

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting: 25 October 2016

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT** – Harrow Virtual School: Headteacher’s End of Academic Year Report 2015/2016

Key Decision: No

Responsible Officer: Chris Spencer
Corporate Director People Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Christine Robson
Children, Schools and Young People

Exempt: No

Decision subject to Call-in: No

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out:

- A.** An overview of the Performance and Standards of Children Looked After (CLA) by the End of Key Stage
- B.** An analysis of attendance and exclusions
- C.** An overview of the work of the Virtual School
- D.** Development priorities for the Virtual School for 2016-17.

Recommendations:

The Panel is requested to note:

- The performance of, and standards being achieved, by Harrow's CLA, in particular the improved performance of CLA at the end of Key Stage 4
- The work of the Virtual School and the strategies used to improve CLA outcomes and to comment on them as appropriate.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

The Virtual School (VS) and Virtual School Headteacher (VHT) model for Children Looked After (CLA) was first introduced in the government White Paper *'Care Matters: Time for Change'* (DCSF, June 2007). Improving the educational outcomes for children looked after is a priority for national and local government.

Local authorities and their directors of Children's Services are the corporate parents for CLA; they have a statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of the children they look after, regardless of where they are placed.

The headteacher's role has been expanded in the DfE document *'Promoting the education of Children Looked After, statutory guidance for local authorities'* July 2014. This document prescribes clearly that:

- VHTs are in place and that they have the resources, time, training and support they need to discharge the duty effectively.

- VHTs have robust procedures in place to monitor the attendance and educational progress of the children their authority looks after (including those placed and educated out of the local authority).
- VHTs must maintain an up to date roll of the Local Authority's Children Looked After who are in school or college settings and gather information about their education placement, attendance and educational progress.
- VHTs must inform Head Teachers and Designated Teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is looked after by the VSH's local authority.
- Ensure that up to date, effective and high quality PEPs focus on educational outcomes and that all Children Looked After, wherever they are placed, have an effective PEP.
- Ensure the educational achievement of children looked after by the authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibility for promoting their welfare.
- Report regularly on the attainment of Children Looked After through the authority's corporate parenting structures.

The recent DfE White Paper (March 2016) *'Educational Excellence Everywhere'* also promotes the extension of the role of the VHT, for children who have left care under an adoption order. The rationale for this is to retain the educational support they had whilst they were in care.

This report gives an overview of the key areas monitored by the Harrow Virtual School (HVS) in the academic year 2015-16.

2. Numbers on Roll

- 2.1 There were 117 pupils of statutory school age (SSA) on the roll of HVS at the end of the academic year 2015-16. The ratio of girls to boys is 44%: 56% respectively. 44% (52/117) of our students are educated outside of Harrow and are spread across 27 local authorities. Harrow schools educate 52 looked after children from other authorities for whom we have a duty of care.
- 2.2 HVS had 224 students aged from 3 to 19 in 2015-16. This represents an increase of 73 pupils across the academic year. In light of this, the Virtual School structure is currently under review.
- 2.3 Chart 2.4 below shows a breakdown of pupil numbers by year group and phase. The Post-16 data for the Summer Term 2016 also includes Year 14 students undertaking courses in further education (FE).
- 2.4 School Numbers 2015-16:

Year Group	Numbers (Summer 2016)	Phase	Autumn Term Totals	Spring Term Totals	Summer Term Totals
12-14	98	Key Stage 5 (16-19 year olds)	53 (excluding Year 14)	72 (excluding Year 14)	98
11	26	Key Stage 4	32	34	38
10	12				
9	12	Key Stage 3	24	25	31
8	9				
7	10				
6	4	Key Stage 2	32	26	31
5	14				
4	4				
3	9				
2	8	Key Stage 1	7	9	13
1	5				
Reception	4	EYFS	3	14	13
Nursery -1	3				
Nursery -2	6				
Total			151	180	224

Post-18

- 2.5 In 2015-16 HVS had 136 students aged between 18 and 23. 10% of care leavers were at university. In 2015-2016 Harrow care leavers were 4% above the national average (6%) for care leavers attending university.

3. Attainment

Please note that the 2015-16 KS4 results are still provisional and will remain so until recent arrivals are discounted and the performance tables are published in January

- 3.1 Outlined below is a summary of the VS End of Key Stage attainment for the academic year 2015-16. The VS monitors the performance of all children upon entry to care, the DfE however only tracks and publishes data for CLA that have been in care for a year or longer.

EYFS

- 3.2 The Reception cohort had 4 pupils that have been in care for less than a year. One pupil had been identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN). 25% (1 out of 4 pupils) met all 17 early learning goals.

Key Stage 1

- 3.3 There were 8 pupils in Year 2. Three pupils had been in care for a year or longer. Two of the three pupils (66%) met end of Key Stage

expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths. The national average for CLA in Key Stage 1 is 67%.

Key Stage 2

- 3.4 Year 6 had 4 pupils with 1 child in care for a year or longer. The pupil concerned had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and was not on track to meet the end of Key Stage 2 standards. In consultation with the Harrow VHT and other key professionals, the school applied for an exemption from the SATs.

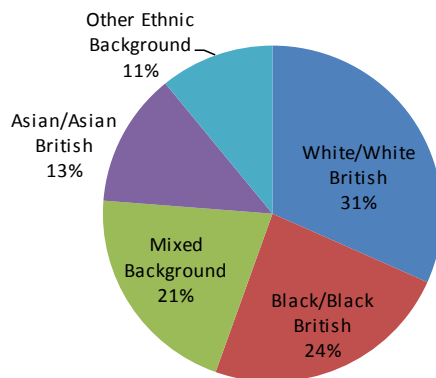
Key Stage 4

- 3.5 There were 26 pupils in Year 11. Fourteen pupils had been in care for a year or longer.
- 3.6 14% (2/14 pupils) received 5 or more GCSEs grades A*-C including English and Maths. Of these 2 pupils, 1 pupil obtained 5 GCSEs and the other obtained 9 GCSEs. These results place HVS above the national average which currently stands at 13% for CLA for the end of Key Stage 4. Over the previous 3 years HVS has not had any pupil achieve 5 or more GCSEs grades A*-C, including English and Maths for Key Stage 4.
- 3.7 28.5% (4/14 pupils) received 5 or more GCSEs grades A*-G.
- 3.8 One pupil who has been in care for less than a year (7 months) received 9 GCSEs grades A*-C, including English and Maths.
- 3.9 Progress and attainment for Key Stage 4 will remain a priority for the academic year 2016-17. The VS will continue to use our 'focus student' initiative to track vulnerable students in Years 10 and 11.

4 Ethnicity

- 4.1 Chart 4.1a shows the population of HVS by ethnicity.

Chart 4.1a

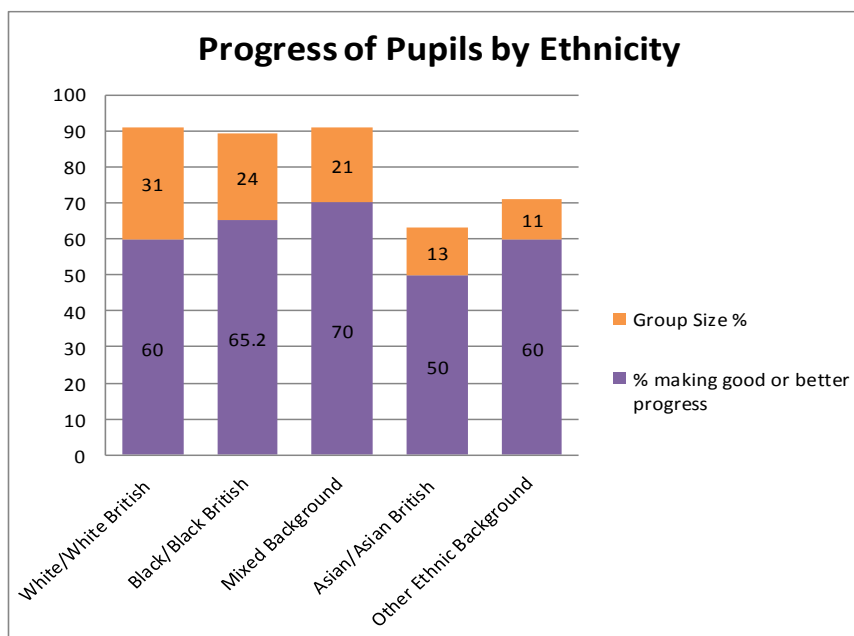


- 4.2 Our largest group were from White British backgrounds (31%) and the smallest group represented from Other Ethnic backgrounds (11%). This is almost on par with the current demographics for Harrow Local

Authority, which has 63% of residents from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic Communities). HVS had a BME group of 69%.

4.3 Further analysis of these groups, looks at pupils of SSA making good or better progress. The bar-chart below shows a comparison across the ethnic groups in HVS.

Chart 4.3a

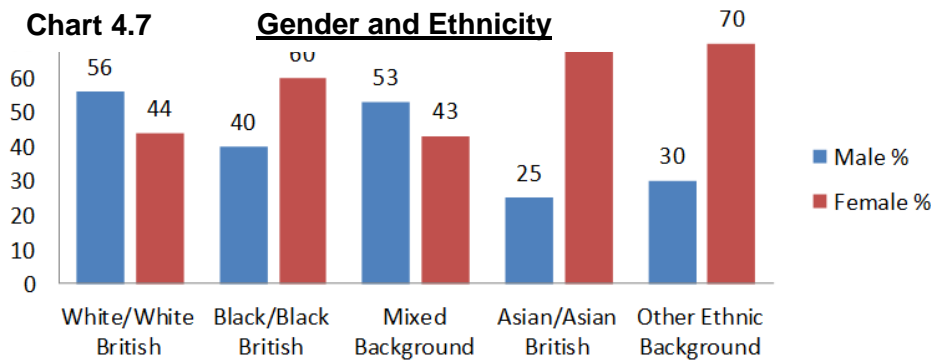


4.4 The percentage range of students by ethnic grouping making good or better progress, throughout the year 2015-16, falls between 60 and 70. Except, for Asian pupils, who fall just outside of this range at 50%. Asian pupils in HVS are not making as much progress as their peers.

4.5 When a comparison is made with the percentage of pupils in each ethnic group against their progress, pupils from Mixed Backgrounds are performing far better; 70% of these pupils make good progress with a group population size of 21%. Whereas White British pupils, make less progress i.e. 60% with a larger population size (31%).

4.6 Harrow LA data for Key Stage 4 (2015) shows Asian and Chinese pupils in the top performing groups. Whilst Mixed Background, White and Black pupils are in the underperforming groups for Harrow. By contrast HVS pupils belonging to Mixed Background, White, Black and Asian groups were our best performers in terms of their educational progress, in 2015-16.

4.7 Chart 4.7 compares pupil progress against gender and ethnicity.



4.8 Asian girls were the highest performing group (75%) in HVS and by contrast, Asian boys were the lowest performing group (25%). This data gives a clearer picture regarding the performance of Asian pupils. This academic year the VS will focus on intervention strategies to accelerate learning for Asian boys and other groups making less than 50% good or better progress.

5. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and Pathway Plans

5.1 PEPs are held termly at the pupil's school. The Designated Teacher (DT) for CLA usually leads this meeting, with the pupil, carer and social worker present. A representative from HVS attends PEPs for all new CLA or where there pressing educational concerns. The PEP addresses the following:

- Current Care Plan
- Attainment
- Short and Long-Term Learning Targets
- Attendance
- Pupil Premium Spend
- Education History

5.2 At the end of the Summer Term 2016, 83% of PEPs were in place for SSA pupils. This figure reflects an increase of 25% of good or better PEPs since the Spring Term, when the figure was just 58%. This figure, however, when compared with the number of PEP meetings (92%) that actually took place, it is slightly lower. More work still needs to be done to ensure that discussions and decisions are recorded on the PEP document during or shortly after the meeting takes place.

5.3 During the past year, 79 education and PEP meetings were undertaken by members of the VS, which has contributed to an improved PEP return rate.

5.4 85% of Pathway Plans were in place for CLA in Years 12 and 13 in July 2016. This is an increase from 77% at the end of March 2016. An audit carried out last year, suggested that approximately 50% of the Pathway Plans were of a good or better standard. Key Stage 5 education plans are a priority for this academic year.

5.5 In line with statutory guidelines, PEPs will be introduced for 3 and 4 year olds from September 2016. It is anticipated that all three and four year olds will have an education review at least 3 times a year.

6. Fixed-Term Exclusions (FTE)

6.1 There were 116 FTEs between September 2015 and June 2016 (See Table 6.5). In the same period in the previous year (September 2014-June 2015) there were 119 FTEs. In the first half of the academic year 2015-16, FTEs were reduced by 50%. However, May and June 2016 saw a sharp rise in FTEs.

6.2 The VS continues to work closely with schools to find alternatives to FTEs. The VS maintains close contacts schools where pupil's behaviour is of concern.

6.3 The table below shows a breakdown of pupils by gender, the number of FTEs and where they are educated in 2015-16.

Key
The cell colour represents a pupil.
*The pupil has a Statement for SEN or an EHCP

Month	No. of Pupils	No. of FTEs Girls			No. of FTEs Boys			Harrow	OLA
September	2	6 (KS 4)			2 (KS4)			0	8
October	1	-			2 (KS4)			0	2
November	3	3.5 (KS4)	3.5 (KS4)		1 (KS4)			8	0
December	1	-			7 *(KS3)			0	7
January	2	-			3 (KS4)	3 (KS4)		0	6
February	1	-			6 (KS4)			0	6
March	2	-			7* (KS2)	14 *(KS3)		7	14
April	3	-			2* (KS2)	2 (KS4)	2 (KS3)	4	2
May	3	-			2* (KS2)	9* (KS3)	9* (KS3)	2	18
June	4	8 (KS4)	8 (KS3)	8 (KS4)	8 * (KS3)			24	8

6.4 This data relates to 13 pupils which represents 11% (13/117) of the VS population having at least 1 FTE. Harrow is slightly above the national average (9.78%) for CLA with 1 FTE and below our statistical neighbours (12.8%). The national average for non-CLA with 1 FTE is 1.92%.

6.5 Fewer girls (5) had FTEs than boys (8). More FTEs (71) occurred in schools outside of Harrow. There were 45 FTEs from Harrow schools.

The 3 students with a Statement or an EHCP were all boys. 62% of the students with FTEs were in Key Stage 4.

- 6.6 The number of students with SEN and FTEs will continue to be a focus of the VS in this academic year (see Section 13).

7. Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

- 7.1 In HVS there were 24 pupils (20%) with Statements or EHC plans in 2015-16. Nationally, 28.5 % of CLA have Statements, where nationally only 2.8% of non-CLA have a Statement or an EHCP.
- 7.2 There are, however a number of students in HVS with identified learning difficulties who will not meet the criteria for an EHCP. These pupils often attract top-up Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) funding, which is held by the VS. Schools can apply to the VHT for this additional funding where they are able to demonstrate measureable educational outcomes and how this will be monitored.

8. Gifted and Talented (G&T)

- 8.1 A definition: Gifted is used to refer to a child who has well above average abilities in school curriculum subjects, such as English, Maths or Science, and talented refers to a child who has particular abilities in creative arts, such as music, dance and sport. Gifted children learn at a much faster pace to other children and may process a subject matter to a much greater depth.
- 8.2 Four out of 114 students (4 %) aged between 4 and 16 in HVS were identified as gifted. At present, no data exists regarding the number of G & T students in the UK. The DfE, from the onset of the G & T programme had asked schools to identify their top 5% of students that meet the G & T criteria. However, it is likely that more than 5% of students will meet this criteria. Research conducted by the National Association of Gifted & Talented in the United States, suggests that between 6% and 10% of students are G & T.
- 8.3 The progress and attainment of G & T pupils will continue to be carefully monitored by the Virtual School to ensure they sustain their outstanding progress measures. Any concerns regarding potential underachievement will be addressed promptly with our partners in education.

9. CLA Health

- 9.1 Children in care are more likely to have problems with their mental health than children who are not in care. The National Statistics Data estimates that CLA are 4 times more to have mental health problems.
- 9.2 From 2008 all local authorities in England were required to provide information on the emotional and behavioural health of children and

young people in care. The DfE requires data to be collected through the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ's).

- 9.3 The SDQ is a short behavioural screening questionnaire developed to be used by range of professionals, to include carers and teachers for pupils aged between 3 and 16. At present, the statutory requirement is for the screening to be only undertaken by carers, although there are SDQs available for schools.
- 9.4 The Harrow Virtual Headteacher, in discussion with Harrow CLA Nurse and Social Care partners, suggested that not having the schools perspective on the pupil's mental health needs gives a skewed picture of the assessment as a whole. Also, with the increasing numbers of CLA presenting with emotional and social difficulties at school, Harrow DTs are keen to be involved in the SDQ process.
- 9.5 Schools have agreed to complete the SDQ in line with the pupil's first PEP. All questionnaires will be returned to HVS. Pupils with high scores i.e. scoring 17 or above will be then referred to the Harrow CLA Health Team. This will commence in the Autumn Term 2016.
- 9.6 Harrow Virtual School will continue to work closely with our CLA Health Team to identify pupils with other health concerns, which may impact on their education; for example, pupils at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

10. Attendance

- 10.1 HVS commissions a company, Welfare Call, to monitor the attendance and exclusions of CLA students. Welfare Call contacts schools daily to ensure that student attendance is tracked closely. The Virtual School Education Welfare Officer (EWO) receives and responds to this information and provides early intervention to prevent situations escalating.
- 10.2 As at 1st June 2016 there were 102 pupils of Statutory School Age in HVS. 25.5% (26 out of 102) students have been identified as having absences causing concern that is an absence percentage figure of 90% or lower.
- 10.3 65.3% (17 out of 26) pupils with poor attendance are educated outside the Borough. This is too high and actions are in place to address this.
- 10.4 The ratio of girls to boys with poor attendance is almost equal, currently standing at 46:54.
- 10.5 The total absence percentages across HVS by Key Stage for Summer Term 2016 are as follows:

Key Stage	EYFS	1	2	3	4
Number of Pupils and Percentage	3 (11.5%)	1 (3.8%)	1 (3.8%)	2 (7.7%)	19 (73%)

10.6 All pupils are monitored by HVS from their point of entry into care, which will inflate the percentage of pupils with poor attendance. The Department of Education (DfE), only monitors pupils who are on a school roll and have been in care 1 year or longer. (See 10.10). The published DfE figures will therefore be much lower, thus giving the authority a much healthier data set.

10.7 The DfE defines percentage absence of 90% or less as persistent absence (PA). This is measured across an academic year. The table in 10.10 shows Harrow data for 'Missed Sessions' and PA from 2012 to 2015. Comparisons are made, where data exists, with Statistical Neighbours (SN) and England.

10.8 The data represents CLA who had in care for 1 year plus as at 31st March 2015 and who were enrolled at a school. Harrow had maintained a steady improvement in attendance for 'sessions missed' over the past 4 years with a small increase of 1.3% in 2015. Our attendance figures were above the England average and our SN, which analytically represents a downward trend. (See table 10.10)

10.9 PA for Harrow CLA has been suppressed. Our data is represented by the letter 'X' for cohort numbers less than or equal to 5 or percentages where the numerator is less than or equal to 5 or the denominator is less than or equal to 10.

10.10 Below is a table showing attendance data for CLA.

	Harrow 2012	Harrow 2013	England Average 2013	SN Average 2013	Harrow 2014	England Average 2014	SN Average 2015	Harrow 2015	England Average 2015	SN Average 2015
Percentage of sessions missed. (CLA 1 year+)	7.8	4.4	4.4	4.18	4.3	3.9	4.28	5.6	4.0	4.2
Percentage classed as persistent absentees (CLA 1 year+)	x	x	5	6.10	x	4.7	8.13	x	4.9	4.8

11. Enrichment

- 11.1 Harrow Virtual School recognises the importance of extra-curricular activities in supporting the development of the whole pupil. Research carried out Massoni, Erin (2011) has identified a number of benefits for pupils participating in extra-curricular pursuits. These include, but are not limited to, increased self-esteem, motivation and organisational skills. In a number of cases they reported improved educational performance and a reduction in poor behaviour.
- 11.2 In 2015-16 our pupils have enjoyed a range of extra-curricular activities, which have been either provided by the Virtual School or supported by our partners in education. These include visits to:
- Universities (Taster days and a film making workshop)
 - Sky Academy (Working in media)
 - Lords Cricket Grounds
- 11.3 Younger pupils (0-5 years) partook in 'Rumble Tumble' (a baby and toddler gym) and teenage students attended education workshops on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Sex and Relationships. A group of students also attended the production of 'Chelsea's Choice' which highlights the issues of CSE and how students affected by this can be supported.

Residential Writing Workshop

- 11.4 During the first week of August, 2 staff members from Harrow Virtual School took a group of 6 students to the Ted Hughes Arvon Centre, West Yorkshire. The centre is based in an 18th century mill-owners house which stands in 20 acres of woodland.
- 11.5 The programme consisted of a daily writing workshop lead by 2 professional writers, with leisure and recreational time built into the day. The aims of the programme were for students to:
- Express themselves in writing in a safe environment
 - Increase their self-confidence and ability to work as a team
 - Read and write for pleasure
- 11.6 Harrow Virtual School has identified writing as an area for improvement in our Virtual School Action Plan, based on our end of Key Stage 2 results in 2014-15. This intervention is in response to HVS's commitment to raise standards in this area. Writing is also an area for development in Harrow local authority for all (non-CLA) pupils.

- 11.7 The 6 students identified were aged between 13 and 16 years and the group consisted of 4 girls and 2 boys. The group were of mixed ability.
- 11.8 This project was arranged in partnership with Brent Virtual School, who also took 6 students. The John Lyon Foundation funded this scheme.
- 11.9 For pupil feedback please see below:

Final Day Comments From Individual Students	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We bonded</i> • <i>I liked how we were all laughing all the time.</i> • <i>Getting to know all the different personalities.</i> • <i>Deep talks.</i> • <i>Getting close on the first day.</i> • <i>Enjoyed the greenery and the food.</i> • <i>Confident with my writing.</i> • <i>Didn't want to do the tutorials but I really enjoyed them and they showed me that writing can be fun.</i> 	<p><i>Enjoyed writing and it has been helpful.</i></p> <p><i>I never write but I do now.</i></p> <p><i>It has made me want to write more.</i></p> <p><i>More expressive in English.</i></p> <p><i>Made me more positive.</i></p> <p><i>More confident in reading my work out loud.</i></p> <p><i>Could see my potential.</i></p>

12. CPD

12.1

Training and Updates Provided By Harrow Virtual School			
Schools	Social Workers	Carers	Other LA Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment in the Classroom: From Risk to Resilience • E-PEP Training • Education Excellence Everywhere- implications for schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Schools • E-PEP Training • Supporting Transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the National Curriculum • Barriers to Learning • New Assessment Arrangements 	<p>The Role of the Virtual School</p>

- 12.2 Training has been welcomed by all services concerned, with 100% positive feedback received. The VS will extend the training on offer

next term and will offer further consultation with stakeholders regarding future training requirements.

13. Development Priorities

To work effectively with schools and other key partners to:

- Raise the overall performance of CLA by closer tracking, monitoring, particularly for:
 - Key Stage 4
 - Asian boys
 - Early Years and Foundation Stage
 - SEN pupils at risk of fixed-term exclusions
- Improve monitoring and support for Post-16 and Care Leavers.
- Improve attendance rates of all CLA by targeted support and intervention for individual pupils.
- Reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions and maintain our record of no permanent exclusions, by monitoring behaviours, developing individual behaviour plans and strengthening partnerships with schools.
- Continue to improve the quality and quantity of PEP returns.
- Raise the profile of the Virtual School across the Local Authority, to improve communication systems between the Virtual school and other services.
- Increase training for all key stakeholders around the educational needs of CLA and factors which may affect engagement.

Legal Implications

The Virtual School Headteacher has a statutory responsibility to the LA and the DfE for monitoring all the education of CLA and Care Leavers regardless of where they are placed. Schools leading on their education may be scrutinised, challenged and supported to improve outcomes, including attendance for this vulnerable group.

Financial Implications

The indicative budget for the Virtual School in 2016-2017 is £256k. In addition the Virtual School Headteacher is accountable for the spend of the Pupil Premium Grant and has a statutory responsibility to ensure that it is used to improve educational outcomes for CLA. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

The weak performance of particular underachieving groups is a concern and the Local Authority through the Harrow School Improvement Partnership has established a 'Closing the Gap' strategy to ensure that all groups achieve in line with the high standards of achievement in Harrow. The strategy is focussed on supporting and challenging individual schools to improve the quality of their provision, so that all groups achieve well against their peers.

Council Priorities

This report provides information on the performance of underachieving groups, and as such is focused on making a difference for the vulnerable. Educational performance and standards are critical in making a difference to the life chances and aspirations of families and communities. A well-educated and skilled workforce secured through quality educational provision in Harrow, contributes significantly to local businesses and industry, within and beyond Harrow.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Financial Officer
Date: 18 th October 2016		
Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring Officer
Date: 18 th October 2016		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO, as it impacts on all Wards
EqIA carried out:	NO
EqIA cleared by:	This report is for information only. There is no decision to be made which would have an impact on the Council's Equality, Policies and Procedures.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mellina Williamson-Taylor, Headteacher, Virtual School
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Email: mellina.williamson-taylor@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None