



Children Looked After

Annual Report of the work of the Virtual School

September 2018 – August 2019

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Executive Summary

In line with DfE standards, the data reported in this document is based on those children and young people who have been continuously looked after for a minimum of 12 months from April 1st, 2018 to March 31st, 2019 – hereafter referred to as the reporting cohort. This executive summary covers statutory school age, whilst the body of the report also includes Early Years and Post 16.

At the Bracknell Forest Virtual School we believe we are making a difference to the lives of children and young people in care. This report evidences broadly positive educational outcomes, strong progress from entry to care, good attendance, few exclusions, high aspirations, strong vocational and academic pathways and effective preparation for adulthood. This is all brought about by a strong virtual school team, including caseworkers who advocate for every looked after child. However, we know we can do even better and we reflect constantly on the impact of our actions and make appropriate changes.

Early indications suggest that the overall performance is positive with improvement across reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling and Maths at Key Stage1, 2 and a strong performance at KS4.

Key Stage 1: Of the three pupils in the reporting cohort for 2018-19, two attended schools with an Ofsted judgement of good or outstanding. The one child in a school which required improvement (RI), had their needs met, made good progress and achieved at least the required standard across all assessed areas. Such small numbers make year on year trends statistically unreliable. However, 100% of the cohort achieved at least the expected levels across reading, writing, mathematics and phonics. There were no children in the cohort who had an Education, Health, Care plan (EHCP).

Bracknell Forest context at Key Stage 1 for all pupils: 67% of pupils achieved the required standard in their combined scores for reading, writing and mathematics (RWM), 2% greater than the national average of 65%. For disadvantaged pupils', reading, writing and maths combined levels, the gap has been reduced by 7% on that attained in 2018.

Key Stage 2: Of the reporting cohort of six pupils, 83%, attended schools with an Ofsted judgement of Good. One child remained in a school which was RI to maintain stability and continued to receive support that met their needs. Three pupils had an EHCP, four attended schools in Bracknell Forest and two were in schools in other local authorities. 100% of the cohort achieved at least the required standard across reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Bracknell Forest context at Key Stage 2: 64% of pupils (just below the national average of 65%) achieved the required standard in the combined score for expected at RWM. Attainment in reading at the expected standard declined nationally by 3%, whilst outcomes in Bracknell Forest only saw a 1% decrease and consequently remain 3% above the provisional national measure. Over the last academic year outcomes in writing at KS2 were a priority area for the LA and the 2% increase on 2018 attainment at the expected standard places attainment in writing above the national for the first time over the last four year period. Outcomes at the expected standard in mathematics are also the highest they have been for the last four years and at 79% is now in line with the provisional national picture.

Key Stage 4: There were fourteen pupils in the reporting cohort, nine of which attended schools in other local authorities. five of which attended special schools or specialist provision, 7 of these were educated out of county. 79% attended schools with an Ofsted judgement of good or better. 100% of the cohort securing at least one pass whilst six secured at least four passes between grades 4 to 9. All pupils have been supported to find

positive destinations for post 16 and have started these programmes in September 2019. We are currently awaiting validated Attainment 8 data for the cohort.

Progress was greatest in pupils with good levels of attendance and so this will be continually monitored and challenged. Progress and outcomes were highest for children with none or only one move compared to those with more placements.

Bracknell Forest context at Key Stage 4: Outcomes in all key measures at the end of Key Stage 4 have decreased on that achieved in 2019. Attainment 8 in Bracknell Forest is down slightly this year at 47.6, compared to 48.6 in 2018.

Post-16 engagement is supported and monitored on a monthly basis. Of the 20 care leavers who were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) in July 2019, 6 were actively engaging with the Virtual School and therefore being supported to secure positive destinations.

Attendance and exclusions: We are delighted that as a result of strong partnerships and swift support and intervention by the Virtual School in partnership with social care, there have been no permanent exclusions of looked after children for at least the last five years. Fixed term exclusions rose nationally and regionally in 2018/19, and we are concerned at the rate of fixed term exclusions particularly for those on SEN Support in Bracknell Forest.

The overall attendance for looked after children has remained consistently high since 2014. In 2018/19, the overall absence for children looked after was 3.3%, which is significantly better than the national (4.5%) and regional (4.1%) averages.

Personal Education Plans and Pupil Premium: Progress and attainment data suggests that PP+ is having a positive impact. We have encouraged schools to use the funding effectively to meet emotional and social needs as well as focusing on the academic outcomes.

Role of the Virtual School

The role of the Virtual School Head is to take the lead in promoting the educational achievement of looked after, and from September 2018, that of previously looked after children. This report will consider our work with previously looked after children below.

We monitor the attendance and progress of our children looked after through a commissioned service 'Welfare Call'. There is a requirement to inform head teachers that they have a child on roll that is looked after by the Local Authority. In addition the Virtual School should ensure that each child has an up to date, effective and high quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) that focuses on education outcomes.

As a Virtual School, we are continuously committed to achieving the best outcomes for all children looked after. This is reflected through our accurate and detailed data along with knowledge of the children and young people to target support more effectively and consistently review our interventions, strategies and use of funding for impact.

In addition to fulfilling their educational potential and increasing life chances through academic achievement; it is a priority for young people leaving care to be positive and contributing members of their communities.

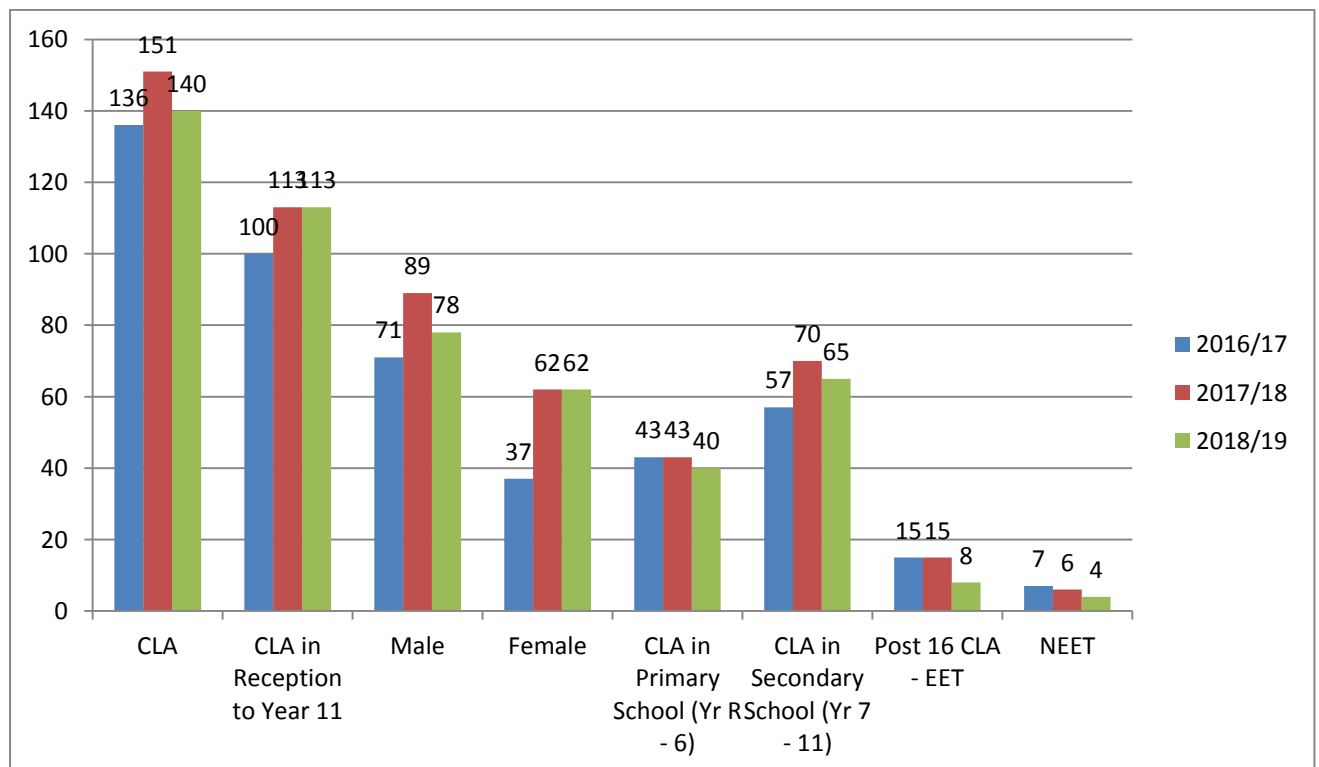
At the end of the 2018/19 academic year, there were 140 children looked after of which 113 were from Reception to Year 13 on the Bracknell Forest Virtual School roll. These children attend 72 different schools, 49 of which are in other Local Authorities. The attendance data collected by Welfare Call allows us to take individual and urgent action where attendance becomes an issue and to use data to better plan intervention, to identify risk factors and to be pro-active in tackling poor engagement before patterns become ingrained.

In accordance with changes previously introduced by the DfE regarding the administration of Pupil Premium funding for children looked after, the Conditions of Grant state that Pupil Premium for children in care must be managed by the Virtual School Head. This means that Bracknell Forest Virtual School is responsible for monitoring and auditing the use of this funding and ensuring that the money makes a real difference to the individual children in the cohort.

As a Virtual School, we continuously seek to develop an in-depth understanding of the child's educational needs and challenges, advise on, secure and maintain best possible education provision according to these needs, raise awareness of attachment issues and barriers to learning with schools and providers through termly Designated Teacher forums, coordinate, chair and process Personal Education Planning (PEP) meetings and documentation, arrange access to additional resources to raise attainment and progress, and develop interests and provide additional one to one advice, guidance and support for engagement in education, training and employment.

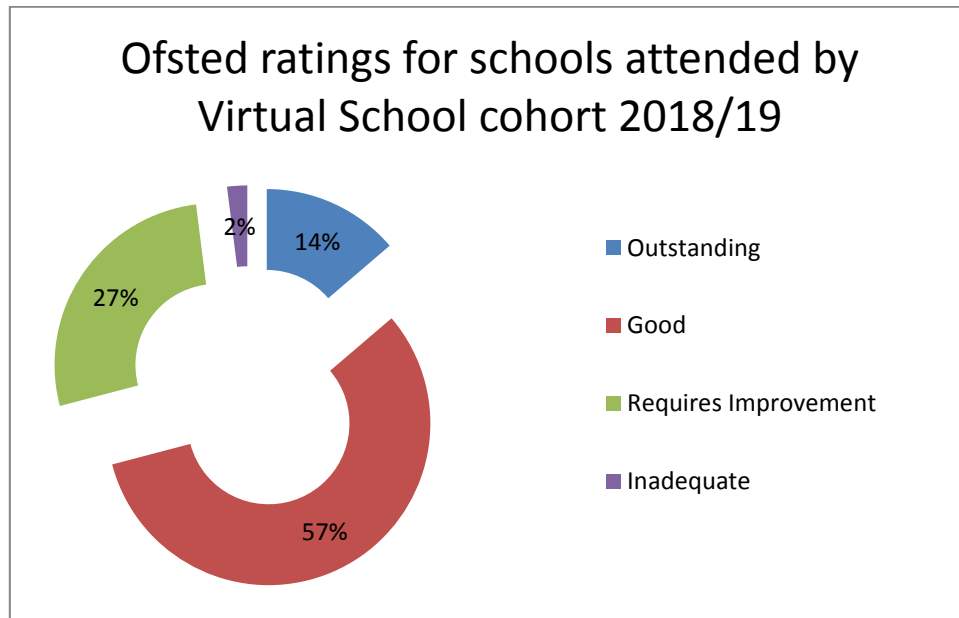
Virtual School Roll

The number of children looked after remained similar to those for the previous academic year:

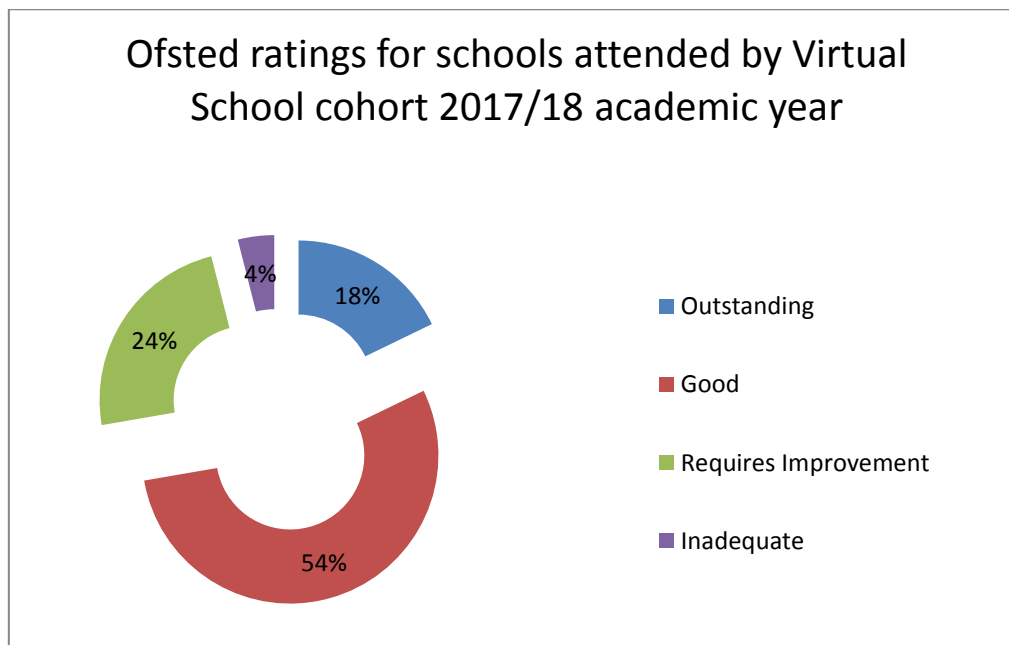


Ofsted Ratings

The statutory guidance 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of looked after children' states that schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' should be prioritised for children looked after in need of a new school and that, unless there are exceptional, evidence-based reasons, children looked after should not be placed in a school judged to be 'inadequate'. The majority of Bracknell Forest's children looked after (71%) attend 'good' or 'outstanding' schools.



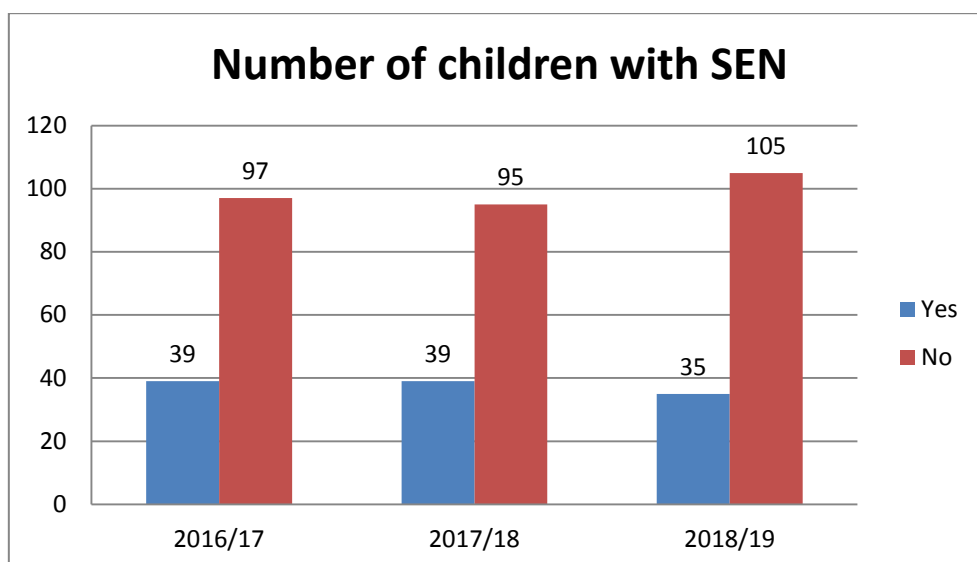
This figure is 1% lower than the cohort that was reported for 2017/18:



When children are placed at a school before a judgement which is less than 'good' is made consideration must always be made by the Virtual School as to whether a fall in Ofsted grading would justify disrupting a child's education with a school move.

Special Educational Needs

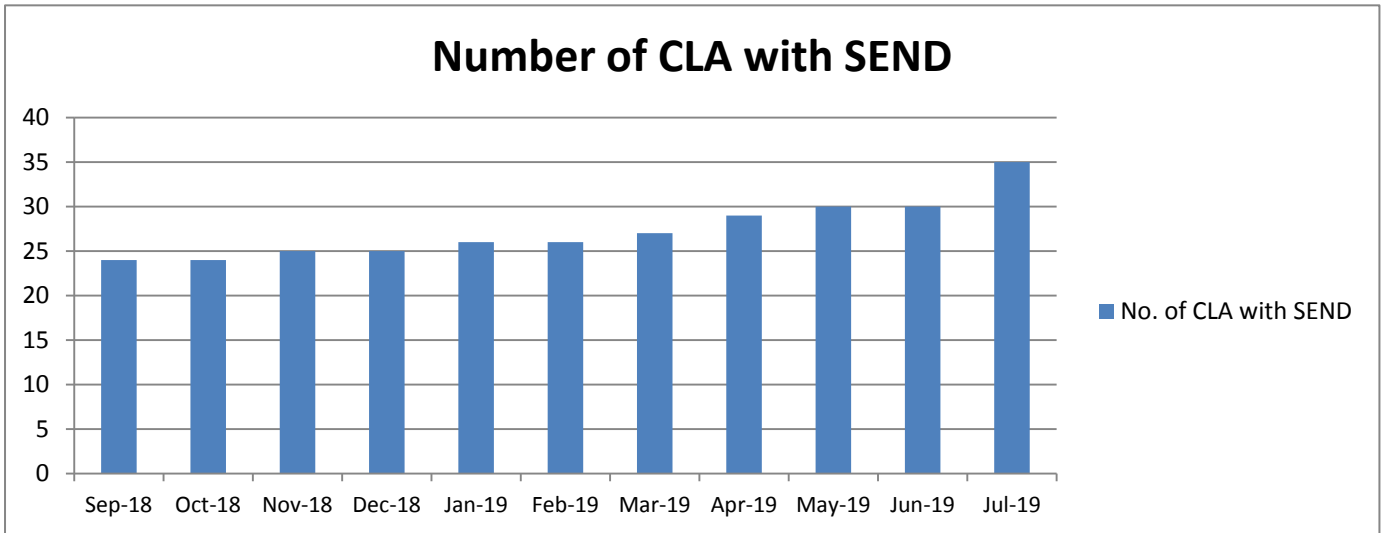
Children Looked After are almost 4 times more likely¹ to have an identified SEN and almost 10 times more likely to have an EHCP than all children. Nationally in 2018, 55.5% of children looked after had a special educational need and 26.5% had an EHCP. In Bracknell Forest, 52% of the cohort have identified special educational needs and 31% of the total cohort (i.e. 35 children looked after) are supported by an EHCP whilst the remainder are on SEN Support. This picture has remained fairly constant for the past three years:



Nationally, children looked after are 3 times more likely to have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) as their primary need than their peers. In Bracknell Forest, this proportion is slightly lower where 36% of our children looked after with EHCP's have SEMH identified as their primary need. We are addressing this through raising awareness with schools and supporting them to be more attachment and trauma informed, so that they can respond more effectively to social and emotional needs and challenging behaviour.

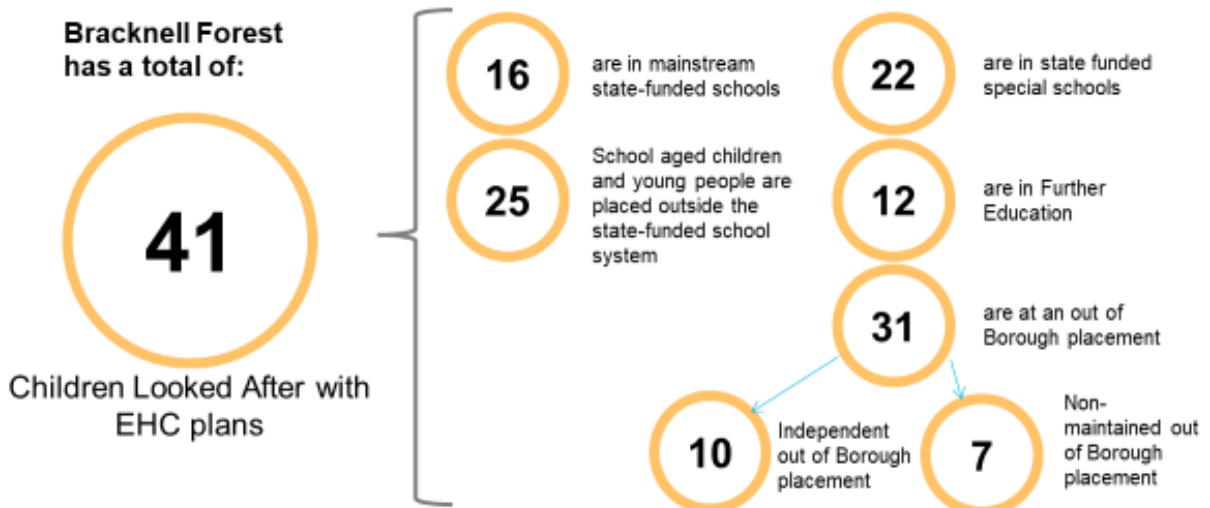
The number of children looked after with EHCP's has increased month on month across the 2018/19 academic year:

¹ DfE March 2018 Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, 31 March 2018



Analysing this cohort, we know that:

Children Looked After with EHCP's (July 2019)

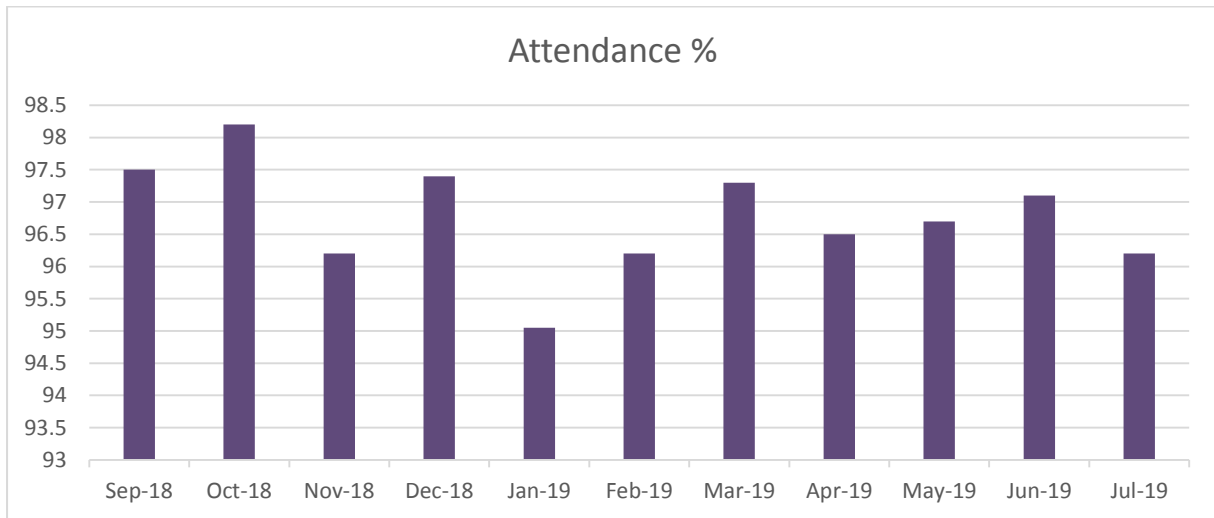


It is essential that there are robust arrangements in place to ensure that any undiagnosed special educational needs are addressed through the SEND framework as soon as possible and this remains a key task for the Virtual School. In addition to this, there are on-going pressures to navigate through the complex national SEND landscape when children looked after with EHCP's are placed in out of borough provision.

To address this, a protocol is being developed in partnership with relevant teams that will not only serve purpose to highlight the additional challenges this cohort of children looked after experience but also strengthen support the LA offers to vulnerable children. This is expected to be in place during the 2019/20 academic year and will be one of the priorities of the Virtual School to develop.

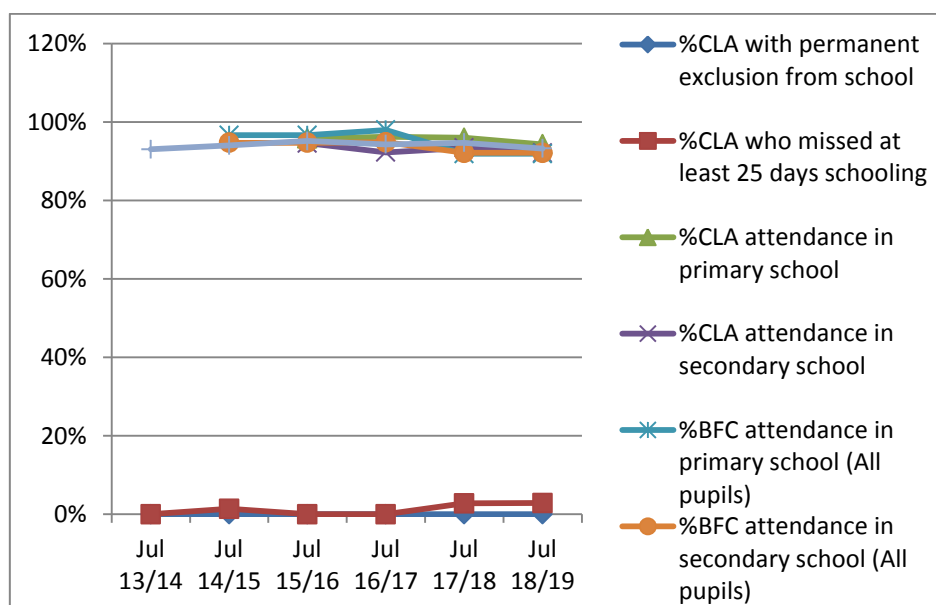
Attendance

Bracknell Forest Virtual School has commissioned the services of Welfare Call to monitor the attendance of Children Looked After. They call each school every day to ensure we have a pro-active approach to improving the attendance of our children looked after:

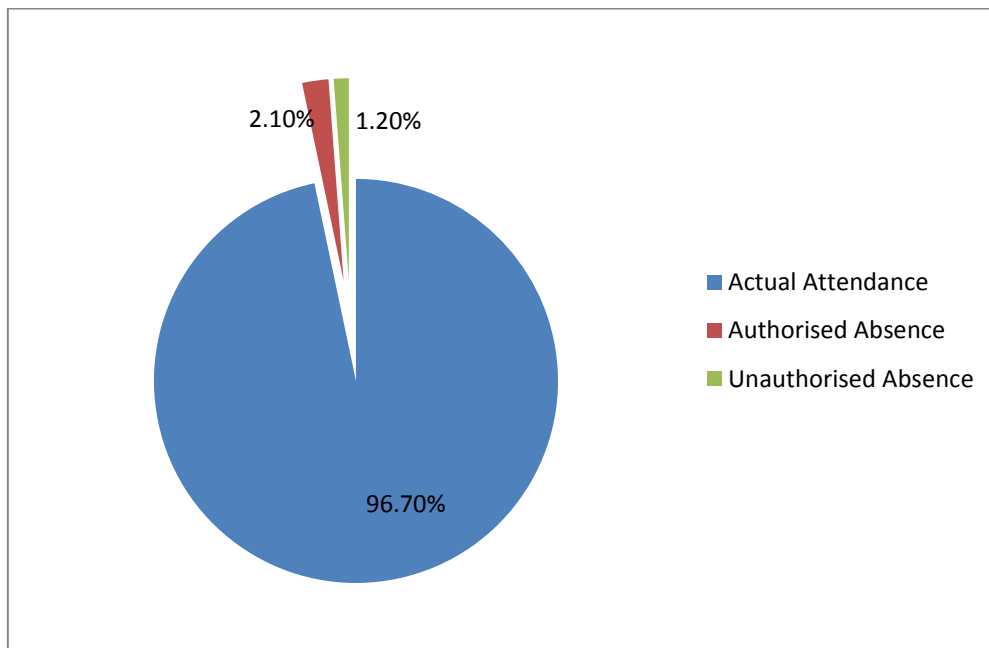


There were three children looked after with significant absenteeism and a range of strategies were put in place with limited success. They have now left formal education and have secured full time employment. There were 13 children looked after in total whose attendance fell below 85%. In all cases, this was also combined with a lack of engagement with their education and behaviour for a period of time across the academic year. This is clearly of great concern and tackling this absenteeism is a key priority for the Virtual School. Working closely with social care to support schools in having a better understanding of the needs of children looked after will be one of the key areas of planning.

Trends noted for the past five years reflect a continuously high rate of attendance for children looked after in line with their peers. This can be noted in the rate of attendance of 93.2% of the total Bracknell Forest school population during 2018/19 and is analysed to be in line with their peers across the borough:



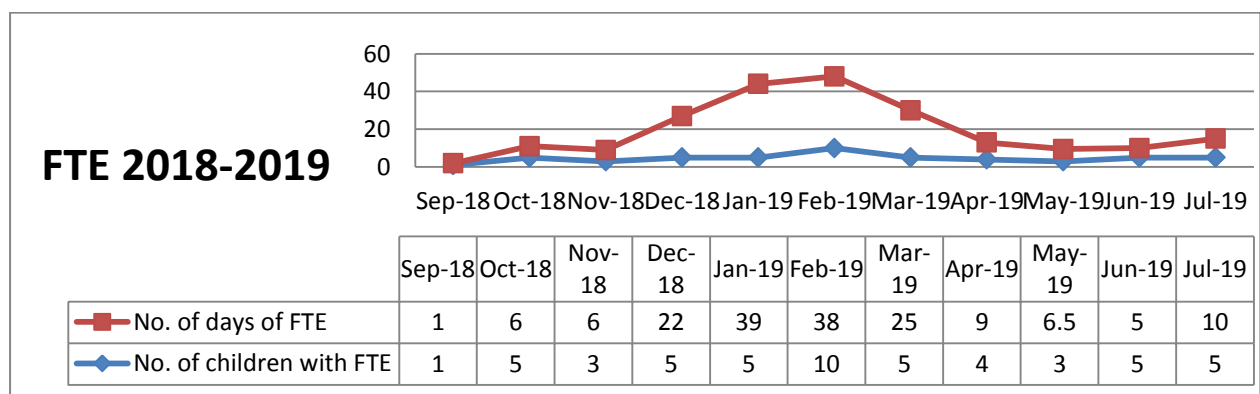
A further area of interest is the information on the remaining 3.3%. This is made up of:



Foster carers are aware of the processes related to term time absence. A significant proportion of the unauthorised absence is also linked to those who had either an average attendance figure lower than 85% and/or a fixed term exclusion. As raised previously, this continues to remain an area of priority for the Virtual School.

Exclusions

The statutory guidance ‘Promoting the Educational Achievement of looked after children’ states that “head teachers should, as far as possible, avoid excluding any looked after child”. The illustration below demonstrates the position on Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE’s) for Bracknell Forest’s children looked after across the 2018/19 academic year:



The above table reflects a total of 14 children looked after who experienced various periods of FTE’s across the year - this was in comparison to 12 children experiencing fixed term exclusions resulting in a total of 176 days missed from school for the previous academic year.

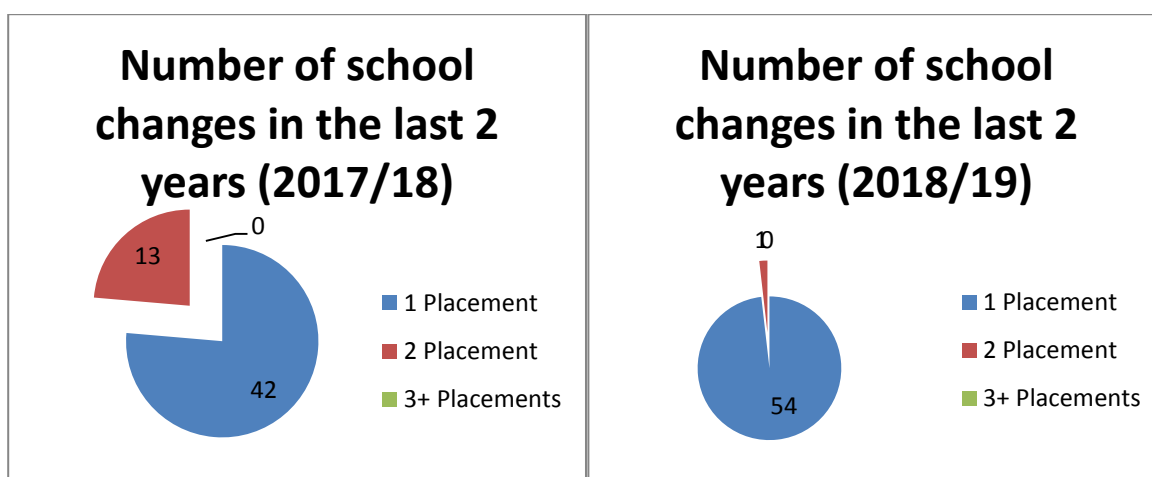
No child looked after was permanently excluded during the 2018/19 academic year.

There were various reasons behind each episode of fixed term exclusion. A member of the Virtual School and the child's social worker was always present at reintegration meetings at school to not only advocate for the young person but also to support the school to ensure they had the resources to meet their needs.

Reducing the incidence and risk of fixed term exclusions is a key priority for the local authority.

Achieving Stability

Underpinning all aspects of the Virtual School's work is a commitment to minimising disruptions to learning so that children looked after achieve the stability they need to learn and flourish. Research is clear that disruption to school placements can have a detrimental effect on any child's education and it has been identified as a contributing factor to the attainment gap between children looked after and their peers. In Bracknell Forest, every effort is made to maintain education placements even when a child may move home. We track the number of schools a child has attended each year.



Children move schools for a number of reasons which include:

- Change of foster placement which means that continuing at current school is unrealistic
- Carers move house which means that continuing at current school is unrealistic
- Change to live with adopters
- Change of school if proximity to social contacts/family mean are having a strong negative impact on the child's progress and learning
- Change when school can no longer meet needs (SEN or non-SEN)

The Virtual School supports Children's Social Care where a new school place is to be secured. Where possible, we look to minimise moves especially during Key Stage 4. Once a notification from the social worker has been received, the Virtual School generally takes on the responsibility to identify suitable schools by liaising with Admission Teams in Bracknell Forest and other local authorities, searching against information held by Ofsted and having discussions with foster carers about their local knowledge of schools.

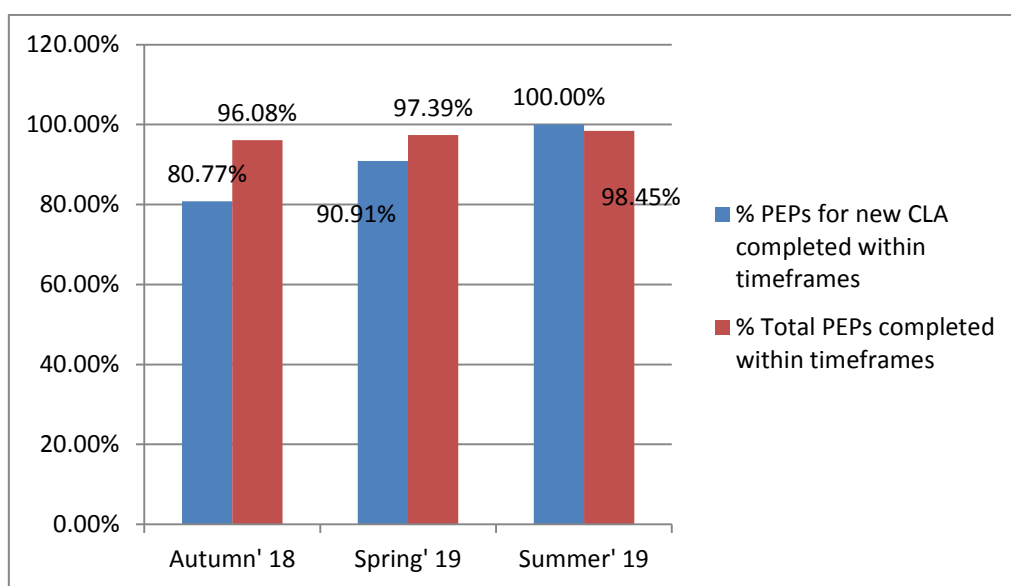
There is however an ongoing challenge that we experience in placing children looked after in academies. Working alongside Virtual Schools across the South East, we know that this is a national issue – one which we will continue to collaborate with other partners on.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

The Virtual School attends all initial PEP meetings for children and young people between the ages of three and eighteen years old and at least one meeting across the academic year. During the initial PEP, the Virtual School leads the meeting to demonstrate how the PEP should be completed and how to ensure that targets are SMART and appropriate. The Virtual School also takes responsibility for ensuring that the PEP is completed and the Social Worker is aware of the details in readiness for the initial PEP which is no longer than twenty days since coming into care. PEPs are reviewed each term with the education provider to taking a lead in these by reviewing the impact of the previous actions, update the PEP and return to the Virtual School. Support and training is available to assist schools and settings with the PEP process. The timeframe specified by the DfE mentions two PEPs a year.

There is a statutory responsibility on local authorities to ensure that children looked after have at least two PEP meetings per year. The Bracknell Forest Virtual School offer is to hold a termly PEP.

The chart below shows the percentage of PEPs for school age children and new children looked after completed within the termly timescale. Our target is to achieve at least a 95% completion rate for each term.



The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that look after the child and the school. Social workers, carers, VSHs, Designated Teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will need to work closely together. Social Workers have been asked to prioritise attendance at PEP meetings so that they gain essential information about their child. As well as updates on their attainment and progress this should include discussion of their attitude, emotional state, friendships etc.

If a child has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) then one of PEP meetings is aimed to run alongside the annual SEN review. This means that targets in the EHCP can be addressed through the PEP and that Social Workers and carers have the chance to review the impact of the SEN support for the child.

Although our approach and performance reflects a position of strength of the Virtual School, it also builds on the quality assurance process we have developed over the past year in relation to PEPs. The key questions we ask are:

- Is there detailed information about the young person's engagement with learning, social engagement, strengths and interests?
- Analysis of need – is there sufficient information of the young person's barriers to achievement?
- What is currently in place – is there a clear link between analysis of need, strengths and actions taken by the school/setting/college?
- Future Planning – are actions linked to stated areas of interest?
- Are the outcomes linked to analysis of need? Are they aspirational and relevant? Do actions match the outcomes? Is it clear how the impact is being measured?
- Spend details of the Pupil Premium that are linked to targets
- Pupil voice clearly portrays young person's views
- PEP sent within advised timescales

Pupil Premium

The Conditions of Grant for Pupil Premium Plus published in March 2014 stated that the funding should be managed by Virtual School Heads from April 2014.

At the end of March 2018, approximately £220k had been allocated to schools against plans they had submitted. This was from a total allocation of £240k where £20k was allocated to the Educational Psychology Service to account for the resource we commission.

Transfer of the CLA Pupil Premium Grant is made in two instalments at two specific junctures in the financial year. The first payment is made at the end of Autumn Term to account for the most recent Summer and the current Autumn Term (hence includes payments for two terms). There are concerns that if the money is paid as a lump sum then it excludes those children who may become eligible later in the term. Similarly there may be CLA who change education placements after payment of the grant. It is not possible to pay the grant twice for any looked after child. Therefore, we make payments to settings that a LAC attends at the start of each term. This practice has been shared at the regional Virtual School Heads meeting and has been adopted by a number of other Virtual Schools as a result of being cited as good practice.

The focus of the Pupil Premium for children looked after is on the following areas:

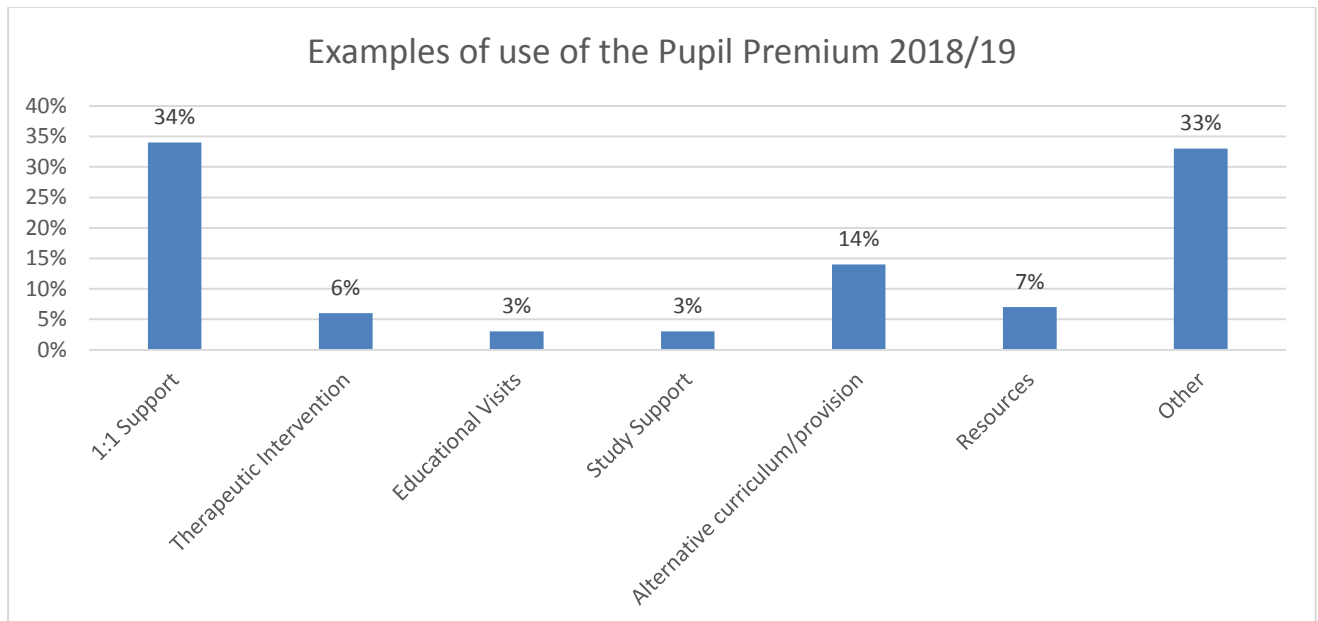
- Academic achievement and progress – clear outcomes and actions.
- Wider achievement – in an area in which the child is gifted and talented.
- Attendance.
- Inclusion – by reducing internal and external exclusion.
- Resilience training, social skills and therapeutic work.
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider.

Increasingly, more examples of the effective use of pupil premium are being reported. Some of these include:

- Additional support in school that will build self-esteem, confidence, resilience or learning skills. Examples of this have been nurture group provision and therapeutic support.
- Aspiration raising activities often outside of school to support engagement with learning in school.
- Extra learning resources over and above what the school provides for all children.

- Alternative education packages.

The cost of these interventions were:



These case studies reflect examples of impact in relation to the effective use of the Pupil Premium:

Barriers to progress and learning for A: is placed in an out of area mainstream school but school were struggling to manage behaviour. There were in excess of 10 incidents during the summer term 2018 3 of which led to fixed period exclusions.

Actions: Pupil A has had behaviour interventions funded through Pupil Premium. The school also worked in partnership with placement to develop a reward and consequence system. A began to understand that injuring staff led to consequences such as losing ICT time rather than gaining rewards towards activities he enjoys such as horse riding. A's class teacher also provided placement and class staff with training on PDA (which A has many traits of) which focused on A's individual behaviours. The training helped staff working with A to understand the reasons behind the behaviours and how to manage this. This has helped reduce incidents of challenging behaviour both in school and residential.

Outcomes: During the 2018/19 academic year, A had just one significant incident leading to a two day fixed term exclusion which was in the Autumn Term. During the past year, school staff have developed A's communication skills, friendship circles and general level of well-being. This is reflected in A's achievements and significant reduction in behaviour incidents.

Barriers to progress and learning for D: Initial meeting and PEP indicated D working below the expected level. Signs of low self esteem were displayed with extreme disruptive behaviour frequently observed leading to four separate instances of fixed term exclusions.

Actions: A combination of alternative provision for 1 day per week along with canine therapy was put in place following the autumn term PEP.

Outcomes: D has 100% school attendance for the summer term, rate of progress is observed to be improving (reported by form tutor), maintains good level of focus and attitude to work, has developed a positive relationship with the form tutor and selected KS4 options to commence studying from September 2019.

Attainment

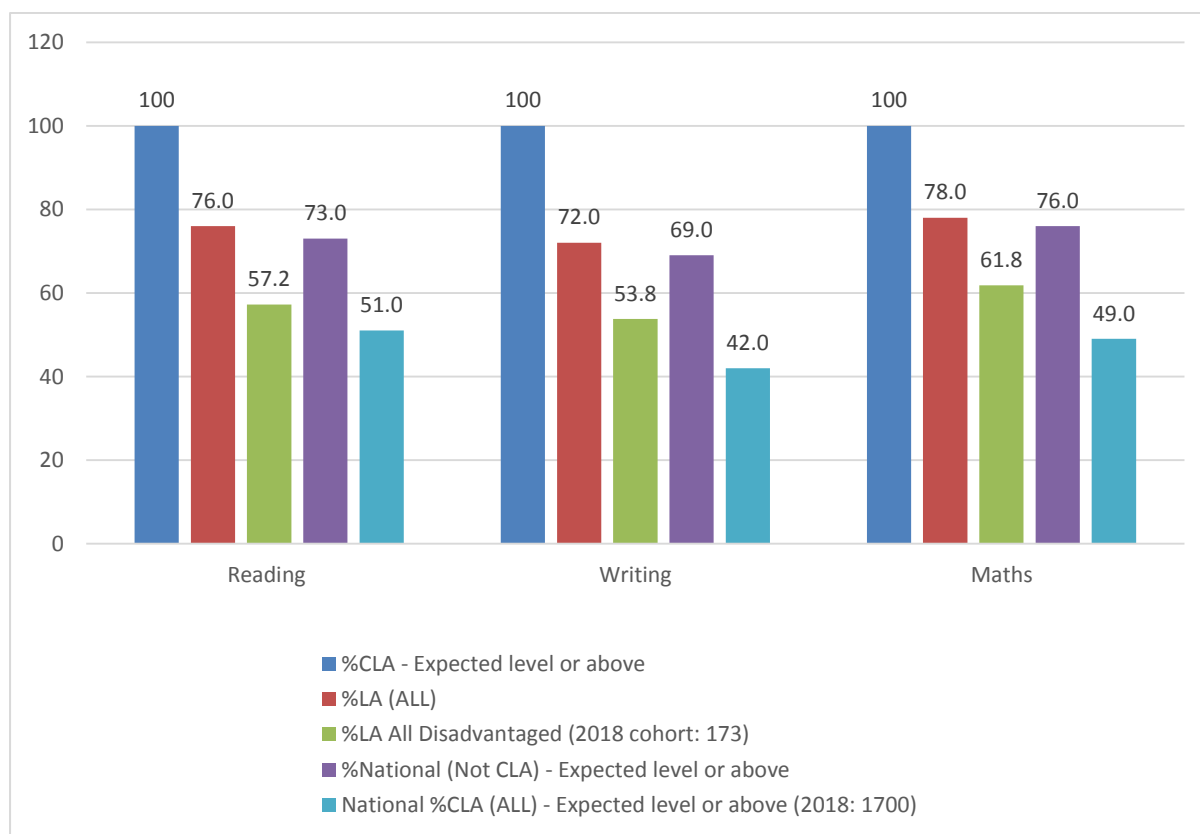
The numbers in each cohort are often very small, therefore the outcomes for one or two children can have a significant impact on results expressed as a percentage. Care should be applied when analysing and comparing the results, which are based on small numbers of children.

Early Years

There were no Bracknell Forest CLA who attempted National Assessments at this level for 2018/19.

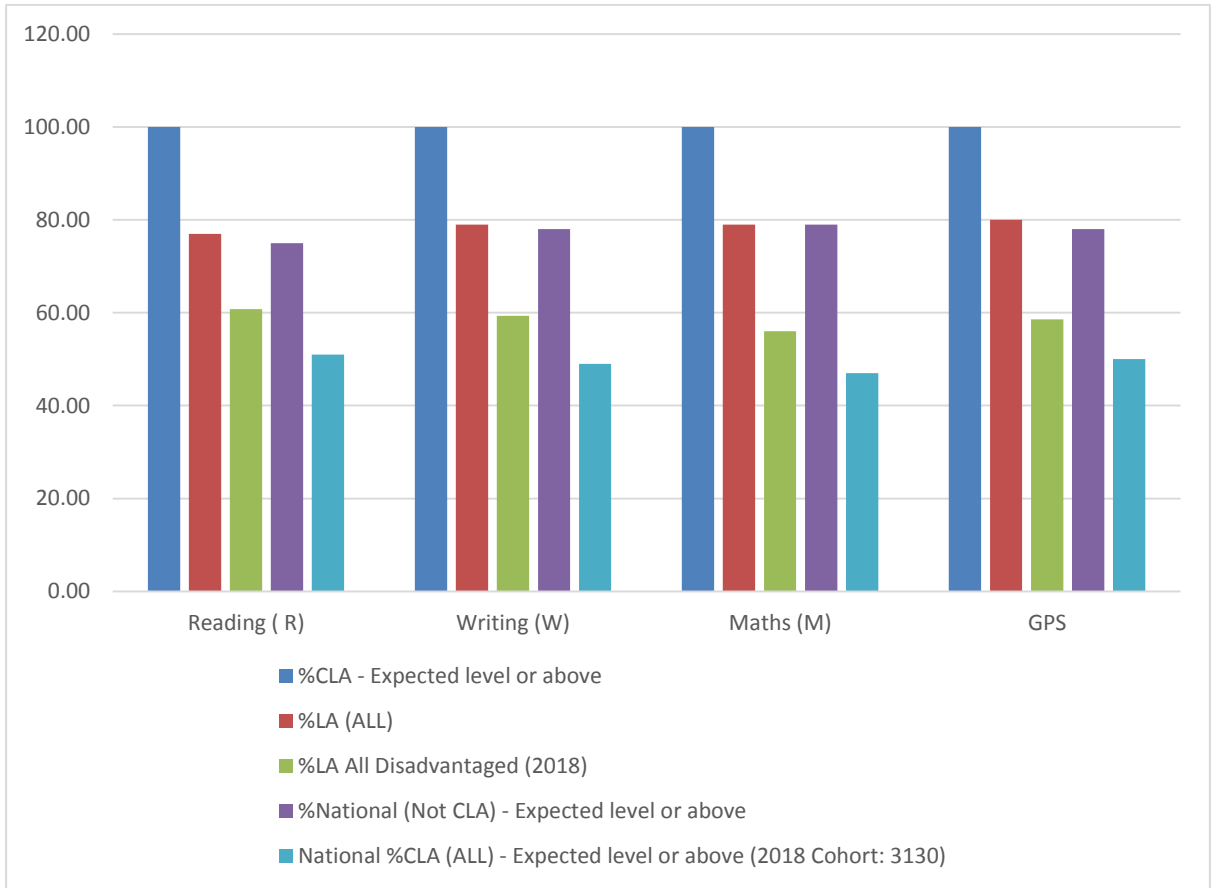
Key Stage 1

There were 3 CLA in the cohort who attempted National Assessments at this level for 2018/19 – this was one more than the cohort for the previous academic year. Comparing the performance of our small cohort against that of their peers across the borough presents a largely positive outcome where performance is above that of the LA average across assessed areas.



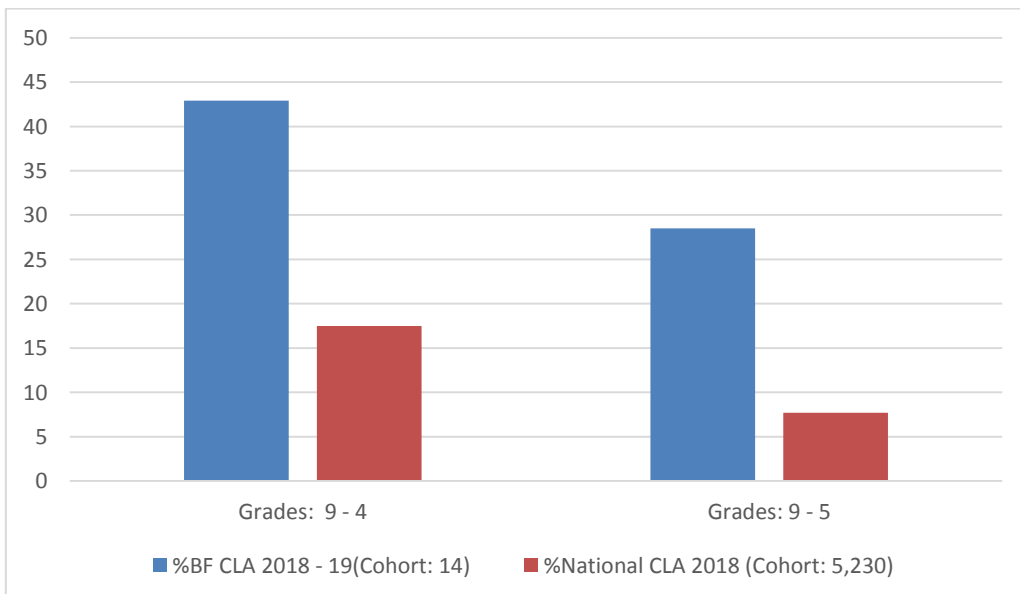
Key Stage 2

There were 6 CLA in the cohort eligible for tests and teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2018/19. The main threshold measures at Key Stage 2 are the percentage of children working at the Expected Standard or at Greater Depth across each assessed area. The average attendance figure for all four was at least 98%. The proportion of children attaining at least the expected standard across Reading, Writing and Maths was significantly higher than both the national and regional average based on 2018 figures.



Key Stage 4

There were 14 CLA in the cohort that attempted GCSE and equivalent examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2018/19, compared with 13 in 2017/18 and 14 in 2016/17. There are a wide range of performance measures at GCSE. The outcomes for this group were higher than national benchmarks observed in 2018 for this cohort which has continued to be the trend for the past 5 years:



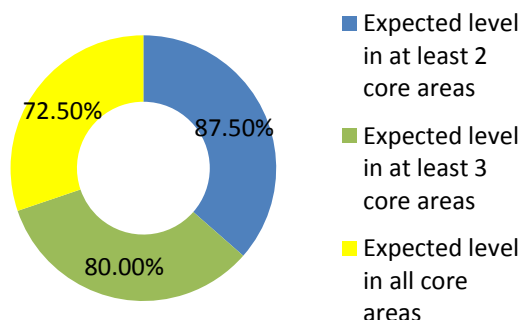
All 14 from this group have progressed onto a range of different post 16 destinations from September 2019. These include Animal Management, sixth form, Art and Design and hair and beauty amongst others.

Tracking Progress

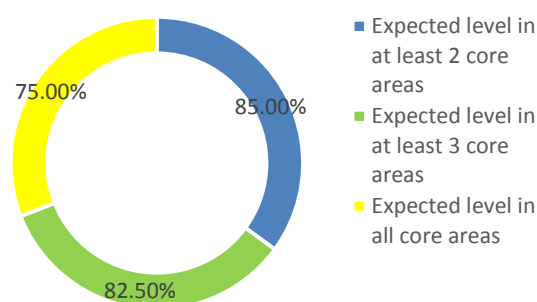
Phonics: The percentage of children looked after in Year 1 phonics reaching the required standard was 60% from a cohort of 5. 4 of the children attended Bracknell Forest schools. 1 child has significant needs which are currently being assessed by the SEN Team.

Primary: 26 out of the 40 children looked after in this cohort attended a Bracknell Forest school. Pupil progress is tracked termly across four core areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening and Mathematics. Outcomes recorded were broadly similar to those from the previous academic year where a marginally higher proportion was recorded for children looked after who achieved at least the expected level across all core areas:

2017/18 (40)

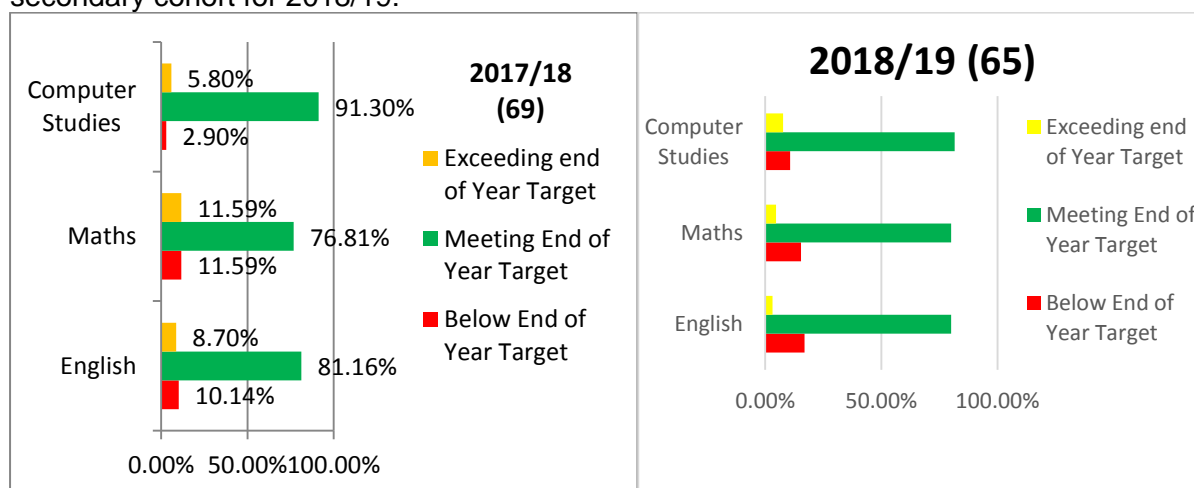


2018/19 (40)



Secondary:

10 out of the 65 children looked after in this cohort (i.e. Year 7 – 11) attended a Bracknell Forest school. With the introduction of the new ePEP system, data is now collected more accurately. We have however highlighted an on-going need for training for system users as there are often inaccuracies between what information has been reported and then what is shared at the actual PEP meeting. Nevertheless, we have noted the below outcomes for our secondary cohort for 2018/19:



Designated Teachers

Designated Teachers' Forums are key in establishing a Virtual School approach in Bracknell Forest and these forums are held on a termly basis. The aim of these forums is to:

- Provide information to designated teachers about their role
- Provide specific training to designated teachers on issues relating to children in care
- Provide an opportunity for designated teachers to discuss and share strategies and initiatives aimed at improving the support to children looked after.

Members of the Virtual School are involved in a number of different intervention programmes across the year. These are usually specific to either primary or secondary schools. However, they are always transferrable in content. Some of the agenda items from these forums over the 2018/19 year have included:

- Planning and demonstrating the impact of the Pupil Premium for children looked after
- Understanding of factors behind behaviour
- Effectively using the new ePEP system

This year, we were also fortunate to have the opportunity for Lisa Cherry to join us and deliver a one day training event to schools on: The Impact of Trauma on Children and Young people. Lisa is a well-known trainer and speaker on the topic and 33 schools were able to benefit from her input. This has already had an impact on a number of school policies and professional practices. We will be working with Lisa to develop further professional development opportunities over the coming academic year.

Over February half term, we were supported by Learning Performance – a regional organisation with a wealth of experience in supporting young people develop their study skills and general confidence and well-being ahead of their GCSE exams. A total of 9 children looked after (from a cohort of 14) attended the three day programme. 7 out of the 9 that attended rated the overall quality of the experience as 'excellent' whereas one young person commented '*I will believe in myself that I can be successful*'.

We have been working with our schools to better understand professional development needs. In collaboration with our Educational Psychology Service, a training programme has been developed for 2019 – 2021 which is included in Appendix 1.

Work Experience

The advantage of the set-up of our Virtual School has continued over 2018/19 where we have been able to maintain our partnership with local agencies that offer work experience. These are bespoke and a limited number of opportunities available specifically for our children looked after who are at least 12 years old. We offer a lighter touch support package for Year 7 students that develops into more intensive and tailored support for students in Years 8 and 9 and can be extended into Key Stage 4 as required.

A total of 18 CLA benefitted from this offer in various forms. Some of these experiences have been captured to reflect the impact this has had on them as individuals as well as aided their life chances:

Name	Year Group	Number of hours	Career Aspirations	Barriers	Outcomes achieved
A	10	6	Equine	A suffered	A had an extended

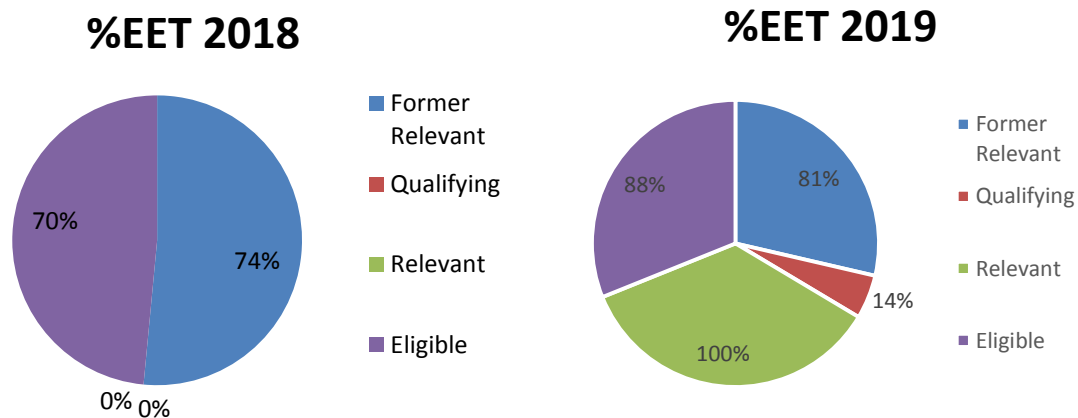
			management.	from low self-esteem and struggled to make friends in schools. A was also on a reduced timetable for a term and a half during year 10 due to issues outside of school and struggles to cope with these.	placement at the Light Calvary Artillery company on the Queens Estate twice – this is unheard of as the placement usually only take young people on for one week at a time. The feedback from the stables was excellent where A worked hard to impress the team. A has grown in confidence and made new friends.
B	11	4	Retail/management	B struggles with confidence and anxiety. It took several attempt to engage with B and discuss potential options for post 16 and what work experience placements might help to achieve these.	B wanted a placement in retail and was supported with one at WHSmith's. Intensive support went in to the first week of the placement from both the provider as well as the Virtual School. This enabled B to feel reassured and had a key adult always available when needed. B completed the placement, following which was able to sit GCSE exams and apply for a college place for a Level 2 Leisure and Tourism course.
C	8	10	Sports Coaching/PE teacher	C had a managed move due to significant behaviour concerns and frequencies of fixed term exclusions during year	Following the managed move, C was supported to consider longer term options to address the behaviour issues that had emerged. C had a work placement at a local primary and secondary school working in the PE dept. and supporting PE lessons. C enjoyed this placement and the feedback from both head teachers was positive. Following the

				10.	placement, Bracknell Leisure Centre have expressed an interest in working with C which will be pursued over the summer break.
D	9	4	Mechanics	D was at risk of permanent exclusion due to behaviour.	D completed a very successful placement at a well-known local garage. The business were apprehensive at first due to D's background. However, they agreed to a trial period of a week which was later extended to 7 weeks. The feedback from the garage was brilliant! Their exact words were: 'D is the best they have had in a long time'!

Young People Aged over 16 and Care Leavers

Recognising the good practice on PEPs for CLA from Year R to 11, this has been adapted to develop a participation plan for 16 to 18 year olds which has been adapted for the new ePEP system. These have been developed in partnership with social workers and young people to ensure they are appropriate and will achieve a positive outcome.

The impact of the increased focused approach when working with children looked after at post 16 and care leavers has been the increase in the proportion of young people in education and training.



This performance equates to a proportion of 79% of children looked after and care leavers being in either education, employment or training (EET) at the end of August 2019 compared with 71% for the same cohort 12 months ago.

We aim to get the best outcomes for our care leavers by working with them as individuals, ensuring wherever they are placed, they are engaged in education, employment or training commensurate to their ability and aspirations. This includes supporting them with individual

needs such as increasing emotional resilience and problem solving skills, developing positive relationships and understanding the causes of children's behaviour using a combination of attachment and social learning theory.

The impact of this work can be observed from these brief case studies and comments from the young person involved:

- 1) M was a school refuser during year 10, refusing to engage with other services, frequent missing episodes (16 episodes between Sep'17 and Jul' 18), repeated offending behaviour including gang involvement and was grieving for the recent bereavement of his mum.

In light of the exhibited behaviour and professional feedback, an intensive piece of work lasting 12 months that included a bespoke emotional resilience programme, study skills and GCSE exam preparation, careers IAG and school support interventions was put in place and agreed with M.

Following the delivery of the resilience programme, M agreed to re-attend school in March 2018. During a PEP meeting the following targets were set: attendance 95%, sit GCSE exams in English, maths and science, visit army centre and sign up to college course for September 2018.

Careers IAG was completed which identified a long term plan to join the air force within engineering. During October '18, work experience was arranged which M completed. Boxing sessions were arranged mainly because M was in agreement and also as a fitness test was the entry requirement for the armed forces.

M was provided with intensive support to prepare for exams following which he successfully achieved 100% attendance and passed two 45 minute long exams. He is now attending a level 2 electrical course at college on a full time basis and has a clear plan on what he will be doing at the end of the programme in June 2019.

M reflected on his experience of working with the Virtual School: "You never gave up on me".

- 2) The first year at college was proving to be a struggle for S. A PEP meeting was arranged early in the Autumn term. College explained that on current performance, S was not going to succeed on the Extended Certificate.

During the PEP meeting the following targets were agreed: completion of two assignments and relevant work experience to help make that theory to practice link. As a result, study support was provided to complete the assignments and an application was sent for work experience as a life guard at Coral Reef. S was also supported with sessions in therapy by the foster carers. Despite support it was decided that college was not appropriate at this time and he left college towards of the Autumn term.

The Virtual School organised a Health and Safety in Construction Environment course to achieve a CSCS card. This would allow a pathway to work in construction. S successfully passed both tests and achieved the CSCS card. He is now fully employed in the construction industry.

- 3) B experienced domestic violence and neglect before being taken into care. Through an assessment for an education, health and care plan it was identified that social and emotional behaviour and communication difficulties have impacted on school

learning. B moved school four times in three years and was currently out of school with frequent missing reports. B struggled to trust people and refused to engage with support.

Due to the complexity of B's needs, the Virtual School worked closely with SEN, CSC, the IRO and placement staff was considered to be the best way forward. The situation was discussed with the educational psychologist and an engagement approach using nurture group principles was agreed. Investing time and following his lead, B developed a positive relationship with the Virtual School allowing us to build bridges between B and school engagement.

1-1 tutoring was arranged until a school was confirmed. As B didn't engage with mainstream education, a package including an 'outreach' approach based on life skills was developed. Several schools were sought but none appropriate to meet his needs.

Two terms later, B is now attending school on a full time table.

- 4) T is an unaccompanied asylum seeker who had to leave his home country because he was going to be forced into military service and feared he would never be able to leave. T travelled across several countries and was rescued by an Italian ship as there were hundreds of people fleeing in one small boat. T commented that they were packed so tight into the boat he could hardly breath.

During T's first PEP meeting, it was identified that learning to communicate in English was a priority. He was enrolled at the local college on ESOL, maths and ICT functional programmes and skills tuition was arranged.

As part of the home education package, counter terrorism, Trust Me (CSE tool) and Prevent for schools was delivered.

Towards the end of the first academic year, College have feedback that from being a complete beginner in English T has passed reading and writing at Entry Level 3. He has also passed Entry Level 3 ICT and will now has now progressed to Level 1. T has now enrolled on to a level 2 programme.

Celebrating Achievement

Recognising and rewarding success is a key element of the drive to improve educational attainment as well as raise aspirations in general. We continue to work in partnership with other services to arrange and hold an annual awards event to recognise and celebrate the achievements and contributions of young people in care. This has proven to be an effective source of motivation both for the young people and their foster carers as it gives all those involved a good opportunity to reflect on the positive experiences of the past 12 months and share these with others in a similar situation to them.

Virtual School Service Development Objectives 2019 – 2020



People Directorate Vision and behaviours	Outcomes – the impact we want to have
<p>“Working together towards a better future for all children and young people”</p>	<p>To drive up improvements in the educational progress and attainment of all children looked after by Bracknell Forest, supporting them to thrive in learning and empower them to be active citizens who are proud to succeed.</p>
Our Priorities for 2019/20	How we will measure success
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Strengthen support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of Pupil Premium for children looked after. 2) To deliver and embed learning from the co – developed training programme for schools to build their capacity in meeting the needs for children looked after as well as other vulnerable groups. 3) Develop and monitor the ePEP system ensuring high standards are maintained across all its elements. 4) Develop improved monitoring of alternative provision for children looked after. 5) Develop SEN link protocol 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All PEPs are graded ‘Green’ with clear targets linked to the Pupil Premium that demonstrate progress. 2) A reduction in the proportion of fixed term exclusions is noted for children looked after and other vulnerable groups of children. 3) Designated Teachers and Social Workers confidently complete PEPs with 100% of the plans completed within timescales. All PEPs are graded ‘Green’. 4) Schools are clear on their roles and responsibilities for commissioning alternative provision. 5) All partners are clear on their roles and responsibilities for children looked after with EHCP’s reflected through their participation in ensuring appropriate provision is in place in a timely manner.
What will drive our work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We will involve children and young people when developing policies and practices. ➤ We will work in partnership with others to ensure we are providing the best possible opportunities to our children and young people to thrive and succeed. ➤ We will make the best use of available resources. 	

Education and Learning

Brought to you by the People Directorate



Building Compassionate Schools Training

Compassionate schools support the wellbeing of all people within the school community, including staff and students.

Research shows that compassionate schools can **protect against Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)** so that all staff and students develop ways of overcoming difficult situations.

Over the next three years, the Virtual School and the Educational Psychology Service will deliver a **Compassionate Schools Training Programme during Designated Teacher forums.**

There will also be supplementary external training days that will be commissioned to help with this project and give you further advice and opportunities.

Trauma & the Brain

9th October 2019

4 – 5:30pm

Bracknell Open Learning Centre

An overview of the effects of trauma on the brain; introducing the healing effects of compassion

2019

2020

Compassion in the Classroom

10th June 2020

4 – 5:30pm

Bracknell Open Learning Centre

Supporting pupils to develop compassion towards others and self-compassion

Compassion in the Staffroom

7th October 2020

4 – 5:30pm

Bracknell Open Learning Centre

Developing compassionate practices across staff

2020

2021

Compassionate Practices 1.

10th February 2021

4 – 5:30pm

Bracknell Open Learning Centre

This external session will focus on Universal Strategies and Mental Health.

Compassionate Practices 2.

9th June 2021

4 – 5:30pm

Bracknell Open Learning Centre

This external session will focus on implementing compassionate practices within your school

2021

Reviewing Compassion Development

6th October 2021

4 – 5:30pm

Bracknell Open Learning Centre

This session will help you to review how compassionate practices have been embedded across your school

Email virtual.school@bracknell-forest.gov.uk to book a place on all or any of these training sessions.