

Oxfordshire

The Virtual School for Looked after Children and Care Leavers



Annual Report

2014-15

The Oxfordshire Virtual School for Looked after Children and Care Leavers, 0-25, is a partner to all schools and settings, challenging each other to be the most ambitious and aspirational corporate parents we can be.

Like all good parents, we ensure we are all working together successfully to help children in care thrive.

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Key performance indicators, 2014 - 2015

At Key Stage 2

- The proportion of those attaining level 4 or better in all 3 subjects has improved from 2014 and is above national in all areas.

At Key Stage 4

- Attainment at 5 A*-C including English and mathematics was 14.0% (locally calculated provisional result). This is significantly higher than the average for the previous three years, and higher than the 2014 Looked After Children (LAC) national result. There remains a wide gap with the performance of all pupils.
- Compared with the average for the previous three years, the percentage making expected progress has improved by 17ppt in English and by 8ppt in mathematics.
- 7 pupils (16%) did not gain any GCSE at all.

The main actions we took in 2014-2015 that made an improvement

- Pupil premium plus grant was allocated on the basis of individual applications from schools through the Personal Education Plan (PEP). The grant was targeted according to need and all the grant was used.
- A more proactive approach, starting tuition early in key stage 4 contributed to the increase in students' achievement.
- The Letter Box project was rolled out to all primary pupils in order to reduce the attainment gaps between LAC and all children. This was especially important in the context of a cohort with increasing special educational needs and a need to focus on improving literacy. An evaluation has been commissioned to determine the impact on reading ages of the participants.
- Foster Carer online training was purchased to enable better support with homework. This has proved to be effective.
- PEPs continue to improve, with the involvement of senior staff often used to model good practice.
- An Early Years PEP was implemented before it was statutory.
- The Orientation and Induction programme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children continues to give young people entering Oxfordshire cultural, language and wellbeing support in order to enable them to access successfully a school or college place.
- Good quality Information, Advice and Guidance is now fully in place for post 16 students and developing for LAC in years 9, 10 and 11.

The main actions we will take in 2015 - 2016

Attendance will improve for looked after children by:

- Working with foster carers and the placement team so that at least 80% of 2-4 year olds are attending an Ofsted registered early years setting.
- Developing better working relationships based on support and challenge with the Children's Homes to raise the profile of education. We will use the opportunity to revise the Education Handbook and deliver the joint strategic plan to secure better education outcomes for residential children.
- Working closely with year 11's, post-16 providers and those leaving care to increase enrolment and retention of young people in employment, education or training.
- Making sure the protocol for unaccompanied asylum seeking children is fully implemented.
- Supporting and challenging school leadership about their exclusions through an updated exclusions protocol (jointly with the Education Inclusion Team), the use of the Inclusion Support Plan and deploying Education Psychologists to support staff in school to address the emotional needs of

looked after children (LAC). Use the daily attendance data to challenge schools to improve LAC attendance.

- Acting on recommendations from an evaluation of the impact of commissioned services to training Designated Teachers (DTs) for assessing and improving emotional health and wellbeing on attendance as part of the PEP process.
- Evaluating and developing recommendations from the externally commissioned projects in the light of improved attendance and reduced exclusions.
- Challenging and supporting schools to provide full time education for all LAC by developing a common understanding and implementation of what is acceptable education.
- Implementing the new protocol concerning known absence and school moves.

All Looked After Children and Care Leavers will make at least expected progress and successfully move to the next stage of their education or training by:

- Extending 'achievement career coaching' training to all learning mentors so that career guidance starts in Year 5 and that there is a clear pathway for each young person into education, training or employment. Young people are given every opportunity to be aspirational.
- Using Pupil Premium plus (PP+) funding to develop oral language to improve literacy in early years through an early years PEP and evaluate rigorously the impact on outcomes at KS1.
- Implementing recommendations from an evaluation of the Letterbox project.
- Improving the quality of interventions to support literacy and numeracy in schools to ensure that maximum progress is made by LAC. And by challenging schools where progress is not accelerated.
- Developing schools' capacity to assess needs accurately, plan appropriately and track the progress of LAC by modelling of good practice, training at network meetings and in discussions at the PEP meeting.
- Supporting, challenging and training Designated Teachers (DTs) to set aspirational targets for progress, attainment, including at transition points, and to develop effective plans to meet these targets.
- Using new electronic PEPs to drive improvement by improving the criteria for quality assurance measures to a judgement on the quality of the content. Challenge those at amber and red
- Developing the engagement and skills of foster carers and Children's Home staff to support children to make accelerated learning progress.



Having fun over the summer with VIP+

Main Report

This report acts as a review and evaluation of the education and attainment of Looked after Children (LAC) in Oxfordshire for the academic year 2014-2015

The key priority of the service is to improve the life chances of Children in Care and Care Leavers in Oxfordshire by challenging providers of education and others within the Local Authority which acts as corporate parent so that they have the highest quality education tailored to their needs.

Developments in the Virtual School team, 2014 - 2015

In the academic year 2014-2015 the Virtual School underwent a number of **significant staffing and location changes**:

- **September 2014** – New appointments made to lead the Virtual School team and as Virtual School Headteacher
- **November 2014** – New post-16 Employment, Education and Training (EET) Co-ordinator took up post
- **January 2015** – New primary and SENCo and secondary leads took up posts
- **January 2015** – EET learning mentor took up post
- **June 2015** – New secondary Learning Mentor took up post
- **July 2015** – Administration of the Virtual School incorporated into the restructuring to a Schools and Learning Business Unit
- **August 2015** – After the team leader of Virtual School took up a deputy headship post, interim leadership appointments were made. [Including a new deputy team lead position starting in Jan 2016]
- **August 2015** – moved from The Harlow Centre to Unipart House with the Schools and Learning team.

Training undertaken by the team 2014 -2015

Targeted at new team members induction and team development priorities

National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum – EET Learning Mentor

Building Resilience and Repairing Neglect - Working with the forgotten 'children' aged 10-15 – Learning Mentor

Mathematics Subject Enhancement Training – Learning Mentor

Institute of Recovery from Childhood Trauma – Primary and Secondary Leads

Induction Training and Attachment Strategies – Learning Mentor

National Virtual School Head Teacher's National Conference – in Manchester, March 2015

National Conference for Attachment – at Bath Spa University, June 2015

Safeguarding training for all staff – September 2015

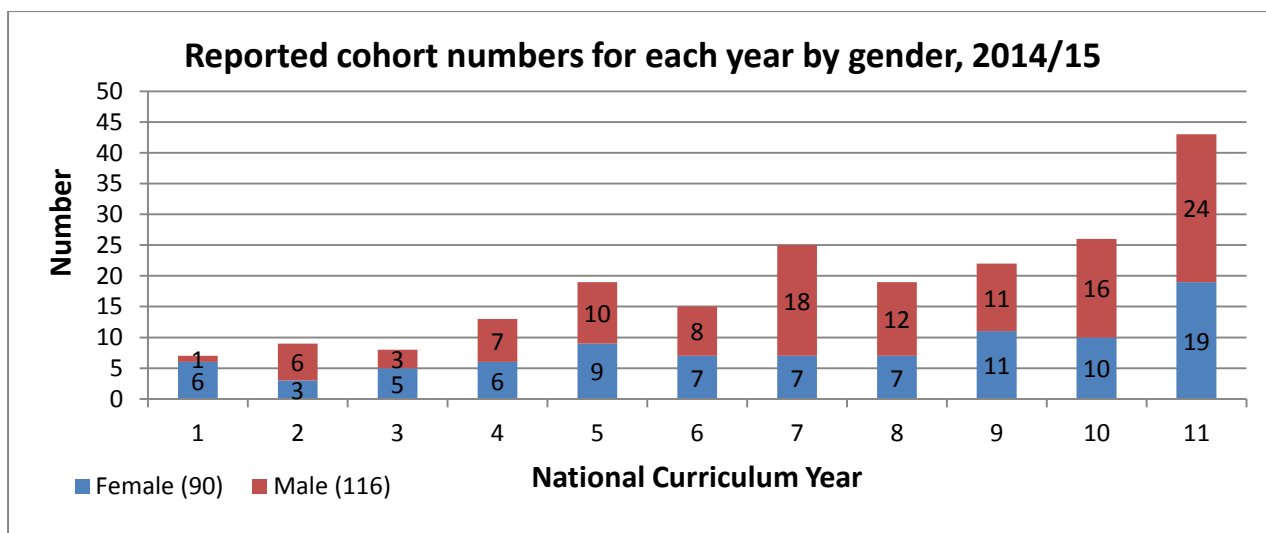
Cohort, 2014-15

The service for Looked after Children (Virtual School) works with all who are in or have been in care. This population changes throughout the year and different groups are reported on: see definitions below.

The reported cohort: 206 pupils - those who have been continuously in care for at least 12 months at 31st March. This is used for reporting to the DfE.

The in-care cohort: 347 pupils at the end of the year - those who are in care at any given time year.

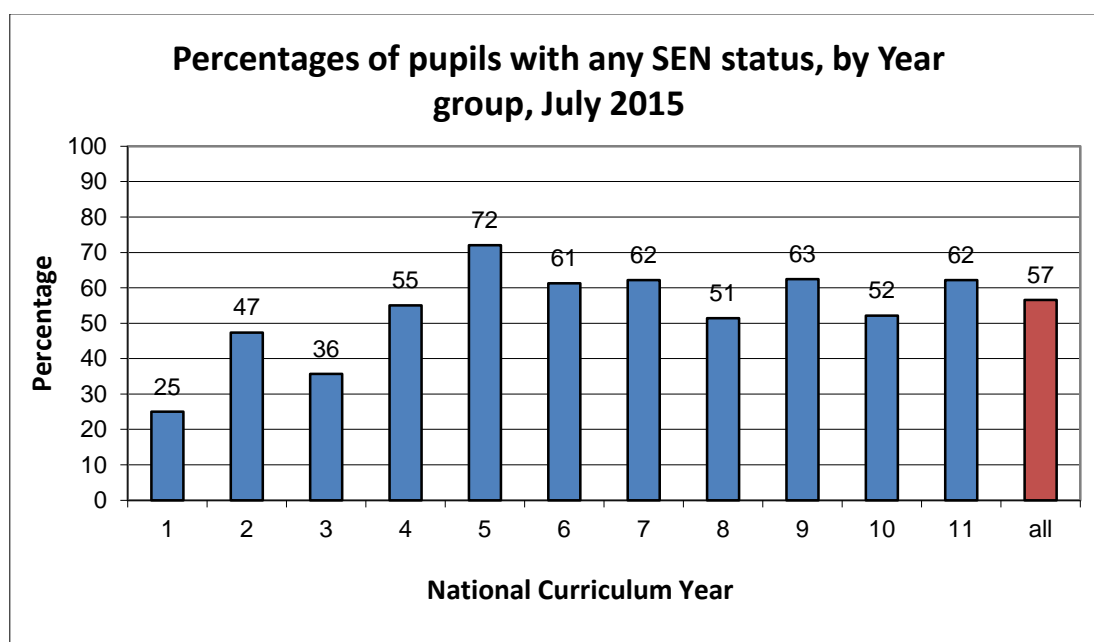
Full cohort: 410 pupils - all who have been in care at some point in the academic year.



The reported cohort comprised 71 pupils in primary and 135 pupils in secondary.

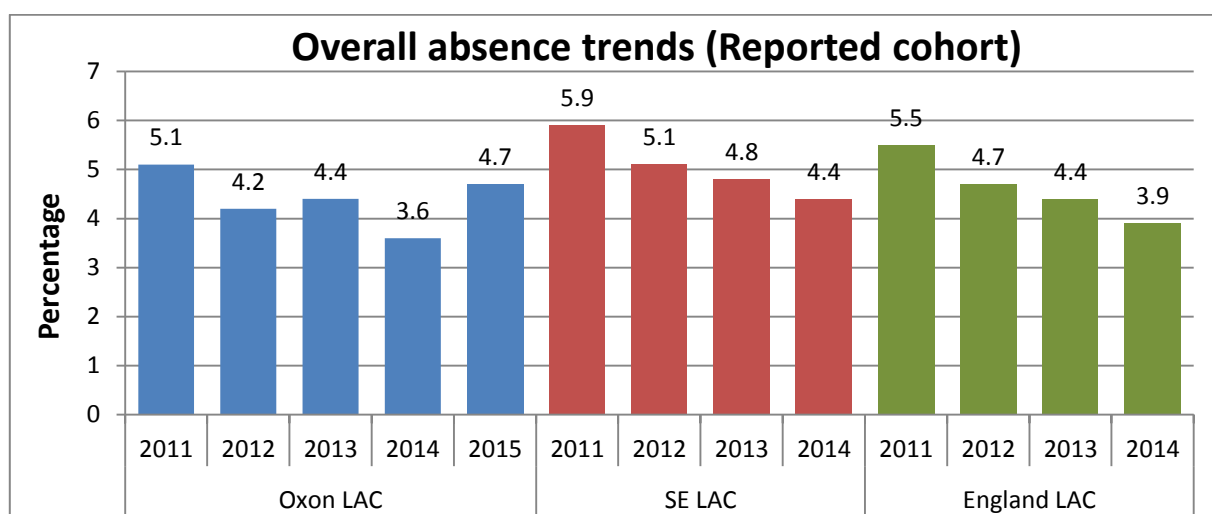
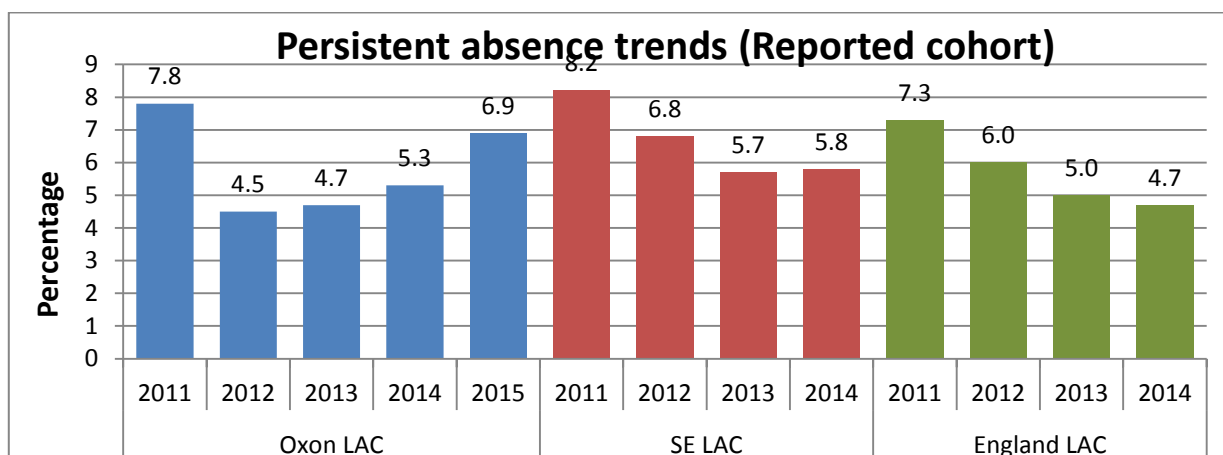
During the year, the full cohort increased by 130 pupils. The biggest increase was in Year 11, with 22 additional pupils

Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)



Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) is the highest area of identified need.

Attendance



Attendance is the responsibility of the Virtual School

- Absence in 2015 for LAC in Oxfordshire showed an increase, which is against national trends
- Overall absence increase by 1.1 ppt, following a 1.4 ppt reduction over the previous three years
- Persistent absence continued to show an increase. The number of persistent absentees increased from 8 to 12 between Terms 5 and 6
- Levels of both overall absence and persistent absence are much higher for pupils who were not in the reported cohort, i.e. were not in care for a full year between April and March.

Evaluation of impact of actions in 2014-2015

- Attendance is gathered daily for all pupils by an external company, Welfare Call – the cost is considerable and significant staff time is required to follow up. This needs evaluating more robustly next year to ensure maximum impact
- Absence is questioned, schools challenged and patterns are assessed to find improvements
- Senior LAC team staff monitor attendance and refer cases to key workers and/or partners who devise intervention
- Senior LA staff assess LAC attendance and devise strategies in partnership to overcome issues.

What we will do to improve further in 2015 - 2016

- This has become a significant improvement priority
- Use the data more swiftly to prevent absence
- Develop more challenge to remove systemic barriers to good attendance. School leadership, foster carers, social workers and the virtual school need to work together to improve attendance. We need to ensure that UASCS and those that take a long time to get on roll are placed much more quickly by developing relationships with schools, social care and admissions and tracking these groups very actively.

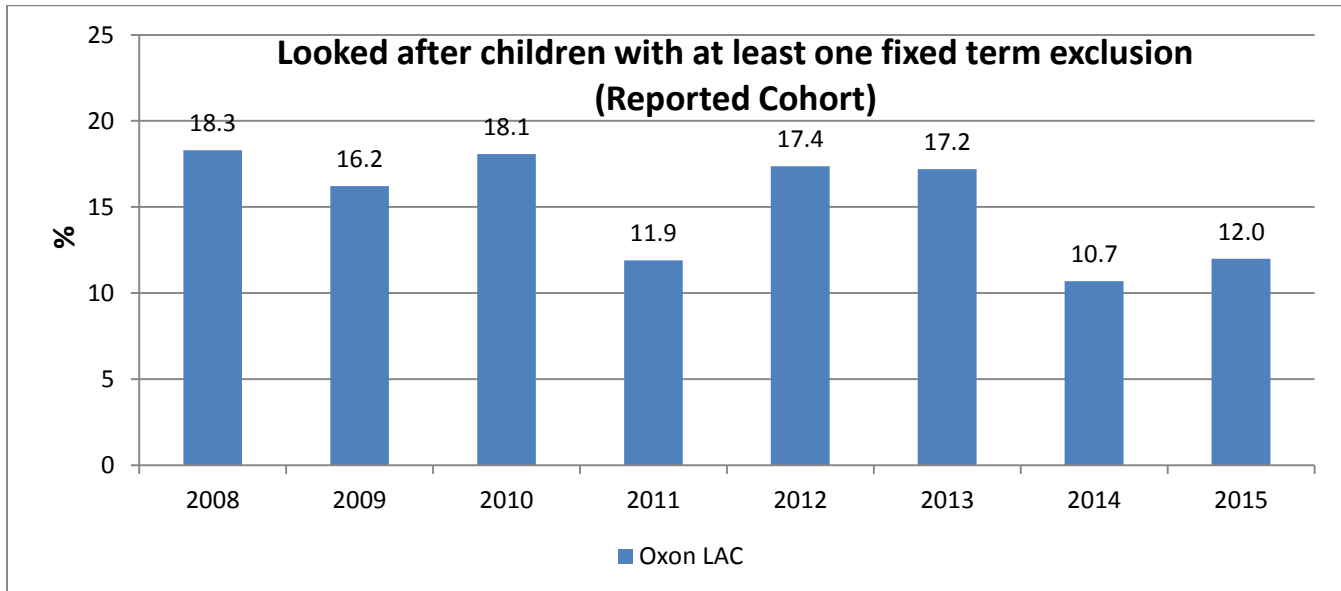
- Protocol for known absence and school moves is to be implemented. This involves seeking permission from the Corporate Parenting Manager and is only given exceptionally.

Exclusions

Oxfordshire has a policy of zero tolerance on permanent exclusions for Looked After Children and works with schools when children are on the edge of being excluded.

As a consequence no Looked after Child has been permanently excluded in Oxfordshire for 7 years.

Fixed term exclusions



The exclusions rate increased slightly in 2014/15 following a big reduction the previous year. Almost 50% (10/21) of pupils receiving an exclusion were first excluded in the second Autumn term (term 2).

Nationally, the fixed term LAC exclusion rate is decreasing.

In line with the national data, exclusions increase significantly from Year 7 onwards. There is a slight reduction though in the Year 11 rate: 13.9% compared with 16.3% average in other years. This suggests schools are more willing to explore alternatives during the examination year.

Looked after Children continue to have significantly higher exclusion rates than all children. This is significant in view of the attainment gaps: in Oxfordshire, 27% at KS2 and 39% at KS4.

Evaluation of impact of actions in 2014-2015

- Package of support offered to schools when pupils on the edge of exclusion – this was not fully evaluated in 2014 – 2015
- Therapeutic academic intervention through the charity 'One –Eighty' support engagement and develop strategies with school and the pupil following the exclusion – this was not sufficiently evaluated in 2014 - 2015

What we will do to improve further in 2015 - 2016

- Work with the Educational Inclusion Team and revise the exclusion protocol (last reviewed 2013).
- Support and challenge schools to promote an inclusive ethos in collaboration with the EP team and the Inclusion Team.
- Work closely with new education workers in the Edge of Care Team to ensure appropriate placement evaluated by reduction in exclusions for this group.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Of the full cohort assessed using the foundation stage profile in 2014/15, 29 pupils were identified as being looked after at some time in the year. Of the 24 with assessment results, 17% (4 children) achieved a good level of development (GLD).

20 of the 29 were in care for less than a year.

There are areas of weakness across the whole range of measures, but especially in reading, writing and mathematics.

Key Stage 1

As a consequence of local authority policy, children coming into care in KS1 or in the early years move quickly to adoption. The Local Authority received a letter of congratulation by the minister for this good practice.

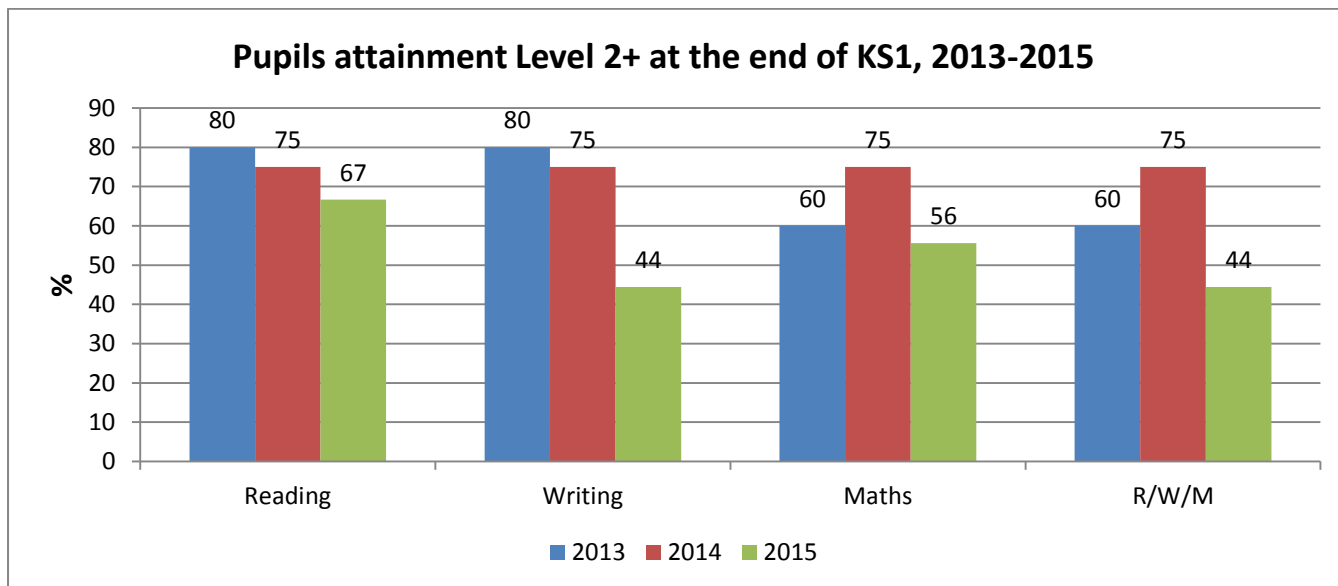
Cohort

The reported cohort was twice as big as in the previous two years, with 9 children: 3 girls, 6 boys. 8 were identified as in need of SEN support, and 2 of these had an EHCP. 6 were educated in Oxfordshire, and 3 out-of-county.

Attainment at level 2

%	Reading	Writing	Maths	R/W/M
Oxon LAC 2015	66.7	44.4	55.6	44.4
England LAC (2014)	71.0	61.0	72.0	

Attainment declined compared to previous years and was below that of all LAC nationally (in 2014) in all three subjects, particularly in writing.



Evaluation of impact of actions in 2014-2015

- All children who are not making progress in line with expectation are offered additional individual interventions through a PEP. Where additional tuition is needed sessional tutors are provided – PEPs indicate some progress made in provision.
- A therapeutic, academic intervention is bought in for pupils needing reintegration or engagement support – resulted in improved attendance and reduced exclusion.
- Early years monitoring document has been adopted – tracking is now in place so that transfer to KS1 is more targeted and schools have clear actions. We need to further evaluate the impact of this next year for those achieving a good level of development (GLD).

What we will do to improve further in 2015 -2016

- Continue to ensure all schools and early years settings effectively write new PEPs to ensure they plan well to support and sustain learning development through KS1 – evaluate the impact of provision through the revised PEP document.
- Develop partnerships with the Early Years team to ensure children's needs are identified early and specialist input is available to support progress into and through KS1.
- Employ wider expertise to support schools to improve outcomes for pupils at KS1.
- Evaluate impact of actions against the improved outcomes for pupils.

Making sure there is intervention for language development in a new school

When pupil T arrived at the school in Reception, the school leadership worked closely with the foster carer to ensure stability for the child. This was a period of huge change for the 4 year old as over the course of the year he was separated from his siblings and put up for adoption. The Virtual School were extremely effective in ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupil T. Pupil Premium plus (PP+) money funded time for quality discussions and for nurture work to support him in school. The speech therapist had also identified huge gaps T's language and in Year 1 the grant funded one-to-one intensive speech therapy for this child alongside ongoing nurture provision. Pupil T made rapid progress in his speech and the therapy moved to a group scenario to develop his social communication. In key stage 1 pupil T's anxieties continued to have an impact on his learning and school held a multi-professional meeting to discuss the possible diagnosis of Foetal Alcohol syndrome Disorder (FASD) emotional needs, partly funded by the PP+. This included Reading Recovery Intervention and Numbers Count Intervention, ongoing speech and language intervention and nurture support including social group work sessions. The school have invited the FASD trust to provide staff support and training.

Pupil T has now been with the school 3 years. He is happy at school, has perfect attendance and has lots of friends. He now talks clearly and has improved communication skills. Last year he made 5 points progress in maths, 9 points progress in reading and 3 points progress in writing. He is on the SEN register but his reading and maths progress have closed the significant gap with his peers and he is working at just below age appropriate levels.

Key Stage 2

Reported cohort

15 pupils in the reported cohort: 8 boys, 7 girls; 10 educated in Oxfordshire and 5 out of County. 13 of the 18 (72.2%) have been identified as having a special educational need, and 5 of these have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Note: One pupil with an EHCP was working at P levels, below level 1.

KS2 Attainment & progress

KS2 Attainment					
	2015 (No.)	2013 (%)	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	National 2014
Level 4+					
Reading	11	45	76	73	68
Writing	9	46	47	60	59
Maths	10	55	59	67	61
R/W/M	9	46	41	53	48
EPSG	8	25	47	60	48
Level 5+					
Reading	5	18	22	33	
Writing	2	0	6	13	
Maths	3	0	6	20	

KS2 Progress					
	2015 (No.)	2013 (%)	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	National 2014
Expected progress (2+ levels)					
Reading	12	91	83	80	81
Writing	12	100	78	81	82
Maths	11	91	78	73	75
R/W/M	9	82	72	60	-
Above expected levels of progress					
Reading	8	50	44	53	35
Writing	4	25	38	27	33
Maths	7	22	35	47	35

- The proportion of those gaining level 4 or better in all 3 subjects has increased by 12 ppt compared with 2014, and is also higher than the national figure last year.
- Attainment of Level 4 has improved for writing and maths, but in reading has declined slightly compared with 2014. Attainment of Level 5 has improved for all three subjects.

Evaluation of actions 2014 - 2015

- Letter Box now sent to all primary aged pupils to encourage reading and a love of books. Early indications are that this has been a success, but further evaluation is being done.
- On-line training purchased for Foster Carers to improve support for homework – evaluation and foster carers feel this is a very valuable training.

What we will do to improve further in 2015 - 2016

- Include early intervention for writing training in network meetings.
- Challenge school leadership to use best practice interventions to meet the needs of LAC.

- Focus professional development to improve knowledge to support schools with most effective provision to close attainment gaps.

Key Stage 4 (GCSE)

Cohort characteristics

- Reported cohort: 43 students - 24 boys, 19 girls
- Full cohort: 69 students
- Of the Full cohort, 26 came into care during KS4, including 14 in Year 11
- Both the Reported cohort and the Full cohort were just under 40% bigger than in 2014
- The percentage of the Reported cohort educated out of County was up by 76% (22 out of 43 pupils) Of the Full cohort, 64% (44 pupils) had a special educational need or disability: 36% were receiving SEN support, and 28% had an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). Of the students with an EHCP, 53% had a primary need of Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- These figures may under-report need: a number of learners starting in the care system late in their education have had poor attendance and/or were highly disengaged, so their needs were not adequately assessed.

Headlines for the reported cohort

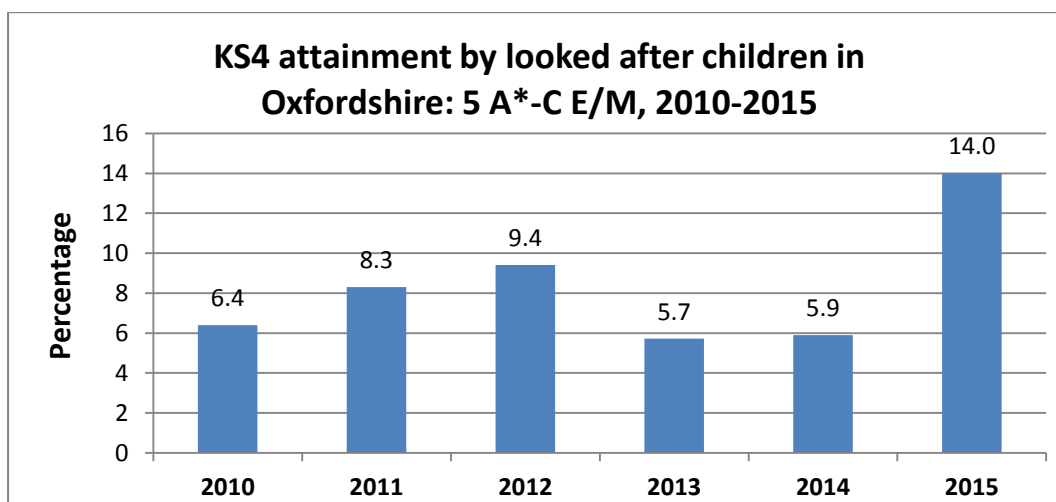
- Attainment at 5 A*-C including English and mathematics was 14.0% (locally calculated provisional result). This is 7ppt higher than the average for the previous three years, and 2 ppt higher than the 2014 LAC national result.
- Compared with the average for the previous three years, the percentage making expected progress has increased by 17ppt in English, by 8ppt in mathematics, and by 17ppt in both English and mathematics.
- 7 pupils (16%) did not gain any GCSE at all.

Headlines for the full cohort

- 10% of the Full cohort (7 pupils) gained 5 A* to C including EM
- 30% of the Full cohort (21 pupils) did not gain any GCSE at all. Of these, just under half were UASCs who came into care in Y10 or Y11.

Achievement by Reported cohort - attainment and progress

Reported cohort (=43)				
	No.	%		
		2015	2014	2015
5+ A*-C inc English & maths	6	5.9	14.0	53.4
5+ A*-C	9	8.8	20.9	63.8
Basics - GCSE C+ in E & M	7	14.7	16.3	55.5
5+ A*-G inc English & Maths	18	38.7	41.9	85.1
5 A*-G	18	51.6	41.9	89.7
1 or more GCSEs	36	93.5	83.7	97.7
Expected progress				
English	17	48.1	56.7	71.6
Maths	13	25.9	43.3	65.5
English & Maths	12	25.9	40.0	
Above expected progress				
English	6	0.0	20.0	
Maths	2	0.0	6.7	
English & Maths	1	0.0	3.3	



Evaluation of actions 2014 -2015

- Best ever examination results recorded in 2015.
- One-to-one tutoring in key subjects had good impact.
- Learning Mentor engagement and support for young people was successful.
- Information, advice and guidance (IAG) and the involvement of the post-16 EET team to raise pupil aspirations has meant that more are going on to college and in employment.

What we will do to improve further in 2015 - 2016

- Improve the process of developing a PEP which focusses on outcomes for secondary school pupils and the actions needed to get them there.
- 67% of current secondary cohort have capability to get 5 A* - C but only 5% on track – action plans are in place to improve outcomes, Learning mentors are being targeted to these students.
- Work in parallel to the Edge of Care team so that children coming into care are already supported in schools and other education settings.

Using Alternative Education effectively to ensure engagement and improved outcomes

Working in partnership with school leadership and social care, a Year 11 student C avoided permanent exclusion following a serious incident. The Virtual School negotiated a full time off site package at Hill End, Outdoor Centre with tuition and work experience. Student C flourished at Hill End and gained 6 GCSE passes with one at a B grade. The Virtual School secondary team made sure that transition was successful by liaising with the post-16 team. Student C is now on a suitable post-16 course.

Another Year 11 student E was supported to raise her aspirations when she was at risk of permanent exclusion. She was able to consider her options for the future and possible career choices. As a consequence she re-engaged in education and worked with Hill End, Outdoor Centre to build a package of education. Student E took examinations in the summer and she gained 2 GCSE passes.

Post-16 into employment, education and training (EET)

This year has seen the re-establishment and development of the Post-16 Specialist Workers for EET (SWEET) network. This core group meets several times a year to ensure transitions into and out of EET and between EET placements are supported and given the best chance of success.

2014-15 has also seen the establishment of the countywide Education, Employment and Training strategy: Putting Looked after Children and those Leaving Care First. The post-16 team play a lead role in this plan to improve EET engagement and progression for our young people. As part of this strategy the Virtual school is co-ordinating the development of accredited career coaching training to key teams including Oxfordshire Residential Provisions, Activate Learning, Children in Care Council, Oxford Brookes University, Residential Edge of Care, Hill End Outdoor Centre, Key2 and Aspire.

A new post-16 PEP document has been developed for post-16 Providers with support and training to improve monitoring and support.

There were 69 Year 11 pupils in care at the end of 2014/15, with the following plans in place for September:

- Education: 47 (68%)
- Apprenticeship/Training: 5 (7%)
- No plan finalised: 17 (25%)

At the end of July 2015, there were 71 young people in the Year 12 in-care/care-leaver cohort. Their EET statuses were:

- EET: 47 (66%)
- Not in EET: 17 (24%)
- Not known: 7 (10%)

and 44 (62%) were participating in education or training.

In the academic year 2014-15 4 Oxfordshire Care Leavers were in Higher Education which is a huge testament to their personal achievement, determination and the support that was available to assist them to this stage. Although University may not be the most appropriate pathway for all Care Leavers, students should be encouraged to consider a broad range of options and to be aspirational in their ambitions. Targets emerging from the Oxfordshire Care Leaver EET Strategy include one of 22% of Care Leavers reaching Higher Education which is in line with the overall cohort for Year 14s in Oxfordshire. Between 27-40% of the general UK population are educated to degree level or above according to which upper age limit is included.

Evaluation of actions 2014 -2015

Continue support and success towards Oxfordshire's target of 100% of year 12 participating in Employment, Education or Training (EET) by:

- *Improving Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) through employing a qualified member of staff* - Mark Walker joined VSLAC in November 2014 as Post-16 Co-ordinator and Sarah Kelly joined the Post 16 team in January 2015 as the second full time EET Support Worker alongside Barney Perkins. Emma-Jane Ivey also remained within the team as an additional part time Support Worker to assist the new team until September 2015. The 3 full time team members now coordinate, advise and provide one-to-one IAG and EET related support for over 350 Oxfordshire children in care or care leavers aged 16-25 within and outside the county.
- *Building employability skills by developing schemes for all ages of children in care focusing on broadening knowledge and raising aspiration.* - The main focus of the team has been providing advice and guidance, supporting EET placements and transitions, particularly the September Guarantee of destinations for Looked after Children leaving Year 11.

- *Strengthening retention rates in college by ensuring year 11s have good quality IAG to take the right course and staff in college hold timely and good quality plans* - Significant progress has been made this year through early planning to ensure as many year 11 PEPs were attended as possible, College applications were in place and transitions supported. Close to 90% of year 11s had clear progression plans in place for EET destinations in year 12. Key support workers within Colleges work much more closely with the Virtual School Post-16 team and this has been key to the introduction of and gradual improvements in the timeliness and quality of Post-16 PEPs.
- *Developing understanding of the duty of Corporate Parenthood in schools and develop capacity to meet the needs of those with delayed attainment* - The Post-16 Team was not in a position to address this aim for schools in 2014-15 though the team has made significant progress in establishing strong working relationships with Post-16 Providers and increasing understanding of the additional support needs of children in care or care leaving students.
- *Exploring opportunities to create bespoke provision for those hard to engage.* - A new EET Support Plan has been developed for one-to-one interventions alongside the introduction of accredited Career Coaching tools that are now used by the Virtual School Post-16 team to support both those in EET and those harder to engage. Bespoke EET related packages are developed for individuals through networks and identification of suitable opportunities as required.
- *Developing accurate and robust data systems to track and monitor progress and engagement in order to intervene earlier* - New processes have been developed to ensure accuracy and consistency of data across teams. Virtual School Post-16 monitoring spreadsheets and data collection processes have been developed to improve monitoring and ease of reporting.
- *Developing apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities through developing a post-16 process parallel to a Personal Education Plan (PEP)* - A Post-16 PEP has been developed tested and rolled out to Post-16 Providers and Social Workers. This is not directly related to developing Apprenticeship and Traineeships which are identified as and when appropriate through PEPs or one-to-one support for children in care or care leavers.

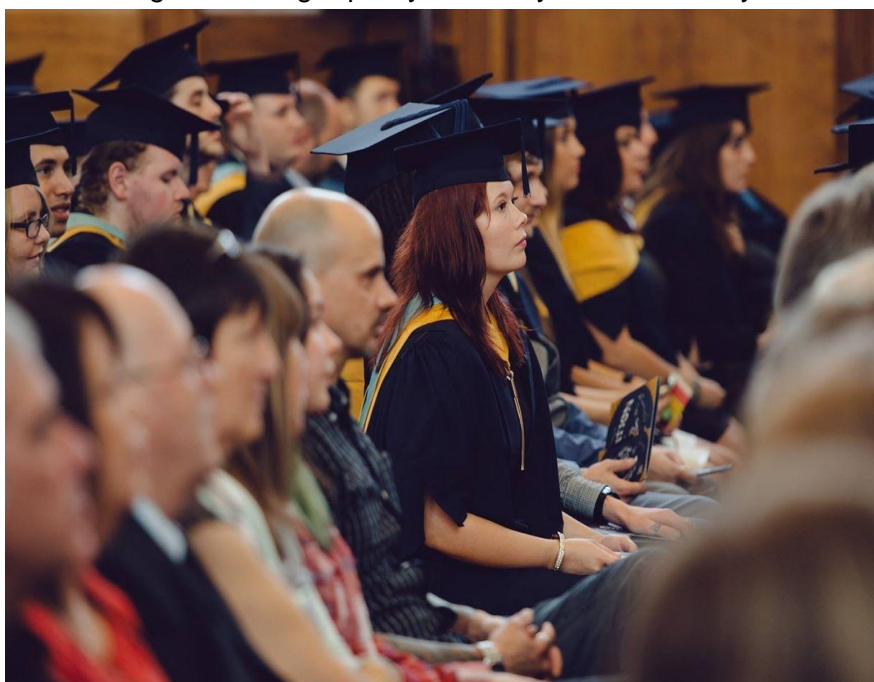
Making sure a disrupted KS4 does not affect examination success

Student A came into care in year 10 and was placed in an out of county residential home. The Virtual School team supported readmission into a mainstream school. Pupil premium plus grant was used very effectively to support catch up in the subject's student A was taking for GCSE and a laptop was bought. The Virtual School team worked with student A to produce a Careers Action Plan and arrangements were made for her to visit City of Oxford College. Student As attendance and engagement were excellent; she gained 7 A – C grades including English and mathematics. She is now on a Level 3 Health and Social Care Course.

What we will do to improve further in 2015 – 2016

To ensure all Looked after Children (LAC) and Care Leavers have an offer of aspirational and consistent Employment, Education and Training (EET) related support we will

- Roll out Career Coaching training to ensure there are at least 2 fully trained and equipped 'CEIAG Champions' from each Foster Carer network, each residential, edge of care team and each Social Care Team.
- Incorporate the new Supported Housing Pathway Providers and Social Care into the support with EET network to ensure regular information sharing and communication ensures LAC and Care Leavers have consistent support and transitions are well managed.
- Ensure the most vulnerable LAC receive high quality Careers education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) before age 16 by supporting schools to strengthen their CEIAG offering to LAC and ensuring Virtual School Learning Mentors and Oxfordshire Children's Homes are equipped to deliver Career Coaching.
- Access alternative sources of funding to support Post-16 EET packages and challenge education providers to remove barriers to learning for LAC and care leavers.
- Continue to target three high quality PEPs a year for as many LAC and care leavers in EET as possible.



Emily Clark
receiving her
BA (Hons)
Graphic Design
at Plymouth
College of Art

Partnership work

Personal Education Plans (PEP)

Virtual School staff model quality PEPs by attending, chairing and writing the first PEP and PEPs in new schools. The PEP toolkit has advice for social workers, schools and foster carers.

The quality of PEPs for Years 1-11 has improved over time, with 60% rated Green in 2015, up from 38% in 2010. The 2015 figure is however lower than in 2013 & 2014 (average 75%), but this is understandable as quality assuring has become more rigorous. An expectation of PEPs containing a robust explanation of pupil premium is an additional recent factor to quality assure.

Starting in 2014/15 pupils are required to have three PEPs in the year and there has been an increased focus on PEPs for post-16 students. Improved monitoring will be available through the electronic PEP system currently being developed.

Designated Teachers (DTs) and Staff in Colleges.

The rolling programme of induction for new DTs was well attended. DTs were offered at least two networking events including using outside speakers and focussed on national and local developments for Looked After Children. DTs lead some agenda items.

There are eight Designated Teacher lead practitioners in the county, three in secondary schools, three in primary, one in a Pupil Referral Unit and one in a special school. All contribute to training, the newsletter and are available to their colleagues for advice and support.

Social Care

Regular meetings are held with the Corporate Parenting Manager, Deputy Director of Children's Services and Virtual School senior staff to explore barriers to attendance and plan strategies to remove them. Monthly Children in Care Education Panels are held with Virtual School, social care, SEN and educational psychology staff to discuss difficult cases and plan to overcome issues.

Induction sessions for new social workers are in the training programme and social workers are invited to all designated teacher meetings and network sessions. A social worker is always involved with the appointment of new Virtual School staff.

Monthly education liaison meetings are also held by a senior member of staff in the two children's homes in Oxfordshire. These have resulted in developing a strategy where children's home staff allowed and supported tuition in the homes where necessary, created an education noticeboard, trained in CoPE (Certificate of Personal Effectiveness) and enrichment and aspirational activity.

Orientation and Induction Programme

This was set up in 2010 for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who were not getting a school place quickly enough and also needed some support adapting to the changes in culture. The final cycle in the academic year 2013/14 had 14 students, 3 of which moved to another county, the other 11 all moved to schools or college within 2 days of finishing the programme and the overall attendance was 90%.

There were 31 UASC in care in the course of 2014/15. Of these 14 were in Year 11 and 9 in Year 10.

19 UASC came into care during the year: 8 in Y11, 6 in Y10, 4 in Y9, 1 in Y8.

There were 13 UASC in Y11 at the end of the year. Of these, 8 had plans to go to college, and 5 did not have finalised plans.

Foster Carers

Foster carer training is currently run by Virtual School staff, but we are looking to improve attendance. Foster carers contribute to newsletters and strong relationships with some mean they know about the Virtual School and seek advice and support as necessary.

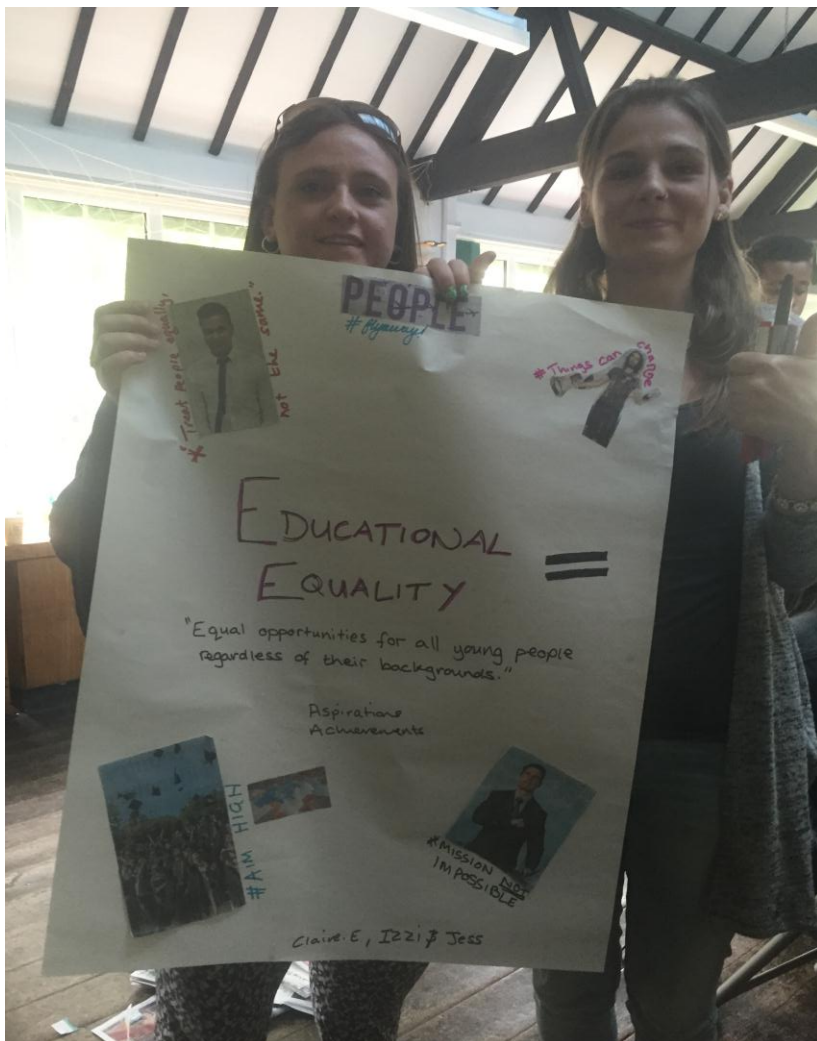
Children in Care Council

Members of the children in care council are involved with the appointment of Virtual School staff.

Council members have been involved in Designated Teacher Training.

They are consulted on all major policies around education and recent feedback has indicated they still feel a better understanding of the role of the Designated Teacher is required.

The Virtual School was involved in organising and attended the Children in Care Spring Ball in March 2014.



Two students from the Children in Care Council promoting equality in education

The right intervention to inspire post-16 learning

Last year a 17 year old Care Leaver was catching up on her studies after some missed education but refusing to engage with additional support offered and struggling to motivate herself to revise in the run up to her AS-level exams. The new Post-16 PEP highlighted these concerns and the Virtual School was able to organise for an inspirational visit to Oxford Brookes campus for this student to meet the Widening Participation team and receive a tour of the campus, talk about her ambitions to progress and find out what opportunities would be available if she continued working hard with her studies. This intervention had an immediate impact on the student who thoroughly enjoyed the visit, re-engaged well with her studies, sat her examinations and progressed to the next year of her studies with a clear ambition to move on to Higher Education.

More recently a tutor has been identified to provide additional support and a suitable course has been identified for further studies at Ruskin College.

What we will do to improve further

- Involve pupil voice in all development and marketing activity.
- Review and develop more effective ways of quality assuring and formatively feeding back on PEPs to improve the quality.
- Develop lead practitioners for colleges and Early Years settings.
- Expand the Caremark to all phases as it is currently only for Secondary Schools.
- Increase attendance of social workers at training to increase understanding of risk and protective factors around education.
- Build links with Oxfordshire Teaching School Alliance to increase opportunities for staff in the Virtual School and use Virtual School staff in training.
- Support foster carers in supporting learning at home through evidence-based interventions.
- Recognise and celebrate good practice by foster carers by appointing carer education champions to support other foster carers in good practice.

Evaluation of actions 2014 – 2015

Raising the attainment of Children in Care and leaving care remains a high priority for Government. This has been the first year that the Head of the Virtual School role has been statutory. The impact of this role in the county and the changes in the team are in the early stages to evaluate, but the KS4 results and one school obtaining the Caremark appear to be a good start. Last year's ambition is continued into next.

What we will do to improve further in 2015 – 2016

- New criteria for PEPs developed which focuses on the quality of assessment, intervention and outcomes. Electronic PEPs will ensure all mandatory fields are filled in.
- Ensure that at least 10 more schools achieve a Caremark
- Work closely with Children's Homes on an improvement plan to ensure improved attendance and engagement

VIP+, a charity

In 2013, the Virtual School in partnership with the Hospital School and the Pupil Referral Unit, Meadowbrook, set up a charity called VIP+. Since then they have commissioned summer activities based around bush craft, performing arts, art work and celebrating success, and are now expanding to offer activities throughout all school holidays. They also run bespoke activities and have recently offered all young people in Oxfordshire's children's homes the opportunity to take part in a programme run by ArtsXchange to engage the young people in the arts. They visited museums, the theatre, made music, created pieces of art.

The charity is going expanding and will advertise for a new co-ordinator to increase their capacity to reach more young people.

Young Leaders' Festival

Seven 14 to 17 year olds took part in this festival over the summer of 2014. They spent five days on a farm in Kent taking part in leadership activities, developing wellbeing, learning strategies to support emotional pain and hearing motivational speakers.

