



# Virtual School Head Teacher Annual Report 2022/23

All data is provisional until validated data is published by DFE

## Overview

The Virtual School is responsible for supporting the Virtual School Head Teacher (VSH) in discharging their statutory duties as stated in the DfE statutory guidance, dated February 2018, Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.

VSHs, working with education settings, should implement Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) arrangements for all Children in our Care (CIOC) who need support. VSHs have considerable flexibility in the use of PPP funding to maximise its impact for individual CIOC as well as the whole CIOC cohort.

The Virtual School works with educational providers and other professionals and partners to ensure that the educational achievement of CIOC is seen as a priority by everyone and that the needs of CIOC are understood. The Virtual School provides training, support, challenge, and signposting to providers to support them to meet these needs, contributing to improved educational outcomes and supporting CIOC to make at least expected progress and reach their full potential.

### The functions within the Virtual School include:

- **Promoting a culture of high aspirations for our children.**
  - By striving to achieve accelerated progress and age-related attainment or better
  - Ensuring our children access high quality educational experiences
  - Promote consultation with the VSH prior to a CIOC moving placement
  - Children are prepared for adulthood and independence in the best possible way
  - Attachment aware and trauma informed practice is embedded in our day-to-day work
- **Ensuring efficient systems are in place to ensure good quality data, information, and monitoring**
  - The VSH holds a roll of all CIOC, which includes information on the name, type and quality of education provision, SEN status, attendance, exclusions, attainment, and progress.
  - Robust procedures are in place to monitor attendance and educational progress
- **Personal Education Plans (PEP)**
  - Ensure up-to-date, effective, and high-quality PEPs, which focus on educational outcomes, are in place and that education planning is aspirational and is an integral part of the care planning process
  - Ensure social workers, designated teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities
- **Pupil Premium Plus Funding (PPP)**
  - VSH are responsible for managing pupil premium plus funding for CIOC and for allocating it appropriately
- **Ensuring all statutory guidance is followed and drift and delay are avoided**
  - For admissions, exclusions, SEN procedures
- **Pupil Voice in education is sought and listened to**
- **Supporting schools and other Partners in meeting the needs of CIOC**
  - By supporting and challenging schools to ensure that they are working in the best way to identify and meet the needs of individual CIOC
  - By providing appropriate training to all partners
  - By signposting to appropriate services and resources
  - By supporting all professionals and stakeholders to focus on early identification of needs
  - By promoting the importance of effective transitions
  - Ensuring information sharing is appropriate and timely
  - By promoting evidenced based interventions, and an attachment aware and trauma informed approach

## **Introduction**

The following report is a summary of work undertaken by the Virtual School and the achievements of the Children in our Care whose education we support and oversee for the academic year September 2022 to August 2023.

## **Extended Duties of the Virtual School**

From September 2021, the role of the Virtual School Head was extended to include all children who have or have previously had a social worker. The objectives are to ensure that there would be a local champion for children with a social worker (CWSW) in each Virtual School to increase the profile of this cohort of children and young people in school. The aim is also to promote their educational needs within children's social care and to provide strategic leadership in order, 'to create a culture of high aspirations that helps all children with a social worker to make educational progress.' Currently these duties are non-statutory however all local authorities received grant funding under section 31 of the Education Act 2022 to deliver this extended role and we are taking part in national research conducted by the Rees Centre at Oxford University commissioned by the Department for Education to measure the impact of our work.

[Virtual school head role extension to children with a social worker - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Phase one evaluation of the virtual school head's extension of duties to children with a social worker and the post-16 pupil premium plus pilot \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The funding received has been used to provide additional staffing, one Education Development Adviser who will be the strategic lead for this project and one senior data officer who will support the strategic work by providing the data that will allow us to analyse patterns and trends both from a national, regional, and local perspective.

The extended cohort is defined as 'Children with a social worker' (CWSW) and includes all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker within the past six years (Ever6). It includes children and young people aged 0-18 across all educational settings. For children and young people in Stockton this includes all children subject to a Child in Need plan (CIN), or a Child Protection plan (CP) and children who have had a social worker in the previous 3 years (Ever3). The previous 3 years is used due to availability of data following the move from RAISE to Liquid Logic.

Implementation of the Virtual School Head Teacher's Extended Duties:

- A key aspect of the extended duties is the accurate identification of our CWSW cohort. Our Data Officer has built a new vulnerable children's database which includes data on SEN status, attendance, suspensions, allocated social worker, social care status, Early Help involvement, allocated Early Help Team and Co-ordinator, and latest referral/incident dates.
- Next steps for the database will involve collaborating with key partners in schools and social care to monitor its use, discuss new suggestions/innovations, and share emerging best practice in tackling the disadvantage gap that exists for this cohort of young people.
- To support schools in identifying the key barriers and challenges facing this cohort, the Virtual School undertook a survey of primary and secondary schools. This information has been analysed, compared with other local data relating to disadvantage gaps (e.g., Pupil Premium strategy data), and shared with school staff.
- The extended duties team have analysed exclusion data for academic year 2022-23, finding that CWSW are significantly more likely to be excluded. The Virtual School will continue to analyse exclusion data to identify key trends or risk factors for this cohort.
- To raise awareness of the trauma that some of our CWSW may have experienced, the Virtual School is delivering training that looks at 'in situ' child's perspective views of trauma, neglect, abuse, Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) using virtual reality technology.

- To date, the average evaluation score for the extent to which the VR training has helped staff understand the potential effects of trauma on pupils is 4.66/5.00.
- The average evaluation score for the extent to which VR encourages a greater sense of empathy and understanding is 4.97/5.00.
- To support colleagues in social care, the extended duties team have provided:
  - A named education contact for assessment team social workers.
  - A survey for social workers to identify key training needs (training and support will then be offered).
  - Analysis of multiple CIN and CP plans to identify key education objectives to target.
  - A selection of exemplar education SMART goals to support social workers when writing CIN and CP plans.
  - A training offer for ASYE Academy covering CIN and CP plans (including objectives to support attendance) and VR training on trauma and neglect and how this might affect a child's presentation in school.
- To continue to improve the quality of the education content of CIN and CP plans. The extended duties team has proposed some joint work with CP conference chairs to audit and monitor ICPC minutes and plans, and to co-create with conference chairs and school safeguarding leads some agreed education-focused questions that will be asked and recorded at all ICPCs.
- This cohort of children also benefit from the work of the Virtual School for CIOC, particularly with regards to the Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed training and networks that are offered to schools, colleges, and early years settings.
- Briefings and information sessions have been provided for Local Authority staff, Head Teachers, Safeguarding Forum attendees, Special Educational Needs Coordinators, Designated Teachers, CAMHS colleagues.

## Virtual School Structure

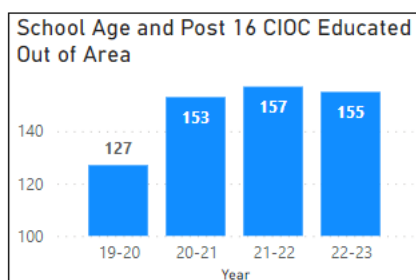
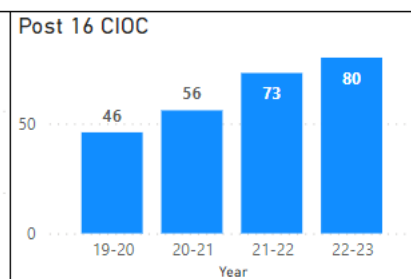
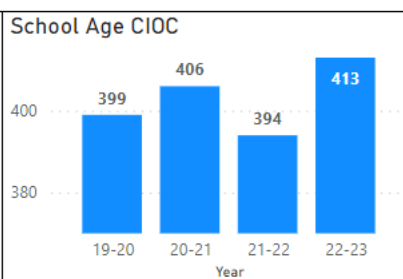
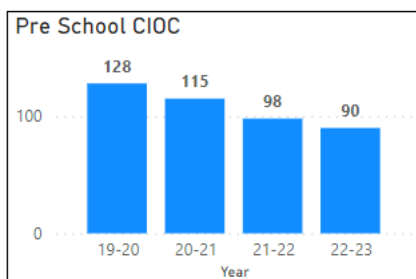
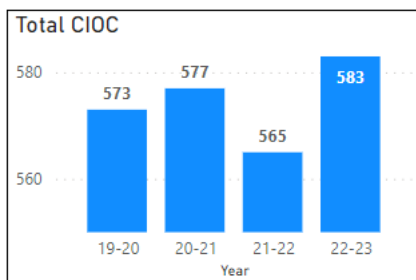


The team are a highly motivated and committed group of professionals who are dedicated to ensuring that the best interests of the children in our care are prioritised. They respond skilfully and enthusiastically to the many challenges and changes required of them.

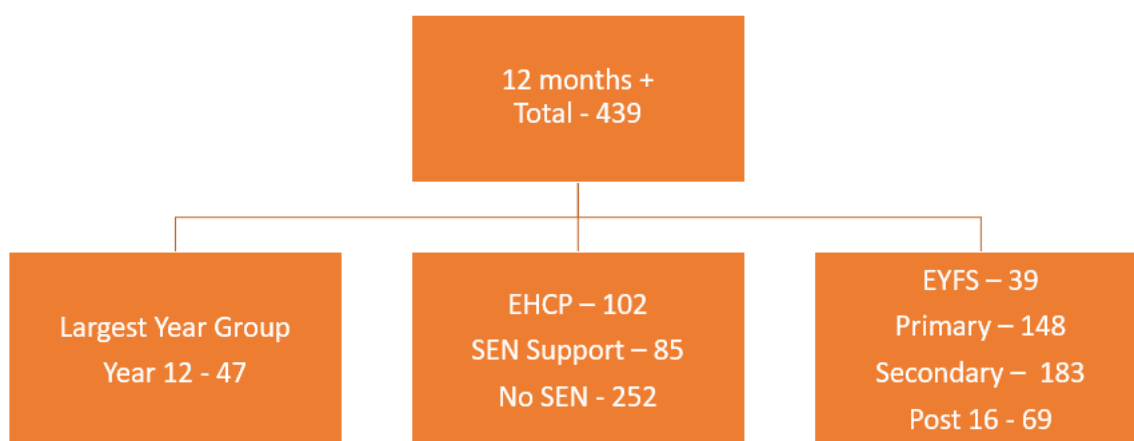
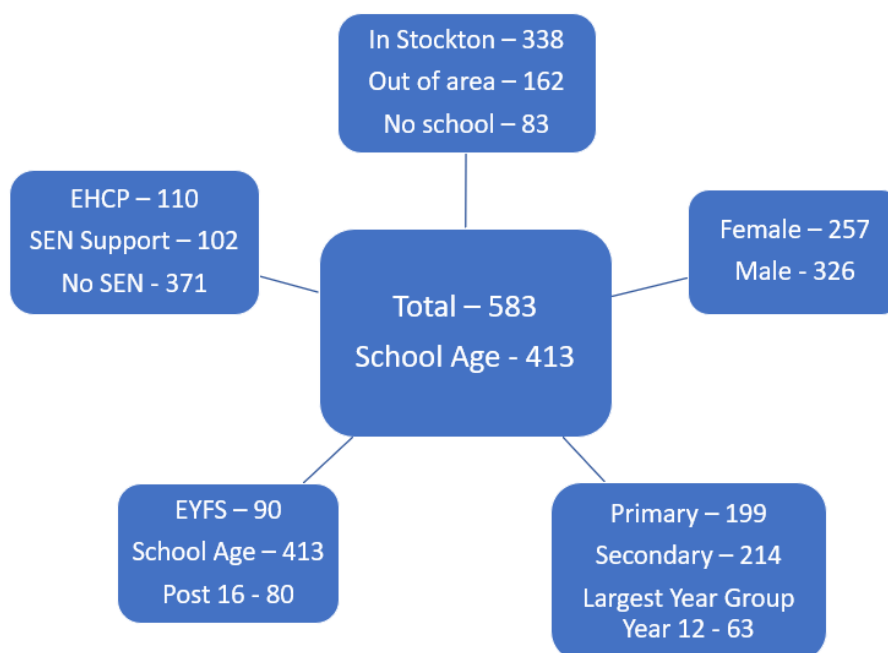
### **Virtual School Roll**

The graphs below show the trend over the previous four years for our cohort of CIOC.

(Data taken from the July 2023 Virtual School Roll, L3 report)



The diagrams below show the current cohort as of July 23, broken down into key groups. The blue diagram shows all children in care, the orange shows those who have been in care for over 12 months. The majority of children with no school are those aged under two.



### Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

	SEN Identified		EHCP	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
19-20	47.3%	193	21.3%	87
20-21	38.2%	220	17.7%	102
21-22	36.5%	206	18.1%	102
22-23	36.4%	212	18.9%	110

An Education Development Adviser specialises in SEN support, attends Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) panel, and supports school and partners to ensure statutory timescales are followed and appropriate interventions are in place. The Virtual School Head sits on the Senior Leadership Team of SEND and Inclusion and works closely with the

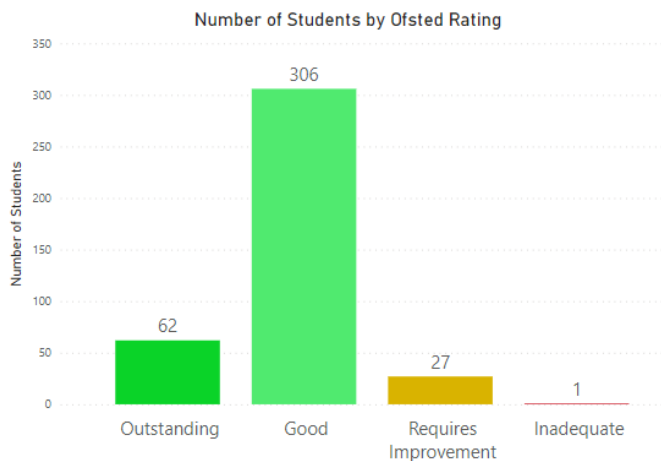
other Service Leads to ensure provision for CIOC is timely and appropriate wherever possible. The Virtual School and SEN colleagues work closely to ensure that drift and delay is avoided when placing pupils in specialist provision by:

- Liaising closely with one another when informed of a CIOC who has an EHCP and who has a potential care placement change where it may result in a change of school
- A change of school is only considered if necessary or it is deemed appropriate through the EHCP process.
- The Virtual School Education Development Adviser supports with the consultation process whenever necessary.
- Virtual School and SEN work together to provide interim provision whilst a placement is found or work to arrange a bespoke package where necessary.

## **Key Indicators**

### **Quality of Education**

School OFSTED Ratings	No of CIOC	% of children	No of Schools
Outstanding	62	15.6%	17
Good	306	77.3%	98
Requires Improvement	27	6.8%	11
Inadequate	1	-	1



- 92.9% of our students attend good or better schools
- 6.8% attend Requires Improvement Schools
- 33 students attend 17 schools who do not have an OFSTED rating following academy conversion.
- 4 students attend 2 independent schools who have Independent School Inspections
- 2 students attend 2 schools in Scotland
- 1 student attends a school in Wales

Concerted efforts are made to ensure that CIOC attend good or better schools. Currently 92.9% of CIOC attend good or better schools. In exceptional circumstances the Virtual School may agree to enrol a child into a school graded requires improvement. Where this may be appropriate, the Virtual School Head will discuss this with their equivalent Virtual School Head Teacher in another LA to ensure provision is appropriate for the needs of an individual child and that the decision is evidence based. Where a child already attends a school, which is judged to be less than good before becoming looked after or the school receives a lower grade at inspection while the child is already at the school the VSHT must consider whether a fall in OFSTED grading would justify disrupting a child's education with a school move. The Virtual School will monitor the education that is provided for children in less than good schools closely through our half termly monitoring meetings.

## Attendance

	2018-19	2019-20		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
		Before Lockdown	Total			
Stockton CIOC overall attendance	96.8%	95.7%	94.6%	90.6%	91.9% Validated – 92.2%	90.5%
National (England CIOC)	94.9%		No data	90.9%	92.2%	No data
Primary	97.3%	96.8%	96.7%	93.7%	96.1%	93.2%
Secondary	93.1%	94.7%	92.6%	82.5%	85.5%	87.2%
Persistent absence (<90%)	8.3%		No data	33.9%	16.1% Validated – 17.9%	15.3%
National	12%		No data	30.4%	19.1%	No data
100% attendance				63 Children (14.4%)	49 Children (15%)	35 Children (8.5%)

### How is Attendance monitored and supported by the Virtual School

- Attendance is monitored by a data feed direct from schools for children attending Stockton Schools. For children attending out of borough schools we use an external attendance monitoring service (Welfare Call) that collects daily attendance
- The data is collated in the Virtual School Dashboard
- All CIOC have a named allocated Virtual School Caseworker who monitors attendance on a weekly basis and follows up any concerns that arise
- Caseworkers advocate for children that have been suspended and/or at risk of permanent exclusion with a great deal of success and find solutions with schools

### Persistent Absentees (those children who have attendance below 90%)

- CIOC are monitored weekly at Virtual School team meetings where progress is reviewed, and impact of action evaluated
- All persistently absent CIOC should have an attendance plan in place, drawn up in partnership with the young person and the care team
- The Virtual School follow the ATTEND framework, an emotionally based school non-attendance model
- Caseworkers support, advise and challenge the school to ensure they are following the Local Authority Tier 1 level interventions
- Caseworkers signpost colleagues to the Tier 2 Interventions and then collaborate with colleagues in the Vulnerable Learners Team at Tier 3.
- Additional pupil premium funding can be requested from the Virtual School to support interventions, transitions, and reintegration back into school
- The Virtual School have challenged permanent exclusions, with success, when the situation has required a challenge
- The Virtual School promote statutory assessment for SEN when appropriate
- The Virtual School support social workers to secure education when a child has had a placement change, where appropriate, as quickly as possible to support the stability of a care placement although this is often dependant on support from other Local Authorities. We work closely with these colleagues to avoid drift and delay. If possible, we would try to avoid a school placement change as this is often a place of stability and positive relationships.



- Where there is drift and delay bespoke packages are considered and implemented, these packages often involving tuition and/or alternative provision and are short term measures whilst a placement is secured.

## Exclusions

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
% of CIOC with at least 1 Fixed term exclusion	No Data	4.2	8.2	11.7	12.2 Validated – 10.37%	11.3
Number of pupils with at least 1 Fixed term exclusion	12	16	33	44	58	66
Total days lost to exclusion	63.5	132	No Data	239	440.5	499.5

This academic year we have had four permanent exclusions, two boys, both in Year 10, and two girls, one in Year 6 and one in Year 9. Three of the exclusions were challenged: one was upheld by the Independent Review Panel; one was overturned by the Governing Board, and one was rescinded prior to the Independent Review Panel.

## Children Missing Education

### Definition of Children Missing Education

“Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training) later in life.”

The whole CIOC cohort (0-18) is reviewed every half term to ensure that we are aware of any child who is missing education or who is receiving a bespoke education package due to complex personal circumstances and the delay in securing a school place. Actions are taken to secure education and to ensure that children are placed in high quality regulated education provision that meets their individual needs,

### Some reasons why children may be missing education

1. New into care
2. Placement moves
3. Placed in short term unregulated care provision
4. Prior to coming into care a child was not attending school or was electively home educated
5. Children leave secure or residential accommodation with education on site
6. A child is permanently excluded, and no 6-day provision is available
7. Local SEN teams (LA where child is placed) are unable to source specialist provision that can meet a child's needs
8. A local school refuses to admit a CIOC and a direction from the DCS may need to be requested

In July 2023 we had 9 students who are not accessing high quality education provision

Gender	Placed	Reason	
Female	Durham	8	
Male	Blackpool	3	
Male	Stockton	7	
Male	Durham	3	
Male	Preston	3	

Female	Northamptonshire	7	
Female	Redcar and Cleveland	7	
Female	Scotland	8	

Children who are not accessing high quality provision are offered a bespoke package that may include, online learning, face to face tuition or alternative provision.

There is active advocacy from the Virtual School, Social Care Colleagues, SEND Colleagues, Foster Carers and Residential staff to secure education as quickly as possible.

Reasons for delays

- Nationally the largest barrier in delaying school placement is specialist school sufficiency across the country
- Increase in complex needs
- Difficulty in finding care placements

## **Educational Outcomes**

Children in care are not a homogenous group, mobility is often pronounced, many factors impact on their educational achievement and there is a high number who have a Special Educational Need. Overall, the circumstances are often complex, and oversimplification of results can be misleading. In many cases analysing attainment or progress alone does not always reflect the progress or impact of targeted support implemented by schools or the Virtual School.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

In 2022 we were disappointed in the Good Level of Development (GLD) results as they were well below pre pandemic levels and well below national figures. As described in last year's report the cohort had very specific needs and attendance at school was low. It is pleasing to see that the results this year (2023) have improved and are above national, however we will continue to work with schools and early years setting on closing the gaps.

	Stockton 2019	Stockton 2022	Stockton CIOC 2023	National CIOC 2023
% Achieving Good Level of Development (GLD)	60%	27.3%	46.2%	41.0%

### **Phonics Screening Check in Year 1**

The 2022 cohort above sat the phonic screening check this summer. We continue to support this cohort and have secured a reading intervention teacher through a supply agency as part of the school led tutoring initiative to work with Year 1 and Year 2 children on literacy and reading interventions.

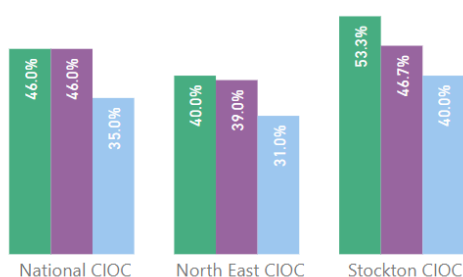
	Stockton CIOC 2022	Stockton CIOC 2023	National CIOC 2023
Phonics required standard	69.2%	45.5%	61%

### **Key Stage 1**

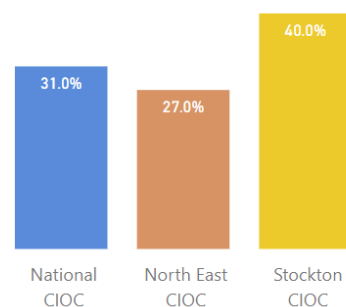
Outcomes are still below pre pandemic levels but are above the national average, and in most cases significantly above the national average for children in care in 2023.

Subject ● Maths ● Reading ● Writing

## KS1 2023



## KS1 Combined 2023



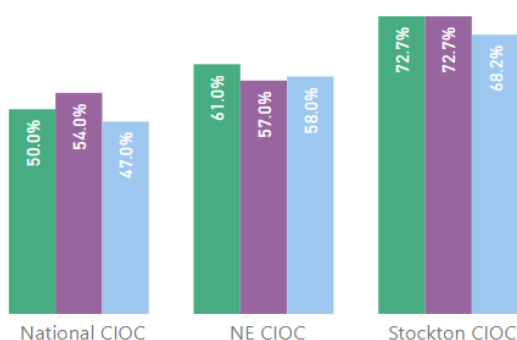
	Stockton 2019	Stockton CIOC 2022	Stockton CIOC 2023	National CIOC 2023
EXS Reading	78.6	44.4%	46.7%	46.0%
EXS Writing	71.4	44.4%	40%	35%
EXS Mathematics	78.6	44.4%	53.3%	46%
EXS combined RWM	71.4	38.8%	40%	31%

## Key Stage 2

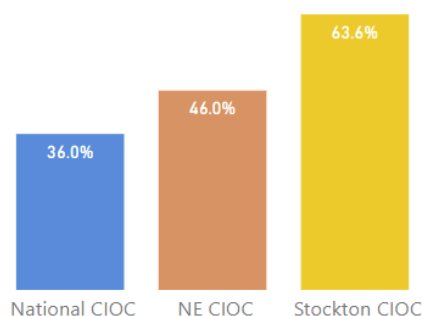
In 2023, Key Stage 2 results are well above pre pandemic levels. The provisional data for Key Stage 2 shows that Stockton CIOC have performed well above the national average for children in care and North East Children Looked After in all areas. (Reading, Writing, Mathematics and combined RWM).

Subject ● Maths ● Reading ● Writing

## KS2 2023



## KS2 Combined 2023



	2019	Stockton CIOC 2022	Stockton CIOC 2023	National CIOC 2023
Expected Standard Reading (EXS)	47%	64.7%	72.7%	54%
EXS Writing	53%	55.9%	68.2%	47%
EXS Maths	59%	58.8%	72.7%	50%
EXSRWM combined	44%	41.2%	63.6%	36%

## Boosting Reading Programme

In 2019 reading attainment was identified as an area for improvement and as part of our improvement plan, we implemented the booster reading programme. Reading attainment is continuing to improve and is now well above 2019 outcomes and above the national average for all Children in Care. The reading booster programme has had praiseworthy impact.

## Key Stage 4

In 2022/23 there was a return to pre pandemic standards for GCSE, AS and A 'Level qualifications. This follows three years of changes to assessment criteria and disruption due to the COVID pandemic. It is nationally recognised that the system for measuring and comparing the attainment and progress of looked after children is problematic and often not of significance due to the often small and diverse cohorts. For that reason, it is often useful to look at the make-up of the cohort and consider how this may impact upon outcomes. Nationally it is recommended that the more meaningful comparison is with 2019 outcomes as the last year that summer exams were taken before the pandemic. It is expected that performance in 2023 will generally be lower than 2022.

DfE Key Stage 4 Performance, Oct 2023

### Year 11 cohort

- 45 pupils were in the Year 11 (12 months +) cohort, 1 pupil is equivalent to 2.2%
- 56% has some recognised special educational need
- 33% had an EHCP and 23% had SEN support
- 9% (4 CIOC) had significantly poor attendance
- 32 pupils were educated in schools in Stockton (71%)
- 13 pupils were educated in schools outside of Stockton (29%)
- 20 pupils attended specialist, specialist independent or alternative provision (44%), of which, only 2 achieved L4+ in Maths and English
- Of the 25 who attended mainstream school, 11 achieved L4+ in Maths and English (44%)

Results at Level 4+ are in line with last year and slightly better than 2019, however L5+ results have decreased from last year but are slightly better than 2019.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Level 4+ English and Maths	20%	27.5%	31.7%	28.6%	28.9%
Level 4+ English	33%	42.8%	46.3%	35.7%	37.8%
Level 4+ Maths	27%	27.5%	34.1%	33.3%	31.1%
Level 5+ English and Maths	10%	14.2%	9.7%	21.4%	13.3%
Level 5+ English	17%	22.8%	19.5%	33.3%	22.2%
Level 5+ Maths	13%	14.2%	19.5%	26.2%	17.8%

### Key Stage 4 Attainment and progress measures

Attainment and progress measures are not yet available.

The attainment and progress, as well as the overall progress of children regardless of their attainment, and their engagement, is recorded on a child's PEP document. Every term information is collated and analysed. As part of our monitoring schedule, the Virtual School scrutinise this information and identify those children where their attainment is a cause for concern. We will then aim to attend the next PEP meeting or contact the school for further information, ensuring effective interventions are in place and to offer support.

### Post 16

To support CIOC with their preparation for adulthood and in making appropriate decisions for their education Post 16, the Virtual School has appointed a Youth Direction Participation Adviser, this adviser works alongside a colleague appointed by the Opportunities Service, in Help and Support. A further adviser has been appointed to support the outcomes of the Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus pilot. These advisers support the Virtual School in delivering independent careers advice, guidance, and support.

The Virtual School Youth Direction Participation Advisers play a vital role in supporting other professionals, carers, young people who are in our care or care leavers in respect of education, employment, or training. They work in partnership with colleagues in social care, Youth Direction, SEN, carers, schools, colleges, universities, and training providers to ensure pathways support young people in their aspirations and independence.

The roles and responsibilities of the Participation Advisers include:

- Offering advice guidance and support to CIOC
- Attending PEP meetings from Year 9 onwards to support and advise on transition plans into further education, employment, and training
- Liaising with other professionals in the LA to secure work experience opportunities/apprenticeships, training, and employment
- Ensuring that CIOC have a careers information, advice, and guidance interview
- Maintaining positive links with local colleges, training providers and schools to support young people's attendance and engagement in their education and training
- Mentoring and supporting young people regarding accessing and engaging in educational opportunities
- Advising and guiding with transition plans and exit plans between courses of education, employment, and training.
- working with other professionals to ensure support for the young person is in place to overcome barriers to engagement,
- keeping other professionals up to date with any relevant information in respect of the young person's attendance, engagement, disciplinary action in respect of their education and training

The Participation Advisors work closely with the Virtual School Education Adviser and attend termly Post 16 meetings to ensure future destinations are shared and communicated to receiving colleges. In 2022-23 the Participation Advisers carried out 1926 significant interventions ranging from attendance at a range of meetings, home visits, support taking CIOC to interviews and college visits, emails, telephone calls and texts.

#### Destination data (Year 11 into Year 12)

	Sept 2017 (23 young people)	Sept 2018 (28 young people)	Sept 19 (34 young people)	Sept 20 (36 young people)	Sept 21 (41 young people)	Sep 22 (50 young people)	Sept 23 (54 young people)
Education	96%	76%	74%	75%	(27) 66%	(39) 78%	(42) 78%
Employment	0%	8%	3%	0%	0%	(1) 2%	(4) 7%
Training	0%	8%	15%	22%	(8) 20%	0	(2) 4%
NEET	4%	4%	9%	0%	(6) 14%	(8) 16%	(6) 11%
Other	0%	4%	0%	3%	0%	(2) 4% Secure/Prison	0

From destination interviews in year 12 and 13 (July 2023), 73% of year 12 (compared to 67% in 2022) and 51% of Year 13 (compared to 65% in 2022) are planning to progress and stay in education, employment, or training.

In Year 14 Employment and Education figures are below

EET	34 (51%)	NEET	33 (49%)
Apprenticeship	1	NEET	26
Education	22	NEET – Re engagement	1
Employed	7	NEET – Pregnant	1
University	4	NEET – Parent	1
		NEET - Illness	1
		NEET – Custody	3

### University figures

Progression to University is pleasing. 17 Care Leavers currently attend University, 7 started university courses, in Year 1, in Sept/Oct 2023. Five care leavers completed their university degree in Summer 2023.

University	Number of care leavers 2022	Type of degree	Number of Care Leaver 2023	Type of degree
Total	23		17	
Year 1	10	1 x Foundation Degree 7 x Honours Degree 2 x Masters	7	6 x Honours degree
Year 2	6	5 x Honours	7	7 x Honours degree
Year 3	4	4 x Honours	3	3 x Honours degree
Year 4	2	1 x Honours 1 x PGCE	N/A	
Year 5	1		N/A	
	<b>Completed 2022</b>		<b>Completed 2023</b>	
	First - Masters (Medical and Molecular Virology)		BSc (Hons) 2:1 Computer Science – now Teacher training	
	Graphic Art Degree – Hartlepool 2:1 (BA) Hons		BSc (Hons) 2:1 Physiotherapy Degree – now working as a Physiotherapist	
	2 x BA (Hons) Educational Studies		BA (Hons) 2:1 Film Production – Exploring carer in wind farm industry	
	BA (Hons) Criminology and Law		BA(Hons) 2:1 Law – Year out to Travel	
			BA (Hons)2:1 in Social Policing Degree and Master’s in Law. – Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate	

### Personal Education Plans (PEP)

The statutory guidance published in 2018, Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children emphasises the importance of PEPs as an integral part of the care plan of all children in our care (CIOC) from pre-school to age 18. Currently all children who are school age (age 5 to 16) have their PEP reviewed termly, pre nursery are reviewed every 6 months. The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority and the school that the child attends. The PEP is quality assured by Virtual School staff with support from other LA colleagues following a quality assurance framework devised by the Virtual School. All PEPs are quality assured, and feedback is provided to schools.

In September 2019, the Virtual School focused on the submission of PEPs as a priority for schools and this has seen a significant improvement in the completion rates by schools. This work is being accompanied by the production and sharing of PEP completion guides and additional support and training from the Virtual School. We have also listened to Designated Teachers and implemented several changes to the PEP document to help them use their time more efficiently.

The Virtual School aims to attend at least one PEP for each child in an academic year. All CIOC have an allocated virtual school caseworker. Priority will be given to:

- Requests to attend from Social Worker and/or Designated Teacher
- Identification of pupils though our regular data meetings where analysis of data allows us to identify students, we feel may need additional support
- A new admission to care
- CIOC who have recently moved out of the area, or it is proposed that they may move out of the area
- CIOC attending schools that are graded less than good, where we have concerns

### **Record of PEPs in place**

	Academic Year 20-21	Academic Year 21-22	Academic Year 22-23
Total number of PEPs	546 (summer term only)	1708	1844
PEPs in Place	71.5%	82%	86.2%

PEP completion rate is continuing to improve. We strive for 100%

### **Quality Assurance of PEPs (2022-23)**

Cohort	Number of PEPs quality assured in 2022-23	Green	Amber	Red
Early Years	217	68.2%	22.5%	9.2%
School Age	1191	73.6%	21.9%	4.5%
Post 16	360	74.1%	19.4%	6.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,768</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>

The quality of PEPs is also improving. PEPs rated green have improved from 67% in 2022 to 73% in 2023, again we strive for the highest quality PEPs and work with all education providers and social care colleagues to continuously improve quality. Where quality is judged to be Red, the quality assurance process ensures that comprehensive feedback is given, and Virtual School staff encourage the designated teacher to resubmit. If necessary, or if requested the Virtual school Staff will offer bespoke advice and/or training.

### **Pupil Premium Plus (PPP)**

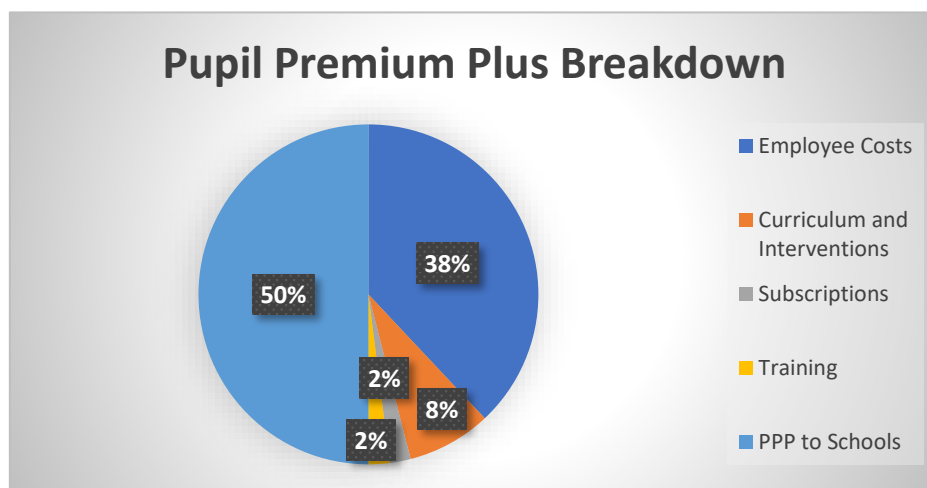
Looked-after children are one of the groups of pupils that attract PPP funding. This is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of looked-after children and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Local authorities receive a PPP grant allocation (£2410 per child) based on the number of children looked after for at least one day and aged 4 to 15 on 31 August, as recorded in the latest looked-after children data return. VSHs, working with education settings, should implement PPP arrangements for all looked-after children. VSHs have considerable flexibility in the use of PPP funding to maximise its impact for individual looked-after children as well as the whole looked-after cohort. This grant cannot be carried forward into the new financial year and must be spent within the allocated financial year or returned to the Department for Education. As a result, this budget needs careful management, the Virtual School Head Teacher works closely with the Finance team to ensure this grant supports the CIOC appropriately and effectively.

50% of pupil premium plus funding is made available to schools to meet the specific needs of individual children in line with the targets in their PEP and is paid on submission of a completed PEP document.

The Virtual School Head Teacher holds the remaining proportion to support the Cohort as a whole. This part of the grant provides:

- Virtual School Employee costs (Staff salaries, Staff CPD, equipment, expenses)
- Curriculum interventions

- Subscription costs (Welfare Call EPEP, Welfare Call Attendance Monitoring, National Association of Virtual School Headteachers, Attachment Research Community, Thrive Approach)
- Training for Schools and other partners
- Additional Learning Support Fund (schools can request additional pupil premium plus funding to support additional learning interventions)



## Virtual School Interventions – Academic Year 2022-23

### Funding

- Allocated Pupil Premium Plus (currently £1400)
- Additionally allocated Pupil premium Plus (paid April 2022 and again in April 2023, £200)
- Recovery premium – given to schools (£156 per CIOC in 2022, allocations in guidance for 2023)
- School Led Tutoring – a proportion is given to schools (different amounts depending on reported use, VS to provide the required additional percent - 25% in 2021-22, 40% in 2022-23)

### Staffing

- Virtual School Educational Psychologist
- Increased number of caseworkers
- Increased number of Youth Direction participation advisers (1.2 increased to 2) – Post 16 Pilot
- Adoption Tees Valley (ATV) Education Support Worker
- Education Development Advisor (Extended duties) support for Previously Looked After Children
- St John's Hub (In-reach and Out-reach work)
- Senior Data Officer (Extended duties)

### Interventions

- Thrive Approach
- Sensory Profiling
- English tuition
- Boosting Reading Intervention
- Letterbox parcels
- Middlesbrough Football Club Mentoring
- CAMHS support



## Training

- Training booklet
- TIPS (Trauma Informed Practice in Stockton) Offer
  - 7-day Touchbase Attachment Lead Course (External training provider)
  - Theraplay (External Training provider)
  - Emotion Coaching (External Training Provider)
  - ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant). Training delivered by VS Educational Psychologist
  - TIPS Network Meetings
  - EP training
    - Supporting Transitions
    - Executive Functioning
    - Stress
    - ATTEND Framework (EBSA)
    - PACE Approach
    - Power of relationships
  - Bespoke Virtual School training (AATI)
    - Bespoke support and training for School Leadership
    - Bespoke training for whole staff
    - Bespoke training for small staff groups
    - Bespoke training for staff working with individual CIOC
    - Key Adult training
    - DT termly Network meetings
  - Carer training
    - Family Thrive
    - Emotion Coaching for parents

## EP Support

- Assessment
- Reports
- Solution Focussed planning
- Circle of Understanding model
- Circle of Adults model
- Consultations
- ELSA Supervision

## Other

- Virtual School Hubs
- MSLTP
- Care2Dance

## SEND and Inclusion

- Link with Statutory SEN, SENDCO briefings and training
- Link with Vulnerable Learners Team, access to Vulnerable Learners Team (VLT) training offer
- Link with Vulnerable Learners Team, access to Specialist Teachers
- Link with Vulnerable Learners Team, access to VLT HLTA support

## **Previously Looked After Children**

The role of the VSH for previously looked-after children is to promote their educational achievement through the provision of information and advice to their parents, educators, and others who the VSH considers necessary.

The Virtual School work very closely with Adoption Tees Valley and with the other Tees Valley Virtual School Head Teachers. To support us in discharging this duty the Tees Valley VSHTs have appointed an Education Support Worker to sit within Adoption Tees Valley (ATV) to promote education and support this service with education advice, guidance, and support. The Education Support worker has been employed since July 2019 and has made a significant impact within the ATV service. The worker contributes to Designated Teacher meetings, liaises regularly with the Virtual School, and has accessed Thrive training along with Stockton Virtual School colleagues ensuring that a consistent message is given to schools about meeting the needs of this group of children. As well as working closely with the education support worker the five Tees Valley Virtual School Head Teachers meet regularly with the Service Lead and key staff within ATV to coordinate and support the Education Support Worker in their role.

### **ATV Education Support – Stockton (report from Leanne Longstaff, Education worker ATV)**

The number of families and children requiring support continues to increase annually. This school year (2022 to 2023) I have provided education support to 108 families in the Tees Valley area a total of 44 families were from the Stockton area.

The recurring themes for support have been.

- Helping schools and nurseries to understand developmental trauma and the impact of the child's early life experiences on the behaviour and at times their ability to manage the school environment.
- Trying to reduce the risk of exclusions and permanent exclusions.
- Behaviour systems and policies that have a detrimental effect on the young person and the need to make reasonable adjustments at times.
- Managing transitions to secondary schools.
- Supporting cases involving Emotional Based School avoidance

#### **Training**

- Delivered adoption training to the Darlington Early Years network and raised awareness regarding support.
- Presented at the Darlington Head teachers Network meeting
- Delivered training on Developmental Trauma and teaching strategies, to schools in the Tees Valley which included using the VR Headsets.
- Delivered a workshop on Education Support for PLAC at London's Regional Adoption Agencies event in London.
- Delivered Education support training and advice to RAA Coast to Coast

### **Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed (AATI) Journey**

In May 2022, The Rees Centre at Oxford University published a piece of research on Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed schools' programmes which emphasised that schools tend to conceptualise the embedding of AATI practice as a lengthy journey.

This journey towards understanding how best to support children who have experienced trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) or disrupted attachments is recognised by schools and Virtual Schools nationally and locally.

The research has prompted the Stockton Virtual School team to reflect on their journey both in terms of their own learning and with colleagues in Stockton Schools and in many cases out of area schools. The Virtual School believe that our role in this work is to support schools and encourage them to consider their AATI offer to support children in care primarily but also to embed AATI practice for the benefit of all vulnerable learners.

It is pleasing to reflect on the progress that has been made since starting this work in 2017-18 despite the COVID pandemic.

A brief history of the journey so far comprises of:

#### 2017-2018

- Touchbase Attachment Lead 7-day course (22 participants, 7 LA Officers, 8 schools represented)
- 2-day Group Theraplay – 8 schools represented
- Emotion Coaching 2-day course organised by Stockton EP service

#### 2018-19

- KCA Whole School AATI Practice with focus on Emotion Coaching project with 5 schools, evaluated by the Rees Centre
- 2 Cohorts of 2-day Group Theraplay – 25 schools and 2 Early Years settings represented
- Touchbase Attachment Lead 7-day course (24 participants, 1 LA Officer, 15 schools)
- PAC UK Whole School Attachment Awareness training delivered to 24 schools and 2 Early Years settings, 1 session also provided to Stockton DTs and Residential Care Home Staff

2019-2020 and 2020-2021 were disrupted significantly by COVID, however some work did continue

- AATI Awareness training delivered by the Virtual School to 22 schools
- Jan 20 KCA Emotion Coaching 1-day CPD – 36 delegates, 2 Virtual School colleagues and 20 schools represented
- 5 Virtual School Staff and 2 SEND colleagues participated in Thrive Licensed Practitioner CPD
- Spring 21 and Summer 21 - Touchbase Attachment Lead 7-day course (16 participants, 5 LA Officer, 5 schools and 4 representatives from other regional VS)
- KCA Training 2 half day sessions related to relevant issues (Sexualised Behaviour and Self Harming Behaviour) were delivered virtually
- The Lisa Cherry Conference arranged for April 2020 was disrupted due to COVID, it did run virtually over two half days. However, it is felt that the aim of bringing colleagues across the borough together to explore how relevant teams could contribute to a single borough vision around Trauma Informed practice was not achievable at that point in time.

#### 2021 – 2022

- Autumn 2021 2-day Group Theraplay 2 cohorts 16 schools represented
- A series of 6 stand-alone training sessions delivered by the Virtual school EP, one every half term
- Thrive Licensed Practitioner CPD attended by 2 new Virtual School case workers
- Two Family Thrive Programmes delivered to two groups of Foster Carers
- Compassionate Stockton: Trauma Informed Practice in Schools Network launched and working party established
- Good practice hubs established, working with the Virtual School EP to develop practice

#### 2022 – 2023

In 2022-23 we have followed a similar model to that delivered in 2021-22 in order to embed the work that we do. In addition to the above we have also:

- Introduced a comprehensive Training booklet detailing our training offer
- Completed Instructor training for the Virtual Reality Headsets to start rolling out training in Sept 23
- Hosted two courses on Emotion Coaching, one for Education professionals and one for Foster Carer/Residential staff, delivered by external providers Emotion Coaching UK
- Hosted a 1-day Conference in partnership with Horizons Academy - Margot Sunderland Trauma Informed Schools UK Virtual Conference

59 schools (66%) have engaged with one or more training sessions this academic year

50 schools (62%) have attended Designated Teacher Meetings

17 schools were represented at the Compassionate Stockton TIPS (Trauma Informed Practice in Schools) Network launch

Oxford University, Rees Centre research, Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Schools Programme, Positive Practice Examples from Local Authorities, has reinforced that our work does contain most of the key ingredients needed to support schools on their journey. This includes:

- Organised and subsidised external training (Touchbase Attachment Lead 7-day course, Theraplay, The Thrive Approach, and Emotion Coaching)
- Half termly, stand alone, training sessions
- Bespoke training packages for school staff
- Bespoke consultations and packages for individual CIOC
- Compassionate Stockton: TIPS Network and working party, coproducing our offer and support across Stockton Schools

## **Challenge and Support**

### **Partnership Working**

Partnership working is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the Virtual School and our support of CIOC. As one part of the Corporate Parenting Body we strive to support all partners to ensure that the educational provision and opportunities that our children receive are of the highest quality and that children are supported to make at least expected progress and achieve their potential.

Examples of how we work in partnership are detailed below.

- As a Service Lead the VSHT attends Children's Services Management Group (CSMG)
- VSHT sits on Placement Panel held weekly
- Attendance at the Children in our Care Strategic Group (CIOCSG)
- Provide training sessions as part of the Foster Carer Preparation Training
- A Virtual School EDA sits on the Fostering Panel
- Attendance at Social Care Team Meeting to update staff on local and national developments
- Virtual School Youth Direction Participation Adviser attends Accommodation Panel
- IRO information and briefing sessions, with any necessary identified training or bespoke support
- As a Service Lead in the SEND and Inclusion Service, the VSHT attends senior leadership meetings
- VS Education Development Adviser (EDA) attends SEN EHCP Panel
- VS contribute to SENDCo briefings, Safeguarding Forum, Education Matters, Closing the Gap, Schools Causing Concern, Secondary Heads and Principals Group (SHPG)
- VSHT sits on the monthly CAMHS Referral panel
- VSHT is a member of the Healthy Schools Steering group, and the VS is represented on the development groups of the four strands and contributes to the accreditation process

Meetings organised by the Virtual School to aid partnership working include:

- Virtual School Monitoring Meeting (chaired by VSHT), these meeting look at students who may be struggling and who may need additional support. Held at the beginning of every half term
- Post 16 Meeting (chaired by EDA) held termly
- Early Years (0-5) (chaired by EDA) held termly
- SEN placement meetings held weekly
- LAC CAHMS joint working meetings held every term

Within the wider partnership working the VSHT attends The Tees Valley Adoption Education Group, the North East Virtual School Head Teachers regional meetings and the National Association of Virtual School Heads webinars and Annual Conference

## **Training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

As well as attendance at meetings the Virtual School (VS) supports a comprehensive training package for school and partners. We produce a training booklet, setting out our training programme for the academic year, which is shared with Schools, Colleges and Early Years Setting. We also promote the training and initiatives offered by SEND and Inclusion, and the Education Improvement Service.

The following training events were delivered by the Virtual School in 2022-23

- Termly DT meetings/briefings
- Half termly DT Newsletters
- Bespoke training for Designated Teachers new to post
- PEP training for all professionals
- Online SEN training for Social Care Colleagues
- Ongoing Bespoke Training for individual teachers, Teaching Assistants, and whole school training on Attachment Difficulties/Developmental Trauma/ Emotion Coaching and Theraplay.
- Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed whole school training sessions (3 different sessions).
- Newly Qualified Teacher training on Attachment Aware and Trauma informed classroom approaches
- Stockton Campus Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) – Training delivered on Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed Approaches
- Education Psychologist half termly training sessions (session 1 – ATTEND Framework (supporting emotionally based school avoidance), session 2 – CIOC and Stress, session 3- reframing behaviour, session 4 – executive functioning skills, session 5 – Power of Relationships, session 6 – using creative approaches therapeutically in school)
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training
- Family Thrive for Foster Carers, delivered to two groups of Foster Carers with very positive feedback

External training organised by VS

- Emotion coaching was arranged and delivered in January 2023

## **High Aspirations**

The VS will challenge decisions and interventions that we feel are not in the best interests of our children. We will challenge decisions that are not in accordance with statutory guidance or the law, or are causing drift and/or delay to our children accessing appropriate provision in a timely manner. This is done through professional dialogue with colleagues and partners and by using the processes within the Virtual School and Children's Services to document, escalate and inform.

Currently the Virtual School accesses outcomes data via our own monitoring systems and reports provided from the web based EPEP system, Welfare Call. We meet weekly to identify areas of concern and actions to be taken. A School Summary report has been devised to support schools with their readiness and ability to support CIOC and this is used to support schools in the development of their work with CIOC. It also allows us to identify and celebrate the good work of many of our schools who provide outstanding provision for the CIOC.

School monitoring visits have continued to take place for the CIOC in key year groups to work with schools to support children in making expected progress and making up for lost learning. This is particularly important following the interrupted and often variable provision that children experienced in 2019-20 and 2020-21, including national lockdowns, teaching bubbles and individuals needing to self-isolate.

### **Virtual School Accountability**

The Virtual School are held to account through key performance meetings within Children's Service. The VSHT attends the SEND and Inclusion Service Performance Clinic and presents to that group every half term on progress and outcomes for the Virtual School and for CIOC.

The Virtual School have a school improvement plan that is shared with the SEND and Inclusion Service manager. This plan is available on request.

The Virtual School Head Teacher works closely with a group of Head Teachers and Designated Teachers to share decision making about how CIOC funding (Pupil premium plus, Recovery premium, School Led Tutoring) is allocated. The Virtual School work in partnership with this group to discuss what interventions and support is needed in schools so that Virtual School can respond to need in the best way possible.

The VSHT presents biannually to the Corporate Parenting Board

### **Child Engagement/Celebration**

- The Virtual School supported with the organisation and delivery of the CIOC celebration event held in October 2022
- VS have supported the More Stuff Like This Please (MSLTP) initiative, and the Care 2 Dance Project
- Implementation of Primary and Secondary hubs have continued. One Hub event culminated in an exhibition of work at the ARC in Stockton Town Centre
- Following the Children's Service Review the Youth Participation Advisors have supported the Let's Take Action/ Positive Activities Group
- Pupil voice is collected termly on a child's PEP
- The VS continues to encourage schools to celebrate pupil achievement in its widest sense on the child/young person's PEP. Schools are encouraged to use the Big Goals, Big Life Challenges, which links into the Preparation for Adulthood Framework, and supports schools in engaging pupils in a variety of activities that evidence social skills and personal development. The challenges are bespoke to the different educational Key Stages and have been devised with schools and young people.