

L E A R N

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A C H I E V E

C E L E B R A T E



**Northumberland**  
Northumberland County Council



**HELLO** and welcome to the Spring issue of Learn, Achieve, Celebrate. It has been a very busy half term but I am pleased to be able to publish my Annual Report for 2015-16, now that the national and validated data is available. Please take a look at the link below. The report is a self-evaluation tool which informs the priorities in our Virtual School improvement plan.

You will see that there have been improvements across the board, but we still need to work together to reduce the number of persistent absentees and improve outcomes at Key Stage 2. I am confident that we will continue to make a difference in these and other aspects of the education we offer our children in care. It has been a very long half term and you must all looking forward to some sort of Spring break – enjoy, and I look forward to working with you next term.

Jane Walker, Virtual School Headteacher

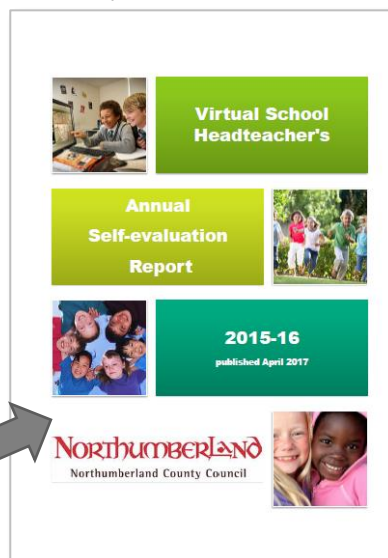
## Annual Report of the Virtual School Headteacher

I am pleased to be able to share with you my annual report for the academic year 2015-16.

There is much to celebrate about the achievements of our looked after children and growing evidence that we are improving education outcomes.

Many thanks to all Designated Teachers for their contribution and commitment to our looked after learners.

The report can be viewed and downloaded at this link on our [Inclusion and the Virtual School](#) webpage:



## Pupil Premium Plus arrangements 2017-18

For 2017-18 arrangements in Northumberland for the distribution of the Pupil Premium Plus grant will be the same as they were in 2016-17 and in accordance with the DfE's [Pupil Premium Conditions of Grant](#) and *statutory roles and responsibilities of the Virtual School Headteacher*. That means that your school/academy/alternative provision will receive the funding up to a maximum of £1 500 per eligible pupil. The pupil premium plus agreement in each pupil's PEP must be completed and signed for the funding to be released.

I am confident that the changes we made last year have improved the impact of the funding on the education achievement of our children in care. I have referred to this in some detail in my Annual Report 2015-16, and examples of the benefits of holding some funding centrally include the commissioning of an Education Psychologist for 2 days per week in the Virtual School, and rolling out our Thrive attachment training programme.

Please be re-assured that we will continue to use the funding as flexibly as possible so that those pupils who most need it will benefit from it, for example: those who come into care during the financial year, those whose needs escalate suddenly, those who leave care during the financial year but who are still vulnerable to under-achievement.

The [Pupil Premium Plus Policy for Looked After Children Arrangements 2017-18](#) document can be found on our webpage (under Virtual School – Designated Teachers for Looked After Children).

## Service Level Agreement

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 non-statutory support to schools, academies and alternative providers is now available for schools to buy through the Education & Skills Service service level agreement. The full brochure can be viewed on the Northumberland Education website by clicking the image of the brochure or following the link <http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/services-to-schools-17-18/>:

**There will be no charge to schools for education support to looked after children.**

However, there are offers of support for safeguarding, inclusion, SEND and other services which might help schools to meet the very diverse needs of our looked after children. Please make sure that as a Designated Teacher you know what is on offer and how to access the support if and when you might need it.

Costs are included in the brochure, but if you would like to discuss or arrange a package of support more tailored to the needs of your school/setting then please contact us directly.



## Designated Teacher audit tool

In last summer's newsletter I shared with you an audit tool for Designated Teachers which has been developed by the National Association of Virtual School Headteachers (NAVSH).

Your response was encouraging and I was able to follow up the request by convening a small working group with Toni McGuire (ESLAC Team Manager) and Designated Teachers from Ashington High, NCEA and Collingwood. Colleagues are now working on the tool in their own primary, secondary and special school settings ready for when we re-convene in June to consider how we might adapt the tool to be more helpful in a Northumberland context.

If you would like to get involved in the working group then please let me know. Or if you would like to see the tool then please follow the link on the document/picture above to download from our webpage.

A framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's provision for children in care (CIC/CIC/LAC)<sup>®</sup>

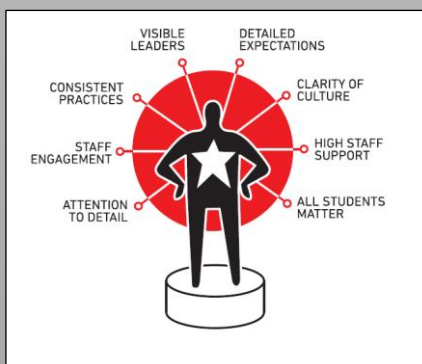
1. Achievement of Pupils	Guidance to schools	Indicator of Good Practice	Evidence to support assertion
1.1	CIC are supported to achieve in line with their peers making progress appropriate to their starting point	Across the last 3 years CIC have consistently made expected progress and often made better than expected progress.	
1.2	The school has a culture of high aspiration and nurture for CIC	Younger CIC contribute to the PSE. Older children describe their aspirations for their future by suggesting ways to boost their achievements.	
1.3	The school sets appropriate challenging performance targets for individual CIC	Across a 3 year period the proportion of CIC moving from level 1 into BT is at least as high as for non-CIC pupils. CIC know their individual targets and can describe how they are doing against them as well as actions they need to take to achieve them.	

Judgement (by experience)

☐ Outstanding  
☐ Good  
☐ Satisfactory  
☐ Needs Improvement

## Creating a Culture

Last year the DfE commissioned independent Tom Bennett as national behaviour Tsar and independent reviewer of behaviour in schools. His report – Creating a Culture: how school leaders can optimise behaviour – was published on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017.



The report focuses on the need for strong and inspirational leadership to drive the agenda for good behaviour in schools, not just the highly skilled workforce. Common factors which contribute to that success across the schools Tom visited are then what he uses to make recommendations to us in the report.

Tom has also worked with the NAVSH this year to focus on what works with looked after children.

The full report can be downloaded by following the link in the picture.

## Enrichment

From 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017 the Personal Education Allowance, or PEA, will be re-named Enrichment. You can access the funding in the same way (through your ESLAC worker) and for the same reasons, but the PEA allowance as such will no longer exist in name.

## Promoting the achievement of looked after children: PALAC

PALAC is a bespoke programme which is being developed by UCL (University College London) to benefit looked after learners in Northumberland and Middlesbrough schools. It is a pioneering evidence-based research-led programme to support professionals to enhance the achievement and wellbeing of looked after and adopted children and young people in school. It supports professionals through a process of rethinking the school environment to help ensure that they actively support the all-round education of children in care and adopted children.

During the summer term I will be approaching schools to see if they would like to participate in the programme with us. There will be 8 schools engaged in the programme for the first year, focussing on those in the least socially mobile areas of the County.

Participating schools will receive:

- An evidence-based audit tool for schools to assess current practice re Looked after Children
- A handbook of practice, key research papers and advice on supporting system level change in schools
- Guidance and classroom-tested strategies on how to improve the education of children in care
- Support on initiating, managing and sustaining change in a school setting
- The chance to collaborate with other professionals from other settings and engage with leading research and researchers in the field

**If you are interested in getting involved then please contact me, otherwise I will be sending out further information to targeted schools during the summer term.**

## Final Countdown to SATs and GCSEs



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You don't need us to tell you that we're now on the final countdown to SATs and GCSEs for 2017.

This is a reminder to let us know if you or any of your looked after pupils require additional or intensive support – that might be revision resources, the support of an Education Psychologist, contact with foster carers etc.

**If there is anything we can do  
then please get in touch**