


## Update for General Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Virtual School for Looked After Children Activities

This update provides an update on the work of the Herefordshire Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC) funded by the £300 per pupil top slice of the LAC pupil premium.

Activity	Comment
Monitoring of attendance	Looked After Call has been engaged to monitor daily the attendance of Herefordshire Looked After Children. This allows the Virtual School to be informed of and respond to any issues relating to non – attendance immediately
Additional Educational Psychology time	<p>Following difficulties with recruitment, an Educational Psychologist has now been recruited and started with the school in April. She is funded to provide one day per week for activities designed to support improved outcomes for looked after children.</p> <p>To date, there have been two assessments which have supported the successful inclusion of pupils in new provision, along with target setting activities; developing a literacy project with a school in special measures and delivering a “clinic” for education and social staff.</p>
Letterbox Club	<p>This scheme provides six parcels with books, literacy and numeracy activities to looked after children in Years 1, 3, 5 and 7. In 2014, 36 children received the packages, 89% (32) of whom made at least the expected level of progress following the receipt of the packages. (Typically 69% of Herefordshire LAC made this level of progress in the corresponding period). The scheme was also evaluated by a Trainee Educational Psychologist, who identified that one super – ordinate theme was that children reported that it helped them with their schoolwork. This built on earlier research which noted an increase in reading ability for those involved in the Letterbox scheme.</p> <p>Comments from young people included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“I was excited because it was my first time opening the parcels”</i></li> <li>• <i>“It made me feel like. When I first opened the parcel and um, it made me feel like someone actually cared about giving the parcels”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Um, yeah because, um when I read at home, I tried to not read without missing any words and understanding as much as I can,</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>so yeah it helped me with school too”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“And there is even some bubble things [referring to the bubble wrap in the parcel], which you can pop”</i></li> </ul> <p>Foster carers also commented positively on the scheme, with many saying they appreciated the arrival of the parcels as something exciting and different for the children. They also said that the packages gave them a range of new activities to share with the children.</p> <p>In 2015, 64 pupils are currently receiving packages. Impact will again be measured.</p>
<p>Individual tuition time – delivered with a focus on KS2 SATS and GCSE pupils.</p>	<p>For the first time staff from the Education Liaison Support Service have been able to offer dedicated 1:1 tuition for pupils approaching Key Stage 2 SATS and GCSEs. The success of this will only be evaluated once the results are known</p>
<p>Alternative packages</p>	<p>The Virtual School has engaged Apricot Online Learning to deliver a number of bespoke, online packages to young people for whom a school place cannot be found quickly.</p>
<p>Activities to raise aspiration</p>	<p>Over the course of the year the Virtual School has continued to support a number of activities aimed at raising the aspirations of young people in care. These have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits to University of Birmingham and University College London to give a taste of university life.</li> <li>• Support for two pupils to attend a University of Birmingham Summer School.</li> <li>• Support for those applying to university.</li> <li>• Attendance for some at the Hay Festival, with the opportunity to meet an author of children’s books. The attached e-mail gives a flavor of the positive feedback received.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">         FW Hay Festival.msg     </p>
<p>Designated Teachers’ Conference</p>	<p>A conference was funded and organized by the Virtual School to help school develop their role, with a particular focus on the understanding of attachment difficulties and its impact on behavior and attainment.</p> <p>Two further sessions on the role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children are planned for September 2015.</p>

Further evidence of impact on progress and attainment will be included in the report to be made by the Head of Additional Needs following the publication of results this summer.

Steve Laycock  
Additional Needs Senior Casework Manager  
(Virtual School Headteacher)

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