

Virtual School, Ealing Looked After Children Headteacher's Annual Report

Academic Year September 2013 - July 2014

1. The Work of the Virtual School

The role of Ealing's Virtual School is to raise the attainment and educational achievement of Ealing's Looked After Children (LAC). The Virtual School, Ealing Looked After Children Education Team (LACET) do this through working with the children and young people directly as well as providing training, advice, support and consultancy to a number of stakeholders in order to ensure that Ealing's LAC receive a high standard of education and are engaged in appropriate educational activity. The team focus their work on raising aspirations of the young people and relevant professionals so that they can reach their potential and move forward into further and higher education, training and gainful employment.

There were 398 (421 last year) Looked After Children on the 1st September 2013 aged 0-18 years. On 31st August 2014, there were 362 (403 last year) LAC aged 0-18 years. The LAC Education team has a qualified teacher allocated to each Key Stage, from Early Years to Post 16. The Post 16 teacher also worked with 18-23 year old care leavers in higher education. In 2013/14 there were 35 (36 last year) students (14%) at university.

2. Staffing Report

I. Current Staffing

The virtual school LAC Education Team comprise:

Bridie McDonagh (Virtual School Head Teacher)
Sian Hender (Early Years)
Sally Obado (KS1 & 2)
Sue Tarry (KS3)
Claire Hyde (KS4)
Sundeeep Gill (Post 16)
Royanne Johnson Lead Mentor, in post from September 2013

The Head Teacher has been in post for two years. The staff team has remained stable for a number of years. The Lead Mentor post is recruited from the graduate care leaver population and is designed to be a short term post to give a graduate experience and prior to their further studies and/or next career steps.

In 2013-2014, one member of the teaching team has been on a gradual re-entry to work following a serious illness and long term sickness absence. In this period of sickness and then part time re-entry this academic year, the staff team and Lead Early Years' consultant have covered aspects of her work. Two qualified maths and science teachers have provided additional sessional support in the virtual school at the weekly Study Support sessions and on the academic days of the holiday programmes. However, there is more to do in the Early Years Foundation stage to address the gap due to the staff absence.

II. Training and development of staff

As well as individual staff training and professional development (see individual training records) the team took part jointly in 2 training day sessions:

- September 2013 Review of the work of the academic year, action planning and overview of LAC Education Team Year
- Business Plan Development and Priority Action Planning-January 2014

In addition, the virtual school team meet every week for one hour to plan, discuss issues, take forward new initiatives and ensure actions are progressed.

The Virtual School Head meets individually with team teachers every 4-6 weeks for supervision and case discussion. In addition, there is frequent email exchange and more informal contact on all aspects of the work of the virtual school.

3. The Work of the Team

Support to Social Workers

A key role of the virtual school LACET is to work in partnership, advising consulting and supporting with Ealing social workers to support the education of their young people through:

- PEPs (process and new PEP format introduced, training to SWs both in groups and 1-1, attendance in SW offices, team meetings, attendance and education contribution at Away Days)
- Training on educational matters, updating them with current practice
- Applications and admissions process both in and out of borough
- SEN processes and advice on schools/appropriate educational provision
- Advising on pupil premium grant and financial support for education
- Offer of, or signpost to, extra-curricular activities

Support to Schools/colleges/universities

- LAC Designated Teachers Network -training, support and advice forums
- Liaising with designated teachers
- Chairing PEPs
- Training re PEPs and strategies for supporting LAC
- Attending PEPs
- Providing advice and targeted intervention
- Ensuring pupil premium grant is used effectively

Support to Foster Carers

- Training on supporting children in their education e.g. maths based activities at KS1 & 2
- Offering and modelling the use of educational resources to be used in the home
- Distributing and recommending educational materials when appropriate
- Being available for regular progress discussion
- Modelling appropriate enrichment activities
- Providing trips and activities

Working with other professionals

- Fostering team
- Recruitment team (including mentors in-put)
- In borough and out borough Admissions Team
- Exclusion Officers
- London Network of virtual school heads, other virtual schools and local authority colleagues
- LAC Psychologists
- LAC Nurse
- SEN
- Connexions
- Youth Offending Service

Direct Work with young people

Key Stage	Activities available
KS1 & 2	Direct 1-1 teaching of Y6 pupils at Horizons

	PEPs Junior Council Outer Stars Who Cares? Magazine sent out to all KS2 quarterly Letterbox project for those outside of the borough Holiday Activities Study Support (Y6)
KS3	PEPs Mentoring through Ealing run programme Study Support Holiday Activities Academic review evenings/days 1-1 teaching
KS4	PEPs Mentoring (as above) Study Support Holiday Activities Academic evenings 1-1 tutoring
Post 16	Advice/support for Post 16 Pathway Plans Thursday drop-in Financial advice 1-1 support with applications 1-1 academic support Connexions/external agencies Signposting for support agencies e.g unaccompanied asylum seekers

4. Progress and Impact of the LAC Education Team Business Plan

The key priorities of the virtual school Education Action Plan September 2013-August 2014 (updated January 2014):

- Measuring pupils' progress

Priorities: Effective use of data
 Personal Education Plans

Progress and Impact:

-Termly updates on pupil progress and targeted activity provided for Corporate Parent Committee and Children's Services Senior Management.

-LAC Education performance data group to provide an improved cohesive data set using Fwi & Tribal so that all aspects of LAC performance are tracked and can be monitored effectively. A system in place to store, collate and regularly extract attendance and attainment data from in and out borough schools. Underway and December 2013 target date for completion. Tendering process and external company contracted to collect data set August 2014 for new term start, September 2014.

-PEPs: Action Plan in place, regular reporting to CS management of compliance in place. Monitoring data w/e 20th Dec 2013 reached 100% compliance (with exception of 2 PEPs outstanding but having good reason for delay and 9 PEPs to be sent to schools; w/e 16th May 2014, 90% of PEPs complete or scheduled, end of July 2014, a low at 75% complete

but up again by the beginning of the next term. PEPs complete or scheduled has consistently been at around 90% or above this academic year.

Continued and improved level of compliance is an ongoing priority. Regular monitoring in place. Social worker training and support plan underway.

- Defining the Virtual School

Priorities: Raising the profile of Ealing's Virtual School-
Keeping the team dynamic and responsive to changes in the new national context for virtual schools and education change

-Two Ealing schools participation in the GLA project with the A4All and Fostering Network; cross borough work through John Lyons activities (see below) with Tri borough, Brent, Harrow; regular attendance at London VSH Network contributing to the consultation and change in PPG, PEPs and development of a strategic approach to raising attainment of LAC.

-Links developed with range of external agencies and partners to maximise the Virtual School's high quality achievements and programmes

Priorities: Developing key areas of the virtual school's work

-Team members' work aligned with each development stage of education, pupil progress reporting structures in place- in place and ongoing.

-Team's holiday programme structure in place targeting students and using team's areas of specialist knowledge and expertise.

Ealing's Looked After Children have benefited from support from the John Lyon's Charity to deliver a cross borough programme 'Unlocking the Future for Looked After Children' with 3 other boroughs. There are 3 themes to this programme: Literacy; Promoting self –reliance and confidence through group work, expeditions and residential and Access to sport, recreation and drama. In addition, Ealing borough only activities, such as theatre trips and other activities run at school holiday times. (See para 10 *Extra Curricular and Holiday Activities*)

- Challenge and Support

Priorities: To establish and maintain effective channels of communication for stakeholders

- LAC Education update established through report to CS management team monthly. Examples of matters discussed are training available and PEP progress.

-LACET ongoing attendance at area offices and team meetings for regular bespoke advice / consultation on education matters.

-LACET attend and present education matters as a standing item at scheduled Away Days attended by social workers from the LAC teams and the Fostering and Adoption Teams.

-Corporate Parent Committee continues to provide an opportunity to monitor and discuss children and young people's progress and as a forum for children and young people to present their issues from their perspective e.g. Junior Council members presented results of their consultation with other primary aged children which resulted in a series of actions.

5. Outcomes: Attainment of children and young people July 2014

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. The results below also include national performance data published annually and outlining the end of KS2 and KS4 cohorts who have been continuously in care for 12 months or more.

Reference: Education Reports available September 2013, November 2013, March 2014, July 2014, September 2014, all available on Ealing Council website.

Attainment for the academic year September 2013 –2014 was reported in September 2014 after results had been analysed.

End of Key Stage Results 2013 – 2014

Key Stage 2

The KS 2 (Y6 2013/14 Aged 11) total cohort was a little smaller this year 17 (22 previous year) and 13 children (76%, compared with 17 children, 77 % last year) were entered for the SATs.

The KS 2 results overall were excellent this year, in maths the highest achieved to date of our Looked After Children achieving level 4, the nationally expected level (or above) at the end of KS2.

Year 6 cohort 2013/14

Gender	Total	Not entered	Entered for SATs
Male	12	4	8
Female	5	0	5

SEN breakdown

Total	No SEN	School Action	School Action +	Statement
17	8	1	2	6

Of the four children who were not entered for the SATs, three have statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and all are attending special schools outside of the borough.

	English	Maths
Total % of those entered in Y6 who achieved level 4+ (expected level nationally)	11/13= 85%	12/13 = 92%
Total % of LAC in Y6 who achieved level 4+	11/17 = 65%	12/17 = 71%

It is also worth noting that 4 pupils achieved level 5 in English and 4 children achieved level 5 in maths, which are both above the national expectations.

Comparison with last two years

	2012	2013	2014
% of pupils in Y6 entered for SATs	55%	77%	76%
% of those entered who achieved level 4 or above in English	83%	88%	85%
% of those entered who achieved level 4 or above in Maths	33%	53%	92%

Nationally published results

National data published annually provides a comparison across London and nationally. This data measures performance for children who have been in care continuously for 12 months from the 31st March 2014.

Children who have been in care continuously for 12 months from the 31 st March 2014.							
	English			Maths		Combined total Reading, Writing and Maths	
Achieved Level 4 and above (expected level nationally)	R	W	GP&S	75%	1 st in London 7 th joint nationally	58%	2 nd joint London 16 th joint nationally
	67%	67%	58%				
	R=reading W=writing GP&S=Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling						

Summary of KS2 results

This year saw one of the highest percentages ever of children achieving level 4 or above in maths. Of the 13 children who took the SATs, only 2 children did not achieve level 4 or above in English and they both made progress. In maths, one child narrowly missed achieving level 4 and was awarded a 3a.

The English results given show children who achieved a level 4 or above in both their reading test and their writing assessment. 10 out of the 13 children who took the SATs achieved a level 4 in their reading test, their writing assessment and their maths. This is **77% of those who took the SATs** and **59% of the entire Y6 cohort**.

The 2014 target for all Ealing primary schools to achieve the combined total was 78% at for the entire Year 6 cohort including Looked After Children. The actual percentage achieved was provisionally 81%.

Of the children who were not entered for the SATs, one has severe disabilities and is working below level 1, another is in a therapeutic residential home with education attached and he has made progress this year. The other two children are also in special schools outside of the borough but have made excellent progress, now working around a level 3a. Plans have been made for them to integrate back into mainstream schools during year 7.

Key Stage 4 GCSE

In the academic year 2013/14 there were 44 Year 11s (32 in 2013).

In 2014, 30% (13/44) students achieved 5 A* to C grades including English and Maths, which is a 27% increase from 2013 (3% = 1/32). **These are Ealing LAC's best results to date.**

	2012		2013		2014	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
5 A* - C (inc Eng & Maths)	7/38	18%	1/32	3%	13/44	30%
5 A* - C	10/ 38	34%	1/32	3%	14/44	32%
5 + A* - G (inc A* - C grades)	15/ 38	39%	9/32	8%	25/44	57%
1 + A* - G (inc all A* -C grades)	21/ 38	55%	17/32	53%	36/44	82%

The number of students who gained A* - C in English was 16/44 (36%)
 The number of students who gained A* - C in Maths was 14/44 (30%)

The number of LAC who actually took GCSE/ KS4 exams this year was 40/ 44 (91%) of the cohort.

National data published annually provides a comparison across London and nationally. This data measures performance for children who have been in care continuously for 12 months from the 31st March 2014.

Children who have been in care continuously for 12 months from the 31 st March 2014			
2013 / 2014	Ealing	London average	National average
5 A* - C (inc Eng & Maths)	32%	15% Ealing 1 st in London	12% Ealing 3 rd Nationally
5 A* - C	40%	20% Ealing 1 st in London	16% Ealing 3 rd Nationally

This year, none of the students with statements of SEN were disapplied from the KS4 curriculum and all took KS4 exams, including GCSEs, BTECs, Entry Levels and Functional Skills.

In 2014, 4 students (9%) did not sit exams, compared to last year (5 = 16%)

- 1 male student out of borough did not engage with his care plan or education in spite of significant effort by professionals.
- 1 male student out of borough moved several times throughout Year 11 and education could not be sourced in time.
- 1 male student had medical and mental health issues that impacted on his attendance at school and subsequently his GCSEs.
- 1 female student in a residential out of borough placement frequently absconded.

Educational Provisions

Type of provision	Number of students
Mainstream	29 (66%)
Special school	3

Residential Therapeutic/ Care/school linked	5
Alternative Provision (Study Centre, Pupil Parent Partnership, Bespoke AP programmes)	6
HMP/ Secure	1

Significant information relating to this cohort:

Of the 20 students taught in borough, 16 were in mainstream schools. Of the 24 students taught out of borough, 13 were in mainstream schools. This is significantly different to last year, where almost two thirds of the cohort was living out of borough and the majority of these students were not in mainstream schools.

Although LAC cohorts are fluid in terms of those coming in and leaving care, students in the KS4 cohort very rarely go home during this time period. This means that the Year 11 group grows throughout the academic year with students often coming in to care in the last few months – and in some cases - weeks of the academic year. During this academic year, fewer students came in to care towards the end of Year 11 (after Christmas 2013) and therefore the results were more predictable and support was able to be put in. Last year, nine Year 11 students became LAC after Christmas, whereas this year only four did. The LASPO Judgment applied again this year and this meant that two students previously not in care became LAC at a late stage, due to their court sentences.

Another factor to affect results this year was the number of young people who were placed in and around Ealing who attended good or outstanding mainstream schools and were able to regularly access regular sustained and specialist additional support from Horizons (19 = 43%)

Action points from this year

- Ensure all LAC are placed in OFSTED-rated 'good' or 'outstanding' educational provisions, as directed in the statutory guidance, by working collaboratively with social care and the ART Team.
- Support social workers/ ART colleagues to ensure education moves are only made when absolutely necessary – and that (barring an emergency move) an education provision is in place before any planned move so there is no gap in education as per the Statutory Guidance.
- Focus on the small cohort who need a post-16 provision. This will include offering appointments to young people/carers/key workers to discuss options and liaising with colleges and training providers to secure placements.
- Continued work with CRI (substance misuse team) and YOS (Youth Offending Services) to support care plans and ensure young people are tracked, monitored and supported effectively.
- Targeted work with YOS and social workers for young people who come in to care under the LASPO judgment.
- A continued programme of education training to be offered to social workers, carers and related groups.

Post 16 Education Results

Total Graduates 2013/2014

This year there were a total of eight students who graduated from University, six with first degrees and two who graduated with a Masters Degree (ten graduated in 2013 and thirteen in 2011).

As last year, the young people studied a wide variety of courses and achieved varying pass rates from an outstanding first to pass degrees. The numbers of graduates are lower than the previous two years as there were 6 students that started University in 2010 which correlates to the number of students graduating this year. The reason for this decrease in first year university students uptake in 2010 is likely to be linked to results in 2008 when only four students achieved five GCSEs A to C and one of these included English and Maths.

Type of Course/Choice of University Trends 2013/14

In the academic year (2013/14) there were a total of 35 students studying at University level at 21 different institutions (compared to 36 in 2012/13 and 38 students in 2011).

Choice of course and University

A wide range of courses were chosen, although Engineering, Psychology, Business Studies and Social Work are proving to be popular as are Universities in the London area (25/35 students studying at Universities in the London area). University of East London and London Metropolitan are the most popular universities to study amongst our young people. In 2013/14, 3/35 students were studying at Russell Group Universities.

Numbers of students by Year studied

In the academic year 2013/2014, Ealing Care Leavers were in the following years at University:

- Masters – 4 students (3 in 2012/13)
- Other Postgraduate – 2 students (4 in 2012/13)
- Fourth Year – 2 students (1 in 2012/13)
- Third Year – 4 students (9 in 2012/13)
- Second Year – 10 students (7 in 2012/13)
- First Year – 13 students (12 in 2012/13)

Trends

Overall, student numbers at University have slightly decreased in the previous three years. In 2013/14 we had 35 students at university, compared to 36 the year previously. This is compared to 38 in 11/12, 40 students in 10/11, 44 in 09/10, 39 in 08/09, 38 in 07/08, 37 in 06/07, 32 in 05/06, 30 in 04/05 and 27 in 03/04. However, more students continue to study at postgraduate level, with 1 student in 06/07, two in 07/08, three in 08/09, three in 09/10, three in 10/11, seven in 11/12, seven in 12/13 and six in 13/14.

During the Academic Year 2013/14, 3 additional students did not continue their degree courses (2 in 2012/13).

We expect a total of 37 students to be studying at University during the academic year 2014/15, which is 15% of the care leaver group (14% previous year).

Year 12 ETE

Numbers of students in education in Year 12 in 2013/14 has decreased compared to the previous academic year. The NEET percentage has increased compared to the previous year. This reflects the complex year 11 group that took their GCSEs in summer 2013 where 11 were only in mainstream schools and the cohort had special educational needs, mental

health issues or complex social and emotional needs. Students are being supported in alternative appropriate Post 16 Pathways and accreditation.

Year 12 students in study, employment, NEET or other

Category	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
In Study	48/65= 74%	39/52=75%	49/62=79%	33/51=65%
Employed	1/65=1.5%	0/52= 0%	0/62=0%	0/51=0%
Training	1/65=1.5%	2/52= 4%	2/62=3%	4/51=8%
NEET	3/65=20%	11/52=21%	11/62=18%	14/51=27%
Other/unknown	2/65=3%	0/52=%	0/62=0%	0/51=0%

Year 13 ETE

As seen from the table below, the figures for students in education has slightly increased compared to the previous year. The NEET percentage has stayed the same as the previous year. Changing courses, being full time parents and illness have impacted on the figures.

Year 13 students in study, employment, NEET or other

Category	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
In Study	51/75 =68%	45/65 =69%	44/65=68%	49/71=69%
Employed	3/75=4%	0/65 =0%	2/65=3%	3/71=4%
NEET	15/75 =20%	15/65 =23%	14/65=21%	15/71=21%
Training	6/75 =8%	5/65 = 8%	5/65=8%	4/71=6%

LAC Team work to sustain and improve

In order to ensure the uptake for Higher Education is sustained for 2015 entry:

- Appointments have been made with the young people to support them with choosing appropriate courses and Universities and ensuring applications are made to time.
- Advice and support with UCAS applications and student finance is covered with our young people every Thursday during information and Advice for Post 16 students.
- All young people applying to University receive guidance on their personal statements as well as the financial support that is available to them.
- Potential University students are given the opportunity to meet with the Post 16 Teacher regularly at Horizons to access support with assignments as well as any support with the University application process.
- Their progress is tracked and monitored throughout the year with regular dialogue with their College & Sixth Form tutors, Social Workers and 20+ workers.
- We have built strong links with the Refugee Support Network who have offered additional support for our young people with immigration issues who are aspiring to attend University.
- We have also built strong links with Widening Participation Officers that support Care Leavers at University which includes pre application support and advice.

6. Attendance

The attendance figures for all Ealing schools LAC have been published for 2013/14 (based on the new 6 half terms measure).

Based on the 140 children who were looked after continuously for at least 12 months as at 31st March 2014 and that could be matched to absence data, Ealing's Looked After Children had an absence rate of 4.7% during the 2013/14 academic year, with 3.8% of sessions missed for authorised absence reasons and 0.9% missed for unauthorised absence reasons. This is higher than both the national average (3.9%) and London average (4.3%) and has increased from 3.9% in 2012/13.

9 of these children (6.4%) were persistent absentees which is higher than the 4.7% nationally and the 5.3% seen across London and has increased from 5.8% the previous year.

The key issues in attendance in 2013/14 were at KS4 where there were 9 young people with persistent absence.

Fischer Family Trust Aspire publish reports which provide a breakdown of absence and persistent absentee data in to vulnerable groups and these are available for each end of key stage cohort. This data provides an indication as to how Ealing's LAC compare to vulnerable groups in Ealing and nationally.

It is useful to compare Year 11 data in particular as KS 4 is a challenging period for LAC. Ealing LAC have a lower absence rate and persistent absence rate than all other vulnerable groups nationally and all other vulnerable groups in Ealing schools, except those children who joined before Year 10 where Ealing LAC's overall absence rate was marginally lower and persistent absence was higher by 1.4%.

Year 11 children comparison with other vulnerable groups in Ealing schools and nationally			
Category		Ealing	National
FSM and eligible for Pupil Premium Grant	Absence	6%	9%
	Persistent absence	7%	15%
Joined Year 10 or Year 11	Absence	7%	13%
	Persistent absence	7%	25%
Joined before Year 10	Absence	5%	6%
	Persistent absence	5%	7%
Ealing LAC in Ealing schools	Absence	4.7%	
	Persistent absence	6.4%	

The virtual school recognises the importance of good attendance at school in raising attainment for looked after children. Attendance at school and/or alternative provision in and out borough is pursued rigorously by the virtual school teachers and wherever possible the school placement is maintained with an appropriate support package put in place. Where it is clear school is not meeting needs, other alternatives are sought in partnership with schools. If students are refusing to attend or not engaging one of the two PRU provisions in

Ealing as the PRU is part of a wider provision, they will be offered more bespoke and tailored provision from the range available on the local authority's approved list of providers. This would also be accessible to Ealing LAC and looked after children from other local authorities living in Ealing. It has been more difficult to secure that alternative range from other local authorities however, where provision at the PRU can be the only provision offered and any alternative provision left as something the home authority needs to secure if the student refuses to attend the PRU or the PRU does not admit a student. This can cause delays and in turn can further disengage the young person from education.

Examples of support offered to persistent absentees.

Four young people in Year 10 were chronic non-attenders. Attendance has significantly improved for 2 of these young people into Year 11 with a college placement secured for one young woman and a full time distance learning option provided for another young woman who left and re-entered care and is now placed in a residential setting. One of the male students was a frequent absconder from care and returned home intermittently where he still failed to attend his provision but was offered a bespoke provision and kept on the roll of Ealing Alternative Provision to enable access to provision in these periods of absconding from care. Another young man has continued to refuse provision and work is ongoing with a range of professionals to re-engage this young man.

In Year 11, 5 young people were persistent absentees. School refusal and erratic attendance were addressed in school firstly with curriculum adaptations and inclusion provision; then through referrals to more appropriate alternative provision with high student: staff ratios, wrap around therapeutic provision, and distance learning options for one young man who had mental health needs combined with medical issues. One young man moved several times in Year 11 and accessing education was challenging given these placement moves and the level of his disaffection. In spite of this significant level of support and access to bespoke provision, establishing attendance remained a challenge. Although 40/44 (91%) of the Year 11 cohort accessed exams, 4 (9%) of these young people in Year 11 did not sit exams.

Supporting students through to Post-16 destinations

Analysis of post-16 destinations in November 2014 show that the small number of students who either did not sit exams or did not meet the requirements for the courses they applied for were supported by the KS4 and KS5 LAC Teachers and the LAC Connexions Adviser and Ealing's Year 12 NEETs was lower than the previous year (by November 2014) with three students NEET (6%, 12% last year). Targeted work is ongoing to engage NEETs post 16.

7. 15th Education Awards – Sept 2013

The virtual school celebrates attainment and progress every year in a prestigious event held at Ealing Town Hall. The Education Awards ceremony is part of the calendar of events each year along with Rising Stars day and the Outer Limits programme, this year replaced with Outer Stars, a combined event for younger children and young people leaving care.

The annual Education Awards always very popular with children, young people and carers took place on the 27th September 2014 in Victoria Hall at the Ealing Town Hall. There was a good attendance filling the hall as usual for the ceremony with many attending this event from out borough schools. The awards presented another opportunity for children living outside the borough to link with the work of the team in the virtual school. All the young people invited to receive academic awards were presented with a certificate, vouchers and had their photograph taken with the Mayor.

The Director, Children and Families opened the 15th Annual Education Awards and a number of Corporate Parent Committee members attended. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People presented certificates. One of our post - graduates who had been supported to retake GCSE Maths through individual maths tutoring at Horizons spoke about his personal educational journey through to his current position teaching at a primary school in September 2013, having successfully gained GCSE Maths.

Other guests attending included teachers and head teachers and Designated Teachers from the schools the children attend sharing in the celebration and acknowledging their hard work and achievement. Foster carers, social workers, youth workers and residential workers were also part of the audience invited alongside family members.

8. Student Leadership Committees

Junior Council

The Junior Council was established in September 2010 and is made up of eight children from KS2. These representatives aim to improve the lives of children in care through sharing their views, developing projects and communicating with senior officers and elected members. This is through the monthly meetings (which are led by two teachers and our Lead Mentor and the Corporate Parent Committee Meetings, at which the children always give an update. Over the last 3 years, the Junior Council has improved communication between young people and social services and has changed and influenced the corporate parenting they receive. Junior Council representatives communicate with the rest of KS2 by sending a letter with the Who Cares? Magazine which is quarterly and they invite KS2 to our Rising Stars event. The Junior Council staff the consultation stand and wear their JC T-shirts so that other children can identify and seek them out.

This year, following a survey about the role of the social worker that the Junior Council designed and sent out, they spent time discussing the results and planning the next steps. Carol Yates, Operations Manager, LAC and Leaving Care, Team attended a meeting in May, where she discussed the outcomes with the children and explored the areas further. The children participated fully and were very keen and articulate in expressing their views and drawing on their own experiences.

During the May half term holiday, five of the Junior Council members went to Perceval House to meet with seven team managers. Discussion with the children on what they liked and didn't like and suggestions of ways to improve the service, were then taken forward at the LAC Teams Away Day to put these ideas could be put into practice. Children have commented positively on improvements to the service as a result of the project.

Mentoring Programme

The (ME) Mentoring Project started in 2005 as part of the Aim Higher project at West London University (formerly known as Thames Valley University). This was a weekend project that then developed into weekly sessions. The project is in its eighth year. The project is run by Care Leavers and is for young people in Care from years 8 to 13. All our Lead mentors have been Ealing Care Leaver graduates. Currently, we have one Lead mentor, one Co-ordinator and 8 mentors. On average 8 to 10 mentees have attended each week over the year.

Our mentors delivered a presentation to Councillors from Hillingdon LA who visited Horizons on Monday 7th October 2013 on the work of the mentoring project.

Pauline Bennett, Policy and Procedures Officer, worked with our mentors and mentees over two sessions to design an information pack for young people aged 12 years to post 16 who are entering care.

Another session was run by one of our LAC team Clinical Psychologists. This included a discussion on 'What is Psychology', the myths surrounding this field, the different fields in Psychology, routes to becoming a Psychologist and own journey to becoming a qualified Psychologist.

The aim of the project is to improve the aspirations of mentees by sharing experiences, to inform young people in care about the different services and options that are available to them as well as to support and guide young people to become independent individuals. This has been achieved by focusing on relationships between mentors and mentees, mentors target setting with their mentees to achieve their aspirations as well encouraging mentors to take leadership to run and organise sessions. Mentors are able to support and advise on issues around current education and future aspirations for our young people. They also offer encouragement and help young people to talk through issues mentees wish to discuss. Sessions have included inspirational speakers, taster sessions at local Colleges and Universities as well as mentor led sessions. Mentees are referred to the Project through social workers, carers and the LAC Teachers. Young people are referred to the project because they may need support with homework, confidence building, advice on education options, organisation, planning for new opportunities, trying new activities and workshops. Mentors and mentees attend Corporate Parent three times a year to provide an overview and update of what has taken place each term.

9. Pupil Premium Grant

The pupil premium grant (PPG) has increased in April 2013 to £900 from £623. There was a further increase in April 2014 to £1,900 and the PPG was extended to include children in care for one day or more as recorded in the March census. The PPG for Looked After Children was allocated to the virtual school for the first time to allocate and oversee the funding from April 2014. An Ealing Policy setting out Ealing's approach for the PPG April 2014-March 2015 was published in July 2014.

The Ealing policy principles:

- Ealing would embrace the spirit of the intention in the increase in the grant to adopt a 'child centred' approach.
- Ealing Virtual School will take a pragmatic approach to the Pupil Premium Plus that centres around the statutory tool of the Personal Education Plan.
- We will support good practice in schools for PEPs, that PEPs are in place and complete with SMART targets, outcomes identified, impact assessed.
- If there are concerns with progress or the grant is not being used appropriately to fund what is agreed at the PEP, this will trigger a conversation with the DT in the school.

The policy introduced to schools Ealing's *Pupil Premium Plus Provision Plan* pro-forma (or schools' own provision individual provision map) setting out how the additional funding will be used to improve outcomes for each Looked After Child. This was to provide the Virtual school with valuable monitoring information on all the children in care to the local authority.

The policy emphasised that the Pupil Premium should focus on activity to raise attainment and close the gap between Looked After Children and their peers with the grant providing 'additionality' for the Looked After Child.

The PPG continues to be used on a wide variety of additional activities for Looked After Children this year from tuition for catch up to increased levels of pastoral support and/or counselling (e.g. Place to Be) to help children with emotional needs that detract from their achievement and progress.

Schools are asked at PEP meetings how the pupil premium is being used, its impact on attainment and this is noted on the PEP document. Tracking progress, evidencing good practice and measuring the impact of interventions funded through the pupil premium grant continues to be an on-going area of development.

10. Extra Curricular and Holiday Activities

Every half term, Easter, summer and some weekends, the LAC Education Team offers activities from Horizons.

The Virtual school runs various activities for different age groups in the holidays and this year, KS2 participated in a Roald Dahl Project. This included dramatised readings of the books, a chocolate workshop, a trip to the Roald Dahl Museum in Great Missenden and tickets to Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, the Musical.

Last year we reported on a very successful residential that took place in the summer 2013, where 6 young people from Ealing and 6 from Brent travelled to Devon to take in a high quality creative writing workshop.

In a follow up session in October 2014 one of the Arvon professional guest writers, Caroline Bird led a poetry workshop for 19 young people aged between 12yrs and 17yrs. Also in October half term 2014 16 young people benefitted from a visit to Cambridge University. Study support sessions were offered as a regular weekly session throughout the academic year and targeted sessions were run during the school breaks for GCSE maths, English and science support.

Projects offered this year by the virtual school education team include theatre visits to Warhorse, Matilda and Richard 111. These trips included young people coming from out of borough placements in Kent, Sussex and Herts.

Notable projects were the Fashion Project and the Opera at Holland Park. The fashion project was in collaboration with the RCA and started at Easter, finishing with a fashion show at the RCA in June 2014. This engaged a group of 14 young people, one young woman travelling from Ipswich to join the group. Part of the project included a trip to the headquarters of the prestigious Burberry International Design House. Skills gained were in printing techniques, tailoring and photography. Students were able to use this work for school textiles' work and GCSE folders.

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On Saturday 26th July 2014 the whole LAC community (children, young people, care leavers, social workers, foster carers, managers, councillors) were invited to attend the Outer Stars Day, a fun day at the newly refurbished Hanwell Community Centre. Around 250 Looked After Children with carers, family, friends and professionals enjoyed participating in a variety of activities including roller blading, football, basketball, T shirt printing, singing, face painting and circus skills. The Mayor, Councillors and Senior Managers supported the event.

This event, organised by the virtual school and the Horizons staff, also served as an opportunity for people to spend time together. Young people expressed their excitement about seeing their past foster carers and vice versa. There was a great family atmosphere and it was particularly good that many of the young people who live out of the borough attended. The relationships developed on these days play a crucial part in engaging the young people in future educational activities.

Supported by funding from John Lyons, the virtual school continues to provide many activities as above and frequent trips to the theatre workshops and productions, music venues and dance workshops.

11. Horizons Centre

The unique Horizons Centre continues to offer a great space dedicated to Looked After Children and care leavers to access support and engage in activities designed to increase their skills, broaden their knowledge base and ultimately to raise attainment and achieve. The strength of the Horizons model continues to be the added value of a young person led centre with all key staff working out of one place and working closely together. There are ongoing easy opportunities for joining up with the other colleagues on projects and initiatives.

The LAC Education Team has run the mentoring programme and training for mentors from Horizons this year, as well as the additional teaching and holiday activities and our Junior Council.

The Horizons Senior Council (the HSC) also runs from the centre and some of the members attend and chair a whole staff meeting every couple of months.

A semi-independent outreach team is based at the Horizons Centre, as well as a Leaving Care Connexions PA and youth workers. There is a manager of the centre and a deputy plus one administrator who covers reception. There are lots of comings and goings. It continues to be very popular and heavily used.

The centre is a well-kept and attractive space offering a base for the virtual school and the young people really do find it young people friendly.

Key activities offered from Horizons are study support sessions on Wednesday pms, Thursday Drop Ins for Post 16 and individual study support. This can be after school tailored individual support or to care leavers and college or University students who have made use of it during the day time to support their coursework and studies.

Horizons continues to be a meeting place for students, staff and care leavers. This opportunity to work creatively together at the centre over time has developed team planning and the virtual school LAC Education programme to a high standard, focused, aspirational and targeted in content and for students.

The Corporate Parent Committee holds its half termly meetings at Horizons.

12. Complaints

There have been no complaints this academic year.

13. Priorities for 2014/15

- To maximise progress and close the attainment gap for statutory school aged LAC by informed use of data and targeted support.

- To target pre statutory school age children at risk of not achieving EY goals by reviewing the Early Years PEP, developing process and training in line with all key stages.
- To improve the quality of targets set in PEPs to raise the attainment through further and ongoing training of social workers and Designated Teachers.
- To offer support to LAC at risk of under achieving and not making expected or better levels of progress through robust tracking of progress and attainment aided by more comprehensive data collection and analysis.
- To improve attendance and reduce persistent absence targeting timely support and intervention using the *LAC Call* live system.
- To increase ETE through targeted intervention for Post 16 students.
- To embed the Ealing PPG policy and monitoring systems increasing effectiveness of the funding for impact on outcomes for LAC, including the use of the LAC Educational Psychologist from centrally held PPG.
- To extend the LAC DT training and professional development programme.

Bridie McDonagh
Head Teacher, Virtual School, Ealing Looked After Children
April, 2014