

REPORT TO: Children & Young People Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 27th January 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - People

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Annual headteacher's report of the attainment and progress of Halton Children in Care

WARD(S) All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide PPB with the annual update of the educational outcomes for Halton children in care 2018-19.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

i) PPB note the information provided.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Please see attached report for detailed data, analysis and impact

3.2 The data within the report compares the performance of Halton children who have been in care for 12 months or more, to that of their non-care peers in Halton and their in-care peers across the North West and Nationally.

3.3 What is a good outcome?

Contextual:

That a child has been in care for at least 12 months, living in a stable placement, with at least 95% attendance at a Good or better school, with no fixed term exclusions, and making at least the expected progress in comparison to their peers.

At Early Years Foundation stage:

A child has achieved the measure of Good Level of Development (GLD)

At Year 1 Phonics:

A child has achieved the threshold of 32 or more in the Phonics test

At Key stage 1:

A child has achieved the Expected Standard in each subject area (Reading, Writing, and Maths) and in the 3 combined areas.

At Key Stage 2:

A child has achieved the Expected Standard in each subject area (Reading, Writing, and Maths) and in the 3 combined areas. In addition the child had made at least their expected progress in Reading, Writing and Maths, from their prior attainment at Key Stage 1 (this indicated by a positive number).

At Key Stage 4:

A young person had achieved English and Maths at grade 5 or above and that they will have achieved highly on Attainment 8 and have a positive Progress 8 score.

Attendance and Exclusions:

A child or young person's attendance has been above 95% for the academic year and they have had no fixed term exclusions or be permanently excluded from school.

EET:

A young person should be actively engaged in education, employment or training from the age of leaving school until at least 19 years old.

3.4

Executive Summary

Please see attached report for detailed data, analysis and impact

✓ = Good Performance

≈ = there is some improvement but there is still concern

✗ = an area of underperformance

Key Stage/Outcome	Performance rating	Comment
Early Years Foundation	≈	Improved performance on last year in comparison with non-care peers but slightly below that of in-care peers. Areas of underachievement are in literacy, numeracy, communication and managing feelings and behaviour.
Year 1 Phonics	≈	Improvement on last year and broadly in line with performance of in-care peers
Key Stage 1	✗	In comparison to non-care peers, Reading outcomes have improved on previous year but there has been a decline in Writing and Maths. In comparison with in-care peers Halton children in care have performed better in Reading and the combined measure, are broadly in line in Writing but below in maths

Key Stage 2	<p>✘ Attainment</p> <p>✘ Progress</p>	<p>In comparison with non-care peers, there has been a decline in performance across all area. In comparison with in-care peers Halton children in care are broadly in line for the combined measure but are below in all individual subjects</p> <p>Halton children in care have made above the expected progress in Writing in comparison to their non-care peers. However, they have made less progress in Reading and Maths. Compared to their in-care peers Halton children in care have made better progress in Reading and Writing but are below in Maths</p>
Key Stage 4	✘ Attainment	<p>Attainment across all measures was poor. 33% young people had an EHCP all for SEMH needs; 42% were persistently absent; 42% had periods of fixed term exclusions over key stage 4. No young person was predicted to achieve the combined measures of English and Maths at either level 4 or level 5. Main reasons for the underperformance were related to poor attendance and exclusions.</p>
Attendance	✔	<p>Despite a slight dip in Primary attendance there has been an increase in attendance at secondary and overall.</p>
Exclusions	✘	<p>Exclusions have risen from the previous year and this is particularly in Primary. However, there has been a reduction in the length of exclusions and also in the number of repeated exclusions.</p>
EET	≈	<p>NEET at 16-19 remains good. However, is still a cause for concern for 20-22 year olds. We have 3 young people at University. A major area of concern is the lack of young</p>

		people accessing apprenticeships.
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3.5 Improving educational outcomes and engagement in education, employment and training of our children in care and care leavers is a key priority for the Council for the next 3 years.

The Senior Management Team have agreed the following actions:

1. Develop an action plan to improve overall outcomes for children in care and care leavers, with a particular focus on education, and ensure through this that there is full corporate ownership.
2. Further increase awareness of corporate parenting responsibilities across the Council and actively demonstrate our aspirations for our children in care and care leavers.
3. Receive regular reports on the progress and outcomes of our children in care and care leavers in order to identify and remove barriers to improvement.

Halton Virtual School remains fully committed to improving the educational progress and life chances of our children in care and care leavers and will continue to provide additional support to all our children, examples of which are detailed in the appendix to this report. In addition we are:

1. Strengthening our support and challenge role with all corporate parents so that they more fully understand the importance of promoting educational achievement and engagement within their roles and areas of responsibility.
2. Holding solution focused Progress Improvement Clinics with Children's Social Care colleagues to ensure that each child is making the maximum educational progress that they can by accessing all the support they require at home, in school and through other relevant professionals.
3. Undertaking termly challenge meetings with Designated Teachers to identify underperformance and clearly identify the impact of Pupil Premium Plus interventions.
4. Holding meetings with targeted schools between the PEP and Progress Coordinator, the school Education Psychologist, the Designated Teacher and SENCo, to review any child that has unidentified needs and put an action plan in place to address them.
5. Further developing our training offer for Foster Carers to support learning at home. This is via an on-line platform which provides bespoke learning linked to the individual child in placement.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Please see below regarding national policy changes that will have implications for the support provided through Halton Virtual School.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Halton Virtual School relies heavily on the use of Pupil Premium Plus funding from the Government to support the educational outcomes of children in care. This includes support provided through the Personal Education Plan Coordinators and the ability to commission specialist psychological assessment, as well as direct curriculum support for the children and young people. There is currently an agreement that this funding will remain in place until 2020 but that it will be reviewed to take into account other budgetary changes and pressures.

5.2 There is a major risk to the outcomes of our most vulnerable children if this funding ceases because Halton Virtual School will no longer be able to provide the high level and necessary educational support for our children in care.

5.3 Halton Virtual School continues to look to provide additional employment and training opportunities for Care Leavers through access to apprenticeships and work programmes. There needs to be a review of funding opportunities to support these, including creative look at the apprenticeship levy funding.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The educational outcomes of children in care remain a key priority for the Council.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

If children in care do not achieve their expected educational outcomes, there is a high risk that they will become NEET and therefore not achieve employment which fulfils their aspirations or enables them to be active participants in the community.

6.3 Creating and accessing appropriate apprenticeship opportunities for our Care Leavers remains a major challenge within the current political and financial climate. To support and increase the number of care leavers in apprenticeships is one of the Corporate Parenting Pledges that Halton Borough Council has made but to date there are no care leavers in an apprenticeship.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Research has demonstrated that issues related to the emotional health and well-being has a significant impact upon the educational

outcomes for children in care. Timely and effective services are vital in providing emotional support for our young people to enable them to have positive engagement in their learning and achieve their potential.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Due to their lived experiences children in care can be at higher risk of child sexual exploitation, and episodes of missing from care or school. Research does indicate that these factors all have a negative impact upon educational outcomes for our children and young people in care. Therefore, all agencies need to provide proactive support in order to keep children in care safe.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 If the outcomes for our Halton children in care do not improve then there is a continued risk that they are more likely to become NEET and not become active and positive partners in their community.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Children in care continue to be a vulnerable group whose life experiences of trauma, neglect and abuse mean that they have not had the same start to life as other young people.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.