

Virtual School, Ealing Looked after Children and Care Leavers

Head Teacher's Annual Report

Academic Year September 2019 - July 2020

Children's and Adults' Services



Contents

1. The Work of the Virtual School
2. Staffing Report
Staffing 2019-2020
3. The Work of the Team
4. Progress and Impact of the Virtual School Development Plan
5. Outcomes: Attainment of children and young people July 2020
6. Attendance
7. Summary & comparison of fixed-term exclusions for Ealing LAC
8. Celebratory events
9. Student Leadership Committees
10. Pupil Premium Grant
11. Special Educational Needs
12. Enhanced Curriculum and Holiday Activities
13. Horizons Centre
14. Complaints
15. The work of the Virtual School, some highlights 2019-2020
16. Priorities for 2020/21

Virtual School, Ealing Looked After Children and Care Leavers Head Teacher's Annual Report

Academic Year September 2019 - July 2020

1. The Work of the Virtual School

The role of Ealing's virtual school (VS) is to raise the attainment and educational achievement of Ealing's looked after children (LAC) and care leavers. The virtual school team work directly with the children and young people, advocating for them as well as providing training, advice, support and consultancy to a number of stakeholders to ensure that Ealing's LAC and care leavers receive a high standard of education and are engaged in appropriate educational activity. A key focus of the VS is on raising aspirations of the young people and the professionals working with them, to support children and young people to reach their potential and move forward into further and higher education, training and employment.

There were 312 (344 last year) LAC and care leavers, aged 0-17 years at the start of the school year on the 1st September 2019. The VS has a qualified teacher allocated to each key stage (KS) from early years (EYs) to post 16. The post 16 teacher also worked **directly with 70 plus care leavers aged 18-25 years**, including those in further and higher education, as well students wishing to return to education. **In 2019/20, there were 47 students (17%) at university, 48 last year (17%).**

2. Staffing Report

Staffing 2019-2020

The VS staff team comprise:

Bridie McDonagh, Headteacher

Sian Hender, EYs and KS1

Alison O'Connor, KS2 & KS3 (transition years)

Sue Tarry, KS 3-4

David Aizenberg, KS4

Sundeep Gill, Post 16

Gabrielle Pelter, Educational Psychologist (0.5fte, from Jan 2020)

Shabnam Karimzada, Volunteer Mentor, part time (supporting programmes at Harrow School and We Belong)

All the teachers retain a key stage specialism as above but there is a strong whole school approach. This enables a stronger attainment and progress tracking process, providing opportunities for joint discussions between teachers to utilise data, develop work and practice together around key themes and patterns. In addition, there are benefits in skills' sharing and insight as well as through the building of individual relationships with children and sibling groups.

At the period covered in this report, the headteacher had been in post for 8 years. A core staff team had continued to remain stable for a number of years, with one teacher recruited to the team more recently, April 2019. Ealing Council has had a long-standing commitment to mentoring with a care leaver graduate or university student taking on a role of a mentor within the VS team, providing work experience prior to further studies and/or next career steps. This year, with no care leaver uptake to the post, the VS was fortunate to have the post covered part time by a volunteer care leaver who was still attending university.

The VS Educational Psychologist (EP) is a 0.5fte post and has been in place since January 2020; her predecessor since 2015, with a reduced commitment for a short period in the autumn term 2019.

An unprecedented year

In autumn 2020 and the spring term 2021, until coronavirus and COVID-19 required the country to lock down at the end of the spring term 2020, students continued to benefit from VS teachers direct teaching sessions and additional sessional support to boost maths levels provided by an experienced qualified maths teacher at the weekly study support sessions held at Horizons.

The VS team met weekly to plan, consider issues, take forward new initiatives and ensure priority actions were progressed. In 2019-20, a pilot for delivery of a new model of study support was trialled with each teacher taking the lead weekly on the session, publishing the programme in advance and the team prepared to support the session.

The spring term ended abruptly however, with lockdown and the VS team adapted quickly to remote working and online tuition and support during this period.

The Covid-19 outbreak and the unprecedented decisions made in response affected all children and young people in Ealing and across the UK, with schools being closed, education being offered and completed at home in a collaboration between schools and families and carers, and opportunities for social interaction reduced to within the family in the early weeks of the outbreak.

Looked after children (LAC) and care leavers are at risk of being amongst the worst affected by the emotional and educational impact of the outbreak and the Ealing virtual school team committed to offering additional support to the children and young people over the months after schools closed in March 2020.

Home learning and school attendance during lockdown, see also Attendance, section 6

The virtual school quickly drafted an *access to learning survey* for the teachers to contact every children and/or foster carer, young person and their schools to ensure access to home learning for Ealing LAC and care leavers not attending school and in particular, to ensure every child and young person had a plan, school /provision contact and access to a digital device and wifi. In addition, support was offered to carers less familiar with technology and access to learning online.

Each VS team member followed a COVID lockdown support plan:

VS COVID lockdown support to include support, monitoring and possible direct delivery of:

- Attendance & Access (home learning & school)
- Home learning offer with understanding of the pupil's offer in:
 - curriculum areas
 - virtual learning offer (i.e., not direct teaching)
 - real time teaching
 - paper based resources and access
 - assessment opportunities,
 - review and direct teacher contact arrangements.
 - mental and emotional health and well-being.

Stakeholders Pupil, School, Social worker, Foster carer, other support staff involved.

A summary report on the Ealing VS response and support for Ealing LAC and care leavers during the first lockdown period was presented at the June 2020 Corporate Parent Committee, *Part 2: Report on the work of the Virtual School team during the COVID-19 closure of schools, March-June 2020*. It is included in the attachments for ease of reference.

The work below started as face to face or direct but was delivered remotely during the first COVID-19 lockdown and through the rest of the school year.

3. The Work of the Team

Support to Social Workers

A key role of the VS team is to work in partnership with Ealing social workers (SW), advising, consulting and supporting the education of their young people through:

- Personal Education Plan (PEP) training to SWs both in groups and 1-1, attendance in SW offices, team meetings, attendance and education contribution at away days and Leaving Care Team (LCT) meetings and education training to new SWs in the leaving care teams (LCT 1 and LCT 2) virtually in summer 2020.
- PEP process advice, guidance and training on PEPs / PEP meetings
- Training on all other educational matters, updating the teams with processes and current practice
- Applications and support for the admissions process both in and out of borough
- Special educational needs (SEN) processes and advice on schools/appropriate educational provision
- SEN funding process and support matters
- LCTs' training on post 16 SEN
- Advising on pupil premium grant (PPG) and financial support for education, including post 16 bursary and Higher Education (HE) Grant, HE scholarships and bursaries.
- Offer of, or signpost to, extra-curricular activities
- EP consultation sessions with social workers to offer support around SEN and/or social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs
- LCT training on PEPs and Post 16 education processes, summer 2020
- Signposting and highlighting the SEN handbook for social care staff
- Building links with schools and colleges via the designated teachers and lead colleagues.
- PEP audit process and feedback to social workers
- Advice and consultation for adopted children and young people, those on special guardianship orders and on child arrangements, all post-LAC going to school in LB Ealing
- **Laptop distribution-* the virtual school headteacher had a lead role with schools and social care colleagues in the distribution of 859 DfE laptops to vulnerable pupils including LAC, during the lockdown period. These enabled vulnerable pupils to access learning and complete education tasks online through inconsistent on-site school access.

Support to schools/colleges/universities

- LAC Designated Teachers (LAC DT) network -training, support and advice forum
- Liaising with LAC DTs
- Chairing and attending PEPs
- Training on PEPs and strategies for supporting LAC and care leavers
- Providing advice and targeted intervention
- Ensuring PPG is maximised and used effectively

- EP advice and support offered to school staff when the school EP cannot respond quickly enough
- VS EP liaison with school EPs to ensure LAC discussed at SEN Plan where necessary
- Developmental trauma training to education staff
- Attending professional/student meetings to support learning

Working with other professionals

- Post 16 training on supporting young people in their education
 - Supporting with foster carer recruitment meetings-inviting care leavers to attend
 - EETS/NEETs improving outcomes working group, ongoing.
 - Advice on education, signposting and consultation to support post-LAC
- Specific to the VS team:
- Year 11 transition meetings with the key stage 4 (KS4) VS advisory teachers, the VS headteacher with the post 16 advisory teacher to ensure smooth transition for our young people going on to year 12, particularly those with additional needs.

Support to foster carers

- Training on supporting children in their education in early years EYs, KS1 & KS2.
- Distributing and recommending educational materials when appropriate
- Being available for regular progress discussion
- Modelling appropriate enrichment activities
- Providing trips and activities, from March 2020, remote activities.
- Supporting foster carers at PEPs and professional meetings
- Contributing to the fostering newsletter, including annual updates on post 16 results

Working with other professionals

- Fostering team
- Ealing learning partnership and schools' service teams
- Adopt London West
- Ealing Alternative Provision (EAP) & Ealing Primary Centre (EPC) and out borough pupil referral units (PRUs) and alternative providers (APs)
- Recruitment team
- Admissions' teams in and out borough
- Exclusions' officers locally and nationally
- London and national networks of VS heads, other VSs and local authority colleagues
- LAC psychologists
- LAC nurse and health professionals
- SEN services
- Youth and Connexions services and the Youth Justice Service
- Independent Reviewing Officers
- Widening participation officers at colleges and universities
- Horizons participation team
- Data performance team
- Events team at Ealing Council
- Ealing Education Centre
- Policy and procedures officer for Children's Services

Direct Work with young people, including mentors

Key Stage	Activities available
EYs	Advice, demonstration and modelling of resources Holiday enrichment activities
KS1 & 2	PEPs Direct 1-1 teaching of pupils at Horizons, at home and at school Junior Council Become magazine sent out to all KS2 quarterly Letterbox project for LAC in and out borough Study support (yr 6 targeted) Enrichment activities Intervention strategy activities
KS3 & KS4	PEPs Mentoring through Ealing run programme & St Mary's University Study support 1-1 Teaching Enrichment activities, online after March 2020 Intervention strategy activities
Post 16	PEPs 16 to 18 years statutory PEP meetings; post 16 advisory teacher attends level 3 PEP meetings, supports and advises for level 1 and 2 courses. Information and advice Thursday drop in, moved to virtual drop in from March 2020. Appointments with the young people to support them choosing appropriate courses and universities and to ensure applications are made to time. Potential university students given the opportunity to meet (from March 2020 virtually) with the post 16 teacher to access support with assignments as well as any support with the University application process. Financial advice on bursaries and student finance applications etc 1-1 support with applications including personal statements 1-1 academic support in person or via email/telephone Signposting support agencies e.g. unaccompanied asylum seekers Assessments for young people returning to education for care leavers' funding panel Supporting young people at progress/professional virtual meetings at schools, colleges and universities. Intervention strategy activities Enrichment activities e.g. Debate Mate, Kings College London Feb 2020, targeted tuition intervention via Harrow School, at the school in person and then online from March 2020. Support for the govt lap top initiative for care leavers

4. Progress and Impact of the Virtual School Development Plan

Key virtual school priorities for 2019/20 (retained from previous year's plan)

<p>Priority 1: To improve outcomes through the effective use of data and targeted intervention</p> <p>Review and improve systems across all indicators to ensure progress and attainment are tracked robustly and all indicators of attendance, exclusions, prior attainment and current assessments are used to target timely and effective intervention</p> <p>To increase attendance, reduce persistent absence and reduce fixed term exclusions targeting timely support and ensuring clear individual action plans and intervention.</p> <p>Maximise progress and close the attainment gap for all statutory school aged LAC by informed use of prior data and targeted intervention and support.</p> <p>From good to outstanding PEPs - compliance and quality.</p> <p>Ensure compliance</p> <p>Amend PEPs to include improved transition information and to support ease of completion for social workers</p> <p>Improving the quality of PEPs Develop the partnership for improvement of the PEP Ensure the document is useful and helpful as record as well as to ensure the meetings are useful for the education plan: -High quality and accessible training for social workers -Training and briefings offered to teams and evidence from the audit included in the training</p>	<p><i>Reporting systems in place so that senior managers are kept informed of CS PEP performance</i></p> <p><u>Outcomes</u> All the KS2 children made a successful transition to year 7 high schools following an erratic year 6 experience. KS4 GCSE outcomes improved by 6% (see attainment and progress section). Post 16 university outcomes remain strong, ETE, a key ongoing focus (see post 16 outcomes).</p> <p><i>Weekly VS meeting chaired performance scrutiny meeting focused on attendance and exclusion and actions to address.</i> Exclusions reduced 2019-20 September to March 20 by 2.51% (10.84 to 8.33) & 3.33% September -July 20</p> <p><u>Outcomes:</u> successful and significant reductions year on year in persistent absence but impact of COVID on attendance ensures attendance remains a key area of priority (see attendance section).</p> <p>Monitoring PEP performance –reports fortnightly /monthly</p> <p>Regular meetings with social care HoS and managers and VS Project officer reports and keeps records</p> <p><u>Outcomes:</u> 97% PEP completion in the summer term.</p> <p>Work undertaken with Mosaic team summer term 20. Autumn term changes ready for ‘go live’.</p> <p>Audits demonstrate there are 70% of good and outstanding PEPs- further improvements to be actioned 20-21.</p>
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<p>-Training to SW teams, away days, both in groups and 1-1, meetings -Individual social worker feedback on points of improvement -Attendance of VS at PEPs, chair, take notes, advise, read PEPs and offer notes, contributions to add in post PEP.</p>	<p>Evidence from supervisions and feedback at the TM highlights the meetings are in the majority worthwhile and useful.</p>
<p>Priority 2: To improve outcomes for LAC with SEND by further development of VS SEN processes, systems and data and training</p> <p>Further embed all current processes and systems so they are robust and routine and 'drift and delay' minimised</p> <p>Refine systems for SEN data collection, thereby maintaining an accurate and 'live' virtual school SEN register</p> <p>Continue to offer consultation support to social care staff and VS teachers</p> <p>SEN Plan meetings at least half termly to support teachers in developing a better understanding of individual children and young people's SEN</p> <p>Continue to liaise with key contacts in the SEN assessment service to ensure that LAC with SEN are responded to quickly and efficiently in order to prevent delay and drift</p> <p>Develop the approaches to SEMH as a priority SEN particularly in regard to: -understanding and supporting behaviour needs -attachment needs and trauma journeys (as below) -emotional health and well-being support through COVID.</p>	<p>Dedicated Senior Education Health and Care Coordinator (EHCCo) has oversight for LAC with SEN (with EHC Plans or undergoing statutory assessment). Systems established to share information of new LAC with EHCPs and ensure Ealing SENAS informed of SAs out borough.</p> <p>SEN Plan meetings embedded, understanding of SEN processes developed in borough and liaison for out borough</p> <p>Flexible training to SW and SEN delivered</p> <p>SEN Register current and covering CYP with EHCPs, primary and secondary SEN, name of CYP SEN Coordinator, SEN support</p> <p>PPG evidence of expenditure to provide emotional health and well-being interventions and support (see, PPG Impact Report)</p>
<p>Priority 3: To extend and further develop education staff and LAC DT training and professional development programme.</p> <p>Develop Ealing schools as trauma and attachment aware schools.</p>	<p>Networks held termly with a training element at all. Virtual delivery through COVID.</p> <p>Training at networks included trauma and attachment</p> <p>The Developmental Trauma training usually held twice annually was not scheduled this year, in the summer term it was adapted to be delivered remotely.</p>

5. Outcomes: Attainment and progress of children and young people July 2020

Educational progress and achievements for all key stages as well as activity throughout the year have been submitted to the Corporate Parent Committee regularly through written and verbal education reports to each meeting. Numbers are updated for each meeting and reflect current cohorts. **Attainment for the academic year September 2019-2020 was reported in October 2020**, after results had been analysed locally. The October outcomes' report includes a break-down of **outcomes data** for specific groups i.e., **SEN, gender, ethnicity, type of school attended and Ofsted rating**. The report is available to members from the headteacher and is published on the Ealing Council website with the agenda for the October meeting.

The Head Teacher's Annual Report primarily focuses on the **statistical first release (SFR)** that provides national and local authority (LA) level education outcomes on the children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months as at 31 March 2019 in LAs in England. This release seeks to capture the children that LAs and VSs nationally can reasonably be held to account for and provides a good source of information to compare the KS2 and KS4 results for Ealing's LAC with London and national averages.

Due to the cancellation of exams the SFR has published limited data relating to attainment, SEN, absence and exclusions. This limits outcome comparison and analysis in this report this year, with very little comparative data. Any published data and local data is included however, and some relevant data from other reports presented to Corporate Parent through 2019-2020, this to offer some local data to contextualise outcomes where national data is unavailable. In addition, a key strength of Ealing's strategy is in the long-term investment in our care leavers' education and that can be evidenced by higher ETE figures than the average for London and nationally, and in our university entrants and ongoing success at post 16.

The attainment and progress data section focuses mainly on Year 11 outcomes as the end of key stage 2 assessments did not happen this year. However, 2018-2019 data for KS2 is included where considered a helpful iteration.

End of key stage 2 & 4 Assessment results

Below is the 3-year SFR published outcomes up to **2018-2019 only**

Key stage 2 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months at 31/03/2018

Key Stage 2 performance						
	Number of LAC*	R	W	M	GPS	RMW
Ealing 2018/19	14	50%	57%	64%	65%	30%
Ealing 2017/18	13	31%	39%	39%	54%	23%
Ealing 2016/17	17	76%	59%	65%	65%	53%
Inner London	140	54%	53%	61%	60%	43%
Outer London	200	56%	54%	56%	58%	42%
England	3230	49%	50%	51%	53%	36%
Ealing schools average (All pupils)	4340	78%	81%	85%	86%	71%

*The SFR shows the % achieving the expected standard as a % of all children in the KS2 cohort, not just those entered.

Progress at key stage 2 2019-2020

Progress scores are usually calculated for each of reading, writing and maths; individual scores are not combined to provide an overall progress measure. The scores are calculated by comparing pupils' results to the actual achievements of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment. **There are no nationally published progress outcomes available for KS2 for 2019-2020.**

However, the virtual school published May SATs targets for the year 6 cohort in the March 2020 CP report. And again, captured the autumn term teacher assessments for individual children in the same cohort but now in year 7, in the December 2020 CP report.

This helps to show the year 6 cohort's progress. See below for the summary information.

Teacher Assessments March 2020 & Dec 2020 (14 pupils)								
	Expected		Exceeded		Working towards expected (WTE)		Below expected level	
Reading	4	29%	3	21%	6	43%	1	7%
Overall Expected/Exp plus	March target 57%							
	Dec assessments 50%							
Writing	4	29%	3	21%	6	43%	1	7%
Overall Expected/Exp plus	March target 57%							
	Dec assessments 50%							
SPAG	5	36%	2	14%	6	43%	1	7%
Overall Expected/Exp plus	March target 57%							
	Dec assessments 50%							
Maths	7	50%	1	7%	5	7%	1	7%
Overall Expected/expected plus	March target 57%							
	Dec assessments 57%							

NB The child who remained at 'Below expected levels' has significant SEN and was out of school in Year 6 whilst a specialist school was sourced. This child had ongoing tuition through this period and it is hoped will make gains in progress and attainment through year 7.

The maths target outcomes has been achieved by all the children expected/exp plus. We can see one child (7%) had not achieved expectations in reading, writing, and spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) by the autumn term assessment.

Attendance for this group during lockdown was on average 64%, nine of the fourteen children attended school regularly. In spite of a problematical year 6 for two of the children and time out of school for severe anxiety and social and emotional issues, they all made a successful transition to high school.

Key stage 4 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months at 31/03/2020

Key stage 4 performance 4+ in English and Maths										
	Number of LAC*	2015-16	Number of LAC*	2016-17	Number of LAC*	2017-18	Number of LAC*	2018-19	Number of LAC*	2019-20
Ealing	30	22.6%	18	33%	24	25%	26	15%	34	21%
London	800	20.8%	780	20%	900	15.6%	750	20.0%	83129	23%
England	4890	17.5%	5010	18%	5130	17.8%	5370	18.0%	561994	22%
Ealing schools average (NON-LAC)	2781	65.0%	2723	70.5%	2853	69.4%	2875	72.0%	3755	76.9%

*Source for this data is the Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) 2018-2020 rounded up to the nearest whole number

In 2019/20, the percentage of Ealing LAC achieving 4+ in English and maths has improved and is higher (6%) than in the previous year.

As in all LAC cohorts across London and nationally, results fluctuate year on year in relation to the needs of the cohorts, especially at KS 4 GCSE and narrowing the gap for key stage 4 remains a priority for the virtual school. The on-going attainment gap for LAC at KS4 reflected nationally for this group.

Attainment in English and maths (5-9*)

This measure looks at the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ in both English and maths. From 2016, pupils could achieve the English component of this with 5+ in English language or literature.

Key stage 4 performance 5+ in English and maths								
	Number of LAC	2016-17	Number of LAC	2017-18	Number of LAC	2018-19	Number of LAC	2019-20
Ealing	18	22%	24	17%	26	12%	34	12%
London	780	10%	740	9%	750	8%		
England	5010	7%	5130	8%	5370	7%		
Ealing schools average (NON-LAC)	2723	50.70%	2853	52%	2875	54%		

*Source for this data is the October 2020, CP report.

5+ in English and maths was not published nationally or available on LAIT. 2018-2020 is rounded up to the nearest whole number

In 2019/20, we can see that there was no change in the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ in English and maths.

Key stage 4 average Attainment 8 scores of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months at 31/03/2020

Attainment 8

Attainment 8 measures the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 qualifications including English (double weighted if the combined English qualification, or both language and literature are taken), maths (double weighted), three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list.

	2018-2019	2019-2020
Ealing	19.6	20.3
Outer London	19.2	20.7
England	19.6	21.4
Ealing schools		
average (NON-LAC)	50.9	53.5

Source for this data is LAIT

Only children who have been matched to key stage 4 data are included.

Ealing CLA achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 20.3, this is equal to the performance of CLA across outer London, and similar to the national average for CLA (21.4).

***SFR KS4 Cohort Outcomes**

**students who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months at 31/03/2020*

There are 34 students in the SFR cohort. 19/34 (56%) students in the SFR cohort took GCSEs.

Of these 19:

- 7/19 (37%) achieved 9-4 in E&M
- 12/19 (63%) achieved 9-4 in English
- 8/19 (42%) achieved 9-4 in maths

15/34 (44%) did not take GCSEs.

Of these,

- 6/15 (40%) achieved Foundation/ Basic Skills
- 9/15 (60%) took no exams.

Whole cohort GCSE information (42 students in Year 11 at the end of the academic year 2019-2020)

Students with SEN and achievement at GCSE

There was a high level of students with SEN in the cohort, with 66% overall SEND (68% last year) and 41% with EHCPs in the overall Year 11 cohort 2019-2020 (40% last year). SEND support is a priority in year 12 for this cohort.

11/42 (26%) were receiving SEN Support and of these students:

- 5 /11 (45%) SEN support achieved a grade 4 or above in English, two of whom also achieved a grade 4 in maths.

17/42 (40%) of students had a EHCP, 27% last year and of these students:

- 1 achieved a grade 4 or above in maths and 2 achieved grade 4 or above in English.

Summary, challenges and highlights

There has been an increase in attainment at GCSE 2020 from the previous year's performance at GCSE. Considering the time out of school this year for year 11s, many have used the home learning options available to them well to gain a Centre Assessed Grade at GCSE.

19% of our **whole cohort of students** (42 students) achieved pass grades (9-4) in both maths and English. However, a number of students narrowly missed out on achieving pass grades in these subjects, with 5/42 (12%) achieving a 3 in maths, and 6/42 (14%) achieving a 3 in English. These students will be well-placed to re-take and pass these exams in the next academic year and as they transition to level 2 & 3 courses in further education.

Some highlights of individual students achieving excellent grades were:

- ✓ One student passed all 9 GCSEs taken at a grade 6 or above, including grade 8s in three subjects.
- ✓ Two other students also achieved 9 good GCSEs at grade 5 and above.

All our students continued to achieve in a wide variety of GCSE subjects, with **Ealing students achieving GCSEs and BTECs in 33 different subjects.**

Nonetheless, the gap between this group and their non-LAC peers is still wide at GCSE.

Strategy to improve attainment and progress at KS4

This year has been very different with the virtual school team not able to take part in any direct programmes and activities since March 2020, due to Covid-19 and lock down.

However, **targeted virtual school support has continued remotely and teachers at the Harrow school have provided online tuition to a number of year 11s through the summer.**

Student feedback rated the online tuition as 'exceptional'.

High quality tuition is evidenced to boost attainment by three to five months, so tutoring will be vital for young people going forward in recovering the teaching hours lost in the last year.

The virtual school continued to undertake careful **tracking of progress data** and to work closely with schools through PEP meetings, LAC DT Network Meetings maintaining regular contact throughout the year, remotely/virtually after the initial lock down period.

Students were also able to access study support through Horizons and Harrow school during the autumn term 2019 and through the spring term 2020 pre COVID-19 for support with exam technique. **Specialist tuition was offered to target areas of challenge and gaps in knowledge and skills.** During the COVID lockdown period, targeted intervention was provided by the virtual school teachers to ensure that students continued to study through home learning programmes and one-to-one virtual tuition was continued for students to support ongoing progress, attainment and skills development for post 16.

Transition support

- ✓ **With a high level of SEND in the cohort, planning for transition to post 16 is key.**

A transition focus to the PEPs was introduced last year with the use of an additional document to highlight target areas, academic and wider achievements.

In 2019-2020, **transition tracking meetings** have strengthened the approach to ensure maximum success for year 11 transition to ETE post 16 attended by the VS headteacher, KS4 and post 16 teachers. Destination data for all year 11s is reviewed. Here the focus is on sharing information and necessary further action on transition plans, applications made to 6th form schools and colleges or training providers, target grades, strengths and challenges for the young person, any additional needs and support in place or needed post 16.

Post 16- In 2019-2020, evidence of success in supporting Ealing care leavers, including those with SEN can be seen in year 12 where there were 58 young people, i.e. those who took GCSEs in the summer of 2020. Of these, 76% were in education, training and employment at the end of the autumn term, in December 2020, 14 (24%) NEET is higher than 2018-2019 (18%) for this cohort of young people. It is evident that COVID has had an impact for some of these young people but efforts to engage them and support offered is ongoing through the virtual school and wider Horizons team.

Post 16 2019-2020 Degree Results

Congratulations to 16 Ealing care leavers who graduated with

- ✓ **3 x 1st class honours degrees**
- ✓ **8 x 2:1 honours degrees**
- ✓ **2 x 2:2 honours degrees**

13 undergraduates in all

3 x post-graduate passes with two young people who have gone on to be teachers

16 qualified for first year entry to university for Sep 2020

Overall, in 2019/2020 = **47 at university, 17% of care leaver population**

6. Attendance

Headline summary

Attendance over time

Overall* average attendance for Ealing LAC (primary and secondary stated funded)

	Ealing average (All pupils)	Ealing (LAC) average	London (LAC) average	National (LAC) average
2014/15	95.60%	96.00%	96.30%	96.00%
2015/16	95.40%	95.40%	95.90%	96.10%
2016/17	95.70%	94.60%	95.40%	95.70%
2017/18	95.60%	96.30%	95.20%	95.50%
2018/19	95.60%	96.80%	96.30%	96.30%
2019/20	Not available	90.28%	Not available	Not available

- **Source for this data is LAC Call.**

**Includes all X codes i.e., COVID related absence*

Ealing LAC attendance has dropped by 6.52% compared with the previous year. Due to Covid, the attendance has been at its lowest recorded when comparing to previous academic years.

Persistent absence is a key indicator and for Ealing LAC had decreased year on year, from 2015 until 2019. Unfortunately this trend of reduction is interrupted due to COVID absence this year.

<i>Ealing Average over 4 years</i>				<i>England Avg</i>	<i>Inner London Avg.</i>	<i>Outer London Avg</i>
<i>2015-2016</i>	<i>2016-2017</i>	<i>2017-2018</i>	<i>2018-2019</i>	<i>2018-2019</i>		
14.5	14.28	13.1	10.1	10.9	13.4	10

Persistent Absence (PA) - % children looked after for at least 12 months classed as persistent absentees (6 terms from 2013)

Ealing LAC's average **persistent absence rate has reduced to 10.1% in 2019.**

- <than the inner London average by 3.3%
- <national average by 0.8%
- similar to the outer London average.

Attendance remains a key priority for the virtual school going forward.

Attendance has been a challenge through COVID, particularly in the first lockdown and remains an ongoing priority. Aside from the impact of COVID, there is clear evidence to show the **negative impact absence from school or education has for LAC on attainment and progress.** However, the context for LAC is that a very small number of children and young people with poor or sometimes non-attendance impacts negatively on performance increasing authorised and unauthorised absence rates. **Evidence indicates a higher prevalence of SEMH needs in the LAC population due often to underlying attachment and trauma needs.**

This can act as a barrier for LAC at given points to engage in education: they go missing, they abscond, they can have mental health needs. In addition, **exclusion contributes to authorised absence.**

Good attendance is supported by good data systems to trigger action and to challenge absence routinely. In addition, knowledge of the children and young people to ensure absence is noted and acted on appropriately and that the young people are given every encouragement and support to engage with education. Our VS aim is to ensure that every child's journey is understood by the team around that child and where necessary, creative interventions and solutions offered to re-engage with education.

Attendance is monitored rigorously by the VS through:

- Daily alerts from LAC Call
- Weekly 1 hour VS performance scrutiny meetings chaired by the VSH that focus on actions arising from the previous week's exception data.
- PEP attendance data and recording system
- Regular attendance reports
- No school place lists highlighted at the weekly performance scrutiny meeting and circulated to social work managers weekly to highlight any child not on the roll of a school and the date they were off roll plus action to access them to a school place.

7. Summary & comparison of fixed-term exclusions for Ealing LAC in 2019-20

(See attached report, *Ealing LAC Exclusion Summary and Comparison*)

In 2020, SFR figures are based on the number of looked after children continuously for at least 12 months at 31 March who were aged 5-15 at the start of the academic year (31 August) and were matched to the school census. However, the school census collects exclusions information two terms in arrears. For example, the summer school census collects information on exclusions occurring during the autumn term.

The latest available exclusions data from the SFR that can provide comparisons is for the 2017 to 2018 school year.

Therefore, a separate report on Ealing LAC exclusions is prepared for Corporate Parent Committee members and the Children's Services Management Team with whole cohort exclusion data for Ealing LAC, 2018-2019.

Unfortunately, there has been one permanent exclusions for Ealing LAC in 2019-2020.

Fixed term exclusions (SFR and LAIT data) below represents up to 2018 and shows a reduction over 3 years. In 2018-19, national data is not available but local data from LAC Call indicates a rise in fixed term exclusions of 1.63% (10.69 to 12.32).

In 2019-2020, exclusion has

- **reduced by 3.99% (12.32 to 8.33)** September 2019-July 2020
In the same period comparison:
- **reduced by 2.51% (10.84 to 8.33)** September 2019 -March 2020

Local Authority, Region and England	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change from previous year
307 Ealing Outer	12.86	11.54	8.90	9.15	15.17	14.39	10.69	-3.70
988 London Stat Neighs	11.98	9.56	10.60	10.97	11.13	10.85	10.99	0.14
970 England	13.41	12.18	11.95	13.91	12.29	10.66	12.76	2.10
	11.33	10.27	10.25	10.42	11.44	11.83	11.67	-0.16

Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) extract table, statistical neighbours

8. 21st Annual Education Awards – October 2019

The 21st Education Awards Ceremony took place on Friday 4th October at an exciting new venue, the University of West London, St Mary's Road Campus. It was again, a great success.

Young people, foster carers, social workers, schools and colleagues from Ealing's Children and Adults' Services attended the event to celebrate the educational achievements of Ealing's Looked after children and care leavers.

Special guests attended the ceremony including the Mayor of the London Borough of Ealing; Cllr Dr Addullah Gulaid; Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Children, Adults and Public Health; Cabinet Member, Schools' and Children's Services, Cllr Yvonne Johnson, and the Leader of Ealing Council, Cllr Julian Bell.

We also welcomed Tim Dalton, Director of Shaftesbury Enterprises and programme manager at Harrow School and Nick Turk, St Mary's University, First Star Academy who shared their work with our young people and the VS.

Our volunteer mentor, Shabnam Karimzada gave an inspirational speech about her journey as a care leaver.

All the young people invited to receive academic awards were presented with a certificate, vouchers and had their photograph taken with The Mayor of Ealing. Cllr Yvonne Johnson enjoyed a key role presenting the certificates to the children and young people. Social workers and carers were delighted to see the children and older young people too proudly show them their certificates. Special Awards were presented by the teachers for children and young people for an exceptional effort or achievement.

The ceremony was a wonderful opportunity to publicly recognise and celebrate the work of the foster carers, social workers and teachers who have supported the children and young people's successful outcomes in education, some of them over many years.

The Education Awards ceremony is part of the calendar of events each year to ensure celebration of achievement and education is kept at the forefront of the LAC overall care plan.

9. Student Leadership Committees

Junior Council

Established in September 2010, this year the Junior Council were 9 members, with two honorary sibling members in year 7 and year 2, totalling 11. The others were from the following year groups: 3 in year 6, 4 in year 5, 1 in year 4, 1 in year 3. They were a mixed group of 6 boys and 5 girls.

Representatives aim to improve the lives of children in care through sharing their views, developing projects and communicating with senior officers and elected members. The projects are developed through the monthly meetings and the children present their work to the Corporate Parent Committee at regular meetings. Over the last 10 years, the Junior Council has improved communication between young people and social services and has changed and influenced the corporate parenting they receive.

In 2019-2020, the Junior Children in Care Council's theme was Health. The group achieved attending the council, meeting and getting to know all the children and discussing a variety of health themes. Three members did their own work on the health theme at home including writing a song and making an art picture of the Junior Council and Health. Three members did a great presentation at Corporate Parent. They informed the CP about our numbers, themes, plans for the future and what they like to do to keep healthy.

Lockdown in March 2020 altered plans for the next term's council work.

The council were able to meet virtually but this took time to set up safely and productively through MS Teams and was dependent initially on the carer's involvement and technology working. They had hoped to reach more out borough children by creating a leaflet which gives easy to read, fun, accessible information on keeping healthy for 7 years -11 years.

Although this objective was not achieved this year, the group were able to meet together virtually, also to attend Corporate Parent Committee virtually on MS Teams and make more concrete plans for taking the Health theme forward next year.

Mentoring Programme

The VS volunteer mentor, who graduated in Summer 2020 has been involved in the New Direction Project which launched in Summer 2019. This project is funded through the John Lyon's Charity and **our mentor has been one of the leads on the project**. She has been joined by a small group of care leavers across three other local authorities. The group have been trained and have drawn on their experiences of being in care to consider what they would have found helpful to have been offered. As a result, **this group put together a programme of cultural activities for children in care which commenced in 2019-2020**. The activities include fashion, media, animation, music, dance and more performance and creative pursuits. This creative leadership programme has collaborated with artists and creative professionals, explored creative interests and the group have learnt to programme events and lead. **The project continued virtually through lockdown.**

Our volunteer mentor has also supported our students with tuition at the Harrow School in the Autumn Term of 2019.

10. Pupil Premium Grant 2019-2020

(See attached, PPG Impact Report 2019-2020)

11. Special Educational Needs

There is a high level of SEN overall in the LAC population and this can create additional barriers to achieving good educational outcomes and wider achievement.

In 2019-2020

EHCPs

- **30.7%** of Ealing LAC were supported through an EHCP, <less than last year (31%) similar to the average for outer London (30.6%) >more than the national average (27.7%)

SEN Support

- **35%** of Ealing LAC were supported at SEN stage K (SEN Support)
- >less than the average for outer London (26.6%) and the national average (28.1%)

Ealing SEN over time								
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2019/20 England Avg.	2019/20 Outer London Avg.
% of children looked after who have a statement of SEN/EHCP	27.7	28.3	30.7	34.7	31	30.7	27.7	30.6
% of children looked after who have SEN (Support) but no statement/EHCP	37.7	33	34.1	31.8	34.8	35	28.1	26.6

Source: LAIT

With the consistent support of the VS's Educational Psychologist and a regular system of SEN reviews, there is an increased focus for LAC with special educational needs to ensure early identification, timely assessments, high aspirations and training and support for stakeholders. A particular focus of the work is on the social and emotional development and attachment needs that can act as barriers to progress.

SEN Plan review meetings between the VS EP and each VS teacher are embedded in practice and take place on a half termly basis, although these are held more frequently if required. **This increase in frequency is reflected in the increasing complexity of cases**, particularly those relating to children and young people placed out of borough, as well as the increased greater awareness of SEN. Cases brought to SEN planning meetings continue to be the most complex, where teachers need some reflective space to think around the issues the child or young person is facing and how/ why the school might be struggling to support the child. Often there are also concerns about children's social and emotional wellbeing, in addition to academic progress. **All the teachers have previously attended the Developmental Trauma training run by the VS EP** and they are using the learning to support their thinking and advice to schools.

Verbal feedback has been consistently good with clear indication that the teachers value these meetings.

Overall aims of SEN Plan Meetings

At an individual level:

- To discuss individual children and young people who are causing concern. Concern will already have been identified by the VS teacher using knowledge of the child and available data
- To seek to understand the child or young person better and to explore issues which may be contributing to the individual difficulties
- To identify next steps and make plans
- To monitor and review interventions already in place
- To check accuracy of records (ensuring child / YP is on the SEN register and that the correct SEN code of practice stage is recorded)
- Individual 'Pupils' Case Files' folders have been created on the system where VS teachers store SEN information such as Education Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) and Annual Reviews, so that this information is readily available when discussing the SEN of children and young people.

At an organisational level:

The aim of SEN planning meetings is also to identify recurring themes which should be addressed in the VS in order to improve outcomes for LAC more generally and, more specifically, LAC with SEND. Themes which have been identified this year and have already been acted upon or will be acted upon next academic year include:

- **School's identification of SEN:** This theme has continued this year. *When are children and young people placed on a school's SEN register? When should a child or young person be discussed with the allocated school EP? When is it appropriate to request a statutory Education Health and Care needs assessment? How do schools decide? Who should make this request?* The VS teacher is often the one guiding and supporting schools to make these decisions, a position that can present

challenges. It has been useful for the VS EP to be able to liaise with the VS advisory teacher, school EP, the VS head teacher and other involved professionals when appropriate, in order to move these decisions along.

- **Liaison between local authorities when LAC move placements:** Delays in sending paperwork (e.g. EHCPs) with consequent delay in LAC accessing suitable educational provision. Training has previously been provided to social workers aimed at speeding up this process and ensuring the relevant professionals do the appropriate actions in a timely way. The VS teachers are often involved here and bring such concerns to SEN planning meetings. The VS EP often works with the teachers (by advising and/or joint problem solving) to move things along, in regard to getting children and young people into suitable placements. The VS EP ensures the regular monitoring of the school placement situation with VS teachers, e.g. through increased frequency of SEN planning meetings. Furthermore, as a result of this theme being identified, closer partnership working between the VS and Special Educational Needs Advisory Service (SENAS) has been established. Feedback from this collaborative working has been positive.
- **Schools' support of LAC's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs:** VS teachers have regularly raised the issue of LAC being excluded from school due to behaviour concerns. This is often because schools have struggled to understand and support these children and young people's complex SEMH needs. The VS EP has been working closely with VS teachers to support schools in supporting children and young people who are at risk of exclusion, by helping schools to understand LAC needs more fully, from a developmental trauma perspective. Working with the teachers to help this work with schools e.g. jointly preparing for school meetings in which the children's needs (and presenting behaviour) is discussed and decisions are made, or the VS EP attending PEP/ professionals' meetings, with the VS teacher. The VS headteacher who is experienced and knowledgeable in advice and support to schools on behaviour advises on provision plans to scaffold and support LAC who may be challenging schools' behaviour policies; sometimes schools' behaviour policies lack the flexibility to make necessary adjustments and this requires support and challenge to schools. Previously, the VS has had concerns regarding schools' identification of students with SEMH needs; put simply the question of: '*When is behaviour a special educational need?*' This issue has been explored previously, in the Spring Term 2019 Designated Teachers' Network meeting.
- **Supporting children and young people's wellbeing and learning during Covid pandemic:** The Covid pandemic has presented challenges for children and young people as the pandemic has involved significant change and feelings of loss in a variety of ways. Although research is emerging regarding the impact of the Covid pandemic on the mental health of children and young people, it is possible that the feelings of change and loss will be particularly difficult for LAC, who have already experienced significant loss in their lives.
- **Staff wellbeing during Covid pandemic:** The Covid pandemic has presented challenges with regard to the emotional and social wellbeing of everyone, including VS teachers and teachers in schools. This theme will be addressed further in future VS practice, in the autumn Term 2020 Designated Teachers' Network Meeting and spring Term 2021 Post 16 network meeting.

- **Accurately monitoring progress for children and young people who attend specialist educational provisions:** Concerns have been raised that PEP forms are not always suitable for the accurate recording and monitoring of academic progress for children and young people with more significant learning needs, for example those who attend specialist education settings. This is particularly because settings use a range of different methods for monitoring academic progress. Furthermore, there are concerns that PEP forms may not always capture the views of these young people. Does the PEP form need to be adapted for this population? If so, how? Do we need to explore ways to capture views for young people with a range of needs? Is collaboration needed with another team, for example the Children with Disabilities (CWD) team. This is an area the VS will develop next academic year in our SEN priority area.

SEN processes

The VS EP continues to have almost daily contact with SENAS, following up queries relating to paperwork, school placements and processes.

The VS EP meets on a weekly basis with the Senior Education, Health and Care Coordinator (EHCCO) who has responsibility for LAC, in order to strengthen a positive and responsive relationship between the VS and SENAS and promote close partnership working between the two services. This has been countless benefits to this close working and this has been a successful collaboration between the VS and SENAS leading to collaborative planning for next steps for more complex cases in a timely way and facilitating effective communication between professionals involved (e.g. Social Worker, VS EP, Ealing EHCCO and VS teacher) by coordinating meetings/ phone calls etc. as necessary.

The SEN Handbook for Social Care staff published in 2017-2018, is online and in use.
[Ealing Virtual School SEN Handbook](#)

SEN Data & SEN Register

Work has continued around ensuring we have accurate SEN data. New to the role this year, the VS EP has been working collaboratively with VS colleagues, attending regular (monthly) VS LAC SEN Data Meetings with the VS head teacher and two VS Project Support Officers. These meetings have been essential in ensuring accurate and current up to date SEN data for LAC in the VS. The VS EP has supported the development to streamline SEN processes in the VS.

Other work includes the advice and support relating to individual children's assessments. It remains important to ensure that LAC and care leavers are able to access school services in the same way as any other child. For this reason, fewer individual cases are seen by the VS EP; instead advice is provided to teachers and liaison takes place with school allocated EPs.

Sessions have also been offered to social workers on request and these sometimes included the VS teacher. These meetings have received positive feedback.

12. Enhanced Curriculum and Holiday Activities

Every half term, Easter, Christmas, summer, some evenings and some weekends, the VS team offers educational enrichment activities from Horizons and in locations around London and nationally.

Partners in the projects' delivery are drawn from a cross section of fields in the Arts, Drama, Music, Business and Sports. These activities are always aspirational in content and focused around building confidence in learning. The John Lyon's Charity have supported these activities through funding and developing their own cross VS approach in the boroughs where the charity targets their support. The programmes are reported on at every Corporate Parent but the 2019-2020 is summarised in the table below.

During this period of Covid and lock down, we have re-organised events, and activities were either on-line or outdoor.

- ✓ The Harrow School tuition continued, even supporting some of the children in the summer (2020) holiday period. The range of students has increased, with the age group broadening and spanning years 9-14. During the summer of 2020, over 20 students were engaged, many out of borough.
- ✓ Study support continued on Wednesdays at Horizons until March 2020.
- ✓ Saturday 21st March was the last in-person session of We Belong cancelled due to Covid. All other activities were then on hold.

Planning with all providers began in earnest to take forward our enrichment programmes virtually:

- ✓ The Harrow school set up the online tuition scheme, using their tutors who subscribe to the scheme and offer support in GCSE subjects, a range offered but mainly maths and science.
- ✓ Exsitec STEM programme from Brunel set up their offer on-line over the summer and We Belong, to do a magazine style forum for the children over the summer.
- ✓ Poetry lockdown competitions also took place over the summer period.

Programme 2019-2020

Date	Programme
October 2019–Half Term	Brunel Uni Day-12 out of borough. 19 in total, working with the Brunel Ambassadors – who are CLs. Learning skills in technology and science. 7 foster carers attended and took part in their own workshop, reflecting on their own educational experiences. A theatre trip to the Orange Tree theatre followed with Q&A opportunity – 4 out of borough young people attended, including 3 with EHCPs 12 students in total aged from 14 -16 and 2 foster carers attended. Trip to the London Coliseum and the ENO to see The Mikado with a backstage tour after the performance.
December 2019 -Christmas Holidays	The Snow Queen at the Rose theatre.
	<i>Student feedback, 'I loved this and we had seats near the front!'</i>
January 2020	We Belong – Saturday events at Wembley Stadium, including a theatre performance "Fame"
February 2020	Debate Mate. Another joined up project working with our neighbouring authorities. A day of learning to

key staff working out of one place and working closely together. There are ongoing easy access opportunities for joining up with the other colleagues on projects and initiatives. **The centre is a hub for strong outreach work based on relationships developed over time for Ealing's LAC and care leavers.**

The VS team has continued to run additional teaching and holiday activities and Junior Council from Horizons this year until March 2020 when activity became online only.

The Corporate Parent Committee held all its meetings at Horizons until lockdown forced the meetings online.

14. Complaints

There have been no formal complaints regarding the VS this academic year.

15. The work of the Virtual School 2019-2020 some highlights

Harrow School The ongoing programme of collaborative work with Harrow school. The lead VS teacher sends information ahead of the session to inform the school who is coming and what work they are doing, in order to match the support with the need. This programme has grown from strength to strength during lockdown too.

First Star Academy continues to grow and this year it will open up to a new year 10 cohort, as well as the 5 already part of the programme.

The Annual Awards 2019 in a new venue, the University of West London provided an aspirational backdrop and was well attended and a great celebration of the children and young people's progress and achievement.

Debate Mate, February 2020 Kings College University of London- excellent feedback from young people and facilitators that attended

University. Another strength has been in maintaining University numbers with a low drop-out rate of young people. The ongoing success of the students graduating from university demonstrates the commendable efforts and achievements of Ealing's young people with a particular success this year in the high level of first and upper second degrees achieved.

Virtual Heroes Conference November 2019. Sharing good practice via VS developing networks, there was a key-note speech from an inspirational care leaver; sharing of practice from four virtual schools (one of them, '*Ealing, Post 16 showcase*' and support for our work from Sir Vince Cable, MP. The post 16 advisory teacher delivered the good practice post 16 presentation with Ealing's volunteer mentor.

Virtual Brunel University Conference June 20. Sharing good practice and key updates on UCAS and university programmes including funding.

The Developmental Trauma Training roll out has continued ensuring schools are increasingly skilled with good access to trauma training.
(See below for details)

The LAC DT Network has continued via MS Teams and is well attended and valued by schools. The session always has a training element and post COVID has focused on anxiety, keeping healthy and recovery curriculum.



Developmental Trauma training offered a 5th cohort the training in the Summer Term 2019 (DT5). The training was paused until the new EP to join the team relaunched DT6 virtually.

This is four session training course developed initially with our VS EP and a colleague from the Post Adoption Service (now Adopt London West) and ongoing with the VS EP and an EP colleague. The course is aimed at education staff working with vulnerable children who are presenting with social, emotional and mental health needs, in particular those children who are (or have been) in the social care system or those who are adopted. The training is entitled:

'Understanding and supporting children who have experienced developmental trauma'

This training has been delivered to a range of education staff (teachers, SENCOs, teaching assistants, designated teachers and pastoral support workers).

The course had the following aims:

1. To understand Developmental Trauma and how it impacts on:
 - Brain development
 - Attachment and Relationships
 - Social and emotional development and
 - Learning
2. To understand the unique experiences and challenges faced by children in care, adopted from care, or otherwise permanently placed, such as those under Special Guardianship Order (SGO)
3. How to use this knowledge to support children's behaviour and development.
4. To consider the emotional impact on practitioners of working with students who have experienced developmental trauma and how to support staff

16. Priorities for 2020/2021 (retained annually)

Priority 1: To improve outcomes through the effective use of data and targeted intervention

Priority 2: To improve outcomes for LAC with SEND by further development of VS SEN processes, systems and data and training

Priority 3: To extend and further develop education staff and LAC DT training and professional development programme.

Focus areas 2020-2021:

1. Support for catch up and recovery-based activity, academic and emotional health and wellbeing
2. Trauma and attachment aware schools
3. Developing the VS anti-racist practice and equalities focus.
4. PEPs- 'good' to 'outstanding'

Bridie McDonagh
Head Teacher, Virtual School, Ealing Looked After Children
Summer Term 2021



Good, genuinely
affordable homes

Opportunities and
living incomes

A healthy,
great place

