



**Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy,
Executive Director - Children's Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	14 January 2021
Subject:	Lincolnshire Virtual School Annual Report 2019-2020

Summary:

This report provides an overview of services provided by the Virtual School to support the improvement of educational outcomes of Children in Care and those Previously in Care for the academic year 2019/20.

Actions Required:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to accept the Annual Report 2019/20 as an accurate reflection of services provided for Children in Care and support the recommendations contained within the report.

1. Background

This report covers the period 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020. The Department for Education (DfE) Statutory Guidance on Promoting The Education of Looked after Children and Previously Looked After Children (DfE 2018) requires an annual report on the delivery of service and the outcomes achieved by our children in care. In addition, the Local Authority (LA) requires an annual report to provide a summary of the core activities relating to improving educational outcomes for Children in Care.

This Annual Report is intended to inform Children in Care, the general public, elected members, stakeholder partners and staff of the progress and developments of the Virtual School to date.

2. Conclusion

- The Lincolnshire Virtual School Team continues to be ambitious for all of our children in care. We understand that promoting better educational outcomes is everyone's business and we provide: training, challenge, advice and support to schools, children's services colleagues, foster carers, parents and others so that they can better advocate for the learning of children and young people in their care.

- There remains a continued and growing emphasis on the development of "Learning Homes" where our carers become increasingly skilled to support learning and our schools are committed to creating an environment where the specific emotional and educational needs of our children and young people are understood and their potential fulfilled. Our network of Foster Carer Champions proved themselves to be very effective over the year, and particularly came into their own during the Covid emergency, as they provided a support network across our carer community alongside the Caring2Learn Team and social workers.
- Our children and young people in care continue to be significantly less likely to be excluded from school when compared with their peers nationally and their attendance is good.
- The majority of our children and young people aged 3-18 continue to attend schools graded good or better by Ofsted. In comparison to those nationally, a greater proportion of our children and young people continued to attend and access learning during Lockdown.
- Pupil Premium is allocated to schools in a timely way and is linked to targets outlined in the Personal Education Plan. Personal Education Plans are reviewed three times per year or more if appropriate for all children and young people aged 3-18. Personal Education Plans and support for transition continued throughout Lockdown. Throughout Lockdown the Virtual School worked with schools and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) colleagues to deliver ICT equipment and commission additional tuition to support Children in Care wherever possible.
- Early intervention is key to promoting outcomes and consequently all children in care or entering care aged 3-13 continue to receive support from our Specialist Teachers so that schools are better informed of strategies to improve communication and language needs if appropriate.
- The Virtual School Team continued to work effectively and in cooperation with carers, parents, schools and Children's Services colleagues to support the education of Children in Care throughout the period of Lockdown and recovery up to August 2020 and beyond.
- The voice of our children and young people is heard. We celebrate successes and also provide opportunities for them and their families to be better understood. We endeavour to stick with them when things don't go so well and put any potential setbacks into context.
- Despite the many challenges that our young people and their carers have faced over the Covid pandemic, lockdown, school closures and uncertainty around exams, academic outcomes for our children and young people in 2020 were consistent with previous years and in line with historic national and regional comparators with some achieving outstanding results at 11+, GCSE and A Level.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire County Council Virtual School Annual Report - Academic Year 2019-2020 (Jan 2021)

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Kieran Barnes who can be contacted on 07788566431 or by e-mail at Kieran.barnes@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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