



Notice of a Meeting

Education Scrutiny Committee Thursday, 22 January 2015 at 10.00 am County Hall

Membership

Chairman Councillor Mark Gray
Deputy Chairman - Councillor Michael Waive

Councillors: Kevin Bulmer Pete Handley Sandy Lovatt
Yvonne Constance Steve Harrod Gillian Sanders
Tim Hallchurch MBE John Howson

Co-optees: Mrs Sue Matthew

By Invitation: Ian Jones Carole Thomson

Notes: *Date of next meeting: 16 April 2015*

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

- a focus on the following key areas:
 - work in relation to the education strategy, and including review of an annual report on progress;
 - constructive challenge on performance issues highlighting issues where the Committee can support the improvement dialogue;
 - reviewing the Council's education functions including early years, Special Education Needs and school place planning;
 - reviewing the progress of, and any issues emanating from, the School Organisation Stakeholder Group with regard to admissions patterns and arrangements;
 - reviewing issues raised by the Schools Forum.
- assists the Council in its role of championing good educational outcomes for Oxfordshire's children and young people;
- provides a challenge to schools and academies and to hold them to account for their academic performance;
- promotes jointed up working across organisations in the education sector within Oxfordshire.

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Chairman	-	Councillor Mark Gray E.Mail: mark.grey@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Senior Policy Officer	-	Sarah Jelley, Tel: (01865) 896450 Email: sarah.jelley@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Policy & Performance Officer	-	Andreea Anastasiu, Tel: (01865) 323535 Email: andreea.anastasiu@oxfordshire.gov.uk
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Peter G. Clark.

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County Solicitor

January 2015

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About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 630,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 10 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

1. **Introduction and Welcome**
2. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
3. **Declarations of Interest - see guidance note of the back page**
4. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2014 (**ESC4**) and to receive information arising from them.

5. **Petitions and Public Address**
6. **Annual Report of Service for Looked After Children. (Pages 9 - 36)**

10.10

Mark Jenner, School Intervention Manager and Lucy Wawrzyniak, School Intervention Leader will attend to present the report.

7. **Education Attainment Working Group Update (Pages 37 - 44)**

10.40

Councillor John Howson to present the findings (**ESC7**) from the last meetings and to make recommendations to the committee.

Education Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) ***accept this report from the Attainment working Group.***
- (b) ***disband the working party in view of a lack of officer time to support its work, but keep the main issues under review on a regular basis.***

8. **Schools Forum Funding (Pages 45 - 48)**

10.50

Rebecca Matthews, Interim Director Education & Early Intervention and Gillian McKee, Finance Business Partner (CEF), will attend to present an overview of how the budget works in Schools Forum (**ESC8**).

The Education Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the contents of

the report.

9. School Revenue Balances (Pages 49 - 54)

11.05

Rebecca Matthews, Interim Director Education & Early Intervention and Gillian McKee, Finance Business Partner (CEF), to present an outline of the action taken with schools and the resulting balances **(ESC9)**.

The Education Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED

(a) to note the contents of the report; and

(b) to note that work challenging schools on use of balances is expected to be completed in Spring 2015 and recommendations for further action will be included in a subsequent report.

10. Universal Free School Meals (Pages 55 - 60)

11.20

The Children and Families Bill, placed a duty on state-funded schools in England to provide free school meals for all Reception, year 1 and year 2 children with effect from September 2014. The Education Scrutiny Committee received a progress report on the introduction of the new arrangements in July 2014 and subsequently asked for a report on the costs of the new arrangements. This report is the response to that request.

John Mitchell, Assistant to the Director for Children's Services to present the associated implementation costs to schools and the council including consideration to the consequences of parents not declaring FSM **(ESC10)**.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note this report.

11. Externalisation Update

12.30

Rebecca Matthews, Interim Director Education & Early Intervention, to provide an update including School Improvement Service going forward.

12. Forward Plan and Committee Business

12.45

An opportunity for the Committee to discuss and prioritise future topics, approaches to work and the schedule for future meetings.

CLOSE OF MEETING: 1.00

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Glenn Watson on (01865) 815270 or glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

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EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 16 October 2014 commencing at 9.00 am and finishing at 12.00 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Mark Gray – in the Chair

Councillor Michael Waine (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Kevin Bulmer
Councillor Yvonne Constance
Councillor Tim Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Pete Handley
Councillor Steve Harrod
Councillor John Howson
Councillor Sandy Lovatt
Councillor Gill Sanders
Mrs Sue Matthew

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Melinda Tilley, Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families

By Invitation: Carole Thomson, Oxfordshire Governors Association

Officers:

Whole of meeting Sarah Jelley, Sue Whitehead (Chief Executive's Office)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item Officer Attending

6 Margaret Dennison, Interim Deputy Director – Education and Early Intervention, Sue Bainbridge, Schools & Learning Manager and Vicky Gledhill, Business Development & Change Manager

7 & 8 Roy Leach, School Organisation & Planning Manager

9 Tan Lea, Early Intervention Manager

10 Sue Bainbridge, Schools & Learning Manager

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

28/14 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

(Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Gray welcomed Councillors to the meeting, thanked them for coming in for the earlier start time and in response to comments indicated that this was a one off due to other meeting commitments.

29/14 MINUTES
(Agenda No. 4)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July were agreed and signed subject to the correction to Minute 21/14 to show that Frank Newhofer was representing the Oxfordshire Governors Association.

Responding to comments/queries Margaret Dennison indicated that the position with regard to school balances was being considered with a view to meeting with the identified schools. Following reiteration of concerns over the position with regard to Academy balances the Committee urged officers to seek a meeting between the Committee and the new Commissioner for Schools as soon as possible and in the meantime for officers to contact the Commissioner with a view to getting some assurance on academy balances.

There was a question following the implementation in September of free school meals for KS1 pupils (Minute 26/14) but it was noted that it was too early in the scheme to comment

It was AGREED that revenue balances be on the agenda for January together with an update on the position with regard to free school meals.

30/14 THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY IN THE PARTNERSHIP CONTEXT
(Agenda No. 6)

Margaret Dennison, Interim Deputy Director – Education and Early Intervention, Sue Bainbridge, Schools & Learning Manager and Vicky Gledhill, Business Development & Change Manager attended for this item.

Sue Bainbridge, gave a presentation setting out the current position on externalisation noting that the information provided was subject to consideration at Cabinet next week. She explained how it has been developed, the underlying principles and set out the key functions of a partnership model. These were about quality assurance and supporting school improvement. She also outlined the key activities necessary to forming a future partnership including the importance of the delivery of the traded offer. The traded offer also provided an opportunity for engagement with Academies.

Margaret Dennison responded to concerns from members about the lack of detailed information about the current position, indicated that what was agreed was a set of principles and since her arrival she had met with Hampshire County Council. They had their own set of challenges and so far there was not sufficient meaningful data from them about the financial model and the implications for Oxfordshire County Council. This provided a space for reflection and allowed time for professional exchange sessions. There had been meetings for an exchange of information at a professional level looking at similarities and differences. An analysis was to be presented to Cabinet and would lead to a very clear way forward. She gave

assurances that there were plans in place whatever was decided. The Committee **AGREED** that they receive an update to the next meeting.

Vicky Gledhill, Business Development & Change Manager, gave a presentation on securing outdoor learning provision. It was noted that Hill End is excluded from the Outdoor Education Centre Review. She outlined that market engagement had been undertaken and that there would be an exercise to invite proposals on outline solutions on how the provision of Outdoor Education Centres could be delivered in line with the Council's strategic objectives. She detailed the service specification and outlined the progress made using the one service approach which meant that they were expected to break even in 2014/15. This did not include corporate overheads such as back-office and property costs which were currently being met by the Council.

During discussion the Committee congratulated the efforts made by all involved in the Outdoor Education Centres and commented on the value of the service they provided. It was noted that the commitment and passion of the staff was integral to the success of the service and that they must be integral to its future. Responding to concerns that the service should remain affordable under externalisation Vicky Gledhill stated that affordability and access were key service specifications.

31/14 UPDATE ON ACADEMY CONVERSIONS

(Agenda No. 7)

Roy Leach, School Organisation & Planning Manager, updated the Committee on the current level of academy conversions. He noted that approximately 3/4 of secondary, 1/5 of primary and 1/3 of special schools had converted to academy status. The level of conversion of special schools had not changed in 20 months. The greatest change currently was in primary schools where there were more at the planning stage.

Responding to questions, Roy Leach indicated that some schools had considered and rejected the idea of conversion but that he had no doubt that over time they would reconsider. He expected that only a small number of secondary schools and around a half of primary schools would not be academies by the start of the next School Year. He clarified that schools who were voluntary converters needed to be financially stable but sponsored academies need not.

The Committee discussed the implications for the Council of a reduced number of maintained schools and in particular the likely reduction in staff and the implications of the loss of economy of scale particularly for the remaining maintained primary schools. Roy Leach indicated that there was work being carried out to explore options for schools to join together collaboratively to purchase services.

32/14 SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

(Agenda No. 8)

Roy Leach, School Organisation & Planning Manager, presented the data on Schools capacity, admissions and preferences.

During discussion the following points were made:

- 1) Members paid tribute to the work done by officers in the face of huge increases in the numbers of children.
- 2) They recognised the pressures the expansion programme placed on capital funding. It was suggested that representations were needed to central government to persuade them that prudent planning should not be dealt with harshly but should be rewarded.
- 3) An on-going problem was identified with regard to need arising from small housing developments without S106 money.
- 4) There was discussion of what could be done about those schools identified in the information provided that had a disproportionate number of places available. It was noted that schools did go in and out of favour with parents and that a poor Ofsted inspection would have an impact. Roy Leach commented that the number of spaces in Oxford was expected to fall with Oxford Academy and Oxford Spires taking more pupils.
- 5) There was discussion of the introduction of University Technical Colleges such as the one at Banbury and the impact this could have on school place planning. Early planning was important.

33/14 PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

(Agenda No. 9)

Tan Lea, Early Intervention Manager presented the updated participation strategy. She noted the improving picture but that there was still more work to do particularly around vulnerable groups.

During discussion members questioned Tan Lea on the actions being taken to sustain improvement and she outlined the approach being taken including the role of hubs and the importance of partnership working with schools, businesses and colleagues in the Economy & Skills Team. She confirmed that action included early intervention for those at risk and where necessary home visits to follow up where information was lacking.

Responding to a question on how councillors could help Tan Lea referred to information on the web site that they could signpost for people and the importance of engaging local businesses.

Members welcomed the event with businesses referred to in the report. Tan Lea reassured members that they were not ignoring the part that Small and Medium Enterprises could play. There was some discussion on the use of BTec qualifications and Tan Lea confirmed the importance of having a broad range of choices for young people. This included the promotion of apprenticeships. Reference was made by a member to the amount of work carried out by voluntary groups and the significant funding they received from for example Town Councils. It was important that their role was managed to ensure best use of their efforts.

There was some discussion over the amount and quality of career advice in schools and Tan Lea explained the work being done with schools to improve the situation.

Responding to questions on Annex 2 Tan Lea clarified that the figures set out were aspirational and that in no way was the Committee being asked to approve it today.

Members **AGREED** it would be helpful for the figures to be broken down to locality level and considered at locality meetings.

34/14 PERFORMANCE OF WHITE WORKING CLASS BOYS

(Agenda No. 10)

Sue Bainbridge, Schools & Learning Manager, presented a report on the educational attainment of white working class boys and stressed that this purely presented the current information. There was no reason to assume that only the same general approach to tackling low attainment would work for this group and she was interested in the comments and guidance from members. She added that this matter was of national interest and that a report had recently been produced by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. She undertook to send a link to members.

She referred to the work of the Access and Achievement Steering Group which was looking for best practice and schools bucking the trend. She was hoping to involve a greater level of experts, e.g. from Further and Higher Education. In response to a question Sue Bainbridge outlined the composition of the Group. It was in the early stages and they were meeting with HMI to look at the Groups composition and HMIs involvement.

Sue Bainbridge explained that there were some characteristics of best practice such as having an inclusive culture, high expectations, the best teachers in lowest sets; directed feedback, parental engagement and evaluation. These applied to all low attaining groups and she queried if there is something different we should do for this particular group.

During discussion the following points were made:

- 1) Members highlighted the importance of role models and there was discussion of the mentoring system. It was suggested that a focus on the father and son relationship may be useful. To explain to fathers, failed by the system in the past, the opportunities available now. Sue Bainbridge supported the importance of parental involvement and the support of others and referred to the successful reading campaign using volunteers. There was reference to the involvement of Oxford University who gave an opportunity to young people to go on trips that made a difference to their motivation and aspirations. A member commented on the work done by a local youth worker and stressed the need to support local workers.
- 2) Reference was made to the Big Brother system in America and Sue Bainbridge responded that buddying schemes were used for instance at Hill End for the most vulnerable young people.

- 3) Members highlighted the academically successful education models elsewhere such as India and China and queried if there were lessons to be learnt. It was suggested that the experiences of children here were very different and that in addition to academic success we also prized creativity and innovation. What was apparent in these countries was the lust for education. Sue Bainbridge commented that schools were most interested in best practice in schools near to them which provided concrete examples of best practice.
- 4) Responding to a comment that in today's employment market it seemed that young people leaving education without 5 GCSEs were unemployable, Sue Bainbridge replied that it was essential to focus on preparing children for life not exams. Our best schools were doing that. There were different pathways for different children and an approved providers list had been developed to meet the needs of these young people. Attention was drawn to an Ofsted consultation which was an opportunity to change the current over emphasis on exams
- 5) Responding to a member who would have liked to see key stage 1 data where he felt significant strides were being made Sue Bainbridge undertook to bring this data back to a future meeting. She also indicated that she would circulate information about a Pupil Premium Conference to be held on 12 Nov 2014
- 6) The role of governors to help identify those in need of support was recognised and they had the responsibility not to give up on any child.

It was **AGREED** that data on the performance of white working class boys at KS1 be submitted to a future meeting

35/14 FORWARD PLAN AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

(Agenda No. 11)

During discussion of the Forward Plan members **AGREED** the following items as a priority:

- Revenue balances
- Free School meals – to investigate the hidden cost of free meals. Suggested that the provider be invited and that portion size also be considered
- Schools Forum Funding

Other items in the plan were to be moved to the April meeting. An additional item was raised on attainment in Stem subjects so as not to lose sight of it.

The Committee also **AGREED** that the Ofsted Inspector be invited to a special meeting arranged as soon as possible and preferably in November;

The Chairman highlighted issues around Carillion that were raised at a meeting of the Schools Forum and it was **AGREED** to ask the Performance Scrutiny Committee to investigate.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2014

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Oxfordshire

Service for Looked after Children and Care Leavers



Annual Report

2013-14

The Oxfordshire service for Looked after Children and Care Leavers, 0-25, is a partner to all schools and settings, who challenge 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 Stage 1
- Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 4
- Post-16

Partnerships

Appendices

- Virtual School Improvement Plan 2013-15
- Virtual School Structure chart for 2013-14.

Summary

There was a full cohort of 355 looked after children (LAC) in Oxfordshire.

Key performance indicators, 2013-14

At Key Stage 2

- The proportion of those attaining level 4 or better in all 3 subjects has improved from 2013.

At Key Stage 4

- Attainment at 5A*-C including English and mathematics was 16% and has gone above the national average for LAC for the first time (using the best GCSE results)
- Those making expected progress in English have increased by 17 % points (ppt), remained the same in mathematics and in both subjects have increased by 12ppt
- The gap in attainment at 5A*-C including English and maths has reduced by 6ppt
- The percentage achieving one or more GCSE continues to improve.

The main actions we took in 2013-14 that made an improvement

- The policy for allocating and using pupil premium plus (targeted funding for improving education outcomes for LAC) was agreed and implemented
- Oxfordshire County Council policy to reduce fixed term exclusions for LAC was implemented, causing a reduction exclusions
- Regular attendance scrutiny meetings resulted in a reduction in overall absence by 0.8ppt
- A more proactive approach to tuition early in key stage 4 contributed to the increase in students' achievement
- An Early Years personal education plan (PEP) was implemented before it was statutory
- The Orientation and Induction programme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, continues to take young people entering Oxfordshire and give them cultural, language and wellbeing support in order to enable them to successfully access a school or college place
- Senior staff attend first PEP writing meetings in new schools and when a young person is new into care, significantly improving the quality of them, reaching 95% satisfactory in May.

The main actions we will take in 2014-15

Oxfordshire aims to be the most fostering friendly county in the country

By working more effectively in partnership with schools, with foster carers and listening to the young person, we want to:

- Develop understanding of what it means to be a Corporate Parent among **all** school staff
- Develop a more flexible curriculum recognising the delayed attainment of a number of Looked after Children (LAC)
- Improve the quality of personal education plans (PEPs) so that they meet the learning needs of the young people so that all LAC making good or better progress
- Improve access to good quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), raise student aspiration and improve further education and employment opportunities
- Embed the Oxfordshire behaviour framework to avoid fixed term exclusions, especially out of county exclusions, and reduce persistent absence
- Support foster carers and those newly recruited to fostering concerning learning at home
- Reduce the attainment gaps between LAC and all children in the context of a cohort with increasing special educational needs, through a focus on literacy.

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 2013-14.

The key priorities of the service are to improve the life chances of Children in Care and Care Leavers in Oxfordshire by ensuring all children, for whom the Local Authority acts as corporate parent, have the highest quality education tailored to their needs.

Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers – June 2014

Key Judgement 2 - The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence

- Children and young people attend school or other educational provision and they learn. Accurate and timely assessments of their needs, as well as specialist support where it is needed, help them to make good progress in their learning and development wherever they live. They receive the same support from their carers as they would from a good parent. The attainment gap between them and their peers is narrowing. The local authority maintains accurate and up-to-date information about how looked after children are progressing at school and takes urgent and individual action when they are not achieving well. All looked after children and young people attend a good school.
- Children and young people who do not attend school have access to 25 hours per week of good-quality registered alternative provision. They are encouraged and supported to attend the provision and there is regular review of their progress. Urgent action to protect children is taken where they are missing from school or their attendance noticeably reduces.

After inspection and as a consequence of the amalgamation of RAISE (16-25) team into the Virtual School and its incorporation into the Team for Vulnerable Learners, the service for Looked after Children and Care Leavers will be more able to realise its mission to enable LAC from 0 – 25 to thrive.



Aaron Miles, year 11 2014, elected as North Oxfordshire Member of Youth Parliament. He also appeared on BBC South Today talking about the positive impact of care on his life.

Developments in the team and key events, 2013-14

In the academic year 2013-14 the Virtual School underwent a number of **significant changes**:

- **September 2013** - the team merged with the RAISE (16-25 team) to expand the team's responsibility to 0-25
- **September 2013** – Appointment made on a one year contract to Education, Employment and Training Co-ordinator to lead the 16-25 part of the team
- **September 2013** – Intervention Manager appointed with responsibility for out of county students and daily attendance reporting.
- **September 2013** – LAC performance lead appointed to develop and embed data systems in the Virtual School
- **September 2013** – One of two Education, Employment and Training (EET) support workers went on maternity leave and were not immediately replaced.
- **October 2014** – EET support worker joined the team on a temporary contract
- **November 2013** – staff informed there would be a restructure.
- **December 2013** – Member of admin staff left
- **January 2014** – Senior team begin researching strategies for managing the new Pupil Premium Plus from April 2014
- **February 2014** – One member of staff went on long term sick leave
- **February 2014** – Primary/SENCO lead handed notice in for the end of August.
- **March 2014** – New EET support worker left for a permanent contract
- **March 2014** – Team begin to prepare for the new SEND reforms
- **Pupil Premium Plus introduced and new statutory guidance for Designated Teachers released**
- **April 2014** – Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services for 4 weeks. **Outcome good.**
- **May 2014** - Another member of staff went on long term sick leave.
- **June 2014** – Restructure for Vulnerable Learners' Service consultation document released.



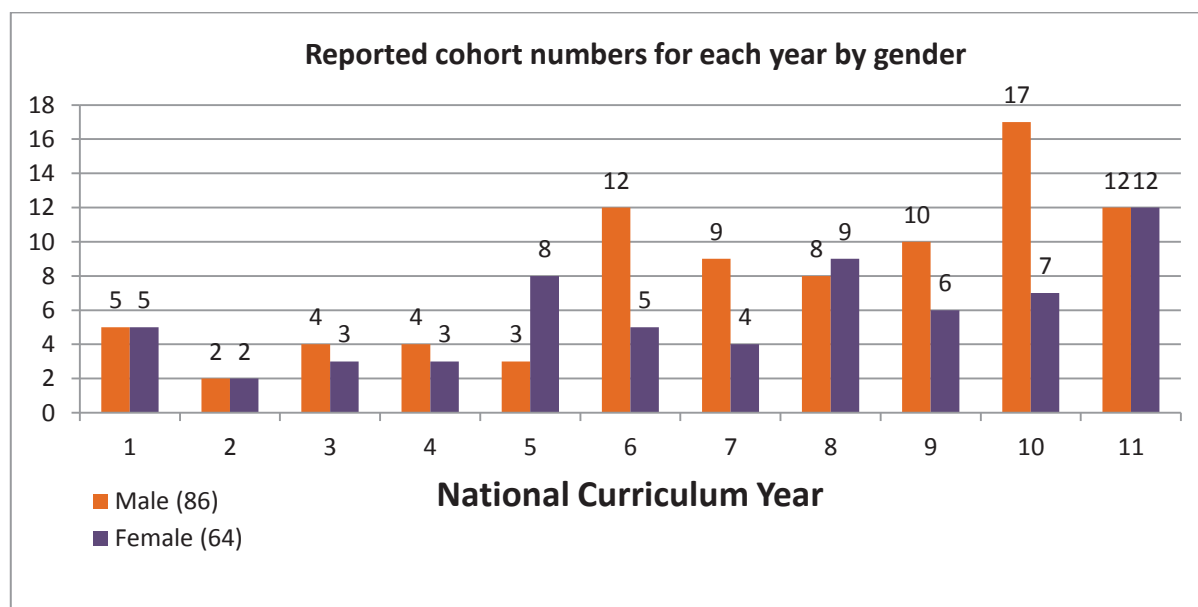
Through this year the priorities have been:

- To improve attendance
- To continue to improve the quality of Personal Education Plans ensuring they have a positive impact on the progress the children and young people
- To raise the number of students achieving 5+ C grade GCSE grades including English and Mathematics
- To merge the RAISE (16-25) team into the Virtual school to improve the numbers in Education, Employment and Training.

Year 11 LAC student's GCSE Practical Food and Nutrition exam graded B

Cohort, 2013-14

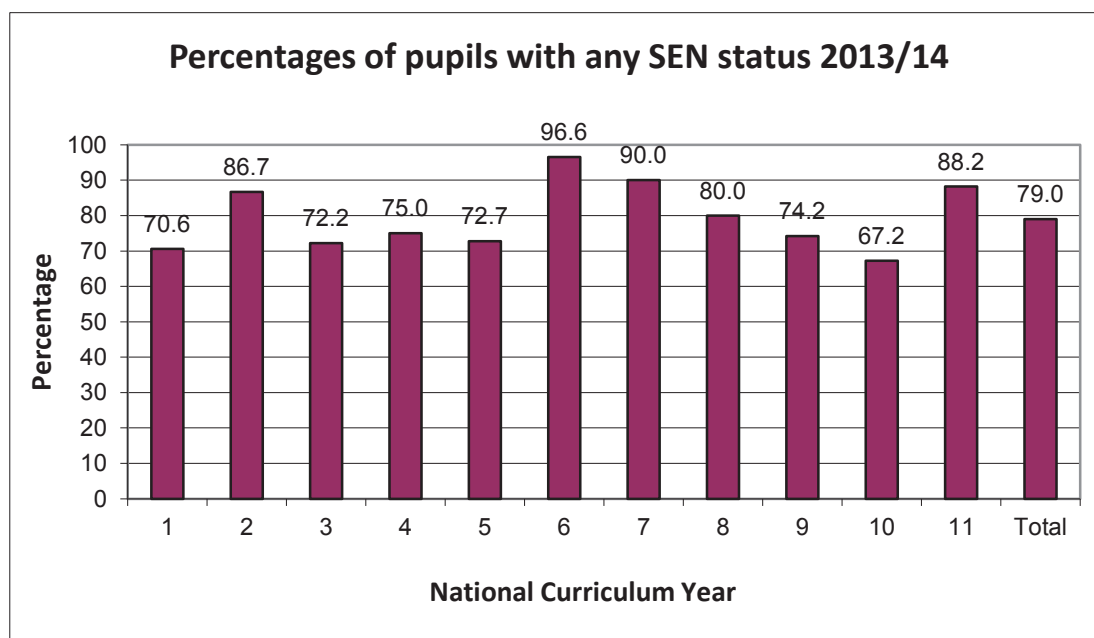
The service for Looked after Children (Virtual School) works with all who are in or have been in care. This population does change throughout the year and different groups are reported on, see definitions below.



The reported cohort comprised 56 pupils in Primary and 94 pupils in Secondary.

From the beginning of April to the end of the academic year, the full Year 10 cohort grew from 47 to 61.

Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)



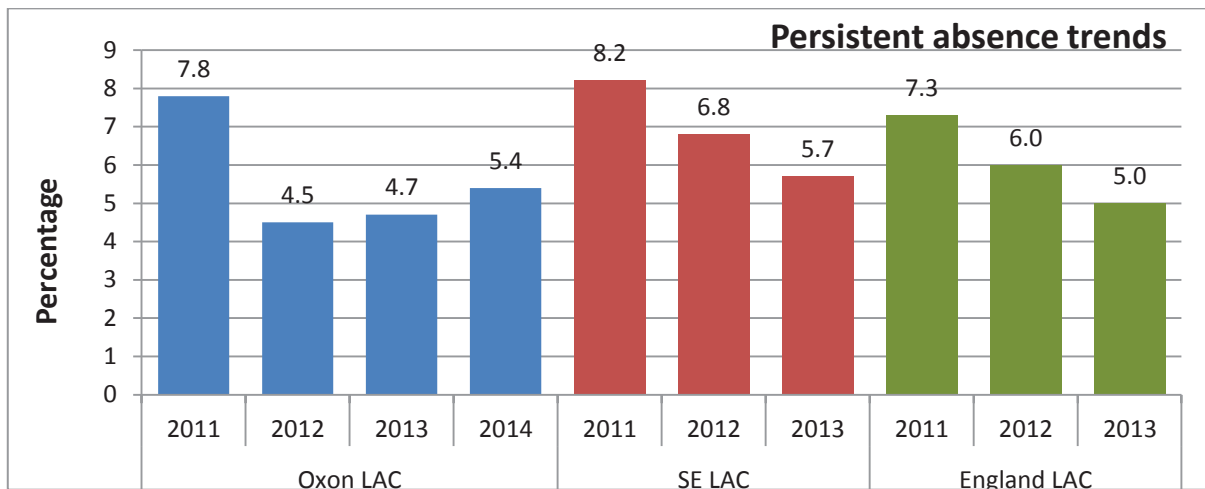
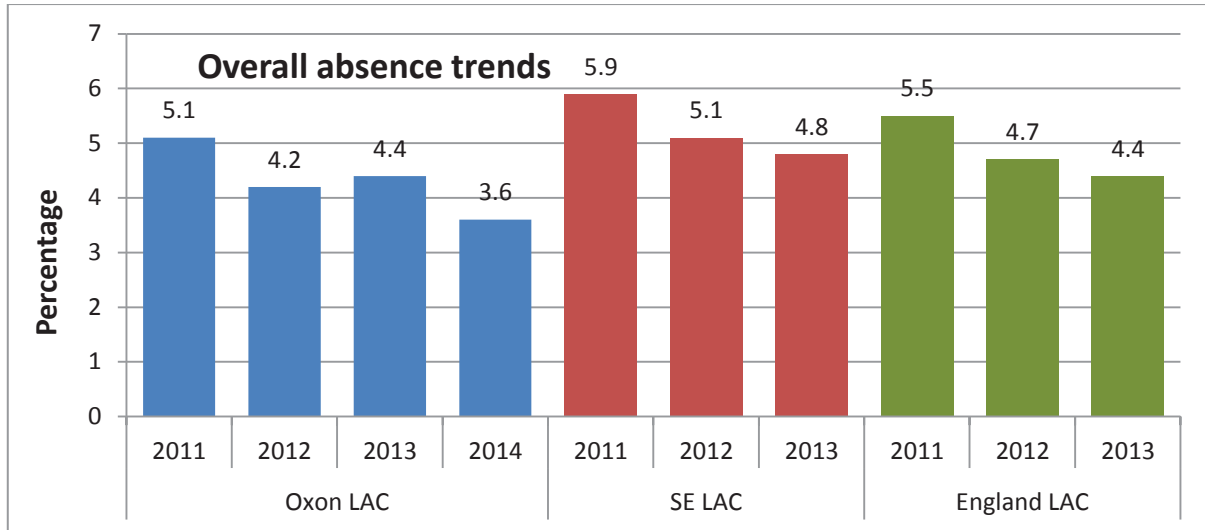
Cohort definitions and numbers:

The reported cohort. 150 pupils, who were continuously in care for at least 12 months at 31st March, attending maintained schools and non-maintained special schools and academies. This is used for reporting by the DfE.

The in-care cohort. 312 pupils, who were in care at the end of year.

Full cohort. 355 pupils have been in care at some point in the academic year.

Attendance



Attendance for LAC is the responsibility of the team for Looked after Children (Virtual School)

- Trends in attendance for LAC in Oxfordshire show an improvement
- Overall absence reduced by 0.8ppt to 3.6%, although persistent absence increased slightly by 0.6ppt to 5.4%.
- Data shows that those not in care for a solid year between April 1st and March 31st have significantly greater levels of overall and persistent absence. This suggests care is a protective factor.

What we are doing to improve

- Attendance is gathered daily for all pupils by an external company, Welfare Call
- 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. This role was new at the start of 2013.
- Senior LA staff assess LAC attendance and devise strategies in partnership to overcome issues.
- From September 2013, social workers must ask permission of the Virtual School Headteacher and Corporate Parenting Manager to take any holiday in term time. This is only exceptionally granted.

What we will do to improve further

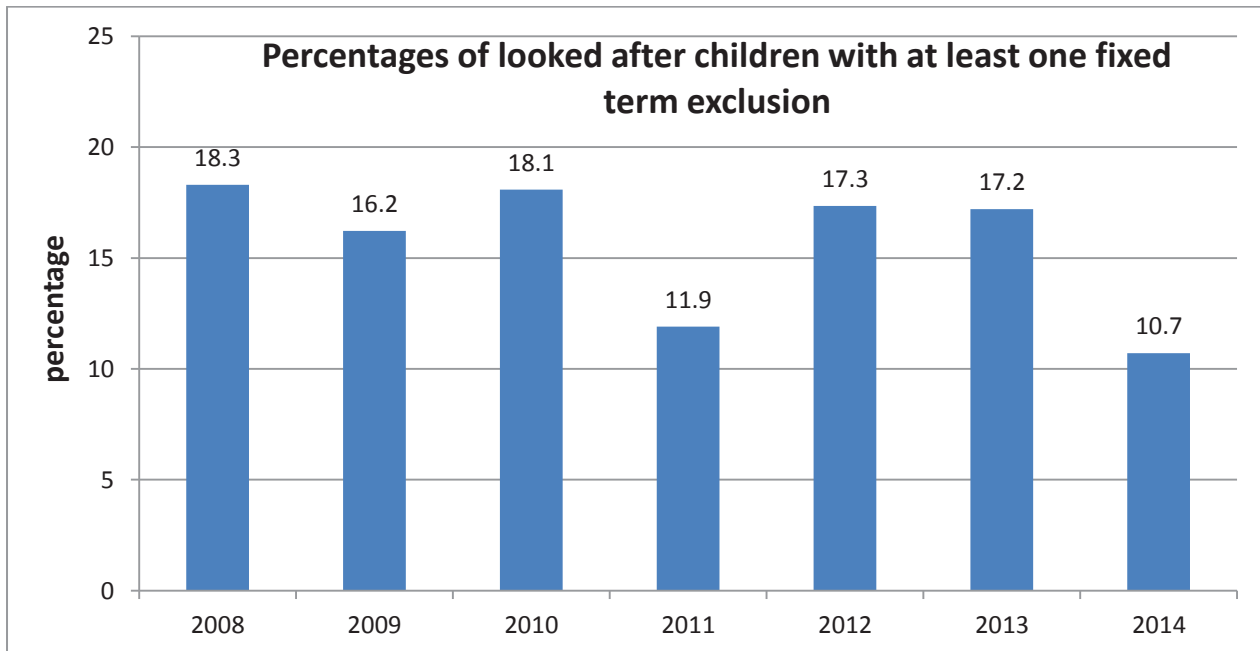
- Develop stronger systems to analysis of the trends in persistent absence
- Develop more challenge between the Corporate Parenting Manager and the Vulnerable Learners Manager to remove systemic barriers to good attendance
- Generate a bigger list of alternative provision particularly more options for young people who are at a high level of risk.
- Continue to develop schools' understanding of the need for relevant, flexible and challenging curriculum for Looked after Children.

Exclusions

Oxfordshire has a policy of zero tolerance on permanent exclusions 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 6 years.

Fixed term Exclusions



The Exclusions rate reduced significantly in 2013/14 and is now at the lowest for six years. The exclusion rate for out-of-county pupils (16.7%) was almost twice as high as that for pupil's in-county (8.8%). Nationally, fixed term exclusions are decreasing.

In line with the national data, exclusions increase significantly from year 9 onwards. The higher numbers in year 10 compared to year 11, suggest schools may be more willing to explore alternatives in year 11 to avoid pupils missing learning in an exam year.

Looked after Children continue to have significantly higher exclusion rates than other children.

What we are doing to improve

- A fixed term exclusion protocol was introduced in September 2013, which had been developed with Designated Teachers
- Best practice visit arranged for senior Oxfordshire school staff visit to a non-excluding school
- Challenges by senior Virtual School staff when pupils are excluded
- Therapeutic academic intervention through the charity One –Eighty support engagement and develop strategies with school and the pupil following the exclusion.

What we will do to improve further

- Target schools where exclusion has led to placement breakdown
- Develop a culture which keeps our riskiest and most vulnerable within county
- Explore opportunities to develop the understanding of Corporate Parenthood with Headteachers.
- Work with all county teams that work with school leadership to also challenge exclusions and raise awareness of the impact on LAC
- Develop the Caremark to share good practice with all schools along with the Young Carers' Team.
- Develop PEPs and good practice, especially by developing a post focussing on schools causing concern out of county.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

There were 12 pupils identified as LAC in the full cohort assessed using the foundation stage profile. 1 had no data. 8 had been in care less than a year.

From this assessment, 2 achieved a good level of development (GLD). The areas of specific weakness relate to literacy, communication and language development.

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 Steve McCabe, Shadow Minister for Children and Families, for this good practice.

Cohort

3 girls, 1 boy [All were educated in Oxfordshire.] All 4 were identified as in need of SEN (3 at School Action Plus, 1 at School Action)

Attainment at level 2*

%	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Oxon LAC 2014 (4 pupils)	75	75	75
England LAC (2013)	61	71	79

- Attainment broadly matches that of all LAC nationally in all three subjects.

What we are doing to improve

- All children who are not making progress in line with expectation are offered additional individual interventions through a Pupil Education Plan (PEP). Where additional tuition is needed sessional tutors are provided.
- A therapeutic, academic intervention is bought in for pupils needing reintegration or engagement support.

What we will do to improve further

- 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
- 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 Key stage 1
- Develop a document to monitor progress for early years, so there is timely and relevant intervention
- Develop early evidence-based literacy support programmes with the literacy team to ensure good progress in reading and writing in years 1 and 2.

In year 2, pupil Z was experiencing difficulties with his peer group. In order to build relationships and support him, a lunch time club was set up for him and other students using pupil premium. He also had poor motor skills and late in year 2, had a diagnosis of double vision. Pupil Premium was also used to provide an i-pad with one-to-one teacher support to practice handwriting. At the end of year 1, his reading level was 1c, his writing was at P8 and his maths was 1b. To improve his reading, the school put in 2 one to one reading interventions and provided one-to-two support for literacy lessons. He also had 2 maths interventions and the school decided to move the male teacher he had built such a good relationship with in year 1, up to year 2 with him. He finished year 2 with a level 2c in reading, 2c in writing and 2 b in maths.

* These results are for those children who have been in care for 12 months or more between April 1st and March 31st as reported to the DfE.

Key Stage 2

Reported Cohort

18 pupils in the reported cohort: 13 boys, 5 girls; 11 educated in Oxfordshire and 7 out of County. 16 of the 18 (88.8%) have been identified as having a special educational need: 6 have statements, 7 school action plus, 3 school action.

Note: One pupil with a statement was working at P levels and another was disapplied.

Achievement*

	Pupils 2014	2013	2014	National 2014
Level 4+				
Reading	13	54.5	76	89
Writing	8	45.5	47	86
Maths	10	54.5	59	86
R/W/M	7	45.5	41	79
EPSSG	8	25.0	47	77
Level 5+				
Reading	3	18.2	6	22.2
Writing	1	0.0	5.6	33
Maths	1	0.0	5.6	42

	Pupils 2014	2013	2014	National 2014
Expected progress				
Reading	15	90.9	83.3	91
Writing	15	100.0	83.3	93
Maths	13	90.9	72.2	89
Above expected progress				
Reading	7	50.0	43.8	35
Writing	6	25.0	37.5	33
Maths	6	22.2	35.3	35

- The proportion of those gaining level 4 or better in all 3 subjects-has declined slightly compared with 2013, but the data shows that several pupils attained level 4 in 1 or 2 subjects rather than all 3.
- Attainment of Level 4 has improved for each of the three subjects, particularly reading which shows an increase of 21 ppt. Attainment in writing and maths is broadly in line with national figures.

What we are doing to improve

- All children who are not making progress in line with expectation are offered additional individual interventions through a Pupil Education Plan (PEP). Where additional tuition is needed sessional tutors are provided
- A therapeutic, academic intervention is bought in for pupils needing reintegration or engagement support
- Transition learning mentors liaise with schools to ensure year 5 and 6 pupils have support to achieve targets. Information is gained from destination schools and issues solved
- The transition learning mentor or the Primary lead attends all year 6 PEP meetings to support schools with any necessary interventions.

What we will do to improve further

- Develop writing intervention with Primary Support Literacy consultants to address the increasing gap in attainment between Looked after Children and all children
- Explore evidence-based schemes for carers to support reading interventions with LAC
- Make links with the Primary Support Mathematics consultants in county to increase their knowledge and understanding of the needs of LAC and develop interventions with schools
- Through the Rees Centre and Bristol University mental health transition project, where they are auditing good practice around transition support, address gaps in transition support and develop plans.

Pupil A came into care in October 2013 when he was in year 6 and was placed with his maternal Grandparents. He was extremely distressed and felt the need to work out of lessons and frequently had altercations with peers. At the end of Key Stage 1, he had achieved a 3c in reading, 2a in writing and a 3c in maths, which indicated he should achieve level 5s in reading in maths and a level 4 in writing if he was to make expected progress.

When it became clear in terms 2 and 3 that he was making no progress, his plans were reviewed. He was brought to school 20 minutes early, so he could meet with a trusted teaching assistant to discuss thoughts and concerns about the day ahead. By January, he was leaving lessons less frequently and the school were able to start to look at his academic progress. The Virtual School transition learning mentor began to work with him in February 2013 focusing on writing. It became apparent through the work with his mentor that he was fixated on death and violence and had been able to watch inappropriate films prior to coming into care. A referral to the Attach team was made and they are now working with him around that.

During his morning conversations, he told his teaching assistant he wanted to be a pilot. A plan was made that if he worked hard and achieved his targets of a level 5 in reading and maths and a 4 in writing, he could have a flying lesson. He achieved level 5s in all three and has made a video explaining the support he had and how it helped him.

Key Stage 4 (GCSE)

Reporting cohort: 31 students (12 boys, 19 girls) [22 were educated in county and 9 out of county]

Full cohort: 50 students, where over a third came into care in April 2013 or later. These proportions are similar to the cohort who completed year 11 in 2013.

Of the whole cohort taking exams in June 2104, 80% had SEND: school action 12.2%; school action plus 32.7%; statements 35.18%. Of the students with a statement, 32% had a primary need of BESD or MLD. 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 5A*-C including English and Mathematics was 16.1% (using the best result) and has gone above the national average for LAC for the first time ever.
- Those making expected progress in English have increased by 17ppt, remained the same in maths and those making expected progress in both English and Mathematics have increased by 12ppt.
- The gap in attainment at 5A*-C including English and mathematics has reduced by 6ppt.
- Those proportion achieving one or more GCSEs continues to increase every year.

Headlines for the full cohort

- Those students (19) who arrive later in care do not show up in published figures but disproportionately consume resources.
- Of those who arrive later in care none gained 5A* to C inc EM and only 2 gained a grade C+ in Eng and maths. 4 made expected progress in English and 1 in mathematics
- Full cohort data shows 10% gained 5A* to C inc EM

Achievement (using the best GCSE)

Key Stage 4, 2014	Reported Cohort 2012-13 (35 pupils)		Reported Cohort 2013-14 (31 pupils)		National 2014
	Students	%	Students	%	
Attainment					
5+ A*-C inc English & Maths	2	5.7	5	16.1	59.6
5+ A*-C	9	25.7	6	20.6	77.8
The Basics GCSE C+ in E & M	2	5.7	6	17.6	-
5+ A*-G inc English & Maths	21	60.0	12	38.7	92.7
GCSE in English & Maths	24	68.6	16	51.6	-
1 or more GCSEs	30	85.7	29	93.5	99.3
Expected progress					
English	9	31.0	13	48.1	70.9
Maths	8	25.8	7	25.9	65.3
English & Maths	4	13.8	7	25.9	-
Met target threshold?	17	48.6	16	51.6	-
Above expected progress					
English	4	13.8	4	14.8	32
Maths	1	3.4	2	7.4	29
English & Maths	0	0.0	0	0.0	-
Met target threshold?	2	5.7	4	12.9	-

What we are doing to improve

Students in year 11 are receiving a highly differentiated variety of support strategies in line with their PEPs, supported by the pupil premium plus and additional funding by their schools. The virtual school works hard to deliver a balance between challenging the school and acting with urgency to support the child.

Interventions (which are also used for other age groups as appropriate) include:

- one-to-one tutoring in key subjects

- engagement packages from our partners One-eighty
- access for unaccompanied asylum seekers to the four week Orientation and Induction project commissioned from The Children's Society
- rewards and incentives
- providing learning mentors
- arts programmes delivered by ArtsXchange and CoPE accreditation managed by the virtual school and delivered by trained residential workers in Oxfordshire children's homes
- 'Extra-milers' event to support aspiration and revision for targeted learners at Oxford Brookes University
- attendance at and chiring of PEPs for those new into care/new school by senior VSLAC staff, and return to the chair the next PEP if school engagement needs challenge or support
- discussions between the Headteacher and Virtual Head where schools are not rapidly removing barrier to success
- referral to alternative provision or highly bespoke packages of provision where a student cannot access learning in their own school or are in need of a highly personalised learning environment
- additional support for EET beyond the independent information, advice and guidance provided by the school.

What we will do to improve further

- Improve access to timely information, advice and guidance (IAG) for all students prior to year 11.
- Investigate value of peer mentoring scheme
- Continue to develop timeliness and quality of PEPs in order to fully support progress
- Continue to develop challenge conversations with partners to ensure year 11 pupils are in appropriate consistent provision where they are not excluded and not moved
- Work alongside the Placement Strategy Board to enhance interventions for those on the edge of care.

Student B achieved 3 C grades (including English and Maths), 2 B grades and 1 E grade.

She had come into care in year 8 in March 2011, having achieved expected levels in English and Maths at KS2. She experienced significant trauma prior to coming into care in year 8, with an adoption break down, which may explain the slow progress in key stage 3.

Following 4 exclusions from her school in year 9, various incidents of running away and a wish to build stronger links with her birth family, the Virtual School suggested and facilitated a move to a school near her birth family. A therapeutic and academic intervention programme was put in place through the charity One-Eighty, to support her transition to her new school. She thrived initially and was on course to achieve 5 A*-C including English and Maths for the majority of year 10. Towards the latter part of year 10, there was an issue around potential child sexual exploitation. At the same time, her relationship with her birth mother broke down and she reacted by refusing to engage with or trust anyone.

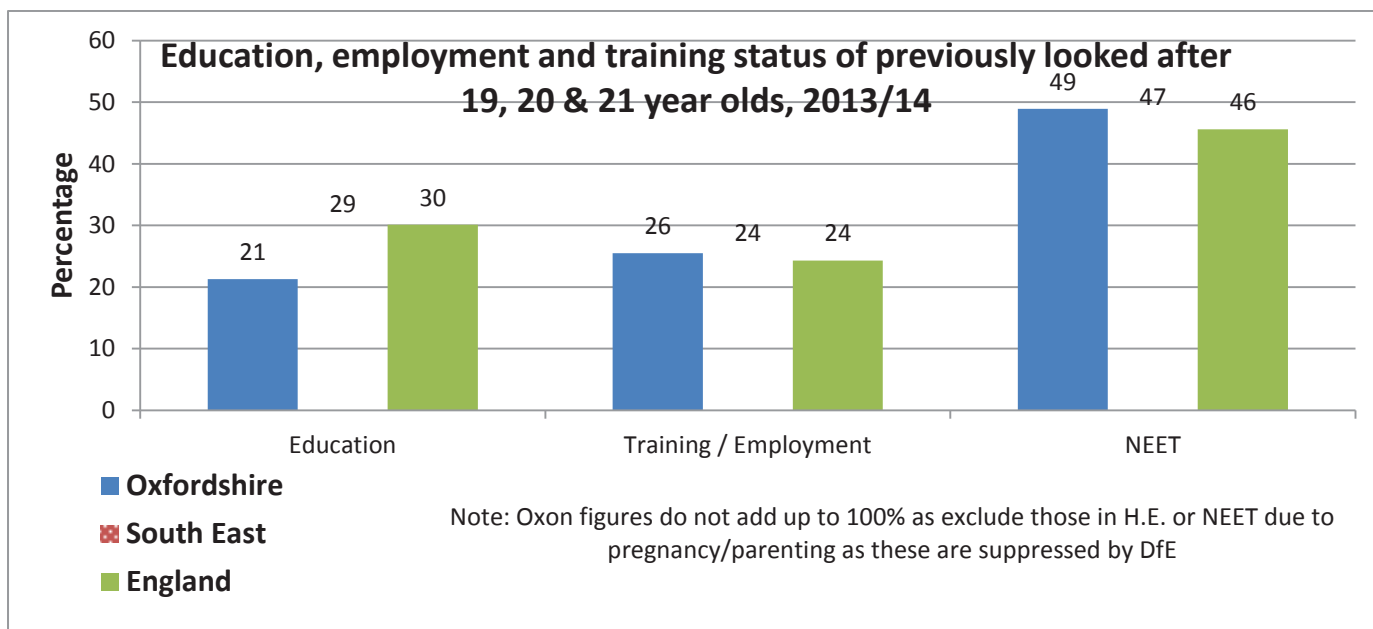
At the start of year 11, she received repeated fixed term exclusions, which only stopped following intervention from the Virtual School and the introduction of a county-wide fixed term exclusion policy for Looked after Children. The school began to explore alternatives to fixed term exclusion and although she continued to abscond and had periods of school refusal, she began to rebuild some relationships with staff. Her attendance dropped to 69% for the year just before she started her exams.

At this point, achieving 5 GCSEs of any grade was aspirational as she would have had to put in significant work to achieve any grade. In her May PEP, she decided she would accept all help offered, which had always been offered and this turn around in attitude led to an intensive period of one to one learning, gym membership and horse riding lessons as weekly reward when she attended school.

Post-16

53 students were identified in the year 11 cohort as needing a plan for the September offer of education or training. By May, 72% had adequate plans in place for post-16 compared to 92% for all year 12s in Oxfordshire.

By May, there were 71 identified students in year 12 who had been in care. 69% were in education, employment or training. The DfE compares 19, 20 and 21 years olds. The numbers in Oxfordshire who are in education are low in comparison.



Students entering Higher Education (passed a degree)

age of entry	2012/13	2013/14
18	5 (1)	5 (1)
19	12 (2)	13 (4)
20	9 (2)	7 (4)
21	5 (1)	3 (1)
22	4 (1)	4 (1)
23	1	2
Total	36 (7)	34 (11)

What we are doing to improve

- At aged 19, national comparators consistently show Oxfordshire to be one of the higher performing authorities at this measure
- 2 EET support workers are currently focussed primarily on years 11 and 12
- Leaving care personal advisers (PAs) have recourse to VSLAC for advice, referral and signposting for older care leavers. This may involve accompanying a late entrant to university with mental health issues to a meeting with the student support team
- Many graduating students are still in touch with their corporate parent; they attend events and contribute to the development of our work. [One has been a member of VSLAC governing body, one is a social worker in a local academy, a previous chair of the Children in Care Council is a social worker in Newbury, on completing his MA another has recently provided music teaching in our cross-regional project]
- Care leavers receive support and advice through leaving care PAs, members of the 'SWEET' (Specialist Workers in Education, Employment and Training) team, including a full time post in the Prospect contract and at Oxford College (linked to support in Banbury College) and from VSLAC EET support workers
- For unaccompanied asylum seekers, assessed by the home office at age 16 and 17, the Children's Society are commissioned to provide a 4 week Orientation and Induction Programme.

What we will do to improve further

Continue support and success towards Oxfordshire's target of 100% of year 12 participating in EET by

- Improving IAG through employing a qualified member of staff
- Building employability skills by developing schemes for all ages of children in care focusing on broadening knowledge and raising aspiration
- 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
- Developing understanding of the duty of Corporate Parenthood in schools and develop capacity to meet the needs of those with delayed attainment
- Exploring opportunities to create bespoke provision for those hard to engage.
- Developing accurate and robust data systems to track and monitor progress and engagement in order to intervene earlier
- Developing apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities through developing a post-16 process parallel to a PEP.

Blog by year 10 young person on the impact of a good care placement on their education:

Being in care has affected my education in a positive way

Since I've been in care, I have been in a foster home and a children's home but I am now currently settled in another foster home. As I've had the experience of being in a foster placement and a care home, I found that a foster placement was better for me because I feel more secure in a household living with a family than with other young children.

When I first went into care, school life was tricky to cope with because of all the emotions and thoughts I had. This could have been because I wasn't settled or I felt like I couldn't share my emotions with anyone and couldn't control them. It was stressful trying to keep up with school work and concentrating when I had other thoughts going around my head. I didn't want to think about school because it seemed to me at that time that school wasn't important anymore and I needed to focus on family matters instead. However, the placement I am settled in now has opened my eyes to show me that school does matter if I want to do something with my life.

Being in care has affected my education in a positive way because I went through a stage where I couldn't get my head around why it was important but when I got put in a settled placement I realised that if I wanted to be someone in the world I'd have to get my education. I realised this from the help of my foster carers who supported me and showed me what life really was. Through living with a different family I got taught that there's more than one way of dealing with things such as dealing with situations, emotions etc. This helped me cope and concentrate on my education.

Once my home life was settled, I figured out I wanted more out of myself. The people I thought were my friends were pulling me into bad situations. I took a step back and asked myself, are these people I really want as my friends? Will they always be in my life and help me when I need it? Then it came to me they can't be my friends if they want me to be in bad situations, they should want me to be doing well. I finally thought that if I wanted to do something I was the only person who could make that happen, it had to be my choice and my choice only. This led me to make the decision of moving schools at the beginning of year 10 where my GCSEs were just about to start. Although this wasn't an easy decision it had a positive outcome because I've made new friends who want to see me make something of myself and help me achieve what I want to. I am now getting higher predicted grades and achieving more than I thought I was capable of.

I would urge teachers to have a supporting attitude to encourage and show looked after children that you think they're doing well. I feel if a teacher is in a happy mood and smiling when teaching I tend to get along with them better because it makes me feel like you've walked into a happier place and can leave behind whatever is going on outside the classroom.

Partnership work

Personal Education Plans

Virtual School staff model quality PEPs by attending, chairing and writing first PEPs and PEPs in new schools. The PEP toolkit has advice for social workers, schools and foster carers. The PEP timeliness was 95% in statute in May. This did not meet the DfE requirement. The quality of PEPs has improved consistently, with 84% rated green in 2014 from 38% in 2010.

Designated Teachers (DTs) and Staff in Colleges.

The rolling programme of induction for new DTs was well attended. DT were offered at least 2 networking events including using outside speakers and focussed on national and local developments for Looked After Children. DTs lead some agenda items.

There are 8 Designated Teacher lead practitioners in the county, 3 in secondary schools, 3 in primary, 1 in a Pupil Referral Unit and 1 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/aspirational activities.

Research and Development

The team leader for LAC undertook a sabbatical for a day a week for 6 months from July 2014 to December 2014 with the Rees Centre at Oxford University. The centre conducts international research into the impact of care. The sabbatical aims to develop evidence –based practice in schools, build sustainable relationships with all relevant partners in Oxfordshire and build a means of practitioners informing future research.

Orientation and Induction Programme

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%

Foster Carers

Foster carer training is currently run by Virtual School staff but is not well attended. 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 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.

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
- Under the leadership of the Early Intervention Service, develop a multi-agency approach to more effective post-16 education and training pathways and provision for care leavers
- 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
- Consult council on how carers can better support their education at home.

Takeover Day 21 November 2014

Takeover Day gives children and young people the chance to work with adults for the day and be involved in decision making. Children benefit from the opportunity to experience the world of work and make their voices heard, while adults and organisations gain a fresh perspective on what they do.

Hollie, who chairs the Oxfordshire County Children in Care Council, came to work with the Rees Centre team and successfully took over the role of Communications Officer.

"I took part in Takeover Day at the Rees Centre. I had a brilliant time, I found out a lot of things I never knew before. I interviewed a lady who is working with the health assessments for children in care, and am really looking forward to working with her in the near future. I put a presentation together about what I do with "I took part in Takeover Day at the Rees Centre. I had a brilliant time, I found out a lot of things I never knew before. I interviewed a lady who is working with the health assessments for children in care, and am really looking forward to working with her in the near future. I put a presentation together about what I do with Children In care Council and what we are. I really enjoyed taking part in Takeover Day and would love to go back to the Rees Centre in the future". Hollie Messenger, Chair of Children in Care Council, Oxfordshire.

Example of an opportunity for a Young Person to go to Oxford University

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 are going from strength to strength and will advertise for a co-ordinator to increase their capacity to reach more young people.

For more information visit <http://www.vipplus.org.uk/>

Young Leaders' Festival

Seven 14 to 17 year olds took part in this festival over the summer of 2014. They spent 5 days on a farm in Kent taking part in leadership activities, developing wellbeing, learning strategies to support emotional pain and hearing motivational speakers.





Improvement plan for the education of Looked After Children, Oxfordshire, September 2013 - September 2015

The Virtual School for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, 0-25

Targets:

1. To ensure that Looked After Children achieve 100% attendance in an appropriate educational setting
2. To enable all Looked After Children to engage for a minimum of 25 hours per week in appropriate educational activity which encourages a positive attitude to learning.
3. To raise educational attainment of all Looked After Children, and secure progress which is at least in line with national expectations, particularly from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4
4. To narrow the gap between Oxfordshire's Looked After Children and all children in England as resources are used effectively and interventions positively impact on outcomes.
5. To secure 100% participation in employment, education and training in years 12 and 13

Strengths

- Significantly above average progress from KS1 to 2
- Attendance above average for LAC, all pupils in Oxfordshire and England
- Significantly improved timeliness and quality of PEPS
- Reduction in fixed term exclusions has been sustained from 2011

Priority areas for development

- Improve attainment and progress from KS2-4
- Accelerate the progress of students arriving in care in from year 9 onwards
- Reduce repeated exclusion of those newly arrived in care
- Sustain above average progress from KS1 to 2 in the light of a higher profile of need in cohort
- Children taken into care during the Early Years phase of education have good plans to secure progress in the early learning goals.
- Full participation in employment, education and training for all care leavers year 12 and 13

Opportunities

- Pupil premium plus (PPP) and national developing role of Virtual Schools in ensuring this is effectively used by schools
- Bursary for care leavers 16-19
- More effective training of governors to challenge schools on good provision for LAC and impact of the pupil premium plus, provided by NCTL
- Increased focus of section 5 inspection of schools on the impact of the pupil premium
- All 2 year olds in care entitled to EYFS provision

Challenges

- Continuing rise of the proportion of children and young people coming into care at a high level of need, especially in KS2 and 4.
- Increasing numbers of older children admitted to care in year 9 and later, with a disproportionate group joining care in year 11.
- Increasing numbers of children arriving in care with SEN or statements.
- All children must be in the best school for their needs in the context of proportionate availability of schools judged good or better in the right place
- Placement strategy 'riskiest closest' to secure immediate provision for more children in Oxfordshire and longer term strategic capacity planning to secure Oxfordshire care for children and young people at a high level of need.
- Introduction of Raising the Participation Age (RPA) requiring effective monitoring and support for the participation in education, employment and training of all care leavers 1-25
- Organisational review of vulnerable learner services within Children, Education and Families

Target	Key Actions	Success Criteria	Responsibility and date	1 st monitoring March 2014
1. To ensure that looked after children achieve 100% attendance in an appropriate educational setting.	1.1 Review resources, roles and responsibilities in the Virtual School (VSLAC) to secure proportional support and challenge for schools so that children wish to attend, engage well with learning and are not excluded. Reduce repeated exclusion of those newly arrived in care.	1.1.2 Contracts with associates including those with One-eighty and The Children's Society are reviewed in line with PBS so that all children meet individual attendance targets.	VM April 2014	
		1.1.3 Virtual School staff and associate staff are appropriately allocated in line with priorities and regular monitoring systems so that all children attend school.	VM On going	
		1.1.4 Schools are fully aware of the protocol for fixed term exclusion (developed and consulted from March 2013 onwards) and adhere to the advice given in at the VSLAC behaviour guidance. One of more fixed term exclusions have reduced from 2012/13 and are lower than the England average for LAC 2011/12.	VM Dec 2014	
		1.1.5 PEP targets for any student at risk of persistent absence show effective use of the PP to prevent absence. Persistent absence is reduced further from 2012/13 and is significantly below that of England LAC average for 2012/13 and all children in Oxfordshire and England 2013/14.	VM Sept 2015	
		1.1.6 All children educated by other LAs, or educated in Oxfordshire schools other than those with DT leading practitioners, or a good record of 'green' have a first PEP led by VSLAC and have attendance of 100%.	SM Sept 2015	
		1.1.7 New database measuring the impact of care shows that care has improved attendance of all looked after children over one year compared with the year prior to care.	VM Sept 2015	
		1.1.8 Develop internet space so that schools in other LAs can access fixed term exclusion protocol, behaviour guidance and all other VSLAC resources.	LW March 2014	
		2. To enable all looked after children to engage for a minimum of 25 hours per week in appropriate education activity which encourages a positive attitude to learning.	2.1 Good systems for monitoring the quality of school provision, particularly for those arriving in care late in secondary education, or at a high level of	2.1.1 The proportion of children educated by independent and maintained providers which are judged as good or outstanding has increased from 73% to 90%
2.1.2 All independent providers are regularly monitored where inspection report is more than years ago and reports show that provision is at least good.	VM July 2014			
2.1.3 All students with a statement have provision which meets their needs.	SM July 2014			
2.1.4 Unity College, part of the Thames Valley Partnership commission with 4 other LAs is judged by independent advisors and TVP education commissioner by March 2014 and by Ofsted Section 162a) inspection, by September 2015 to be Good.	VM Sept 2015			

	need ensure all students are in the best provision.			
3. To raise educational attainment of all looked after children and secure progress which is at least in line with national expectations, particularly from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.	3.1 Sustain above average progress from KS1 to KS2 in the light of a higher profile of need in the cohort.	3.1.1 Enlarge the pool of associate staff and implement revised contracts so that schools can use the PP for ready access to a further enlarged resource of high quality, well-trained staff who understand the needs of students arriving in care so that those in Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 make accelerated and sustained progress.	LW/VM July 2015 and On going	
		3.1.2 Retain monitoring and support for targeted year 7 by VSLAC transition staff throughout the school year, to ensure that the year 7 catch up grant is well-used and that all these students make more than expected progress and catch up.	SM On going	
	3.2 Accelerate the progress of those in care in KS2 who continue throughout KS3.	3.1.3 Target the work of the intervention manager so that those pupils making only expected or less than expected progress in year 7 accelerate their progress in year 8 and 9.	SM On going	
		3.1.4 VSH and Corporate Parenting Manager work together to secure an Edge of care strategy which impacts on students in assessment and step-down centres engaging quickly with learning on entering care because providers meet their needs with effective interventions using the pupil premium. All students arriving in care in years 9, 10 and 11 take at least 5 level 1 or 2 qualifications including English and mathematics.	ME/VM On going	
	3.3 Accelerate the progress of students arriving in care during years 9, 10 and 11.	3.1.5 VSH, Corporate Parenting Manager, Thriving Families Manager develop alerts system based on persistent absence as a proxy measure of educational need for CiN and students with CP. Schools receive early challenge from Attendance and Engagement staff so that if they come into care appropriate agencies are already fully informed and absence is already reducing to below PA level in the last full term before care.	SB/ME/VM July 2014	
		3.1.6 VSLAC staff and associate staff are effectively deployed, with schools using the PP to buy associate staff time. Students make rapid progress on arrival in care and 2014 and 2015 outcomes at 5+ A*-C are at least in line with all England LAC.	LW Sept 2015	
	3.4 Develop educational input to edge of care strategy so that all training of all Oxfordshire partners makes clear the target groups and the	3.1.7 DT leading practitioners are strong champions for looked after children's inclusion and progress and the effective use of the PP as evidenced in evaluations of training by schools.	SM July 2014	
		3.1.8 Evaluations of training for all school staff in attachment, priorities for LAC achievement and the needs of edge of care learners impact on 95% 'green' PEPs with clear impact of the pupil premium, early referrals to social care and other agencies, improved attendance and engagement prior to care and accelerated progress following entry to care.	SM July 2014	

	rapid actions needed to secure progress.	3.1.9 Headteachers and DTs fully understand priorities for looked after children following Summer 2013 DT event and presentation to OSSHTA March 2014 as evidenced by 2013 consultancy review of year 11 and school improvement checks.	VM/SB/SV July 2014	
	3.5 Every child in the EYFS phase has a PEP of high quality.	3.2.1 All PEPs from Sept 2013-Sept 2014 by their effective use of SMART targets and the pupil premium demonstrate a determination by schools to accelerate the progress of all looked after children; as evidenced by a rise in 'green' PEPs from 73% to 95%.	VM Sept 2015	
		3.2.2 Governor Training in the use of the PP continues to be well-attended and evaluated as evidenced by evaluation reports. All schools return reports to governing bodies on attendance, exclusion and achievement of looked after children.	VM/SB/VQ May 2013	
		3.2.3 Revised PEPS either through the introduction of E-PEPs (project under consultation) or by updating existing PEPs include last OE, achievement, behaviour and safety, teaching and leadership and management grades for each school. Schools are aware at every PEP of the way in which provision for looked after children may contribute to future Ofsted outcomes.	VM July 2013	
		3.2.4 Early years worker appointed and trained by VSLAC. Every child age 2-RI has a 'green' PEP.	SM/NB	
4. To narrow the gap between Oxfordshire's looked after children and all children in England, as resources are used effectively and interventions positively impact on outcomes.	4.1 See key actions for targets 1, 2 and 3	4.1.1 Attainment at level 4 at KS2 and progress from KS1 to KS2 are above average for all children in Oxfordshire and England for 2013/14 and 2014/15. The gap has narrowed successively in each of these years.	VM Sept 2015	
		4.1.2 APS at the end of KS2 is above the average for all children in Oxfordshire and England in 2013/14 and 2014/15. The gap has narrowed successively in each of these years.	VM Sept 2015	
	4.2 Develop 'Caremark' in partnership with Young Carers team to include provision for LAC in order to stimulate good practice and formalise differentiation in support and challenge to	4.1.3 The proportion of students achieving The Basics and 5+ A*-C EM is at least equal to that of England LAC average by 2014/15. The gap has narrowed successively from 2013 to 15.	VM Sept 2015	
		4.1.4 APS at the end of KS4 is rising more rapidly than that of all England children from 2013 to 2015.	VM Sept 2015	
		4.1.5 VSH completed 5 th section 5 lead inspection and credibility secured by this evident in outcomes of challenge dialogue with headteachers on fwi.	VM May 2014	
		4.1.6 All governors aware of NCTL courses introduced September 2014 including learning about the education of LAC and the role of this group in narrowing the gap. Governors sign up to courses and challenge schools effectively on narrowing the gap as evidence by school inspection reports from November 2014 onwards.	VM/VQ/SB Sept 2014	

	schools	4.1.7 Pilot of support and challenge package developed by VSLAC and OXIT to support and challenge 3 primary schools judged below grade 2 and with high proportions of CIN, CP and LAC has led to Section 8 good progress or Section 5 good judgements.	SM Sept 2015	
		4.2 Criteria and evaluation process agreed and shared with all designated teachers.	LW Sept 2014	
		4.2.1 4 secondary schools and 3 primary schools assessed and awarded the new Caremark. Caremark schools scheduled for differentiated monitoring of standards and approaches to allocation of pupil premium and other funding.	LW Sept 2015	
5. To secure 100% participation in employment, education and training in years 12 and 13.	5.1 Complete all actions in 0-25 plan to secure employability and progression for all students 0-25	5.1.1 All actions in 0-25 plan are completed so that VSLAC resources are effective aligned with those of the RAISE team impacting on 100% EET in year 12 and 13, sustained and improving high proportions of EET at 19 and an increase in the proportion of care leavers in higher education.	CM Sept 2015	
		5.1.2 More automated monitoring tools are in place so that EET figures for y12 are reported termly to deputy director alongside LAC attendance.	CM Sept 2014	
		5.1.3 All PEPs in KS4 show that students have had IAG in their curriculum, individual IAG support and good plans for the next phase of education, employment or training.	LW July 2015	
	5.2 Review VSLAC post-16 resources in line with priorities.	5.1.4 New EET support worker appointed. Impact can already be seen by July in year 12 NEET reduced from 4 to nil by July 2014.	CM July 2014	
		5.1.5 Training for all social care key workers secures high levels of expertise in promotion of EET, impacting on 100% of year 12 and 13 who are aware of good local sources of advice, how to contact VSLAC and can access the CiCC website.	CM July 2014	
	5.3 Review contracts with The Children's Society and Activate Learning.	5.1.6 Review of resources and structure of VSLAC empowers social care key workers to lead effectively on engagement in EET, has used opportunities to develop continuity of relationships from year 11 to 12 and allocated high levels of expertise in IAG to priority students in year 11 and 12.	VM Sept 2014	
		5.1.7 Joint leadership review of attendance, engagement, completion and progression by care leavers at Activate Learning has resulted in best value review of contract with VSLAC for 1 post.	CM July 2014	
		5.1.8 Pilot partnership in EET for care leavers set up in Banbury in place. Minutes of meetings show impact on the quality of planning and smooth transition to EET from year 11. Good practice developed to review partnership and develop in Central and South areas.	CM Nov 2014	

		5.1.9 Review of contract with The Children's Society secures high quality orientation and induction of all UASC so that all 16-19 new arrivals are quickly on roll in school/college and immediately attend and engage, making good progress in their learning, particularly in English.	VM March 2014	
		5.2.1 Contracts for new supported housing pathway shows specific measures and actions to promote and secure EET.	ES/ CM March 2015	
		5.2.2 Looked after children aspiration partnership developed with clear plan of action by university engagement partners, volunteer team, VIP+, The Rees Centre, The Oxford University Hub, The Children's Society and other key partners.	VM July 2014	

Glossary

CiCC	Children in Care Council
LAC	Looked after children
PP	The Pupil Premium, becoming the Pupil Premium Plus on 1 April 2013
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
VSH	Virtual School Head
VSLAC	The Virtual School for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, 0-25, Oxfordshire

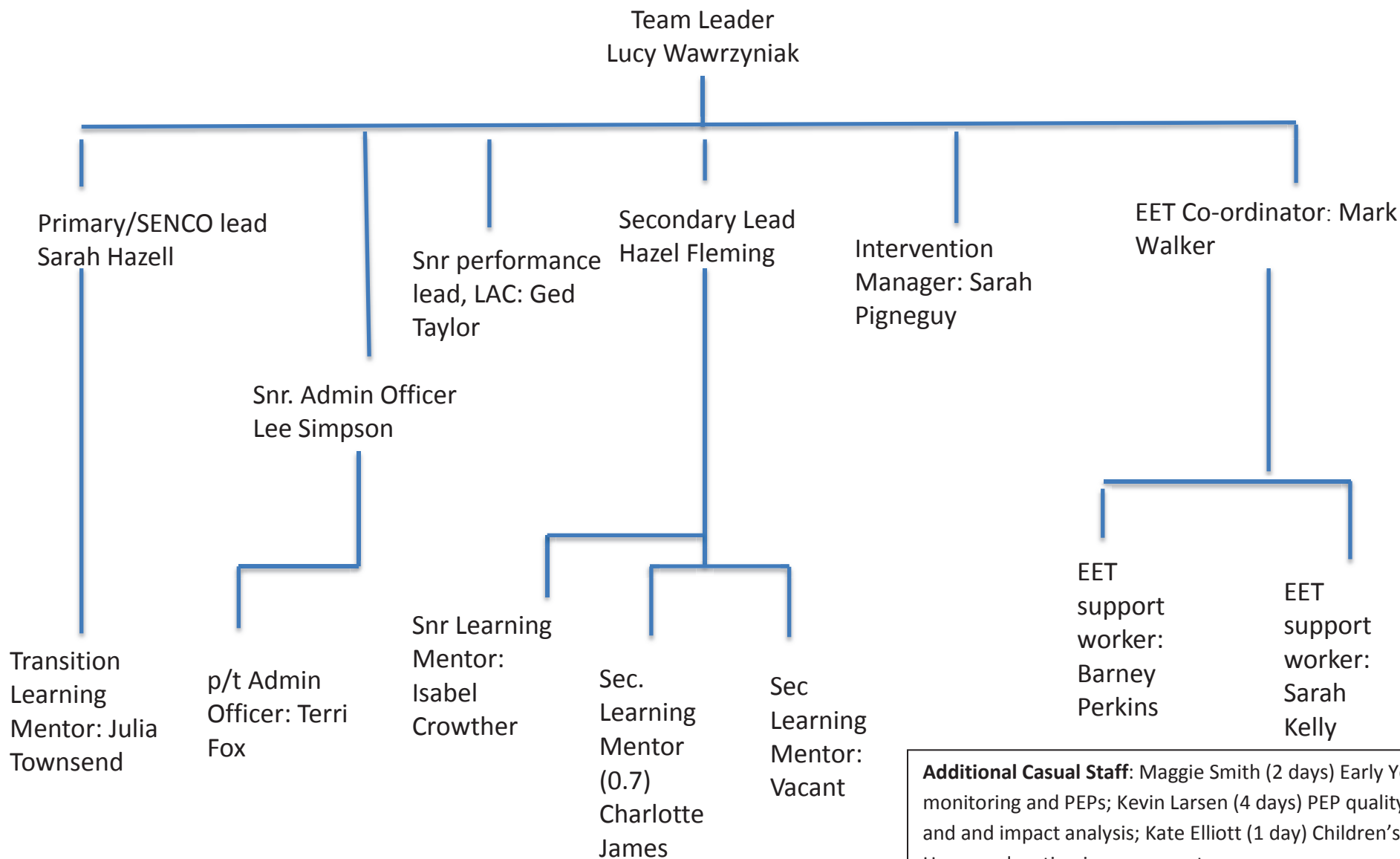
VM – Venetia Mayman
LW – Lucy Wawrzyniak
SM – Susie Mullin
CM – Clare McLening
ES – Eleanor Stone
SB – Sue Bainbridge
VQ – Vince Quayle
NB – Netta Bucket
ME – Matthew Edwards

V2 11/11/2013 VM
V3 17/11/3013 VM
V4 18/11/2013 SB
V5 19/11/2013 VM
V6 24/11/2013 V7 15/12/2013

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The Virtual School for Looked After Children and Care Leavers: 0-25 Structure Chart

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Additional Casual Staff: Maggie Smith (2 days) Early Years monitoring and PEPs; Kevin Larsen (4 days) PEP quality and and impact analysis; Kate Elliott (1 day) Children's Homes education improvement.

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ATTAINMENT WORKING PARTY – REPORT TO EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 JANUARY 2015

1. The Attainment Working Party met on a number of occasions during 2014 to discuss attainment in schools across Oxfordshire. In addition to reviewing the outcomes at different Key Stages, the Working Party also looked at the monitoring tools used by officers in their understanding of how successful schools are at achieving their educational aims and how schools can be supported to improve outcomes in the current climate where local authorities have few remaining powers.
2. Other specific topics discussed during the meetings of the working party included:

Performance in rural primary schools and whether the suppression of small incidence data might allow underperformance by individual children in such schools to go un-noticed.

The issue of performance by students at further education colleges and the ability of the County to request information now that the leaving age has effectively increased to eighteen.

The outcome of Ofsted inspections and the actions taken by the County where there were concerns about school performance. The Working Party did not discuss the outcome of any 'no notice' inspections although these may form an important part of future inspections.

The relative performance on reading of Oxford City schools in both the County and City reading schemes and the city schools enrolled in neither scheme.

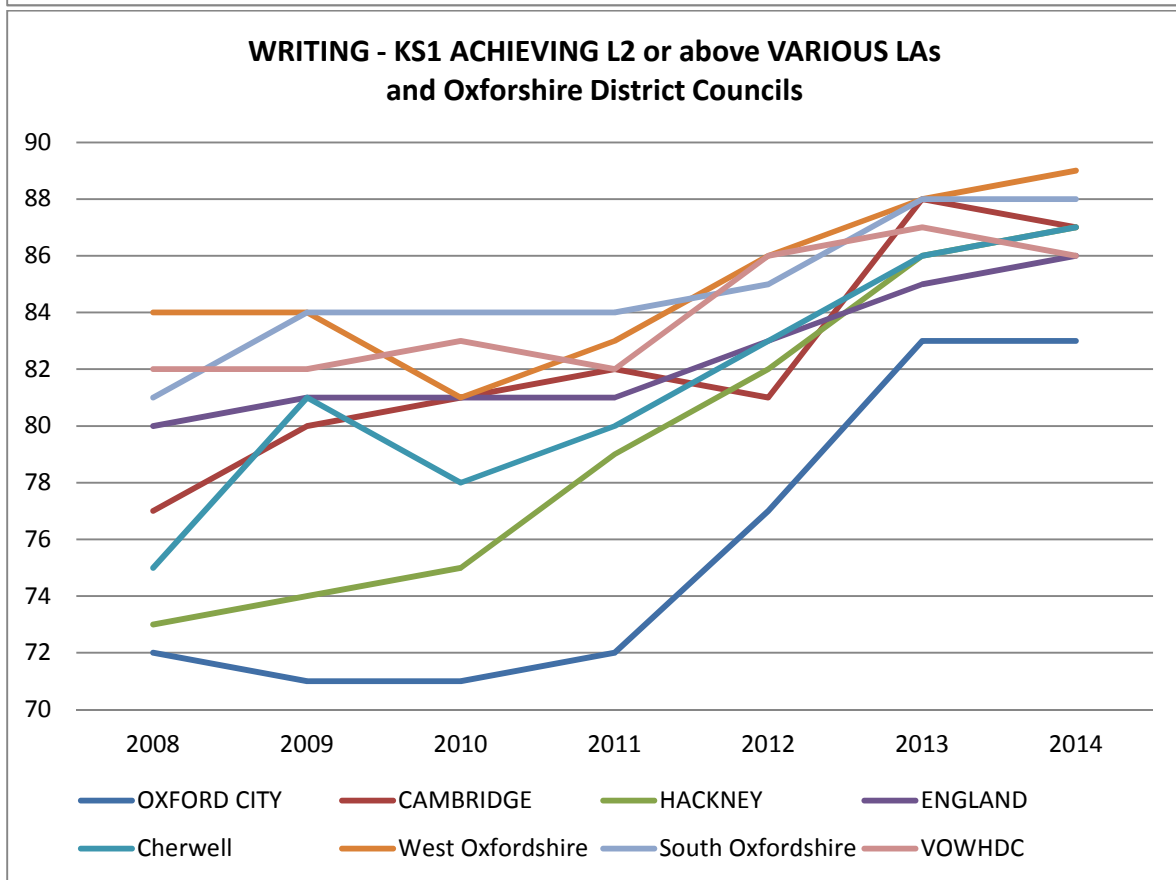
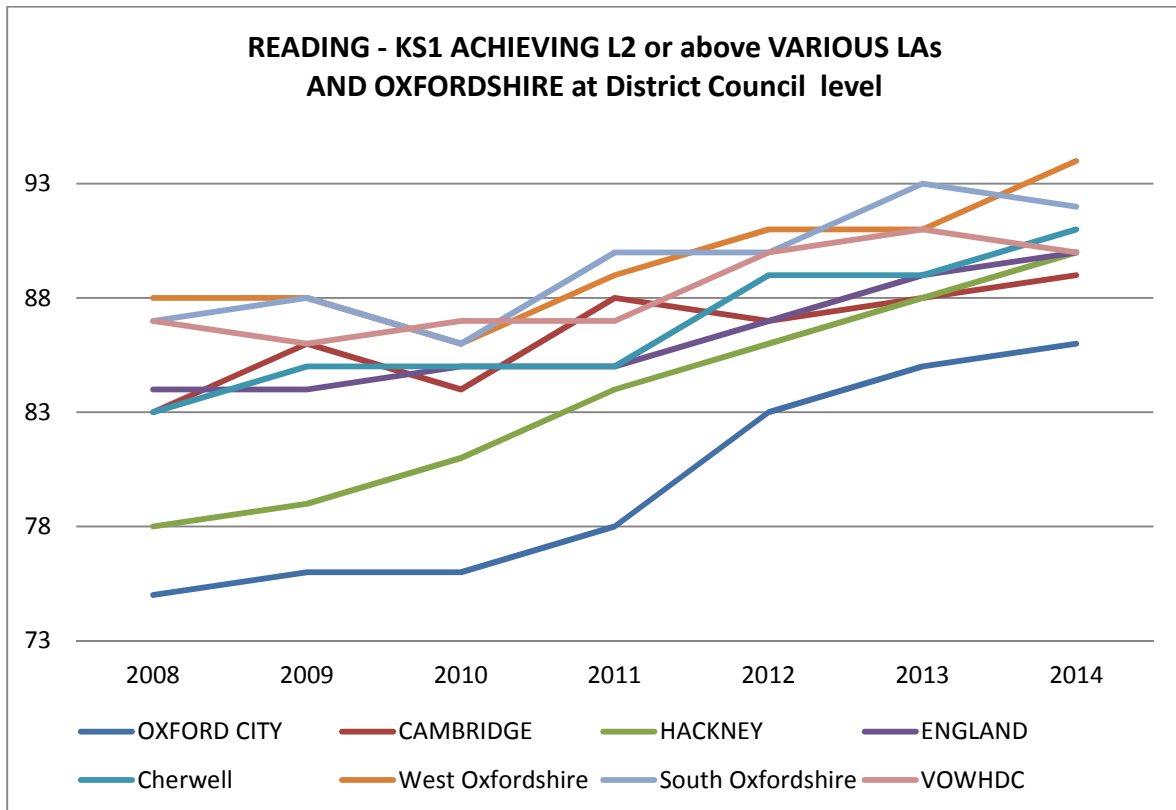
The performance by different groups including outcomes by gender and free school meals eligibility.

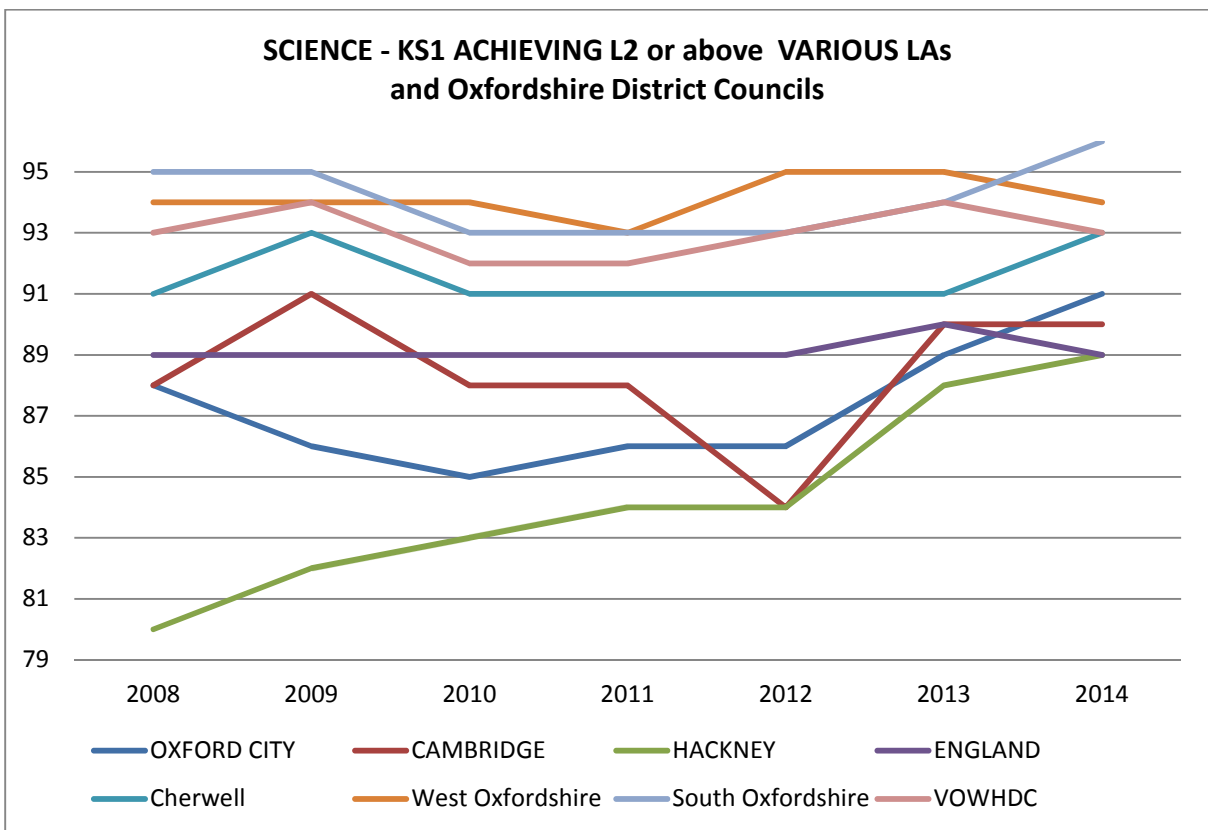
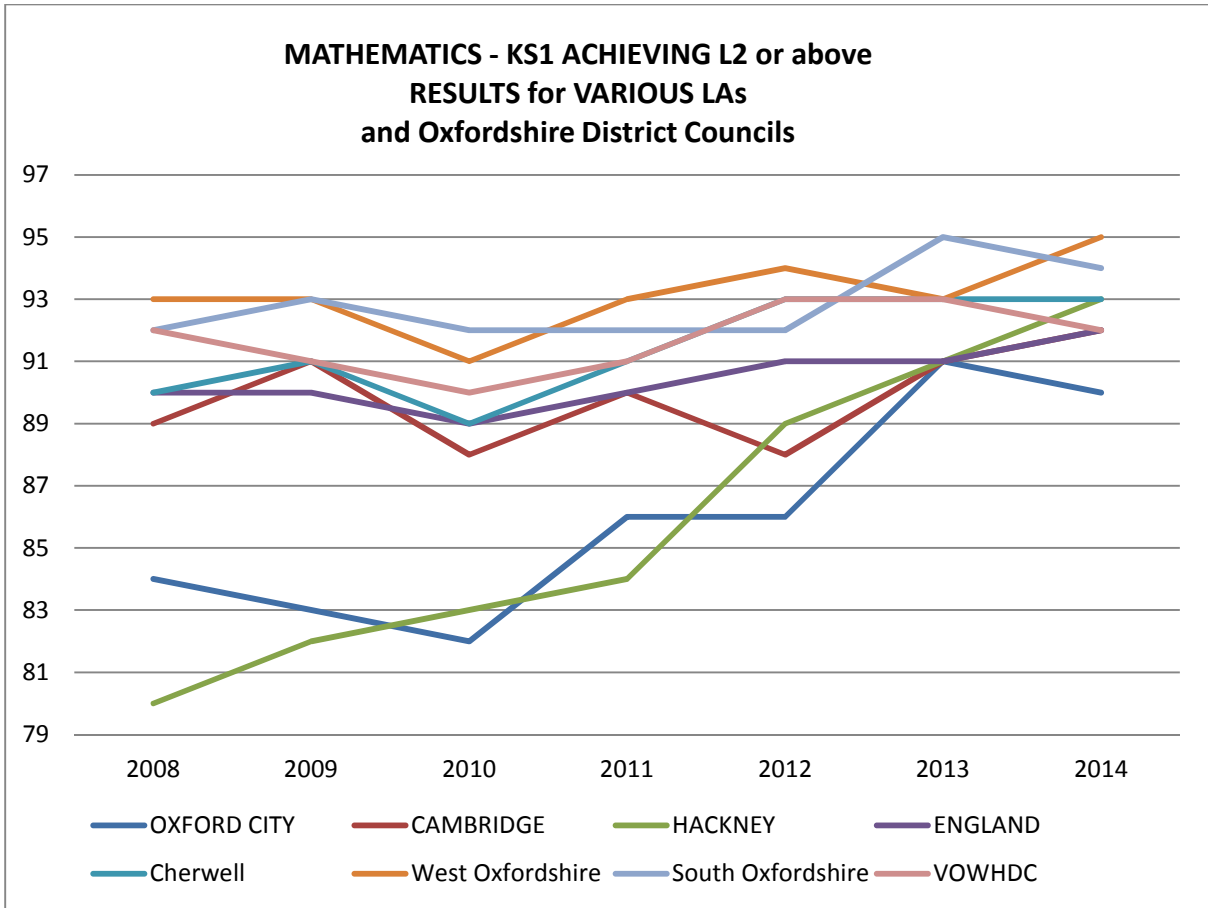
3. Some of these issues were then referred to the Scrutiny Committee for further discussion.
4. What is clear from the work of the group is that there are wide disparities between the best and worst schools in the county irrespective of whether they are traditional maintained schools, voluntary aided or controlled schools or an academy of any description. For instance, based on the 2014 Key State 2 results, the DfE has recorded 16 primary schools in the county that ranked in first place in their new comparison tables of each school with 124 other similar schools. However, there were 10 schools ranked between 120-125th place in the comparisons, including one school ranked in 125th place. At Key Stage 4 in 2013, one school was in the top five

out of 55 schools in the comparisons, whereas four schools were placed in the lowest five of their comparative schools.

5. The working group also identified that Oxfordshire secondary schools has often performed well in mathematics for the more able and felt that more should be made of this fact in view of the importance of STEM subjects to the local economy, although the least able under-performed at Key at Stage 4 in 2013 and remained an issue for some schools.
6. However, the major concern remains over the lack of progress towards the closing of the gap between different groups despite the provision of Pupil and Service Children Premiums.

Outcomes
Key Stage 1





ESC7

Key Stage 2

				% achieving level 4b or above in reading and maths tests and level 4 or above in writing TA			
	2014	2013	2012		Reading	Writing	Maths
England - all schools	79%	75%	75%	67%	91%	93%	89%
England - state funded schools only	79%	75%	74%	67%	91%	93%	90%
Oxfordshire	78%	78%	77%	67%	92%	94%	91%

3 year rolling average - % achieving L4 or above in Reading, Writing and Mathematics

	All pupils	Disadvantaged pupils	Other pupils	In-school gap between disadvantaged and other	Gap between school disadvantaged and national disadvantaged	Average based on 3 years?	All pupils	Disadvantaged pupils	Other pupils
England - all schools	76%	64%	81%	-17	NA	Yes	0	0	0
England - state funded schools only	76%	64%	81%	-17	NA	Yes	0	0	0
Oxfordshire	78%	61%	82%	-21	-3	Yes	18555	3722	14833

	all pupils	low	middle	high	all pupils	low	middle	high	all pupils	low	middle	high	all pupils	low	middle	high
England - all schools	6%	30%	1%	0%	79%	30%	86%	99%	67%	18%	71%	98%	24%	0%	13%	
England - state funded schools only	6%	30%	1%	0%	79%	30%	86%	99%	67%	18%	71%	98%	24%	0%	13%	
Oxfordshire	6%	28%	1%	0%	78%	29%	86%	99%	67%	19%	71%	98%	26%	0%	14%	

ESC7

	% of pupils making expected progress in reading	% of pupils included in reading progress measure	% of pupils making expected progress in writing	% of pupils included in writing progress measure	% of pupils making expected progress in maths	% of pupils included in maths progress measure
England - all schools	91%	NA	93%	NA	89%	NA
England - state funded schools only	91%	NA	93%	NA	90%	NA
Oxfordshire	92%	95%	94%	95%	91%	96%

Key Stage 4

Validated 2014 results will not be issued until later in January. The following is based on results up to 2013.

	% making expected progress		% 5 A*-Cs including English & Mathematics				% achieving grades A*-C in English and maths GCSEs
	English	Maths	2010	2011	2012	2013	
England - all schools	NA	NA	53.50%	59.00%	59.40%	59.20%	60.00%
England - state funded schools only	70.40%	70.80%	55.10%	58.20%	58.80%	60.60%	61.30%
Oxfordshire	70.40%	71.10%	57.30%	57.40%	57.90%	60.60%	61.60%

	% making expected progress in English					% making expected progress in maths				
	All pupils	Low attainers	Middle attainers	High attainers	Coverage	All pupils	Low attainers	Middle attainers	High attainers	Coverage
England - all schools	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
England - state funded schools only	70.40%	45.20%	68.60%	86.20%	96.90%	70.80%	29.70%	72.70%	87.80%	97.30%
Oxfordshire	70.40%	44.30%	68.80%	85.70%	97.30%	71.10%	27.70%	74.00%	88.60%	97.60%

7. The charts and tables clearly reveal the overall strength of education in Oxfordshire but the need to focus on improving outcomes for low attainers and disadvantaged groups.

Recommendation

8. Education Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:
 - (i) accept this report from the Attainment working Group.
 - (ii) disband the working party in view of a lack of officer time to support its work, but keep the main issues under review on a regular basis.

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Division(s): N/A

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 22 JANUARY 2015

SCHOOLS FORUM ROLE AND FUNDING

Report by Interim Deputy Director Education & Learning

Introduction

1. This report gives an overview of Schools Forum role in decisions made about deployment of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – annually and in relation to any unspent DSG balances retained from previous years. DSG is the main source of funding for Schools budgets and the indicative amount for Oxfordshire for 2015-16 is £426.506m. It is estimated that approximately £167m will be recouped by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and paid directly to Academies, leaving £259m expected to be received by the local authority in 2015-16. DSG is a ring-fenced specific grant and can only be used in support of the Schools Budget as defined in the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations.

Role of Schools Forum

2. The local authority must consult annually with Schools Forum about various school budget issues, funded by DSG, including:
 - amendments to the school funding formula (although the local authority is responsible for making the final decision about the formula)
 - arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs
 - arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school
 - arrangements for early years provision
 - administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the local authority
3. Schools Forum must also be consulted, at least one month prior to tender, about any contract proposed for supplies and services to be funded from the Schools Budget which is in excess of EU procurement thresholds.
4. Generally Schools Forum's role is a consultative one, but there are some instances where they are responsible for making decisions. The main areas where Schools Forum decides on local authority proposals for use of DSG are:
 - De-delegation from mainstream school budgets for prescribed services to be provided centrally, with voting restricted to Primary or Secondary mainstream representatives depending on the budget concerned.
 - To create a fund for significant pupil growth in order to support the local authority's duty for place planning (basic need), and agree the criteria for maintained schools and academies to access this fund

- To create a fund for falling rolls for good or outstanding schools if the school's surplus capacity is likely to be needed within the next three years to meet rising pupil numbers, and agree the criteria for maintained schools and academies to access this fund
- Continuation of funding at existing levels for prescribed historic commitments where it would be destabilising to delegate the funding.
- Continuation of funding for the local authority to meet prescribed statutory duties
- Funding for central early years expenditure
- Authorisation of a reduction in the schools budget in order to fund a deficit arising in central expenditure to be carried forward from a previous funding period

In each of the above cases the local authority can appeal to the Secretary of State to adjudicate if Schools Forum rejects its proposal.

5. Agendas and papers for Schools Forum meetings are published on the public internet site, generally a week in advance¹.
6. Schools Forum has an agreed annual budget of £30,730 funded from DSG which covers various expenses including clerking, venue hire and catering, travel and expenses of members. There is also a considerable amount of officer time spent fulfilling our statutory role supporting the work with Schools Forum which cannot be charged to the DSG.

Consultation on use of DSG Balances

7. The local authority consults Schools Forum on the use of DSG balances unspent in previous years. Considerable time was spent by Schools Forum during 2013 reviewing bids for allocations from DSG underspends in 2012-13 and prior years. Most of the DSG underspend relating to this period has been committed to various projects including for example school improvement projects for reading and writing, contribution to behaviour improvement harbour pilots, additional support to smooth the transition as the school funding reforms were introduced in 2013-14 and additional allocations to schools to help meet additional costs of holiday pay changes in Autumn 2013.
8. Following the funding reforms in 2013-14 regulations have been tightened, and it is necessary to decide more urgently how to use any DSG underspend in the following year. Schools Forum reviewed and approved proposals for use of the DSG underspend arising in 2013-14 at the Schools Forum meeting of 3 December 2014. This included continued support around building capacity for the free entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds and creation of a contingency budget for High Needs to deal with some of the budget uncertainties arising from the SEND reforms, but the largest part of the underspend was earmarked to contribute to creation of a growth fund to make

¹ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-schools-forum>

provision for the initial set up and dis-economies of scale costs in establishing new basic need academies².

9. Schools Forum continue to support the principle of minimising funding turbulence in future years, and using any balance for one off expenditure similar to the growth fund, rather than distributing as a one off allocation to schools in their budget share, which may result in some schools mistakenly thinking that this will continue in future years.

Financial and Staff Implications

10. There are no financial or staff implications of this report.

Equalities Implications

11. There are no equalities implications of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

12. **The Education Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the contents of this report**

REBECCA MATTHEWS
Interim Deputy Director Education & Learning

Background papers: Papers 6a and 9 and Minutes from the meeting of Schools Forum on 3 December 2014³.

Contact Officer: Gillian McKee, Finance Business Partner CEF, Tel: (01865) 323920

January 2015

² See minutes of the Schools Forum meeting of 3 December 2014, and papers 6a <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/educationandlearning/schools/ourworkwithschools/schoolsforum/031214/Paper6aHistoricCommitmentsfromDSG.pdf> and paper 9 <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/educationandlearning/schools/ourworkwithschools/schoolsforum/031214/Paper9-UseofDedicatedSchoolsGrantCarryForwards2013-14.pdf>

³ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/childreducationandfamilies/educationandlearning/schools/ourworkwithschools/schoolsforum/2015meetings/jan/Paper2-SFmins03.12.14internetversion.pdf>

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Division(s): N/A

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 JANUARY 2015

SCHOOL REVENUE BALANCES – UPDATE

Report by Interim Deputy Director Education & Learning

Introduction

1. This report updates the Committee on the maintained schools identified as having consistently retained surplus revenue balances, at the end of the last four financial years, and the work undertaken to challenge these schools about the plans for use of these balances. The local authority cannot challenge Academies on the use of any surplus balances that they may hold.
2. The work is on-going and is expected to be completed in the Spring of 2015. Recommendations about possible future action are therefore not possible at this stage, and will need to be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Work Done to Date

3. Appendix 1 identifies the 41 schools that were initially identified as having consistently held surplus balances for the last four financial years, and the balances held. The surplus is based the total revenue balance held and this has required further analysis to identify whether part of the balance is committed e.g. for partnership funds held on behalf of other schools. From the work undertaken so far, officers believe that a much smaller number of schools (possibly up to 10) may require further challenge about uncommitted balances.
4. Letters were sent to all 41 schools in October 2014 by the Interim Deputy Director for Education & Early Intervention and the Finance Business Partner for Children, Education & Families, requesting that the schools provide specific plans for use of the balances, including evidence of links to the School Development Plan, the school budget plan and current year budget monitoring. Schools were also requested to provide evidence that these spending plans had been discussed with and approved by the Governing Body.
5. Information was received from all 41 schools by the middle of November 2014. This information was then reviewed by the School Finance Support team, to determine whether there was evidence of robust plans for use of the balances, and to identify whether schools should be invited in for further discussion of their plans. Attainment data for each school will also be considered along with the response about use of balances when deciding which schools to challenge further.

6. Councillors Tilley and Gray have accepted an invitation from the previous Interim Deputy Director for Education & Early Intervention to be part of a panel, also including the Deputy Director and the Finance Business Partner for Children, Education & Families, to interview schools selected for further challenge. It was originally planned to invite Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of the selected schools to panel meetings in January 2015, however with the recent change of Interim Deputy Director these meetings have been postponed to allow time for the panel to review the submissions provided and confirm the schools that should be invited in for further challenge. It is expected that this will take place in January 2015 with school interviews taking place in February 2015.
7. The list of 41 schools includes a high proportion of small Primary schools and the reasons initially given for holding balances indicate some common themes including a cautious approach to budgeting and retaining some contingency to deal with significant unexpected items of expenditure or fluctuations in pupil numbers, and delays in progressing large projects. In the case of some schools, the figures include partnership balances held on behalf of other schools.
8. Once schools have been interviewed by the panel, it will be possible to draw conclusions and make recommendations for future action.
9. Officers have also requested information from other local authorities to confirm what action, if any, they are taking regarding clawback of surplus balances. Responses were received from ten local authorities, and are shown in Appendix 2. Only 2 of the 10 authorities that responded indicated they currently operate or plan to use a balance clawback mechanism in respect of maintained schools. This reflects a difficult national context, complicated by the conversion of a significant number of maintained schools to Academy status. This should be considered when recommendations are made about future action.

Financial and Staff Implications

10. No recommendations can be made yet about future action, so there are no financial or staff implications.

Equalities Implications

11. No recommendations can be made yet about future action, so there are no equalities implications identified.

RECOMMENDATION

12. **The Education Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED**
 - (a) to note the contents of the report and
 - (b) to note that work challenging schools on use of balances is expected to be completed in Spring 2015 and recommendations for further action will be included in a subsequent report

REBECCA MATTHEWS
Interim Deputy Director Education & Learning

Contact Officer: Gillian McKee, Finance Business Partner for Children, Education & Families, Tel: (01865) 323920

January 2015

Phase of school	School Name	LA/ESTAB number	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
			Total revenue balance	Total revenue balance as a % of total revenue income	Total revenue balance	Total revenue balance as a % of total revenue income	Total revenue balance	Total revenue balance as a % of total revenue income	Total revenue balance	Total revenue balance as a % of total revenue income
NUR	Comper (formerly Bartlemas) Nursery School	9311005	£103,850	19.0%	£86,843	16.4%	£101,465	19.7%	£84,521	16.2%
NUR	Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School	9311006	£49,534	14.6%	£69,900	21.0%	£85,496	22.5%	£41,167	10.9%
NUR	Slade Nursery School	9311011	£48,051	12.5%	£66,717	16.8%	£136,921	30.3%	£105,225	20.6%
NUR	Lydalls Nursery School	9311017	£100,830	21.5%	£97,933	22.5%	£78,309	18.9%	£142,355	30.4%
NUR	Wheatley Nursery School	9311031	£24,247	15.5%	£55,677	28.5%	£47,688	25.7%	£51,232	29.1%
PRI	Orchard Fields Community School	9312055	£160,422	9.7%	£177,543	9.8%	£224,770	12.0%	£201,563	10.0%
PRI	Queensway School (Note 4)	9312057	£94,278	11.7%	£88,681	10.4%	£78,715	8.4%	£75,525	7.0%
PRI	Watlington Primary School	9312459	£87,309	8.1%	£107,591	9.9%	£143,036	12.7%	£139,104	12.5%
PRI	Windmill Primary School	9312527	£147,741	9.7%	£184,338	11.5%	£266,505	15.1%	£300,695	16.0%
PRI	Stockham Primary School	9312583	£98,487	12.7%	£105,561	12.9%	£147,812	17.3%	£105,991	12.2%
PRI	Wroxton Church of England Primary School	9313004	£68,441	15.6%	£78,476	17.5%	£74,657	15.6%	£47,864	10.1%
PRI	Finmere Church of England Primary School	9313090	£50,951	18.2%	£65,024	24.7%	£49,021	19.8%	£38,861	15.0%
PRI	Aston and Cote Church of England Primary School	9313120	£64,464	11.3%	£56,197	9.9%	£65,103	10.8%	£57,289	9.3%
PRI	Hailey Church of England Primary School	9313123	£52,385	10.7%	£54,919	11.6%	£43,250	9.5%	£42,311	9.0%
PRI	St Kenelm's Church of England (VC) School	9313125	£52,125	11.6%	£43,522	9.8%	£39,603	8.7%	£58,493	11.7%
PRI	North Leigh Church of England (Controlled) School	9313128	£73,168	12.8%	£87,689	13.7%	£113,142	16.9%	£100,954	13.9%
PRI	Bletchingdon Parochial Church of England Primary School	9313141	£30,655	8.4%	£45,836	11.8%	£45,866	12.1%	£55,048	13.0%
PRI	Tackley Church of England Primary School	9313144	£53,919	10.0%	£63,442	11.8%	£67,440	12.2%	£74,964	13.1%
PRI	Clifton Hampden Church of England Primary School	9313183	£44,329	14.3%	£49,383	15.3%	£63,410	19.0%	£71,128	21.0%
PRI	Dorchester St Birinus Church of England School	9313186	£105,644	22.6%	£89,938	20.8%	£47,797	10.9%	£43,214	9.5%
PRI	Great Milton Church of England Primary School	9313187	£68,562	10.2%	£108,940	15.0%	£124,279	17.8%	£106,591	14.7%
PRI	St Mary's Church of England Controlled Infant School	9313207	£125,628	31.2%	£157,419	38.3%	£81,938	19.1%	£40,173	9.2%
PRI	St Michael's CofE Primary School	9313216	£82,115	10.9%	£117,540	15.2%	£106,371	13.2%	£96,316	11.9%
PRI	The Ridgeway Church of England (C) Primary School	9313231	£28,445	8.8%	£45,475	13.6%	£43,037	13.6%	£48,155	14.2%
PRI	Long Wittenham (Church of England) Primary School	9313233	£53,070	11.8%	£52,136	11.6%	£61,697	13.4%	£51,018	11.8%
PRI	Stanford in the Vale Church of England Primary School	9313240	£91,205	13.0%	£97,476	13.3%	£96,394	12.8%	£99,752	12.1%
PRI	Blewbury Endowed Church of England Primary School	9313248	£125,075	16.1%	£149,164	16.9%	£179,937	20.7%	£132,273	14.8%

ESC9

Phase of school	School Name	LA/ESTAB number	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
			Total revenue balance	Total revenue balance as a % of total revenue income	Total revenue balance	Total revenue balance as a % of total revenue income	Total revenue balance	Total revenue balance as a % of total revenue income	Total revenue balance	Total revenue balance as a % of total revenue income
PRI	St John's Catholic Primary School, Banbury	9313350	£103,433	10.6%	£113,392	11.6%	£113,512	11.2%	£120,472	11.1%
PRI	Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School	9313801	£50,155	11.7%	£39,272	8.9%	£80,356	16.3%	£70,475	14.7%
PRI	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bicester	9313824	£86,089	9.5%	£103,533	10.9%	£119,254	12.2%	£152,288	15.0%
PRI	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Oxford	9313838	£89,390	8.2%	£139,599	10.7%	£165,307	13.1%	£139,517	10.8%
PRI	Appleton Church of England (A) Primary School	9313850	£110,082	16.5%	£80,968	11.4%	£97,541	12.6%	£66,061	9.2%
PRI	Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp Church of England (A) Primary School	9313851	£116,686	25.0%	£105,389	30.6%	£79,754	27.0%	£77,287	22.9%
PRI	Northbourne Church of England Primary School	9313852	£89,504	8.7%	£92,191	9.0%	£113,712	10.5%	£149,628	12.9%
PRI	Shellingford Church of England (Voluntary Aided) School	9313853	£79,736	17.8%	£98,031	21.8%	£87,114	18.7%	£113,672	21.0%
PRI	Shenington Church of England Primary School	9315200	£38,533	8.5%	£56,736	13.2%	£43,484	10.1%	£47,553	10.2%
SBC	Icknield Community College	9314082	£339,401	10.4%	£393,333	12.2%	£363,400	11.0%	£211,741	6.3%
SBC	Matthew Arnold School	9314128	£394,882	7.0%	£688,723	11.7%	£634,433	11.0%	£487,235	8.1%
SPE	Woodeaton Manor School	9317002	£120,709	8.7%	£160,156	11.5%	£162,443	11.2%	£189,832	12.1%
SPE	Oxfordshire Hospitals Education Service	9317017	£91,682	8.3%	£178,835	14.3%	£281,261	19.3%	£312,858	20.7%
SPE	Bardwell School	9317029	£113,054	8.6%	£138,299	10.6%	£151,975	11.7%	£169,294	13.1%

Notes:

- 1) Excludes school closures, mergers, converters.
- 2) Excess balances are defined as a maximum threshold of 8% for Nursery, Primary and Special schools and 5% for Secondary schools.
- 3) This extract only shows the total revenue balance but the full DfE tables show the total balance broken down between Committed, Uncommitted and Community Focused extended school balances. The DfE additional tables do include a warning that there is some local variation in the way these are defined at local level so care should be taken in relying on these splits.
- 4) Includes Queensway School as the percentage initially identified in 2013-14 was rounded to greater than 8%.

Other Authorities Use of Balance Clawback Mechanism

Appendix 2

Local Authority	Does LA operate a claw back mechanism?	If so, how much clawed back?	What have the clawed back balances been used for?	Summary of other comments
A	No			- As no comparable process for academies, concerned about maintaining equity across all schools if sought to apply a claw back mechanism to only the maintained group. - Difficulty of using claw back funds only for maintained schools.
B	No			- Challenged schools with excess balances in the summer of 2013 with "limited success". - Schools Forum expected not to be supportive of a reintroduction of a claw back mechanism.
C	No			- No longer operate a claw back mechanism and it is unlikely to be reintroduced as it could not apply equally to maintained and academy sectors.
	Yes	£77k	Web based budgeting tool.	
	No			- Used to ask for plans for balances over 5% for Secondary and 8% for Primary, but ceased.
	No			- Stopped claw back mechanism because of the large number of Academies (over 50%). - Clawed back money in 2011-12 and allocated on a lump sum and per pupil amount for one off projects agreed by Governors.
G	No, but planned for 2015-16			- Planned for 2015-16, but threshold doubled to 16% or £0.150m for Primary (whichever the larger), Special and PRUs, and 10% for Secondary. - Schools Forum to determine use.
H	No			- Proposals to Schools Forum 26.2.14, and agreed not to re-instate the school balances claw-back mechanism.
I	No			- Stopped the balance control claw back mechanism in 2011-12 to bring maintained schools in line with academies - Schools Forum right to review.
J	Yes – but not used since 2011-12.			- Clawed back £59k from 8 schools at end of 2011-12, and allocated back to other schools within the phase as an in-year adjustment. No excess balances since, although Special school balances increasing.

Division(s):

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 JANUARY

Costs of introducing universal free school meals for children in infant classes (UFSM)

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. The Children and Families Act places a duty on state-funded schools in England (including academies and free schools) to provide free school meals for all Reception, year 1 and year 2 children with effect from September 2014. The Education Scrutiny Committee received a progress report on the introduction of the new arrangements in July 2014 and subsequently asked for a report on the costs of the new arrangements. This report is the response to that request.

Background

2. The new duty requires schools to provide a lunchtime meal for all children in Reception, year 1 and year 2. The meals must meet minimum national nutritional standards. There is an expectation that this will include a hot meal option. Pupils may choose, instead, to bring a packed lunch from home.
3. The responsibilities of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the associated costs are in relation to Community and Voluntary Controlled schools but not Voluntary Aided schools, Academies or Free Schools
4. The government anticipated that the take-up rate of children taking free meals under the new arrangements would be 87%, the latest data in relation to Oxfordshire's schools suggests a take up in December of 79.7%.
5. In Oxfordshire, preparations for the new requirements were overseen by a project team with representatives of Children, Education & Families; Environment & Economy; and Carillion. At the beginning of September 2014 provision was in place for all schools to provide meals as required and at all but 9 of them, hot meals were available. At the time of writing just two schools for which we are responsible cannot provide a hot option and bids for additional funding have been made in respect of them (see below).
6. 134 schools were identified (excluding academies) where it was believed work was needed. This figure included schools that did not have any food production facilities at the time of the survey. These surveys enabled the limited funding available to be allocated in the most cost effective way.

All works have now been completed with the exception of minor 'snagging' and three projects, which were postponed until the majority of the works were completed. Work has now started on one of these three, with work being

programmed, for the remaining two, over the coming months (both of these schools are currently providing a hot option).

7. 47 of those 134 schools were Voluntary Aided in relation to which OCC could only propose solutions, 34 of which were surveyed and recommendations for work made at 31 of them.
8. Every opportunity was taken to utilise schools with good existing kitchen facilities to offer meals to other schools that did not have a kitchen and/or insufficient capacity
9. Head Teacher involvement was of course essential, not least in relation to the organisation of the school day (thinking particularly of the need in some cases to introduce more than one sitting).
10. The resources available did not permit 'Rolls Royce' solutions but, rather, just those which were sufficient to allow schools to comply with the new requirements, with a focus on food production, leaving schools to deal with other aspects of delivery.

Costs of the new requirements

11. The costs of introducing the new requirements may be broken down, broadly, into the following areas:

- i) Capital budget requirement and funding of kitchen provision

Capital funding (£1.120m) from the government was made available for Oxfordshire's Community & Voluntary Controlled schools. An additional £0.354m was made available for Voluntary Aided schools. Academies had to bid for funding through the academies capital maintenance fund.

The Financial Monitoring Report to Cabinet on the 21st October 2014 identified the budget provision necessary to implement the new requirements as £1.993m; this remains the position (and which supersedes the previous reported position of £1.7m in July 2014).

The capital grant of £1.120m was supplemented by a further £0.873m from the Catering Investment Fund revenue reserve (£0.480m) and Dedicated Schools Grant funding (£0.393m).

At the time of writing, the capital costs incurred against this budget provision is £1.616m. Final account costs and settlement of individual site costs are being finalised.

- ii) Transitional / Small School Funding

Small schools (those with a roll of fewer than 150 pupils) received additional transitional funding to assist with improving kitchen or dining equipment. In Oxfordshire, 82 schools received such funding totalling £0.441m. This is

however one off transitional funding and there is no indication that it will continue.

iii) Revenue costs of meal provision

For the first tranche of funding (for terms 1, 2, 3 and 4) the calculation has been made on the basis of the schools census anticipating how many Reception, year 1 & 2 pupils were expected to be in each school and on the assumption that each pupil who takes free meals will have 190 meals throughout the academic year. A flat rate of £2.30 per pupil is being paid per meal (ie funding per pupil of 190 x £2.30 = £437). Funding for the first four terms has been calculated on the basis of the original expectation of 87% uptake with a balancing exercise conducted in terms 5 and 6 to reflect actual take up.

iv) Costs of initial project

The project team which oversaw implementation of the new requirements comprised, as mentioned above, officers of Oxfordshire County Council and representative of OCC's partner, Carillon. This resulted in no additional costs for OCC. The project was a contributory factor in Carillon expanding its team dedicated to supporting schools but, again, did not result in any additional costs to OCC.

v) Costs to schools of failure of parents to declare entitlement to FSM under the previous (and current) criteria

Prior to the implementation of the new requirements, parents in receipt of certain state benefits were entitled to free school meals (FSM) for their children. This entitlement remains, in parallel with the new UIFSM entitlement. The original entitlement is important not only for the financial and nutritional benefits which it provides for the families and children but also, very significantly, for the financial benefits it provides for the schools. The latter benefit flows from the fact that schools receive some funding via the 'pupil premium' the amount of which, is, in part, a function of the number of pupils claiming free school meals. Put simply, the more pupils claiming free school meals (under the original criteria) the more a school will receive in pupil premium.

Schools are very aware of the importance of maximising the take up of FSM and do all they can to ensure that as many parents who are entitled to claim do so. There were concerns that, given the automatic entitlement granted by the new arrangements, some parents might choose not to declare their entitlement under the original criteria; this is a matter that schools have to address with some tact and delicacy.

To give a sense of the sums involved, each primary school pupil identified as eligible for deprivation Pupil Premium (based on eligibility for free school meals currently or who has been eligible at any point in the past six years) attracts funding of £1,300 in the 2014-15 financial year. The funding implications for individual schools are highly variable, depending on size, location and social factors. A small rural Primary school may identify few eligible children, whereas a larger school with 30 pupils identified as eligible for deprivation Pupil Premium would attract funding of £39,000. A Primary

school at the higher end of the scale, identifying 229 eligible pupils, would receive funding of £297,700. Allocations are made based on the school which the eligible pupil attends at the time of the January school census. (In the 2015-16 financial year, the funding increases to £1,320 for each Primary pupil registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years).

Our latest intelligence indicates that the proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals under the original arrangements decreased in 2014. In primary schools this was from 11.4% in October 2013 to 10.3% in October 2014. However this decrease can be seen in every year group throughout primary and secondary schools and not just in those subject to universal free school meal entitlement. This implies the decrease in eligibility is due to external influences and not the impact of the universal free school meal entitlement.

		% known to be eligible for FSM	
	Year group	2013	2014
Primary	R	8.8	7.5
	1	12.3	11.0
	2	12.5	10.9
	3	12.6	11.8
	4	12.6	11.5
	5	12.0	12.0
	6	12.1	10.8
Secondary	7	12.0	11.1
	8	11.7	10.4
	9	11.5	9.9
	10	10.2	9.9
	11	9.4	9.2

vi) Costs to schools of implementation

It has been for schools to find the means of delivering the new requirements on a day to day basis. In some cases this will have included the need to arrange two sittings and some small consequential additional staffing costs. No data have been collected about these costs or other school related costs. In the case of small schools the additional funding mentioned in ii) above can be used in any way the schools wish in support of the initiative although as noted , it has been provided on a one off basis with no indication that it will be repeated

The future

12. Since introduction of the new requirements the Department for Education (DfE) has allocated an additional £20m capital funding to support schools which most need it to ensure effective implementation of UIFSM.
13. Local authorities were invited to bid for this funding on behalf of their maintained schools up to the value of £0.250m. Oxfordshire has made bids in relation to six projects, all of which were made under the top priority category of requiring capital in order to provide hot meals (or to continue to provide hot meals). Early indications suggest that we are likely to be successful in at least one of these bids.

Conclusion

14. In respect of OCC's responsibilities, the majority of the immediately identifiable costs have been met. Nonetheless, as set out above, there was a shortfall of £0.873m which has had to be met from other sources (see 11 (i) above). Assuming the scheme continues, more or less in its present form, some on-going costs to schools will remain (see 10 (vi)) above which are unfunded
15. Of course the costs of this initiative should not be viewed in isolation but considered alongside its benefits. The advantages of ensuring that children are properly 'fed and watered' extend to their health, wellbeing and capacity to learn effectively. It is likely that some children will now benefit from a healthy and nutritious meal who might not otherwise have done so and this is likely to have a positive impact on their learning. To that extent the introduction of the scheme is a 'good thing' and the costs of its implementation may be seen to be mitigated to a greater or lesser extent by its benefits.

RECOMMENDATION

- 16. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note this report**

JIM LEIVERS
Director for Children's Services

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January 2015

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