

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
23rd November 2006**

**ENJOY AND ACHIEVE
CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER BY MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL**

**JAN BRUNTON - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
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CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING**

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present an overview to Members of the Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework, with reference to enjoy and achieve for Children Looked After (CLA).

BACKGROUND

2. Children in the care of the local authority have a right to expect the universal ambitions we all want for every child and young person, whatever their background and circumstances, i.e. that they should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well being. These outcomes are mutually reinforcing.
3. To achieve these outcomes for children in care, Local Authorities as their “Corporate Parents” should demonstrate the strongest commitment to helping every child they look after achieve to their full potential. This includes their aspirations to achieve in further and higher education.
4. Despite clear improvements in outcomes, the educational attainment of children in care remains low and the pace of change means that the gap between those in care and all other children has in fact widened, with children in care under performing significantly compared to their peers at all key stages of the education system.

5. The recent release, in October 2006, of the consultation document "Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care", considers all the factors that affect the performance of children in care, paying particular attention to their educational attainment.
6. Alongside the duty placed on Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of children in care under Section 52 of The Children Act 2004 and the new Regulations ensuring they are given top priority in school admissions, the education of children in care is one of the DfES's key national priorities for Local Government.

YOUNG PEOPLE

7. Listening to, and consulting with, young people is vital if we are to achieve any change. With Government emphasis on strengthening, safeguarding and improving outcomes for Children Looked After and their educational outcomes being particularly concerning, during the past academic year 2005-06, we consulted with children and young people in care to find out what life in school is like for them. A DVD production of our findings is nearing completion.
8. Amongst other things the messages they gave to us are:-
 - they recognised the importance of receiving a good education, understanding the difference it makes to their future life chances;
 - being in care can make young people susceptible to being bullied;
 - school is important not just for getting good exam results, but also for making friends.
9. Nine young people in total aged 7 – 17 years presented parts 1 and 2 of their DVD production at the North of England Education Conference (NEEC) on 5 January 2006 in Gateshead, where they facilitated an enjoy and achieve workshop to an audience of Ministerial staff, Executive Members and Executive Directors of Children's Services to name but a few. Their presentation was warmly received by all who attended.

ANALYSIS OF KEY STAGE SATS AND GCSE (or GNVQ equivalent) RESULTS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2005-2006 FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

10. KEY STAGE 1 SATS RESULTS National attainment level is Level 2+

11 Middlesbrough Children Looked After were noted as being eligible to be included in the DfES returns at Key Stage 1, having been looked after continuously for a period of 12 months plus.

Key Stage 1				
	In Mbro	OOA		
Number	6	5		
			In Mbro	OOA
			6	5
Tests				
L2+English Reading	2	3	33.3%	60%
L2+ English Writing	1	3	16.7%	60%
L2+ Maths	4	4	66.7%	80%
L2+ Science	5	4	83.3%	80%

*OOA: Children educated out of area

Overall analysis of CLA who achieved the national attainment level at KS1

SUBJECT	CLA	M'Bro	National
L2+ English-reading	45.5% (5)	80.7%	84%
L2+ English-writing	36.4% (4)	78.4%	81%
L2+ Maths	72.7% (8)	87.2%	90%
L2+ Science	81.8% (9)	85.8%	89%

KEY STAGE 2 SATS RESULTS

National attainment level is Level 4+

12 Middlesbrough Children Looked After were noted as being eligible to be included in the DfES returns at Key Stage 2, having been looked after continuously for a period of 12 months plus.

Key Stage 2				
	In Mbro	OOA		
Number	9	3		
			In Mbro	OOA
			9	3
Tests				
L4+ English	4	2	44.4%	66.7%
L4+ Maths	2	3	22.2%	100.0%
L4+ Science	6	3	66.7%	100.0%

Overall analysis of CLA who achieved the national attainment level at KS2

SUBJECT	CLA	M'Bro	National
L4+ English	50% (6)	74.3%	79%
L4+ Maths	41.7% (5)	72.3%	75%
L4+ Science	66.7% (9)	83.6%	86%

KEY STAGE 3 SATS RESULTS

National attainment level is Level 5 +

13 Middlesbrough Children Looked After were noted as being eligible to be included in the DfES returns at Key Stage 3, having been looked after continuously for a period of 12 months plus.

Key Stage 3				
	In Mbro	OOA	In Mbro	OOA
Number	7	6	8	6
Tests				
L5+ English	3	1	42.9%	16.7%
L5+ Maths	2	2	28.6%	33.3%
L5+ Science	2	1	28.6%	16.7%

N.B.

Out of area cohort of 6 pupils includes 3 who were either disapplied or failed to sit.

Overall analysis of CLA who achieved the national attainment level at KS3

Subject	CLA (13)	M'bro	National
L5+ English	30.8% (4)	62.1%	74%
L5+ Maths	30.8% (4)	71.3%	74%
L5+ Science	23% (3)	60.7%	70%

GCSE RESULTS FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN YEAR 11

15 Middlesbrough Looked After Children were noted as being eligible to be included in the DfES return at Key Stage 4, having been looked after continuously for a period of 12 months plus.

Key Stage 4				
	In Mbro	OOA	In Mbro	OOA
Number	7	8	7	8
Test results				
Sat at least one exam	2	8	28.6%	100%
Achieved 5+ A* - C	0	2	0%	25%
Achieved 5+ A* - G	0	7	0%	87.5%
Achieved 1+ A* - G	2	8	28.6%	100%

Overall analysis of CLA who achieved GCSEs in Year 11 – provisional data only available on national data

Test results	CLA (15)	M'Bro	National
Sat at least one GCSE or equivalent exam	66.6% (10)		
Achieved 5+ A*-C	13.3% (2)	48%	59%
Achieved 5+ A*-G	46.7% (7)	81%	90.6%
Achieved 1+ A*-G	66.7% (10)	89%	98%

CURRENT POSITION

11. It has been noted that overall attainment at all key stages shows an improvement on last year's results. Some of the under achievement can be explained by the particularly complex needs of some of the young people.
12. 23.3% of Middlesbrough Children Looked After currently have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, compared to 3% of all children, with 15.9% being at the School Action Plus stage of the SEN Code of Practice, making 39.2% total. This evidence speaks for itself when stating that children in care are significantly more likely than others to require additional support in class.
13. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are a statutory requirement for all children of compulsory school age, who are expected to be in care for more than 28 days. PEPs allow social workers and teachers to find out what children want from their education and for children to raise issues that are affecting their education such as bullying. Following recommendations made by Scrutiny, regular audits of PEPs take place every couple of months throughout the academic year, the most recent audit on 9 November 2006 noting 71.5% of PEPs as being up to date, with no data being available for 10% of the children and young people. All outstanding PEPs and missing data will be followed up.
14. To ensure that PEPs remain a priority for this academic year 2006/07 the following local performance indicators have been introduced:
 - 100% of CLA are to have an active PEP which is implemented within 20 school days of becoming looked after
 - 100% of CLA are to have an identified school placement within 20 school days of either becoming looked after or changing school placement

Monitoring of the above indicators will take place in January 2007 and July 2007.

15. Even when they secure a good school place, children in care often miss a significant amount of education. For this academic year, Middlesbrough have contracted with a private Company to monitor the school attendance of all their children in care wherever they are placed. The company contacts the school every day and when a child is absent from school, the social worker and Education Looked After Children (ELAC) Team Manager are alerted, so that

they can investigate the reason promptly. Such stringent attendance monitoring, not only assists with individual pupil tracking, but also with the collation of accurate data for next years local and national performance indicators.

16. Partnership working between the Principal Adviser School Improvement Service and Education Looked After Children Team continues to develop, with the ELAC Team Manager working within School Improvement at Vancouver House one day per week. Individual pupil achievement is now monitored termly via the School Advisory Service, with early indications of potential areas of concern being followed up immediately.
17. As well as having named Designated Teachers for Children Looked After in all schools, Middlesbrough now has named Designated Governors to champion and promote the needs of children in care. A pro-forma of common protocols "Guidelines for Improving the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children" has been developed and circulated to all Heads and Designated Teachers. These guidelines include a recommendation that each school adopt a policy for looked after children. Prior to circulation, the pro-forma was discussed with Chairs of Governing Bodies who attended the Spring Term Governors' Forum held on Monday 6 March 2006. To date, data on the number of schools who have adopted a looked after children policy is unavailable, as not all of this term's Governing Body meetings have taken place as yet.
18. An officer from Connexions started working in the ELAC Team 2 days per week commencing September 2006. Her work within the Education Children Looked After Team is supervised directly by the ELAC Team Manager, with a review meeting taking place with the Connexions Manager early in the New Year. The officer has taken on the Connexions Personal Advisor role for most looked after young people educated in Middlesbrough, the exceptions being where a relationship with an existing Personal Advisor has already been established and out of area looked after children educated in Middlesbrough. Between now and Christmas the focus of the work will be on ensuring that effective transition plans are in place for all Year 11 pupils.
19. Commencing September 2006, the Educational Psychology Service has agreed to provide additional support specifically for looked after children. A referral form has been devised and distributed to social workers, with 3 referrals being received to date. The support or advice being offered is not additional to the service bought back by schools, this initially creating some confusion. Having clarified this, the working relationship is still evolving, whilst acknowledging the key resource they can be, in assisting and advising professionals.
20. 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All' emphasised the importance of personalised learning, through which education is tailored to meet the needs of individual children. Middlesbrough is currently involved in a national project with 'What Makes the Difference' (WMTD), there being two elements to the pilot scheme. The post 16 element is linked to looking at employability schemes, whilst the education element of the project has £30,000 attached to it, to

provide additional support to help looked after young people in Year 11 upwards succeed.

21. The £30K from the WMTD project has now all been allocated (i.e. a projected allocation) to individual pupils to provide a varied package of additional support to enable each to succeed in their own right. This year's Year 11 cohort consists of 27 pupils, with all of these young people being followed up with regards to the current education provision on offer and any additional support required, as identified jointly by the young person, their carers and/or social worker and the Designated Teacher, to help the child succeed.
22. Not all of the young people have been identified as needing additional support and indeed some young people have refused it, but overall the response has exceeded demand, with the money running out sooner than anticipated. Packages of support vary from an hour a week after school literacy support to 2 full days in class support to encourage young people to attend school, keep on focus and prevent exclusion, these young people responding well on a one to one basis. A Homework Club has also been organised for all Year 11 looked after children to access, this running throughout the duration of the Autumn Term for this academic year.
23. In an attempt to raise the aspirations of looked after children, a joint initiative with Stockton, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland Local Authorities and Teesside University has been organised to take place on 10 November 2006. This motivational visit was opened up to all looked after children within Years 10 and 11 educated in the Teesside area. With the co-operation of schools and colleges, 10 young people from Middlesbrough participated, which included looked after children from other areas who are educated in Middlesbrough. Carers and social workers were also invited to attend and, albeit that they were given short notice, some did attend.
24. A successful bid to the Big Lottery Fund has resulted in £7K being made available to promote Out of School Hours Learning activities (OSHL). Following consultation with the young people a decision was made to expand the current provision on offer at Coulby Newham Youth Club on Tuesday evenings. Details of the programme to be offered have been finalised with Lynn Coppinger from the Youth Service, with the programme of activities on offer, being distributed to young people, their foster carers and their social workers. All nominations are being co-ordinated by the Youth Service, with the provision of transport being made available to encourage participation.
25. Information relating to the education of looked after children, the PEP process and the work of the ELAC team is now available on Mgrid. Details of the consultation document 'Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care' is also available, this being distributed to Designated Teachers in all Middlesbrough schools.

OPTIONAL APPRAISAL

26. Not applicable to this piece of work.

FINANCIAL LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

27. There are no financial, legal or ward implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

28. The Corporate Parenting Board are asked to advise the Executive to note the contents of this report.

REASONS

29. The effectiveness of the Local Authority as a Corporate Parent, the priorities it sets, and the attitudes of those working within it, all affect the educational attainment of children in care. Local Authorities have a duty under the Children Act 2004, to monitor and promote the educational achievements of looked after children to enable each and every one of them to achieve to their full potential, wherever they are placed.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

30. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Social Exclusion Unit Report (SEU) 'A Better Education for Children in Care September 2003.'

DfES Statutory Guidance 'Duty of Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children'.

Children Act 2004

Care Matters; Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care Consultation document 9 October 2006

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