

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

## SHROPSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL



## Executive Summary

Every year the Shropshire Virtual School Head Teacher produces a report to illustrate what has been achieved this year, by our school and our young people. Our team aim to support children and young people in Care so that they can have excellent opportunities to fulfil their potential. As part of the Corporate Parent for this group of young people we always take time to ask whether something would be good enough for our own child. Our Virtual School also provides advice, information and training on education around Previously Looked-after Children and those Children with a Social Worker.

### Key highlights of this year's report are:

- No Permanent Exclusions for any of our Children who are Looked After (CLA) for three years in a row – and 23 prevented with the help of partnership working.
- Contribution to a successful OFSTED Focus visit in July 2024.  
Most children are making positive progress at school. There are strong links between schools, the virtual school and social workers to ensure that schools have the right information and support to meet the child's educational needs. Personal education plans are routinely reviewed, and the child's voice, wishes and ambitions are central to informing these plans. The virtual school has been successful in ensuring that no child in care has been excluded since the last inspection.
- Completion and Quality of PEPs has shown an upward trajectory with 97% completion and 97.2% good quality by the end of the summer term. Additionally - following preparation through the year, our new Key Stage 5 and Early Years Shropshire PEPs launched in September 2024
- A significant increase in the numbers of Children who are Looked-After that we have supported this year. This is particularly marked in years -2 to 11 with a +17% change through the academic year.
- Planning and preparation for a significant reduction in annual funding with the loss of Recovery and National Tuition Programme Grants from September 2024. This is in the context of budget austerity in schools and the council.
- Excellent attendance outcomes for indicators against statistical neighbours and national for both CLA and Children with a Social Worker. However, challenges have increased around securing swift education for CLA with EHCPs who move out of county – and a new Escalation process is being piloted.
- At the end of KS4, significant gains were made in Maths outcomes this year for both indicators of grades 4 and 5 or above and 13% achieved 5 GCSEs at grades 9-5 including English and Maths, compared to 4.2% last year. End of KS2 outcomes for Combined were lower than regional/national unverified outcomes, but progress indicated to be good – and for Reading/Writing outcomes were close to national CLA averages.
- The VS Head Teacher has recently moved into a new post and is now Head of the Virtual School and Access to Education. This will necessitate a new look at how best to meet service needs in alignment with this change.
- Early evaluation of Phase 1 of the Hearts & Minds and Nurture projects are beginning to evidence good impact. The VS training offers are very well received and attended.



## This year, we are particularly proud of our young people because:

17 Shropshire CLA students achieved 8 GCSEs or more. One young person with neuro-diverse challenges attending a specialist hub achieved triple 9 in science plus high grades in 5 other subjects. He is going on to 6<sup>th</sup> form to study science.\*

Our young people from School Council who 'took over' the SVS Conference, positively disrupting and challenging adults to make Stable Schools Built on Love!

11 young people starting A levels and 2 going to university this Autumn! Congratulations to those students who achieved robust A level grades and 1 student who achieved 3 Distinction Stars!

K received a SVS Award for making cakes for a local home for the elderly & volunteered there. He said hello to every resident, served them drinks & one of his cakes, also played games. The manager of the home has asked if Kane can make this a regular visit as it brought so much joy to the residents.

Our children achieved better attendance than statistical neighbours and national with absence at only 6.9% at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (*DFE data*)

K who demonstrated exceptional dedication, talent & leadership - including her involvement with the Kidderminster Harriers, participation in the Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award program, achievements as a referee, mentorship of younger pupils, and her trials for the Lionesses Team.

The young people who engaged so well with their Aspire mentoring for careers, taking risks to think about the future so that 100% of them said they now have a clearer vision of their future.

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*\*pending data being verified*



## Summary of Priorities from the School Development Plan for 2023-25

This link takes you to a user-friendly version of our School Development Plan [Our School Development Plan \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/our-school-development-plan)

There was good progress with actions in the first year of the School Development Plan and key next steps in year 2 will be as follows:

We will

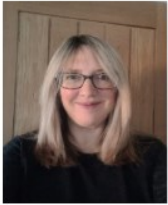
- further develop the voice of our young people – eg School Council will present at Designated Teacher Networks, Corporate Parenting Board and regional events.
- develop our Emotion Coaching Trainer group and roll out the training across more Shropshire schools.
- increase the number of schools in the 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, refresh the SVS Attendance Policy 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, roll this out in schools – and implement our new learning at home strategy.
- use the Audit undertaken to develop robust integrated working and ensure education is a priority area in Child in Need and Child Protection Plans.
- 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, develop employability projects and a programme in KS3 for children as part of a pathway to university programme.
- 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.





We have a fantastic team at our Virtual School, we all take pride and enjoy celebrating and promoting the achievements of our young people.

## Shropshire Virtual School



Jo Kelly  
Virtual School Head



Lindsay Armstrong  
Assistant Head



Jo Betts  
Assistant Head



Adriana Coupe  
Education Adviser



Lorraine Griffiths  
Post 16 Lead



Louise Exton  
Senior EASO



Alice Evans  
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Claire Wright  
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Holly Morris  
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Katherine E Jones  
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Leanne Morris  
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Lisa Wildgoose  
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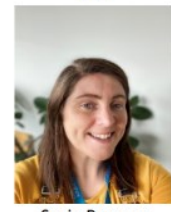
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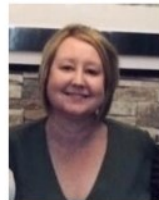
Suzie Rawson  
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Amy Gallagher  
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Report by Jo Kelly  
Head Teacher, Shropshire Virtual School  
October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024



[www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)  
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