**Newcastle Virtual School Annual Report 2020/21**

**Introduction**

This report covers the academic year 2020/21. As was the case in the previous year the education of our children was disrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic.

It is difficult to compare 2020/21 with other previous years due to events and subsequent disrupted data collection. **All data used in this report unless stated otherwise has been provided by the LA’s Capita One data base**.

The Virtual School has made significant progress in identifying areas for development and has a clear strategy in place to improve outcomes for Children in Care (CiC).

Karl Harms. Virtual School Headteacher. 23rd November 2021

**Executive summary**

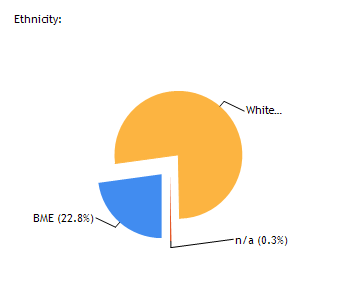
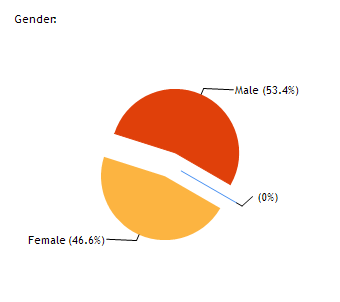
* The Virtual School Governing Body (VSGB) has been established, a chairman appointed, and terms of reference adopted. The VSGB met termly throughout the academic year.
* An internal review of the Virtual School was completed from July 2020- December 2020. The summary was shared with the VSGB and recommendations included into a three-year service improvement plan (SIP) for the Virtual School (VS).
* In July 2021 the role of the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) was extended to include strategic oversight for all children with a social worker.
* The position of Senior Education Achievement Worker has been upgraded to Virtual School Manager.
* A permanent staffing structure has been put into place ending a range of short-term contracts and secondments within the team.
* Acting upon the recommendations of the internal report, a specification for an Electronic Personal Education Plan (EPEP) was co-produced with the Information and Informatics team, Childrens Social Care, Safeguarding, Commissioning, School Effectiveness, and the Virtual School.
* Following a rigorous procurement process the contract was awarded to E-Gov Solutions on 27th July 2021.
* A system of red case reviews has been established and embedded to provide enhanced support to our most vulnerable students. This provides a weekly overview all children without a school place, partial timetables, exclusion, and attendance concerns.

**Profile of the virtual school**

On 31st July 2021 there were 657 children in the care of Newcastle Local Authority. The Virtual School holds records for 600 of these children and 457 were of statutory school age. Of these students 178 were educated outside of Newcastle, which is an increase of ten students from last year. Ten percent of children in care were placed more than 20 miles from Newcastle which compares favourably with the national average of 16%.

In 2020 Newcastle looked after 113 children per 100,000 compared with 67 per 100,000 nationally. Of these children, 11% had more than three places of residence which is equal to national comparisons. (LAIT)

The average time in care during 2020 was three years, with 511 children being in care for more than a year. This is a reduction by two children following the previous year’s increase of 63.



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Two hundred children or 33% of the Virtual School roll have an identified SEN. Of these 86 or 13% have an EHCP. The most common identified need is Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) with 27 plans in place. This is equivalent to 4.5% of the Virtual School.

**Staff Structure from 1st September 2021**

Virtual School Headteacher

Virtual School Manager

5 Education Achievement Workers

1.6 Business Support

0.5 Service Support Officer\*

\*Starting 1st November 2021

**The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers**

**Educational progress**

There have been no national comparisons against validated data since the 2019 results were published. This is a situation that we will be able to return to in November 2021 when publication of this data is resumed.

Key Stage 4 and 16 to 18 performance data for 2021 at National, regional and LA level attainment is due to be published in November 2021, but not at school level or the pupil level files that LA’s would usually have access to.

Following the cancellation of statutory national curriculum assessments due to be held in summer 2021 in primary phase, the DfE will not publish any national, regional, local or constituency statistics

Therefore, at present we are referring to the 2019 validated results. From this position Newcastle is well placed against National comparisons. This is a historic perspective, and we must be aware of the disruptions to learning because of the Covid 19 pandemic. The use of pupil premium plus and recovery payments must be targeted to narrow the gap in achievement and maximise the progress of our children

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| **Previous results compared to national predicted outcomes by National Consortium of Examination Results.** | | **2017**  **NCC**  **Results** | **2018**  **NCC**  **Results** | **2019**  **NCC**  **Results** | **2019**  **National results** | **2020**  **National predicted outcome** |
| Key Stage 1 | KS1 Reading EXS + | 41.7% | 50% | **66.7%** | 52% | 49.0% |
| KS1 Writing EXS + | 25% | 62.5% | **66.7%** | 42% | 44.0% |
| KS1 Maths EXS + | 41.7% | 75% | **66.7%** | 49% | 46.0% |
| KS1 RWM EXS | 25.0% | 37.5% | **66.7%** | 37% | 39.0% |
| Key Stage 2 | RWM Expected Standard | 27.8% | 33% | **57.1%** | 37% | 42.0% |
| Reading Expected Standard | 38.9% | 52% | **61.9%** | 49% | 54.0% |
| Writing Expected Standard | 61.1% | 52% | **71.4%** | 51% | 50.0% |
| Maths Expected Standard | 44.4% | 48% | **66.7%** | 51% | 55.0% |
| Reading Progress | -0.4 | -0.1 | **+2.8** | -0.2 | -1.20 |
| Maths Progress | -0.2 | -0.2 | **+1.2** | -1.0 | -0.80 |
| Writing Progress | +1.6 | -0.7 | **+2.4** | -0.9 | -0.59 |

**Key stage 1 and 2**

**Key Stage 4**

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 | **Cohort** | **7,240** | **7,280**  **-** |  | **7,140**  **-140** |  | **7,130**  **-10** |  | **7,410**  **+280** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | **Progress 8:**  Cohort | **5,550** | **5,560**  **-** |  | **5,520**  **-40** |  | **5,440**  **-80** |  | **5,680**  **+240** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | **Attainment 8:**  Average Score | **18.6** | **20.9**  **-** |  | **18.1**  **-2.8 pts** |  | **17.5**  **-0.6 pts** |  | **17.9**  **+0.4 pts** |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | | |  | **Progress 8:**  Average Score | **-1.46** | **-1.46**  **-** |  | **-1.43**  **+0.03 pts** |  | **-1.48**  **-0.05 pts** |  | **-1.47**  **+0.01 pts** |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | | |  | **EBacc:**  Entered | **8.0%** | **7%**  **-** |  | **8%**  **+1% pts** |  | **8%**  **0% pts** |  | **9%**  **+1% pts** |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | | |  | **Basics:** 9-5 | **9.3%** | **16%**  **-** |  | **7%**  **-9% pts** |  | **7%**  **0% pts** |  | **7%**  **0% pts** |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-** | |  | |  |  | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | **Virtual School** |  | **Cohort** | **64** | **63**  **-** |  | **77**  **+14** |  | **52**  **-25** |  | **65**  **+13** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | **Progress 8:**  Cohort | **56** | **55**  **-** |  | **68**  **+13** |  | **42**  **-26** |  | **57**  **+15** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | **Attainment 8:**  Average Score | **22.5** | **28.0**  **-** |  | **21.2**  **-6.8 pts** |  | **18.2**  **-3.0 pts** |  | **22.4**  **+4.2 pts** |  | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-4.0 pts** | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-2.4 pts** | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **+3.8 pts** | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | |  | **Progress 8:**  Average Score | **-1.49** | **-1.30**  **-** |  | **-1.79**  **-0.49 pts** |  | **-1.63**  **+0.16 pts** |  | **-1.25**  **+0.38 pts** |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-0.52 pts** | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **+0.21 pts** | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **+0.37 pts** | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | |  | **EBacc:**  Entered | **9.9%** | **7.9%**  **-** |  | **6.5%**  **-1.4% pts** |  | **11.5%**  **+5.0% pts** |  | **13.8%**  **+2.3% pts** |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **-2.4% pts** | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **+5.0% pts** | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **+1.3% pts** | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | | |  | **Basics:** 9-5 | **14.6%** | **27.0%**  **-** |  | **11.7%**  **-15.3% pts** |  | **5.8%**  **-5.9% pts** |  | **13.8%**  **+8.0% pts** |  | |  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***Objective: Improve educational progress of individual students by offering targeted support through the EPEP.***

**Educational engagement**

School opening continued to be disrupted by the Covid 19 Pandemic Attendance in Newcastle schools rose from last year by 2.4%, as did the numbers of children with more than 98% attendance.

**Attendance**

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| **Newcastle Schools** | **2018/19** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** |
| Attendance % | 87.1% | 83.1% | 85.5% |
| Students over 98% attendance | 143 | 100 | 145 |

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| **CLA more than 12 months** | **2018/19** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** |
| Attendance | 93.4% | 92.8% | 91.9% |
| Persistent Absence | 14.8% | 14.7% | 18.5% |

(NCER)

Early in the Spring term the VSH sought clarification of the Local Authority’s position that all children were expected to attend school unless otherwise arranged and confirmed by senior managers in CSC. The result of this combined approach was that 68% of CiC attended school compared to 36% during the first period of school closures in 2020.

This is a good example of VS and CSC co-operation and will be extended to designated teachers to tackle poor attendance of CIC, children in need and those under child protection orders.

***Objective: Improve attendance monitoring with introduction of Capita Out of Area attendance monitoring tool.***

***Objective: Co-produce a three-year attendance strategy with schools and CSC.***

***Objective: Achieve more than 90% attendance for Virtual School.***

**Exclusions**

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|  | **Fixed term** | **Permanent** | **Withdrawn** |
| **2018/19** | 108 | 4 | 2 |
| **2019/20** | 115 | 0 | 1 |
| **2020/21** | 112 | 1 | 4 |

Interventions by the VSH have resulted in the withdrawing of permanent exclusions. This involves working pro-actively with headteachers, alternative providers, CSC, and SEN.

***Objective: Improve young person engagement to reduce exclusion.***

**Agencies and professionals working together**

**Resource and Care Panel**.

The VSH attends the weekly Resource and Care plan organised by Childrens Social Care. Papers are circulated the day before the meeting and VSH advices on educational considerations around admission into care, change of placements and additional funding request. Notes and actions are circulated to the VS team on the same day. This is a very valuable meeting both in terms of individual children but also to understand themes and developments with education and children social care. It is a strong two-way flow of information and communication.

**Virtual Designated Teachers Network**

All termly meetings have been held as video conferences. This will continue in the future as we have experienced increased numbers of DTs attending, rising from 20 physical representatives to 50 online. This allows out of authority schools to attend.

In June and July, a total of six drop-in sessions were held by the VSH. These were smaller sessions designed for specific queries, with an average attendance of 8 designated teachers.

Four EPEP training sessions will be held in September 2021 for designated teachers and social workers. Individual support for social workers to access the EPEP system will be provided by the service support officer.

***Objective: Increase inter-agency working/understanding/communication through the extended role of the VSH.***

**Personal Education Plans and resources including Pupil Premium Plus**

The internal review confirmed that the current PEP process was not fit for purpose and that a more effective approach would be via an EPEP.

Central to this recommendation was that current process relied heavily upon the EAW to perform administrative duties such as arranging meetings, collating this information, and uploading documents. Such was the time consumption of this approach there was little capacity remaining for proactive casework to take place.

Once the decision was taken to commission an EPEP it was decided to remain with the reduced Covid PEP format rather than revert to the longer document and then changing the EPEP a term later.

The commissioning process was completed on 27th July 2021 with a contract for three years awarded to E-gov solutions.

On 27th July 2021, 88% of PEPs were completed. This was a total of 525 plans up to date.

From the autumn term 2021 all plans will be quality assured within the EPEP mechanism. Individual plans will be signed off by the EAW responsible and graded on a red, amber, green basis. Regular moderation exercises will ensure the consistency of these judgements with feedback provided for all plans. The VSH will have oversight of this process.

***Objective: Establishing and embedding the EPEP across all users.***

**Pupil Premium Plus**

In January 2021 the LA agreed with Schools Forum to retain and distribute PPP as follows.

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| **Age group** | **Amount per year** | **Arrangements** |
| Early Years | £300 | Paid direct to school where child is educated and not managed by Virtual School |
| Statutory School Age | £2345 | £2345 paid in quarterly instalments to Virtual School by DfE  £800 retained for central services.  £1545 directed to schools in three termly payments |
| 16 + | N/A | N/A |
| Previously Looked After Child | £2345 | Paid direct to schools and not managed by Virtual School. |

Additional PPP was allocated on an individual case basis through an additional application process. From September 2021 this will form part of the EPEP.

**Centrally Retained Funding**

From the centrally retained funding 64% was used to cover staffing costs. The remainder was used to provide alternative provision, addition PPP payments, tuition and 100 sessions of Educational Phycologist time. This valuable support will be increased by 20% in 2021.

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| **PPP Totals by Academic Year 2020/21** | | | | | | |
| **Term** | **Standard amount paid per child** | **Ncle LA Schools** | **Academies/Other LA**  **Schools** | **G'head LA Schools** | **N'land LA Schools** | **Total paid out** |
| **Autumn 20** | £500.00 | £45,950.00 | £157,500.00 | £10,755.00 | £4,000.00 | **£218,205.00** |
| **Spring 21** | £750.00 | £64,090.00 | £238,200.00 | £13,250.00 | £7,500.00 | **£323,040.00** |
| **Summer 21** | £515.00 | £45,770.00 | £168,112.50 | £9,592.50 | £5,665.00 | **£229,140.00** |
| **TOTAL** | **£1,765.00** | **£155,810.00** | **£563,812.50** | **£33,597.50** | **£17,165.00** | **£770,385.00** |

***Objective: Use EPEP to track and monitor impact of PPP on individual student engagement and outcomes.***

**Support for children who are adopted**

The Virtual School attends half termly meeting with other VSHs and Adopt North East working collaboratively to support PLAC.

The Virtual School responds to weekly requests by parents and schools for advice. These cover a range of subjects from pupil premium plus, school application and SEN There is a need to explore ways in which the VS can promote and extend this support through working with local agencies such as Adopt North East.

***Objective: Increase access to support and guidance for PLAC.***

**Care leavers**

The VS has worked with the reorganised careers guidance team to establish CiC without a EHCP as a priority group for this service. This provides support to those children who do not have an EHCP.

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| **Care Leavers** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **Trend** |
| Higher Education | 4% | 6% | 10% | +4% |
| EET | 47% | 41% | 45% | -2% |
| NEET | 48% | 53% | 49% | -1% |
| Not in touch | 3% | 3% | 3% | 0% |

LAIT

***Objective: Increase numbers of in care leavers in education, employment, and training.***

**Leadership**

Through the course of 2020/21 extensive work has been conducted to embed a recognisable system and methodology of leadership and governance.

The Virtual School has operated since September 2020 under the scrutiny and guidance of the newly established Virtual School Governing Body VSGB.

**Role Name Experience**

VSH                        Karl Harms VSH

Community Al Coates MBE Foster Parent

LA Education        Rebeca Wright Specialist Senior EP

Children’s Social Care          Jayne Forsdike Assistant Director CSC

Primary School               Colin Lofthouse (Chair) CEO SMART Academies

Secondary School              Mandy Marsh Designated Teacher

Co-opted Jane Pickthall North Tyneside VSH

Co-opted Jane Edminson National Lead in Governance.

It is proposed that the VSGB membership is extended in 2021/22 to included VS staff, health, and young person representation.

The VSGB meets on a termly and all meetings are recorded by an appointed LA clerk. These meetings form part of an established reporting cycle to enable transparency and communication.

The VSH regularly reports to the Directors Management Team, Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and CiC Multi Agency Partnership.

The VSH reports directly to Mark Patton, Assistant Director Education and Skills. A Self Evaluation Form is reviewed half termly and forms the basis of this report structure. Forward planning and progress are monitored through a School Improvement Plan. Both documents are linked and shared with the VSGB and VS team.

In July 2020, the DfE announced an extension to the role of VSH to cover the strategic oversight of all children who have or have ever had a social worker. This work does not fall into the remit of this report, but it should be noted that a key component is that the objectives of the VSH are not compromised as a result.

***Objective: Develop a strategic plan for extended role of VSH that does not compromise the work of the Virtual School.***

**Priorities for 2021/22**

* Improve educational progress of individual students by offering targeted support through the EPEP.
* Improve attendance monitoring with introduction of Capita Out of Area attendance monitoring tool.
* Co-produce a three-year attendance strategy with schools and CSC.
* Achieve more than 90% attendance for Virtual School.
* Improve young person engagement to reduce exclusion.
* Increase inter-agency working/understanding/communication through the extended role of the VSH.
* Establishing and embedding the EPEP across all users.
* Use EPEP to track and monitor impact of PPP on individual student engagement and outcomes.
* Improve access to support and guidance for PLAC.
* Increase numbers of in care leavers in education, employment, and training.
* Develop a strategic plan for extended role of VSH that does not compromise the work of the Virtual School.

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| |  | | --- | | **Acknowledgments** | | The following sources were used to inform the creation of this template: | | Ofsted framework | | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-from-2018/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services> | | Department for Education | | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children> | |  | |
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