading scheme has been remodelled and delivered in partnership with Staffordshire Libraries. 205 children have benefitted from the scheme this year. VS Co-ordinators will be involved in visiting a sample of children both in and out of county to administer reading tests to inform evaluation of academic progress and next steps. The library service will administer an attitudinal questionnaire to Children and carers to request feedback.
19. Additional funding is applied for through the Virtual school, it usually enables school based Teaching Assistant support to be used for individual children. Support is finite, pressurised and evaluated 6 weeks after completion. The lowest allocation was £100 and the largest allocation £1,500.16% was used for academic interventions, 41% for behaviour interventions and 33% used transition support.

### **Case Study Pupil A Behaviour Support and Transition**

Pupil A had been in care since the age of 2 after a number of care placements he was adopted. The adoption broke down with the result that A came back into care in Year 6 and was placed in a long term foster care placement. Transition to a new school near the foster placement was going to be particularly difficult. The Virtual school supported the development of a transition plan which included funding for a Teaching Assistant (TA) to support the first few weeks to help

manage behaviours that included aggression and anxiety. The pupil was able to build a relationship with the TA who was able to give 1 to 1 support, the school successfully applied for Additional Education Needs (AEN) funding that enabled the TA support to continue throughout the rest of the academic year. The pupil's school place has been maintained and is due to make the transition to high school in September.

### **Pupil B Out of County Social and Emotional Support**

Pupil B started reception in a school out of county. The transition was particularly difficult and it became apparent that the pupil required support for emotional difficulties that made it very difficult to settle into the reception class. A package was put together with involvement for the other authority special needs service and Staffordshire Virtual school that supported some part time provision in a specialist primary nurture provision. Following this intervention the pupil has returned to the mainstream provision full time and the last PEP indicated that the pupil was much more settled and able to access learning in the mainstream reception environment.

20. The Head Teacher of the Virtual School for Staffordshire is part of the Assistant Director of Children's Services working group which is exploring how we can better capture progress of looked after children that take into account the wider care factors that impact on education including emotional wellbeing, changes to care placements etc.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

#### **Ready for Life**

Focus on school improvement and providing access to a good education

#### **Link to other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

Oversight of Pupil Premium Plus will continue on a quarterly basis through the Virtual School Governing Body and bi annually to the Corporate Parent Panel.

#### **Community Impact**

#### **Contact Officer**

Sarah Rivers, Headteacher for the Virtual School for Looked After Children  
Phone 01785 854195

Mobile 07976 191 025

Email [sarah.rivers@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.rivers@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Visit our web page <http://education.staffordshire.gov.uk/Pupil-Support/SEN-and-Vulnerable-Children/Children-in-Care/Children-in-Care.aspx>

**Appendices / Background papers**

Appendix 1 Sample Pupil Premium Provision Plan

Appendix 2 Sample Quarterly Pupil Premium Report