

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Safeguarding Sub-Committee	16/04/2024
<b>Subject:</b> Virtual School Headteacher School Development Plan Academic Year 2023/2024	<b>PUBLIC</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>To contribute to a flourishing society</b> 1d, 2c,3b,3c.3d
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Debby Rigby Headteacher of Virtual School for Children with a Social Worker	

### **Summary**

This report provides Members with an update on the progress of the work of the Virtual School as set out in the School Development Plan (Appendix 1). This serves as a mid-year report on the work of the Virtual School. A detailed assessment of the work and impact of the Virtual School will be presented to Members in the Autumn of 2024 in the form of the Virtual School Annual Report.

At this stage of the academic year, work on all the priority areas in the School Development Plan is on track.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

- Note the plan attached as Appendix 1.

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

The School Development Plan is divided into five main priorities.

- To effectively and creatively, meet the statutory duties of a Virtual School.
- To increase access to apprenticeships, further and higher education for care experienced young people.
- To develop awareness of barriers and raise educational expectations of children with a social worker.
- To encourage early engagement in education and smooth transitions for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and refugee arrivals.
- To provide successful education and enrichment projects for identified groups of children and young people.

There is an action plan for each priority area with targets, actions and success criteria. Each academic term the plans are evaluated, and impacts are noted. All work is currently on track for completion by August 2024.

## **Current Position**

### Highlights

- The Virtual School continues to monitor and promote educational opportunities of all children in care, including academic attainment and school and college attendance.
- New 'Kinship Care' responsibilities for Virtual Schools are being introduced, following the publication of 'Championing Kinship Care - The National Kinship Care Strategy,' in December 2023.
- The Virtual School has secured two City apprenticeship positions that are currently being advertised. One position is for business administration and the other is for a youth worker to support young people with applications, interviews and project work.
- The Virtual School is working in partnership with Open Spaces to run a Forest School project in Epping Forest called 'Four Seasons.' This project allows young people to explore and appreciate the changing seasons, join in team games and creative activities. All have said how being outside increases their sense of well-being.
- The Virtual School has offered online training to school staff, where City children attend, focusing on how to support children and young people who have experienced trauma. The course provides school staff with a deeper understanding of the effects of trauma and gives them strategies to help them pre-empt or deal with challenging behaviour positively.
- The Virtual School is working in partnership with The City of London Boys School to deliver enrichment lessons to unaccompanied asylum seekers on

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses. These include drama, science, sport and cookery. These sessions provide learners with a more broad and balanced learning experience.

- The Virtual School has secured additional funding to provide all primary aged children with a social worker, additional books and educational resources. All children will also be provided with access to a Storytime subscription – ensuring that new stories are delivered to them at home every month.
- Two Virtual School celebration events are booked for Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July and Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

### **Sub-headings**

- Strategic implications – None identified.
- Financial implications – Work undertaken is built into the DCCS Local Risk Budget. DfE funding also supports the work of the Virtual School in respect of the school's extended duties.
- Resource implications – The Virtual School works with a number of internal partners across education, Open Spaces, the CoL School to provide enrichment activities for our Children in Care and Care leaver population.
- Legal implications – None identified
- Risk implications – None identified
- Equalities implications – None identified
- Climate implications – None identified
- Security implications – None identified

### **Conclusion**

This report has highlighted that at the mid-way point in the academic year the Virtual School is delivering on all its priority areas.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Virtual School Development Plan 2023/2024

Debby Rigby  
Headteacher of Virtual School for Children with a Social Worker

T: 07941 072737

E: [debby.rigby@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:debby.rigby@cityoflondon.gov.uk)