

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

## 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.

This year has seen lots of change at our School and as the country has moved into a post-pandemic phase we have been supporting our young people with as many opportunities as possible to support their achievement, resilience, engagement and well-being. Key to this has been the expanded training offer for Designated Teachers and other Senior Leaders in schools as they face an upturn in mental health concerns and widespread issues with attendance.

Key highlights of this year's report are:

- No Permanent Exclusions for any of our Children who are Looked After for two years in a row.
- Launch of our new Shropshire PEP in September 2022, improving quality from 58% in September 2021 to 89.3% in Summer 2023.
- A significant increase in the numbers of Children who are Looked-After that we have supported this year. This is particularly marked in the Post 16 cohort with a +22% change.
- Growth in funding and a new look Virtual School with a restructure to support the service as it expands to meet new responsibilities and increasing numbers of children and young people.
- An expanded Participation offer for our young people, including the start of our School Council and two annual Celebration events.
- A comprehensive training initiative for schools with Hearts & Minds, Nurture and Attachment & Trauma encompassing support for our three families of children. A growing offer for our multi-agency partners supporting attendance, inclusion, emotion coaching and pathways to adulthood. Excellent impact being evidenced from the training delivered.
- The average monthly NEET figure for Shropshire CLA from September 2021 to July 2022 was 16.7% and this was reduced in 2022-23 to 12.9%
- The children in year 2 and 6 reportable cohorts achieving above national and regional averages for the Combined Measure, but that Phonics and Maths are areas for improvement\*.
- An evolving PP+ support map with opportunities for our young people and for this to expand to help schools with bespoke inclusion opportunities and cultural capital.



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

Our Year 2 and 6 children achieved above the CLA National and West Midlands Averages in the Combined Measures (Reading, Writing and Maths) this summer\*.

Lucia - who donated her hair to the Princess Trust charity to help other children who have an illness.

Our four young people who started their degree courses at university this September!

Dylan and Phoebe who have written some poems as part of our School Council and these will be included in our Conference in November

Our children achieved better attendance than all learners nationally, with persistent absence at only 16.5% compared to 22.5% nationally.

All of our young people who were nominated for an award at our Celebration Events

Kaz played drums on stage at our Celebration event even though he had only been having music lessons for a short time!

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*\*pending data being verified*



## Summary of Priorities for 2022-24

- Fully resourcing and future proofing the service to meet the growing numbers of CLA plus the wider duties relating to PLAC and Children with a Social Worker. We will create the sense of 'one school' in our service and Shropshire VS functions very well using hybrid working practices, whilst also supporting the well-being of the team.
- We will develop & deliver a high-quality training offer to schools with the aim of supporting recovery, resilience, transition and inclusion for our three 'families' of children and young people
- Shropshire Virtual School will become increasingly visible to stakeholders, with high-quality regular communications and social media presence/resources. We will enhance partnerships with stakeholders, increase integrated working & increasingly influence strategic outcomes at LA
- Data tracking will be embedded in practice across Attainment & Progress, PEPs, CWSW, Post 16, Participation – and we will drive forward change ready relating to the new Attendance guidance. We will be able to tell how we make a difference and our KPIs are in line with or better than National Averages
- We will develop resource & training to improve Speech & Language skills for our children – and there is impact on outcomes for children in the Early Years up to end of Key Stage 1. We will develop our home learning offer in line with the White Paper and engage Carers with this.
- Our new Shropshire PEP will be launched successfully - and this will support driving up standards of Good Quality PEPs. The Post 16 PEP is developed on to the LCS system.
- We will develop and deliver a robust Training Offer to SWs and DSLs & SENCOs to support promoting achievement and inclusion of CWSW – and we will develop robust integrated working to ensure education is a priority area in CIN and CP Plans
- We will develop robust tracking of data for CWSW so this is established and embedded for high quality reporting and planning for strategic action
- We will make a strong positive contribution to strategic work with our Regional Adoption Agency (Together 4 Children), we will deepen our support offer for parents, promoting understanding of PP+ and how it can be used effectively. We will develop a clear & positive transition offer and process to support children moving from CLA to PLAC
- We will develop an annual calendar of participation activities for each school holiday across CLA and PLAC families, including Celebration events, to support children positively engage in increasing numbers, including those living OOA. We will develop a School Council so that our young people can be supported to have a voice about things that matter to them, supporting them to be heard and shape practice for CLA in the LA
- We will develop effective use of the SDQ and SEMH scales on our new PEP in relation to supporting positive mental health of our Shropshire Children in Care.
- We will build capacity in schools for supporting positive post 16 destination planning and our post 16 UASYP will have increased opportunities to access education through the year, in or out of county. Our young people will have new opportunities created for work experience in the 'family business'
- We will build our offer for children and young people making educational transitions, increasing resources and training to support schools/provisions to build capacity.



**All of these have been achieved in 2022-23 except for the following which are targeted for the second year of the School Development Plan:**

- the development of the home Learning Offer – we will be using some Educational Psychology time to explore the best approach and resources for this.
- robust tracking of attendance data for Children with a Social Worker – this is dependent on the DFE Dashboard being ready for use and their target date is January 2024. In the interim we have developed our own dashboard for a pilot with a small number of schools. Meetings are also taking place with the Performance Manager in Learning & Skills to seek prioritisation for CWSW Attendance data on the LA Dashboard development.
- The SEMH scales are being used in our PEPs and the new Asst Head will look at developing how the SDQ can enhance this.
- Work experience in the ‘family-business’ was developed in late Spring, this was a delay due to the restructure and a high level of absence for the project lead. Out of the 23 Year 10 pupils at Shropshire maintained schools (not including specialist or independent settings) most of these students had already secured a work experience placement and we offered them an extra one in the ‘family business’ if they wished to take that up but none were keen to. The new Asst Head has this project as one of her responsibility areas under Aspirations and Transitions.

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

- We will develop a distributed leadership model in the school to drive change to support improving pupil outcomes.
- We will plan proactively to ensure the school is staffed to meet capacity and caseloads are reduced to be more in line with national averages. All year -2 children will have a VS Link and PEPs from January 2024.
- We will progress the next phase of training roll outs & networks for partners/stakeholders on key themes of supporting inclusion and attendance outcomes.
- We will launch the new Post 16 PEP, including training & supporting documentation for partners. We will target PEP quality to increase to 90% in School & Early Years – and develop the new reporting process to support the quality assurance partnership with social care.
- We will continue effective use of Reduced Timetables to support emotional well-being / mental health -and develop additional inclusion projects / partnerships with alternative providers to increase offers on our PP+ Support Map and reduce the length of time Reduced Timetables are open.
- We will develop projects / interventions to Improve outcomes in Maths at end of Key Stage 2 and 4.
- We will progress our work experience offer take up in the family business and develop employability projects; also we will develop a strategic plan for using the new Post 16 PP+ Grant effectively to support attendance, attainment and retention.
- We will develop a new home learning offer to support carers engagement and pupil outcomes.
- We will progress collection, tracking and reporting of Attendance for Children with a Social Worker
- We will widen our Participation Offer so there is a balanced offer across age phase, group type, location and need/ability.
- We will continue the drive towards all of our CLA attending a Good or Outstanding School
- We will work in partnership to progress use of SDQs (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)



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



 <p>Jo Kelly Virtual School Head</p>	 <p>Lindsay Armstrong Assistant Head</p>	 <p>Jo Betts Assistant Head</p>	 <p>James Waller-Davies Education Adviser</p>	 <p>Adriana Coupe Education Adviser</p>	 <p>Lorraine Griffiths Lead Post 16 Officer</p>	
 <p>Katherine Jones EASO</p>	 <p>Heather Hobman EASO</p>	 <p>Sophie Bishton EASO</p>	 <p>Louise Exton EASO</p>	 <p>Marie Mintoft EASO</p>	 <p>Helen Gregg EASO</p>	 <p>Suzie Rawson EASO Post 16</p>
 <p>Gemma Trestain-Miles EASO</p>	 <p>Alice Evans EASO</p>	 <p>Amy Foulger Lead Attendance Officer</p>	 <p>Beth Francis Participation Support Officer</p>	 <p>Paula Edwards Business Coordinator</p>	 <p>Catherine Brown Administrator</p>	

Report by Jo Kelly  
Head Teacher, Shropshire Virtual School  
October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

