

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25 SHROPSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL



Introduction

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This is the Executive Summary of the Annual Report for Shropshire Virtual School 2024-25.

This has been a year of transformation, with a restructure of the school and new additionality to the Head Teacher's role as lead for the Education Access Service alongside that of the Virtual School. This has enabled closer collaboration with colleagues across inclusion and attendance in general, bringing benefits for the children supported by the Virtual School, as well as the team itself.

By creating an education community for young people, we can promote excellent opportunities and champion their achievements - and as part of our role as a Corporate Parent, we always take the approach of considering whether something is 'good enough for our own child'.

This year **OFSTED** recognised how our Virtual School contributed to a judgement of '**Outstanding**' - and how we provide "high-quality support that promotes our children's educational attainment and progress." OFSTED noted how the practitioners in the team "go over and above", show "tenacity" to secure suitable provision and how this enables our children to make good progress from their starting points.

We are proud of our pupils. A few examples of their achievements in 2024-25 are:



P achieved two awards from his school at the end of the summer term - one was PRIDE Pupil of the Year for Personal Excellence and another was for the highest ever number of house points in 1 year! He was accompanied to the ceremony by his Social Work Assistant.

K raised over £150 for Macmillan Cancer Support by organising a raffle outside a local supermarket, he was very proud of his achievement.

At a Personal Education Plan meeting for N we celebrated him achieving 'man of the match' for the school football team. He was awarded this in assembly for his great sportsmanship and attitude as well as scoring a number of goals! He has been

house captain twice recently and delivered a motivational speech to the whole school, he said he enjoyed feeling proud afterwards.

One of our children has been benefiting from Pupil Premium+ to maintain Greater Depth in Maths, she has been selected to represent her school at a Maths challenge at Wrekin College where she will compete against children from other schools.

One of our children in a specialist school has provided OFSTED inspectors with a guided tour of his school site. The feedback was he was thoughtful, responsible and respectful – he was able to explain how the teachers keep him and other pupils safe plus how he enjoys reading. He has earned a certificate of recognition from his Head Teacher.

Another young person has represented their school at the county final in athletics and one secondary aged pupil has received the Head Teacher's Award for Music.

One of our children in year 4 has been assessed as having a reading age of 15.3 years.



The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers

Our children achieved above national and regional averages* in

- Good Level of Development (GLD)
- Year 1 Phonics
- End of Key Stage 2 Reading and Writing
- Our young people achieved above national average in Attainment 8 at end of Key stage 4

(Awaiting Progress 8 results)

*Source: Nexus, unverified

Key Performance Indicators for Attendance were:

- above all learners in Shropshire and nationally for primary and specialist
- persistent absence figure decreased by 3.23% and severe absence by 1.75% compared to 23-24
- secondary attendance improved by 2.43% on 23-24.
- lower absence for Children Looked After (CLA) than National in 2023 and 2024 – and lower persistent absence than National
- 79% of Key Stage 5 students in education, employment or training at the end of July 2025
- 0 permanent exclusions for 4 consecutive years
- Shropshire CIN and CP attendance and persistent absence was better than all statistical neighbours and national at 31st March 2024

The data summary for PEP outcomes was as follows:

Completion - the termly average

for Year -1 to 11 was 99.6%

for Key Stage 5 was 97.6%

The combined average per term was 99.3%

Quality - the termly average

for Year -1 to 11 was 96.6%

for Key Stage 5 was 85.3%

The combined average per term was 95%

The Shropshire Virtual School has made a difference to children and young people through Training for partners, for example:

- ✓ trained over 20 Schools leaders and 25 LA practitioners from across Shropshire LA to become Emotion Coaching Trainers with the focus of the trainers delivering Emotion Coaching to whole schools.
- ✓ Trained 49 schools in Nurture Theory and Practice so they can become accredited and open their own hub/resource/interventions
- ✓ Trained 117 practitioners in using the Boxall Profile Tool
- ✓ Three Secondary Academies and one Primary school revising their behaviour policy to prioritise a relational approach and strategies

Secondary Case Study



A key part of the transformation of one secondary academy has been a shift in Mindset with the motto **“Stay Curious not Furious”**

Among parents, 89% have stated that the school has improved in the last 12 months.

Student metrics have also improved dramatically: **suspensions and permanent exclusions have dropped to zero**, and **attendance has risen from 86.8% in 2023/24 to 91.4% in 2024/25**. The number of days lost to absence has also fallen sharply.



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Key compliments for Shropshire Virtual School from 2024-25

“Best dedicated and hard-working Virtual school Team I have ever worked with – my kids have all benefited from your dedication... Working alongside your team, I know that every single child I have worked with has been in good hands with you, and that all have and will achieve their educational goals.”

Pam Williams-White, Social Worker

“The training we have received and the advice given by the Virtual School has had a massive impact on our school community. We have a high number of children with a social worker at our Academy and we are proud that our staff have the skills to implement an attachment and trauma informed approach to supporting our most vulnerable learners to thrive.”

Mel Wright, Assistant Principal Holy Trinity C of E Primary School

“I feel invigorated again when I walk into school and deal daily with the many challenges we all face in education...(the Hearts and Minds project) has the potential to impact not only on Children Looked-After, Previous Children Looked After and Children with a Social Worker, but also for all learners within the wider school context as well as staff well-being, leadership, and learning.”

Andy Parkhurst, Deputy Lakelands Academy re our Hearts and Minds project

School Development Plan Outcomes

The Virtual School did:

- develop the voice of our young people – eg School Council will present at Designated Teacher Networks, Corporate Parenting Board and regional events.
- develop our Emotion Coaching Trainer group and roll out the training across more Shropshire schools.
- increase the number of schools in the SVS Hearts & Minds Project, supporting more schools to be attachment and trauma responsive earning the Bronze ARC Award as well as in other aspects of inclusion eg relational practice.
- further develop robust tracking of SVS data using the Power Bi Dashboard data, including for KS5 PEP reporting
- develop our new Kinship Offer – and roll out our enhanced training offer for parents/carers.
- support schools in the transition to using the DFE portal for Attendance data and introduce new integrated processes around supporting CIN, CP and CLA with access to education - including new escalation processes.
- aim to improve attainment outcomes including in Maths for the end of KS2, sustain improvements for the end of KS4, focus on improving Early Years and KS1 outcomes in GLD and for Phonics.
- train the VS team in precision teaching in Literacy and Numeracy with the support of the EP Service and implement our new learning at home strategy.
- work collaboratively with partners on minimising the time CLA are not on roll at a school and continuing to focus on preventing exclusions/suspensions.
- Undertake a revision on forecasted numbers of CLA and consider staffing to meet business need, including in line with the changed role of the VS Head.
- develop effective use of the social emotional and mental health scales in our PEP in relation to supporting positive mental health of our Shropshire Children in Care
- further progress our work experience offer in the family business and develop employability projects
- progress discussions with HR re the Protected Characteristic for CLA/CLs and how this development needs to fit with Shropshire Council's Recruitment Policy
- continue working jointly with Enable and the Care Leavers Team on a possible apprenticeship opportunity in the Café at the Guildhall
- play an integral part in developing the trauma informed workplace in Shropshire Council.



These actions are not yet completed and will be built into the next development plan

- refresh the SVS Attendance Policy
- roll out Precision Teaching in schools
- use the Audit undertaken to develop robust integrated working and ensure education is a priority area in Child in Need and Child Protection Plans.
- develop a programme in KS3 for children as part of a pathway to university programme.

School Development Plan 2025-27

A new two-year School Development Plan has been created for 2025-27 and will include the following ambitions. We will:

- be ambitious in our development of the Hearts & Minds project and supporting schools/trusts with Belonging strategies
- collect further impact data for our Nurture project and use EP advice to enhance how we measure impact of such projects
- further develop tools and resources to support home learning, especially in literacy and numeracy
- roll out Precision Teaching in schools to support literacy and numeracy
- improve our KS5 PEP with views from birth parent & carers - and enhance it for those young people who are employed/in apprenticeships
- improve the quality of our NEET and UASYP PEPs
- start working towards achieving the NNSP accreditation (National Nurturing Schools Programme) and be one of the few Virtual Schools nationally to achieve this
- increase participation opportunities in KS5, including a focus on employability and independence skills.
- fully roll out STREAM to reduce NEET for UASYP and look to include an adapted programme which supports citizen NEET in 26-27
- enhance opportunities for KS5 students with an EHCP who need an EET programme
- develop our links with post 16 providers and expand the training offer for them
- explore ways of encouraging our students into engagement with pathway to university programmes
- further develop the use of Power BI tools to support reporting and strategic decision making
- work with partners to develop robust integrated working and ensure education is a priority area in Child in Need and Child Protection Plans.
- Roll out the Inclusive Attendance conference and programme in collaboration with EAS to support pilot schools achieving Bronze accreditation.
- refresh the SVS Attendance Policy for CLA. Focus on improving secondary attendance outcomes, the rate of progress in primary school attendance and reducing leave of absence in term time
- work with our partners in EAS on revising the Reduced Timetable policy, also to reduce the length of Reduced Timetables for CLA and the number of pupils with an EHCP on a RTT especially for reason as awaiting specialist placement
- work with our partners in EAS and SEND to create a new EBSA pathway for Shropshire
- evolve the Working Together approach to support strategic practice and granular support for children with a social worker, support risk reduction and increase access to suitable education

Report by Jo Kelly, Head Teacher, Shropshire Virtual School

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