Non-Executive Template

REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel 29th September 2020
SUBJECT:	Annual Report of the Virtual School
LEAD OFFICER:	Sarah Bailey Headteacher Virtual School Shelley Davies Interim Director of Education
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
WARDS:	All
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	

SUMMARY OF REPORT:
POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON: Include here a brief statement on how the recommendations address one or more of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities: Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022
FINANCIAL IMPACT: *None.*
RECOMMENDATIONS: 1. Note the annual report of the virtual school

1. Overview

1.1 Personal Education Plans (PEPs) completion rate has been at 85% or higher every month this year. At the end of the academic year this was at 95% which is at our target of 95%.

1.2 We have had a significant increase in the number of PEPs judged through quality assurance (QA) as good or better. Our target for 2019/20 was 70% good 25% outstanding and we have exceeded this with 30% being quality assured as 'outstanding'.

1.3 Staff capacity within the virtual school has grown from 21 to 28 FTE including an increased capacity at post-16 of 3 staff which includes a lead in the area.

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1.4 The nationally published data for our looked after children in 2019 saw Croydon children and young people ranked second overall nationally for KS1-2 progress.

1.5 Our Summer school operated an online and in person offer; attended and praised in evaluation by over 50 unaccompanied asylum seeking (UASC) young people daily. This was able to be delivered with effective social distancing in place to safeguard the students.

1.6 We have maintained our full service delivery and been able to offer all our existing services to schools, carers, social workers and organisations remotely throughout the CV-19 period.

1.7 The EMPIRE team (Children in care council) have been welcomed into the Virtual School.

1.8 Our 'Leaving Care Academy' will come into operation soon, we have recruited five Care Leavers apprentices in our team. They will be with us over the next academic year 2020/21.

2. Detail of the report

THE CROYDON CLA COHORT 2019-2020 (Overall Numbers and Demographics)

2.1 In the last academic year Sept 2019- July 2020, the Virtual School worked with **676** children and young people who were in care (CLA) continually for the whole 12 months (including relevant Care Leavers). Virtual school works on behalf of all children and young people of 'educational age' which means ages 3-18 (in school years, nursery to Year 13.) **This is 60 more Children in care than in the same period last year suggesting more placements are now lasting longer and stability has increased. .**

2.2 A total of **861** children and young people were in care the end of the academic year on **July 23rd 2020. This is 58 children fewer than at the end of last year.** These figures show a substantially more fluid cohort this year with more young people being in care for short periods.

2.3 There were **493** statutory school age (SSA) children (reception year - Year 11 age 4-16) in care at **July 23rd 2020**. **This is 84 children fewer than at this time last year showing a reduction overall in numbers of SSA young people in care.**

2.4 In September 2019, **761** children and young people were placed in the care of Croydon. This rose to **864** by end of July 2020. This means that an additional 103 children and young people came into care between September 2019 and July 2020, a **14%** increase. **This is significantly lower than the cohort increase of 34% over last academic year.**

2.5 During 2019-2020 a total of **51%** of children and young people attended schools in borough and **49%** were placed in schools out of borough. This shifted slightly from a 55%:45% spilt last year

2.6 **247** CLA between aged between 3 to 18 were identified as having SEND needs in July 2020. This was **29%** of the cohort. Of these, **124 (14%)** had an EHCP, **123** (14%) **were** classified by schools as receiving SEND support. Of the total number of children in care at the end of the academic year, **69** (8%) attended special schools, a drop of 13% compared to last year.

2.7 At the end of July 2019-20, the total number of children and young people in care (864) consisted of **576** males (66%) compared to **288** females. (33%)

2.8 At end of academic year 2020, **515** (59.6%) children and young people were recorded as locally looked after compared to **349** (40.4%) UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children). This represents a marginal decrease when compared with the previous year.

2.9 Unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC) young people represent **25** nationalities. The majority of our UASC are from four countries, Albania (30%), Afghanistan (21%), Vietnam (20%) and Eritrea (9%). (Please see the full ethnic breakdown of the CLA cohort for 2019-2020 below). They range from 11-18 years of age on arrival.

3. Attainment and Progress data 2019-20 (Pending and COVID amended)

3.1 2019-20 is an unprecedented year for national data and standardised results. There will be no formal, external published data or league tables of comparison for any key stage this year due to the impact of school closures under covid-19.

3.2 No examinations took place for any pupils. Formal grades were not submitted to examination boards by schools for EYFS, Year 1 pupils or KS1 pupils. This data will all be collated and analysed internally over the autumn term by the Virtual School and an updated data report will follow.

KS1 attainment:

3.3 We did not have a significant group in this reported cohort, 3 out of the 5 pupils have EHCPs and 2 have additional support packages, 1 is working at P Levels, so would be disapplied from the results of their school. Of these five students only one was working consistently at the expected levels in all areas. Percentage scores are not comparable with last year due to the small size of the cohort.

3.4 Only 1 pupil met or exceeded' the expected standard in the combined measure for RWM. This represents 9%. However, of the 11 pupils, 5 are SEND pupils, 2 with EHCPs and 3 more receiving SEND school support and undergoing an assessment for an EHCP. 45% cohort had additional needs.

Of the pupils with identified SEND, only 1 met the 'expected standard' in Reading, Writing and maths and they are in the reported cohort. Of pupils without identified SEND needs, no pupils met the 'expected standard in all areas'. 1 pupil met the standard, in just reading and Maths. In the whole cohort of 11 pupils, no pupils achieved greater depth results.

KS2 attainment:

3.5 We had 21 reportable pupils in KS2 this year and 27 in our whole cohort.

3.6 43% Croydon CLA cohort (21 pupils) and 37% of whole cohort (27 pupils) were working at the combined 'expected standard' in Reading Writing and Maths. This, although slightly lower than last year's cohort, favourably compares with 35% all looked after children nationally in 2018.

Table 1: KS2 attainment by teacher assessed grade

Key Stage 2 results	2019	2020 N101 (21 pupils)	2020 27 pupils)
% pupils achieving expected standard in Reading/Writing/Maths combined	53%	43%	37%
% pupils achieving expected standard in Reading	62.5%	71.4%	70.4%
% pupils achieving expected standard in Writing	62.5%	47.6%	44.4%
% pupils achieving expected standard in Maths	57%	61.9%	55.6%
% pupils achieving greater depth in one or more areas	31%	5%	4%

NB** these figures are all based on teacher assessed grades which are known to be cautious at higher grades.
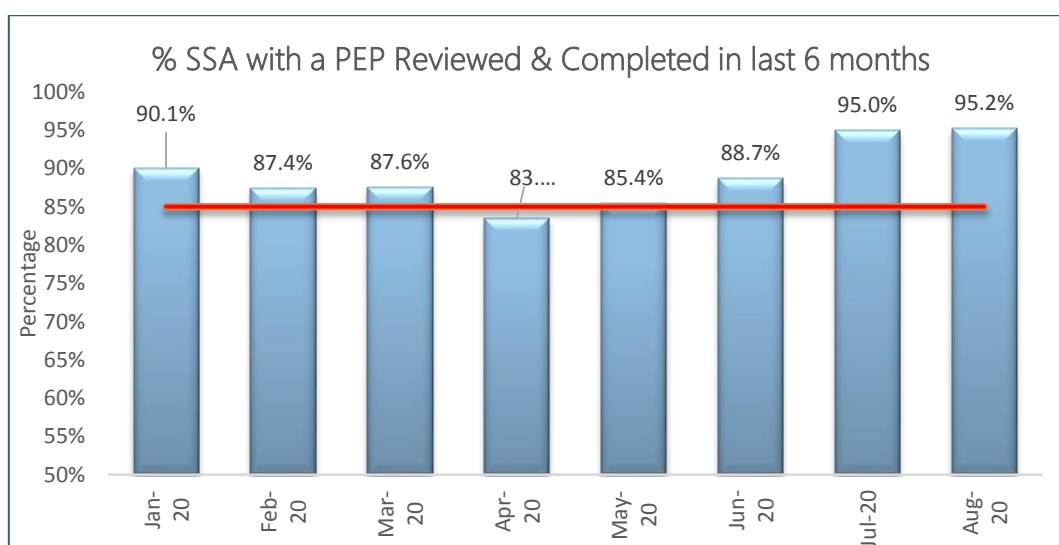
3.7 Within the cohort of 27, 15 pupils have identified SEND needs, including 6 who now have EHCP and 9 more who have school level support. Of these 15, 13 are in the reportable cohort. 62% of the reported cohort have SEND needs, hence any comparison to national must only be where CLA measures are known and these won't be shared this year.

3.8 We set a target in our School Development Plan to monitor the progress and wellbeing of SEND pupils closely across each cohort to ensure support in place is monitored carefully through PEPs. A good example of how this work has been beneficial is Pupil A, pupil with an EHCP for specific learning difficulty, who was working at the expected standard in every subject. This is an outstanding individual achievement. Another 3 pupils each had one or

more 'Greater Depth results in either reading, writing, SPAG or Maths, which again are great individual achievements.

3.9 We continue to strive towards our pupils achieving their very best individual results. The lack of national comparison this year is positive for us as our young people are such a specialist group with such varied additional needs nationally that usual comparative measures are not helpful. What is vital for this cohort, is that we ensure all professionals have the highest expectations for our pupils through their PEPs. Our 95%+ completion and good quality rating here means we are able to effectively and challenge and support schools to use their resources and the child's PPG effectively to help impact attainment. (SDP 2.3)

Table 2: PEP completion rate monthly from January- August 2020

% SSA with a PEP Reviewed & Completed in last 6 months

Jan-20: 90.1% | Feb-20: 87.4% | Mar-20: 87.6% | Apr-20: 83.... | May-20: 85.4% | Jun-20: 88.7% | Jul-20: 95.0% | Aug-20: 95.2%

4. Summer results 2020- KS4 and 5

4.1 A detailed analysis of the cohort's Centre Assessed grades is not yet available due to delays in receipt of many results (BTEC/Level 1/ESOL courses) and the fact that there is no requirement this year for schools to submit data to Local Authorities, which has affected our collation.

4.2 It was agreed at the last hour nationally that schools could issue the Centre assessed grade or the Ofqual ratified grade, whichever was the highest. The data below is based on what schools sent in. There was no legal requirement this year for them to do so. Our cohort was a diverse one as always making year on year comparison less valuable. However the cohort data is as follows:

Table 3: Year 11 cohort 2020- contextual information

	2018	2019	2020
Total cohort size	132	166	146
No in N101 cohort (more than 1 year in care at Mar 31st 2018)	87 (66% of Whole VS cohort at EOY)	70 (42% of whole VS cohort at EOY)	71 (49% os whole VS cohort at EOY)
No of UASC in whole cohort	84 (64%)	107 (65%)	83 (57%)
No of UASC in N101	57 (66%)	30 (43%)	29 (41%)
No in Croydon schools in whole cohort	57 (43%)	84 (51%)	84 (57%)
No in Croydon schools in N101	34 (39%)	28 (40%)	37 (52%)
Missing education in whole cohort	17(13%)	23 (14%)	12 (8%)
Missing education in N101 cohort	5 (6%)	6 (8%)	3 (4%)
Attending a non-mainstream school in N101	31 (36%)	20 (29%)	18 (25%)
Attending a non-mainstream school in whole cohort	59 (45%)	73 (44%)	56 (38%)
Cohort who had been in care for < 1 year at time if exams	45 (34%)	96 (58%)	75 (51%)
Cohort who had been in care for < 2 years at time if exams	89 (68%)	115 (69%)	108 (74%)
Cohort who had been in care for >5 years at time if exams	14 (11%)	23 (14%)	18 (12%)
Number in N101 with SEND EHCP	13 (15%)	17 (24%)	10 (14%)
Number in whole cohort with SEND EHCP	19 (14%)	21 (13%)	13 (9%)
Number in N101 with SEND support	11 (13%)	10 (14.2%)	10 (14%)

Number in whole cohort with SEND support	14 (11%)	15 (9%)	13 (9%)
Number entered at Lvl 1/2 in N101	54 (62%)	43 (61%)	53 (74%)
Number entered at Lvl 1/2 in whole cohort	67 (51%)	66 (40%)	73 (50%)
Number in N101 entered for 8 eligible subjects	20 (	18 (26%)	21 (29%)
Number in Whole cohort entered for 8 eligible subjects	22	20	28

5. Key stage 4 attainment (not yet available due to CV 19-results based on submitted data from schools will be presented at November panel)

5.1 In summary, the Y11 cohort for 2020 was 71 pupils. Only 21 of them were entered for 8 GCSEs in the correct 'buckets' to be eligible for Attainment and Progress 8. Of this cohort, 10 achieved grade 4+ passes in at least one subject. This is 71%.

5.2 It is difficult to compare our cohorts, year on year, as a result of the high mobility and daily contextual changes. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that in 2019/20 academic year: 10% (14% last year- but same number of pupils) pupils gained 5+ 4-9 grades including English and maths.

5.3 77.5% pupils, took qualifications and gained at least 1 grade at 1-9. This is more than the 68% last year.

5.4 There were some exceptional, individual performances including 2 pupils, who attained very highly. 1 girl attained 10 grades, all at 9-6 including English and Maths, and one boy with 9 grades all at 9-7 including English and Maths. Including these 2, 8 pupils scored a full set of 8+ GCSE grades at 4 or above.6 of these YP have been in care for more than 2 years.

5.5 Of the 146 pupils in the whole cohort, 64 % attained at least 1 qualification at Entry level or above. Of our newly arrived young people (those who had been with us less than 6 months, at least 21, achieved 1 or more GCSE equivalent qualifications.

5.6 Key stage 5 data has not been completely received. A current status update appears in raw form below and a more detailed analysis will be tabled in the next Corporate Parenting panel Report.

6. **Key stage 5 attainment data (pending further info)**

Table 3: Year 13 attainment data by Centre assessed grade

	Number	L3	L1/2	EL	No Results*
Total Yr 13	164	12	27	16	72
NI101	150	12	24	13	65

Pupils where no results had been received at the time of writing (9/9/20) will have results submitted to Virtual School by w/b 20/9/20 and update will be issued for the Nov corporate parenting panel.

6.1 The results offer some exceptional individual performances for some of our young people. Of the 12 students, who took a full complement of A Level or equivalent courses, 100% secured a place at a higher education institution

- **1 Yr 12 student achieved Distinction* and Distinction in her AS levels**
- **1 Yr 13 student achieved three Distinction*, one in each of her Level 3 BTECs**
- **1 Yr 13 student achieved A*AAA in his A levels- and will now study Neuroscience at Cambridge**.

6.2 We are exceptionally proud of all our young people and their achievements, through a period of great instability under COVID.

7. **Staffing, Structure and capacity in the Virtual school**

7.1 The Virtual school team is now 28 strong (6 more than this time last year). We have 10 advisory teachers, 3 new specialist ESOL teachers, as well as a post 16 education advisor, a mentoring lead, a UASC project lead, 4 senior phase leaders: a Deputy Headteacher and a lead for each phase of education - EYFS-KS3, KS4 and KS5- post-16. All teaching and direct contact posts with statutory school age pupils are funded through Pupil Premium Grant. We also now have the lead of the Children in Care council and a youth worker in our team (more detail in section. Our structure chart is included in the appendices.

7.2 Each teacher has a named cohort of no more than 60 pupils; means they can really be present at Pupil Education Plan meetings, Quality assure all Plans and support schools to best allocate their Pupil premium resource for the needs of the individual child. These smaller cohorts also allow for strong relationships to be built between schools, social workers, carers, young people and our Virtual School Team so that through knowing each child better we can tailor the support to their needs and ensure both challenge and support to schools. These cohorts will remain with the young, wherever they move to, as they travel up through school years, providing essential consistency of staffing for our highly mobile cohort.

7.3 Our administrative team has also expanded to better serve our growing professionals and carers network. We have a data officer, a Quality assurance, monitoring and finance officer, an EPEP champion responsible for our PEP system and 2 business support senior officers, one for our UASC cohort and one for all other CLA administration. This increased capacity means we are able to issue regular communication to all our stakeholders and keep abreast of changes in Children's Social Care and schooling for our young people. This team, and all leadership roles are funded through designated schools grant as allocated by Schools forum for the effective operation of the Virtual school.

8. Virtual School Cohort: School Ofsted Ratings

8.1 At the end of 2019/20, 90% of statutory school age CLA attended schools rated by Ofsted as 'Outstanding' or 'Good'. Compared to 80.1% the previous year.

8.2 The Ofsted rating of a school where the child moves in-year remains a priority for Croydon and there is a now a dedicated section in the e-PEP to monitor school moves more closely.

Table 4: School Ofsted Ratings

	Number
In schools with Ofsted Good or better rating	290
In schools with Ofsted RI rating	25
In schools with Ofsted Inadequate rating	4
In schools where no Ofsted rating was recorded	29 (not yet rated)
Statutory school age not in education	14

8.3 Where possible, children are placed in schools rated 'good' or better. However, if a child comes into care while in a school rated less than good, or if a schools' rating is altered following OFSTED, it may be inappropriate to move their school place simply on the basis of the Ofsted rating of their current school. In these instances, a full risk assessment would be conducted by the VS senior team in collaboration with the school Headteacher and Designated CLA teacher.

9. Attendance data for children and young people looked after in 2018-19

9.1 At the time of writing, attendance for 2019/20 cannot be compared to any attendance data for previous years due to COVID-19 and non-compulsory attendance at school. It has not yet been agreed how school attendance will be monitored and compared nationally, as schools have a range of flexible options that are bespoke and based on their context.

9.2 At Croydon Virtual School we continue to receive school data via our online collection system, ASSET. This takes data directly from the schools registration system. We currently collect 96.4% data in this way. The rest is ascertained manually through PEPs and calls to schools.

9.3 During the 'lockdown' period of school closures (28 March- July 03 2020) we monitored individual pupil attendance through calls to carers. Our message to carers and establishments, as VS, was that if children and young people were safer at home during this time then they should stay at home. Where individual children needed schooling we advocated for them as key vulnerable children to attend. We called carers weekly to ensure any changing needs were considered. Our attendance figures at their greatest were as follows:

	Rating	Attending School During Covid 19 Lockdown?
Pre School	Nursery	8
Primary School	Year R	8
	KS 1	14
	KS 2	22
	Primary	44
Secondary School	KS 3	14
	KS4	17
	Secondary	31
Post 16		10
		93

10. Exclusions

Permanent exclusions

10.1 There were 2 permanent exclusions of (Secondary) Croydon CLA during the 2019/20 academic year, which is an increase on the previous year's figure of 0. There were no permanent exclusions of primary age pupils. Each of these cases were an extreme incidence of behaviour that was unable to be mitigated despite intense collaboration and involvement of the VS with the school.

10.2 Additional permanent exclusions were issued by schools to Croydon CLA during 2019/20 (one primary age & 2 secondary age), which were subsequently rescinded/revoked following the intervention of the Virtual School.

10.3 A further 3 Croydon CLA were at risk of permanent exclusion, but these never proceeded to permanent exclusion following the intervention of the Virtual School and securing of EHCPs to allow for movement to appropriate specialist settings. (Identifiable pupil data cannot be included here for safeguarding reasons).

Fixed term exclusions

School location	2018/19		2019/20	
	No. of Croydon CLA receiving 1 or more FPEx	No. of FPEx issued to Croydon CLA	No. of Croydon CLA receiving 1 or more FPEx	No. of FPEx issued to Croydon CLA
Croydon school	35	59	34	65
Out of LA school	24	48	26	41
TOTAL	**59**	**107**	**60**	**106**

10.4 A total of 60 Croydon CLA received a total of 106 fixed term exclusions during the 2019/20 academic year. This represents 12.1 % of Croydon's statutory school age CLA cohort of 493 .This is broadly in line with last year (18/19) when a total of pupils with fixed term exclusions, which represented 11.8% of an eligible cohort of 501.

10.5 Broken down by those Croydon CLA in 2019/20 who are educated in Croydon and those who are educated in other local authority areas the figures are as follows:

==Table 4 No. of fixed term exclusions issued to CLA in Croydon 19-20==

10.6 The Virtual school focus between January and July 2019/20 was on avoiding permanent exclusions and in training staff in 'highest exclusion risk' establishments to work in ways that will have longer term effects on reducing the need for permanent exclusion.

10.7 A full day's training was delivered to over 100 Saffron Valley staff; this centred on working effectively with young people who have experienced significant trauma. The impact of this may be evident in their not having excluded any CLA child this year. The training was followed up with some onsite work at KS4 North; however it needs more time and investment over a longer period to truly be deemed effective.

11. Personal Education Plan-completion and quality assurance

11.1 Every statutory school age child who is looked after must have a personal education plan. This is a document, written and evaluated by professionals from education and social work that set out the plan for monitoring and supporting the child's educational progress over the academic year. The plan must be reviewed at least every 6 months. This is a statutory duty for children's social care. In Virtual school we request these 3 x yearly for all pupils to give a more accurate view or progress

11.2   The % Statutory School age children and young people with a PEP that had been reviewed by virtual school in August 2020 was **97%**.

11.3   **98.9**% of children and young people had a PEP meeting held by professionals in the last 6 month period.

11.4   Of these 69% were rated good and 31% rated excellent through the VS quality assurance process. This will continue to be a focal point for next academic year, where VS workers will help to improve the standard of PEPs. We are keen to ensure that our criteria for outstanding is **'the degree to which professional support and it's culmination in the PEP document supports the young person'**. A review involving care leavers will be carried out from October – December so that their perspective drives our practice.

12.   The Virtual School Interim Provisions (VSIPs) for UASC

12.1   Croydon Town school-CTS (11-16) and Croydon Town College-CTC (16-25) are our interim provisions for newly arrived young people. The provisions offer a full curriculum complement and intensive ESOL as well as school readiness and preparation for understanding how schools and education in the UK work. There are 20 places at CTS and the school was full throughout the 19-20 with a waiting list. The college had 6 places in 19-20 and we are hoping to expand this to 10+ in 20-21.

12.2   Both provisions are funded from a combination of Pupil Premium Funding and Controlling Migration Fund Grant, (£650k) which was secured for 2 years by our CMF project lead.

12.3   143 young people from 26 countries passed through the provision for varying periods of time over 2020, averaging 8 weeks. These young people, aged between 11 and 16 (mostly 14-16), are now all successfully integrated into mainstream schools or college places in Croydon or their local borough. Whilst priority is given to Croydon CLA, other boroughs are very keen to utilise the facility. We have had placements of CLA from Merton, Lambeth, Kent, Southwark and Surrey this year.

12.4   We focused our attention on newly arrived UASC of compulsory school age awaiting school places. Through close work with admissions we were usually able to have a child in our provision or a suitable school within two weeks of their arrival at the Home Office.

12.5   The success of provision was noted by our HMI inspector Nasim Butt, during our February 2020 OFSTED inspection.

12.6   During Covid 19 lockdown- both CTC and CTS operated their timetable online to ensure continuity for students. Our ESOL specialist teachers were able to deliver both group and one to one tuition daily, This gave vital provision for this most vulnerable community who chose to begin face to face contact

sessions as soon as was possible- resuming in June 2020 and continuing throughout July to the end of term.

12.7 From Sept 2020 the provisions will no longer based at St Andrews C of E school. We are currently working hard on re-opening on site at Archbishop Tenison School for the end of September. Tuition continues online until this is finalised.

13.   Summer School for UASC in Croydon

13.1 Since 2018, Croydon Virtual School have been delivering a very successful Summer school programme – 'The Summermix'- programme for young asylum seekers and refugees in the borough aged 14-18. 'The Summermix' aims to prepare young people who are newly arrived in the UK to our education system and support them in their journey into settling into the country.

13.2 On 3rd August 2020, for the third time round, we launched a "Covid-19 secure" version of the' Summermix' at the Friends Meeting House, a central venue in Croydon.

13.3 Owing to the current pandemic, the young people were split into morning and afternoon groups of a maximum of 30. Each group were also split into class bubbles of 10-12 per ESOL level- beginners, intermediate and advanced. The programme ran from 3rd-21st August 2020, Monday to Friday for half-days and offered English, Maths, ICT classes along with visual arts, music and sports activities daily. All young people worked towards achieving selected AQA accredited units in English and Maths (results not in yet).

13.4 A record total of 104 young people accessed the programme with a daily attendance of close to 60 young people.

13.5 An online offer was also presented for those who did not wish to meet face to face and Virtual School staff taught daily sessions of English and Maths to small numbers (up to 10) of young people who did not wish to attend in person.

13.6 We are in the process of the full evaluation but a cursory look at our data shows that attendance rate was 90%+ daily and feedback collected from the young people on the programme has been very positive. We are delighted that we were able to adapt at very short notice to legal guidance on CV_19 and ensure safe in-person contact which our young people desperately wanted.

14.   Careers, information, employment, advice and guidance (CIAEG) support

14.1   In February 2019 when the newly appointed VSH heard from members of the CIC council, CIAEG was a key area that all the young people mentioned they felt needed more work.

14.2   As a direct result of this, we secured first a temporary role for a Level 7 trained Careers Professional who worked 3 days a week between July and December 2019. Since then we have made her role full time, combining it with the interim leadership of post 16 phase. She has created a full database of contacts for schools and carers around CIAEG in Croydon, and developed the use of online software, KUDOS, licensed for all CLA in Croydon to use to assess their possible careers interest and knowledge. To date 124 young people have accessed this and this will form a standard part of our involvement for all Year 10 students

15.   Mentoring project and mentoring database

15.1   Over the past year, we have successfully matched 18 young people with volunteer mentors – recruited internally and through 'Croydon Voluntary Action'. Each of these has had up to a year's ongoing weekly support. We are happy to report; these matches have been sustained even through CV 19 and the challenges that posed for delivery. Changes were made, and we quickly managed to ensure that all of our young people were mentored online, every week via MS Teams or Zoom.

15.2   In the next few months we will look to resume sessions in the community i.e., at their home or in a library etc., subject to government guidelines. However, we will also continue to offer online mentoring for those students who want this and for our Out of Borough students - giving us much wider reach than we previously anticipated.

15.3   For 20-21 so far we have 16 young people (and slightly more volunteer mentors) signed up to the programme, all referred to us by the advisory team. We also held a highly successful workshop for social workers that was attended by 40+ people. Social workers were able to witness the difference the programme had made to the life of a CLA young person and from a volunteer mentor perspective. This will no doubt assist with our recruitment round for 20-21.

15.4   The 'Mentoring Programme' exists because our young people requested it and will continue to reach those in need of additional academic support; working in collaboration with the schools, social services, continuing to 'champion' their voices on their education experience.

15.5 One young person said of his experience with our Mentoring Programme; *"Doors have been opened since B (his mentor) and I have achieved what I set out to achieve!"*

15.6 We have moved all our training for mentors online and as such have wider reach and can accept volunteers from other localities.

16.   E.M.P.I.R.E summer programme for CLA

16.1 The EMPIRE Team summer offered an unprecedented 72 activity sessions for young people aged 8-18 covering local and online events across the borough; all bookable by email and ranging from 1hr -3 days duration. A total of 85 different young people accessed this provision in total which is the greatest ever involvement we've seen.

16.2 We worked very hard on communication and publicity this year through the Young Croydon website and social media. We were really pleased with the take up from colleagues in Children's social care and early help teams in supporting the young people they work with to book onto activities.

16.3 There was a well-attended dedicated 'Youth Voice Day' for organisations to bring young people (not just CLA) they are working with together with the Youth Engagement Team supported groups (locality youth forums, young mayor and deputy, CYAC and Empire).

16.4 A direct outcome of this is a forthcoming debate chaired by the young mayor and a consultation session on the Local Plan with the Planning department.

16.5 The Young Mayors' careers event on 21st August at BoxPark; for all young people who may want to consider their education, training and career options whether they are waiting for exam results or not. Speakers and providers picked by the young mayor and deputy.

16.6 The Youth Engagement Team also offered 9 additional targeted sessions over the summer for looked after young people, children and young people living in temporary accommodation along London Road and those vulnerable to having a poor transition from primary to secondary school. These were accessed by CLA in some cases.

17.   SUMMARY OF KEY SUPPORT, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES- including response to COVID 19

17.1 Virtual school is especially pleased that the disruption of CV-19 in March 2020 caused no change to our service delivery or effectiveness. In fact reductions in travel time and online working meant our PEP delivery rose to almost 97.8% by the end of term.

17.2 In the academic 20-21 to employ remote and flexible working as much as possible to maintain the increased effectiveness. A key factor we developed throughout lockdown and school closures was the development of the webinar as a tool for online commination and training.

17.3 Due to online and telephone working, we were able to provide additional, at least fortnightly calls to carers/residential settings by the advisory team throughout the period. Where our most vulnerable children needed additional support interventions and support for the education of our looked after children with achievements:

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17.4 Funding and organisation of the Letterbox book club scheme continued throughout the covid period- all our EYFS and KS1 primary school-aged children receive fiction books as gifts termly. This year 132 parcels have been sent to 56 children and their families to encourage reading together. We have received several letters of thanks from children and foster carers telling us how this has positively impacted on their lives. We will be completing an audit of the effectiveness of the scheme over the autumn term.

17.5 One to one tuition took place online over the academic year, and more intensively over the CV-19 period for 42 pupils who were either out of borough and or in year 10 and Y11 identified as underachieving. The impact of this will be evaluated in the autumn term. Some was provided by our own team and the rest by TLC live and Remedy tuition agencies. We are reviewing all our tuition to assess value for money and will send data to this panel in January.

17.6 As a direct response to the tragic events in the US of the death of George Floyd, our young people took part in two well attended online support sessions and debates in August 2020, and as a direct outcome, designed a **'Race and equalities roadshow'** which they will deliver throughout the year, beginning on 24th September with an online Q and A session with the council Leader and key representatives from Croydon organisations. This has been designed and led by a group of 15 young people with support from the E.M.P.I.R.E team.

17.7 Work collaboratively with other agencies supporting children and young people has actually been somewhat easier since everyone gained the skillset of working online. We've maintained our weekly meetings with school admissions to look at applications made for our children. We have a new tracking process for this in place for Sept 2020 to ensure submissions (both in borough and out of borough) are followed up and each child admitted within a 20 day timeframe.

17.8 VS staff have continued to be involved in EHCP needs assessment request submissions. We are pleased that 4 CLA (2 Croydon, 2 out of borough) have had their plans finalised over the CV-19 period. An example of great joint working is in the case of a young man placed in another county who needed an assessment for change of placement and as a result a new school finding and agreeing through the panels in that areas, then follow up with Croydon SEND to ensure funds were agreed and available. All this took place over the

summer holidays and the young man has been able to receive appropriate prep for transition at the new school on time for term starting.

17.9 Due to lockdown we created and sent out to all carers and establishments a comprehensive list of online links for learning. The team followed this up with calls to carers (in some cases weekly) to ensure that learning at home was possible and effective throughout. We also shard licenses for Britannica Online, Flash academy and Lexia with all students who needed these, seeing significant increases in uptake and access by learners as carers understood how to support.

17.10 Jamie's Farm residential visits were run by Virtual School for Secondary and UASC cohorts over the academic year 19-20. Jamie's Farm acts as a catalyst for change, enabling disadvantaged young people to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. This is done through a unique residential experience and rigorous follow-up programme, combining farming, family and therapy**.** Each trip has a full evaluation which highlights the impact on the young person's wellbeing**.** 29 young people benefitted through the VS and a further 64 CLA young people accessed these trips through their schools funded by Pupil Premium Grant. The focus for these trips going forward will be EMPIRE Membership and increasing the participation of our younger children.

18.   Laptop and digital devices issue

18.1 As a direct consequence of CV-19, our provision of laptops, which was well established previously took on a new level of complexity. Over the period from March –August we issued a further 119 laptops to CLA young people and are now confident that all learners who need one, have access to a working device for September. We also supported the DFEs digital devices scheme as part of which just over 1800 devices were issued to young people (not all CLA) and another 331 to Croydon schools for delivery to year 10 disadvantaged students. We now have very effective processes for issuing laptops and devices to any CLA anywhere nationally as required in a prompt timeframe. This is a significant and vital achievement that has enabled all our young people to stay connected to their social workers and through potentially very challenging times.

18.2 We also facilitated a DFE pilot from July 2020 onwards for any disadvantaged family or household who need internet access. The VS will continue to operate this through the autumn term and offer info and guidance to schools to identify and apply for BT hotspot access for such households. This has the potential to really enable our most vulnerable Croydon families to get connected. So far 13 households have benefited; this will no doubt increase starkly when schools have resumed fully.

19.   OFSTED ILACS inspection February 2020

19.1   We were delighted to receive a very positive, comprehensive review of our contribution to the whole CSC OFSTED in the published report. It is unusual for the VS to have such extensive written feedback in a report. Highlights of this were:

19.1.1   "Since the last inspection, the virtual school has been transformed and the education provision for Croydon's children in care is good. Critical to this success has been the excellent leadership and implementation of a staffing model that is fit for purpose. As a result, there have been recent improvements in outcomes", in particular the achievements of children in care at key stage 4, and provision for post-16 students.

19.1.2   "When children and young people come into care, they make good progress in overcoming many of the barriers that they face in engaging with learning. Staff from the virtual school work closely with partner services, schools and colleges to ensure that children get the right level of support with their learning, grow in confidence, and improve their behaviour and attendance. School staff speak highly of the quality of support that they receive from the virtual school and the impact that this has on the children."

19.1.3   "Children now benefit from regularly updated personal education plans (PEPs). Emphasis is given to ensuring that the PEP process is of good quality. Most PEPs are effective at charting the pupil's journey in a holistic way, providing a live tool for ongoing improvement and having a positive impact on children's attainment."

19.1.4   "Targeted support for pupils in Year 11 and through the transition process is benefiting 16- to 18-year-olds, with improving levels of entry into education, employment or training. Work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is having a strong impact, as their needs are assessed early on and provision is made to get them school-ready. The picture is not as strong for 18- to 25-year-olds."

19.2   Primary to secondary 'transition' all had to be supported online this year by our Year 5/6 advisory teacher and the senior lead for Primary. They were able to work individually online with every child's carer and school to ensure each had a plan in place. All our year 6 children had their first choice placement assigned.

19.3   Our Educational Psychologist and her team have directly worked with 38 cases this academic year and consulted with VS staff on almost 100 cases over the year. This input has proved vital for workers in being able to support schools with EHCP applications. She has also attended PEP meetings, SEND

panel meetings and compiling the submission for a needs assessment to be progressed. The team was particularly important during Covid, where they set up a helpline for carers who could directly access 30 min 1-1 calls. This proved very popular with all parents and carers and was accessed by 19 CLA carers in August. It will continue throughout 20-21.

19.4   The Virtual School also commissioned 'Achievement for All' to deliver the Achieving Well-Being Programme to 4 schools with large numbers of CLA to build capacity amongst staff to acquire the skills, knowledge and tools to support vulnerable children, especially CLA, and to improve their emotional wellbeing and success within the classroom which will lead to improved attainment and attendance and reduce exclusions. The evaluation of the project will follow and be available externally and online.

19.5   VS Senior Leadership are now key members at weekly cross service meetings including: Fair Access Panel, Missing Monday meetings, Weekly Care Panel, Complex Adolescent Panel, the Strategic SEND review board and all SEND partnership working groups. This has led to a much more collaborative approach to working and continues to be a key focus for the coming academic year. Timely identification of cases to target and improved advocacy on behalf of educational perspective when discussing placements and proposed moves. We are also represented on the foster care selection panel.

19.6   Continued participation in wider multi agency networks including the NAVSH meetings for London and National Virtual School Headteachers, South London & Surrey Post 16 VS/DMS network to share good practice and build stronger working relationships with colleges and other virtual schools including Merton, Sutton, Lambeth and Islington.

19.7   The post 16 VS network is led by Croydon VS – building professional links with neighbouring virtual schools working with our oldest young people. .

19.8   Our post 16 team play an active role in the design and application the CSC NEET reduction plan. NEET Figures reduced from 38% in 2018 to 18% in Feb 2020 over the first half of this academic year. A detailed strategy exists linking VS and NEET team to ensure this remains a strong focus over 20-21

19.9   We were very lucky to work in collaboration with the ARC (animal rescue centre) all year. 44 KS1-3 students benefitted in total in a range or workshops, one to one sessions etc and a new KS1 summer literacy and confidence building programme that took place in August 2020 for 10 6-8 year old CLA. These children accessed a programme of animal care and literacy activities that built their confidence, phonics skill and ability to read and write fluently. All of this was in relation to care of unusual animals like a skunk, meerkats and sugar babies. Great fun was had by all and 100% carer feedback was positive. (Pictures can be seen on the VS website.)

20. Key Challenges 2019/20

20.1 Persistent absence rates remain a focus for 20-21. School Development Plan that continues to be a priority for the Virtual School.

20.2 Funding and finance- accuracy of monitoring of PPG Spend

20.3 Croydon Children Looked After **who do not have a full time school offer**. An ongoing focus area will be working closely with admissions and schools to reduce the wait time for children and Young People without a school place, accessing a part-time timetable or being educated offsite.

20.4 Children not in education and post 16 NEETs: weekly tracking of our children and young people out of education, employment or training has helped us to identify children and young people not accessing education in much more time focused way. This is working well across statutory school age (only 16 YP were MIE at the end of the academic year 2020 and 10 of these were newly arrived)

20.5 At Post 16, however, the challenge remains more significant as we still lack funds to effect staffing change. We have though grown our capacity from 1- 3 through CMF Grant finds and are ensuring that our strategic plan for collaboration with other key services in the council mean we have this in sharp focus and can work systematically on these cases.

20.6 COVID-19 continuing to provide responsive online support as needed to schools, social workers, carers and CLA as the circumstances continually change.

21. VIRTUAL SCHOOL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 2019/20

21.1 For 2020-21 a training calendar has already been designed and sent out to stakeholders

21.2 *Designated Teacher Drop in Sessions (Surgeries)*

   21.2.1 Individual training for new Designated Teachers, as required, on the role of the DT, how e-PEP works, the 'PEP' and how Children Looked After should be supported in school. These sessions are also compulsory one to one online sessions for SW where there is any issue.

21.3 New starter compulsory EPEP training for all Children's Services workers**.**

21.4 Termly Designated Teacher 'Arena'- we commission AC training to create bespoke training at the request of our designated teachers.

21.5 Training covered this year has included:

a) Ongoing e-PEP (system) training – has reached 189 Social Workers so far.

b) Trauma informed practice training, 'Introductory 1 day session: The impact of trauma on vulnerable children and CLAs' for Saffron Valley whole staff, Learning Access Team whole staff.

c) Mental Health and wellbeing in COVID –Mike Armiger – 48 participants '*What does a good e-pep look like* including '*Writing good SMART targets*'

d) Closing the gap for CLA learners: working effectively with CLA in schools- by Penny Todd. (attended by 35 Designated Teachers

e) Online webinars for Social Workers around what to expect of education for different ages

f) Online webinars for Year 11s under covid- samples of A level / level 3 type courses in Health and Social care, beauty, career planning.

22.   Bespoke training for social workers, schools and other organisations

22.1   During 2019-20 a range of training was provided at the request of individual schools and other groups. This included:

a) Training for school teams including teachers and senior practitioners in schools across Primary, Secondary and Post 16 providers

b) e-PEP system training

c) The Virtual School team, attending briefings in all teams across social care teams, throughout the week, to support with more general enquiries around e-PEP and or children in young people in education.

d) Social Worker training (particularly induction of newly qualified staff on regular Tuesday afternoon sessions)

e) Individual and small group training for Designated Teachers and other school staff working with CLAs and our new 'the role of the designated teacher webinar

23.   Partnership working both external and internal

23.1   Continued engagement with the National Association of Virtual School Heads at regional and national level.

23.2   Virtual School participation in various local authority strategy groups – including; *Corporate Parenting Panel, Missing Mondays, Fair Access Panel, Fostering Panel, LAC Managers Meetings, YOS resettlement Panel.*

23.3. Increased 'cross-border' working' with neighbouring Virtual Schools. The challenge here is to meet the needs of Croydon children placed in care out of authority and to support the virtual schools of other authorities that have CLA attending Croydon schools.

23.4 The Virtual School has attended the SEN SAG panel and Social Care MARP panel as well as many placement planning meetings (for children moving out of borough). This enables the Virtual School to participate and contribute to key decision making processes and plan for effective and smooth school transitions.

23.5 The Virtual School continues to play a key role in the South London and South East Post 16 Virtual School and DMS network. This network brings together local colleges and post 16 Virtual school representatives to improve the collaborative work across the region between colleges and virtual schools to improve the overall outcomes for post 16 students. This has built stronger links with local virtual schools and colleges leading to an improved sharing of data and good practice to support our young people.

**24.	CONSULTATION**
None.

**25.	FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**
None.

**26.	LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**
None.

**27.	HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**
None

**28.	EQUALITIES IMPACT**
None.

**29.	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**
None.

**30.	CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**
None.

**31.	DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

a)   WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

YES/<u>NO</u>

(If yes, please provide brief details as to what 'personal data' will be processed and complete the next question).

(If no, please complete the sign off)

b)   HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?

YES/NO

(If yes, please attach a copy).

(If no, please provide the reason why a DPIA was not completed. Please also attach any relevant advice)

c)   "*The Director of Education comments that...*

(Approved by: [A. N. Other] on behalf of the Director of XXX)"

CONTACT OFFICER: Sarah Bailey, Headteacher, Virtual School, 0208 726 6000 ext 88758.

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT
None.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:
None