

TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD	
DATE:	19 th April 2021
REPORT AUTHOR:	Linda Mason HEAD TEACHER Virtual School
SUBJECT:	Head Teacher's Report
PURPOSE:	FOR INFORMATION

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with updated information about cared for children since the last report in January 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Board is requested to receive the report for information

3. Context - Cohort and Characteristics

Currently as of 12 April 2021 (report written) we have 625 Cared for Children a reduction of 8 compared to 633 Cared for Children in January 2021.

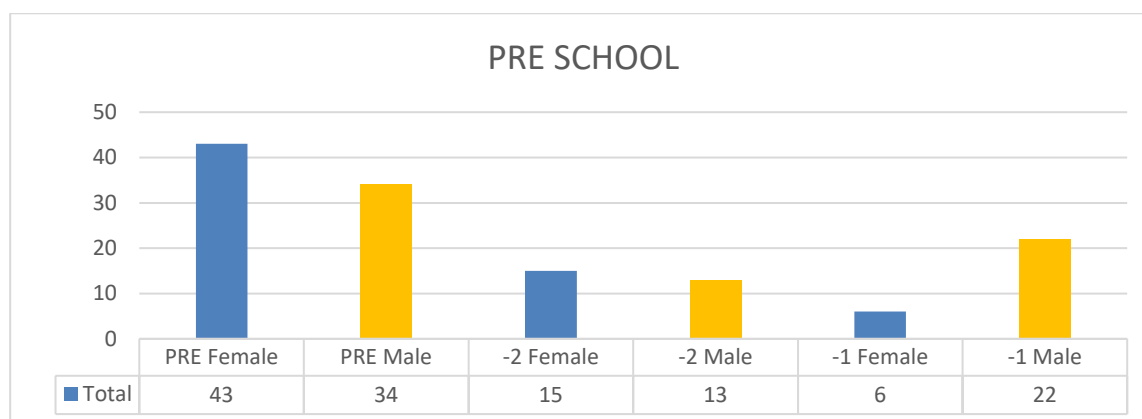
Historical cohorts (when report written)

January 2021	633
October 2020	622
July 2020	578
January 2020	569

3.1 COHORT

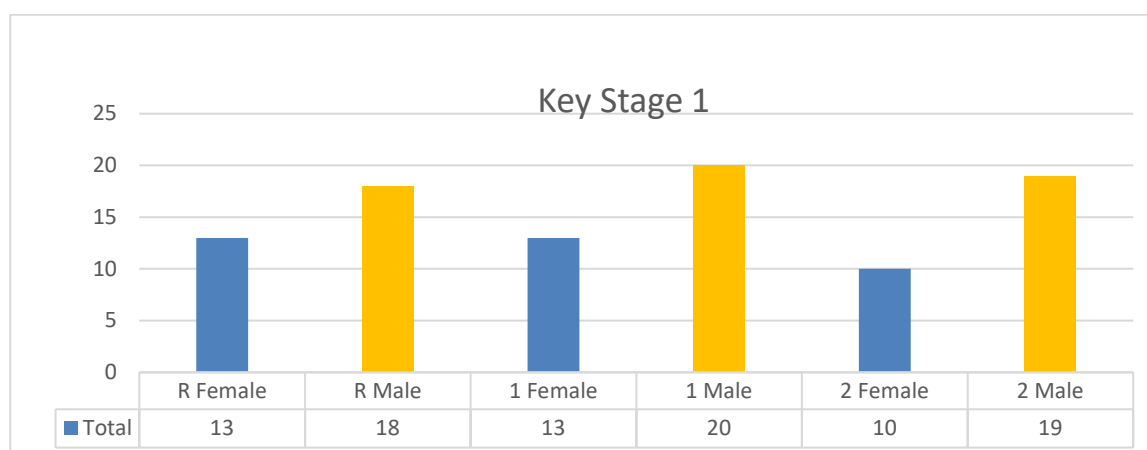
Source Virtual School Data 12 April 2021
Cohort Tables by Key Stage

3.1.1 PRE SCHOOL

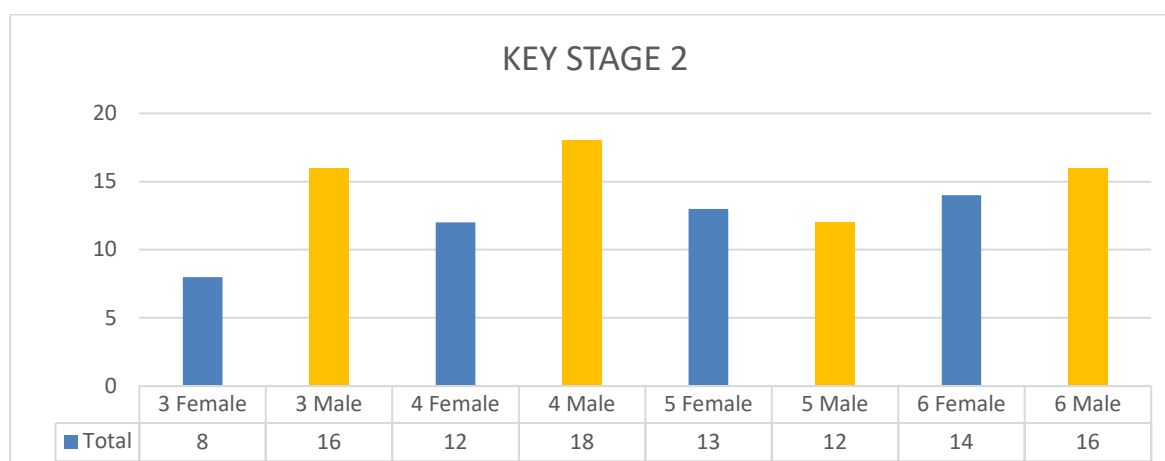


Pre-school children are aged 0 – 2 years, - 2 (early years provision, childcare or nursery) children are aged 2/3 and -1 (early years provision, childcare or nursery) children are aged 3/4

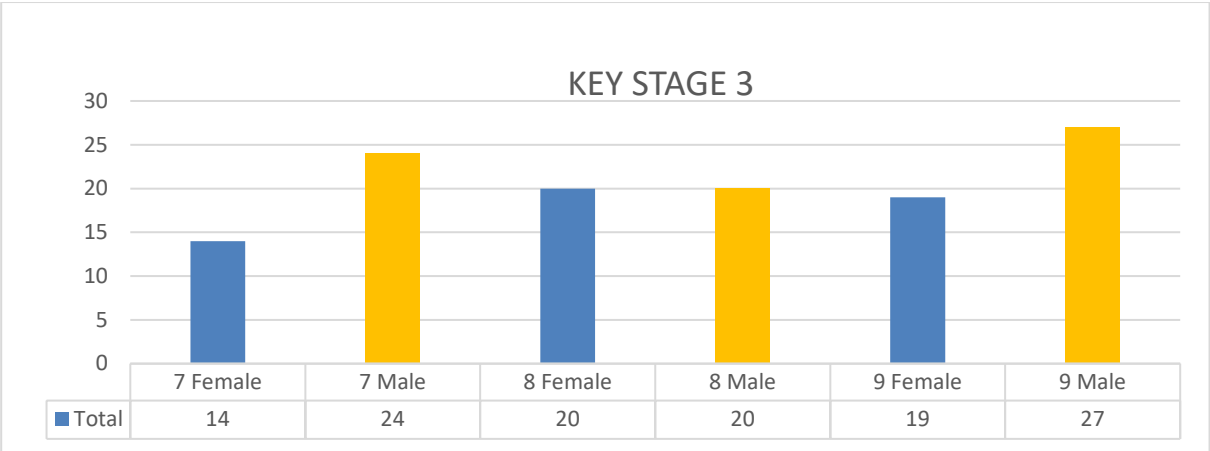
3.1.2 KEY STAGE 1



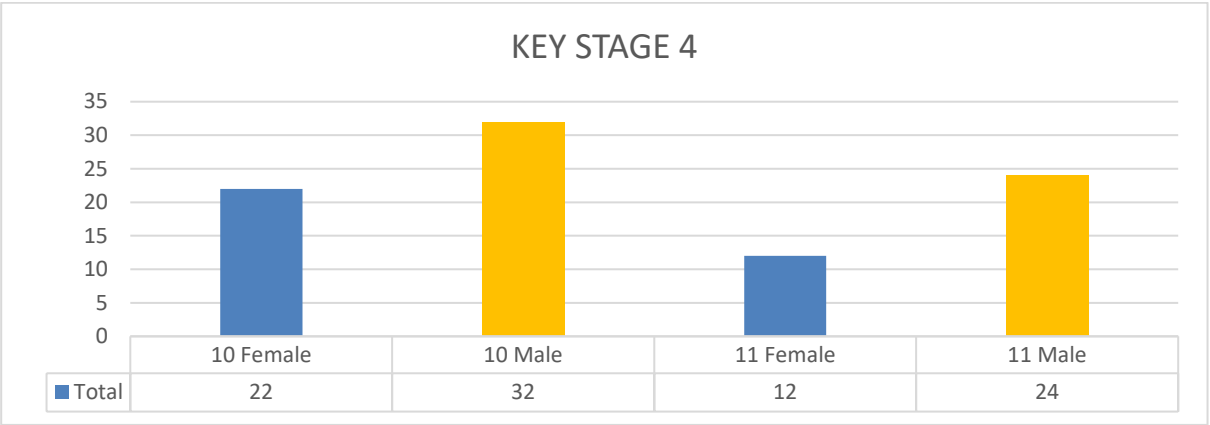
3.1.3 KEY STAGE 2



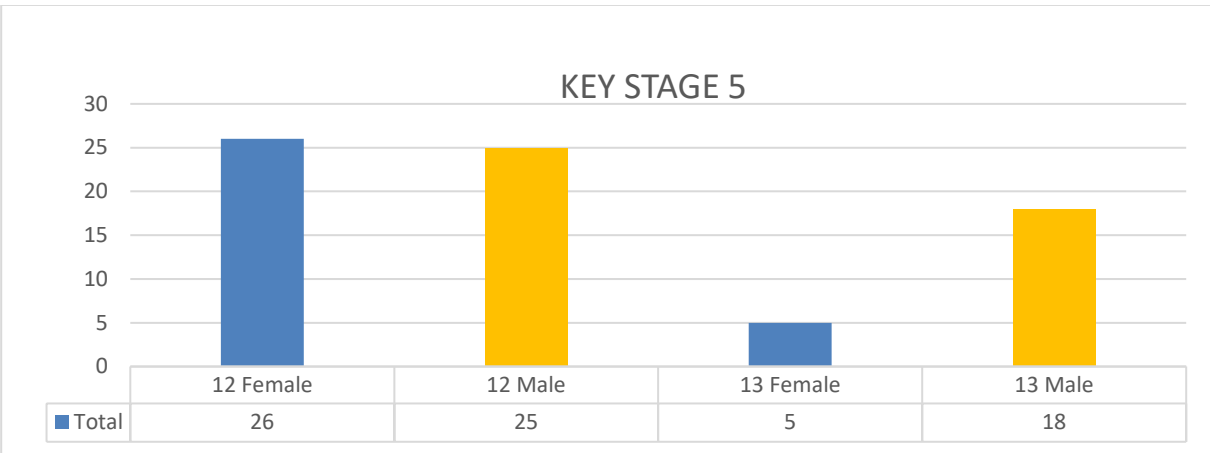
3.1.4 KEY STAGE 3



3.1.5 KEY STAGE 4



3.1.6 KEY STAGE 5



3.2 SEND Analysis

The Sunderland SEND cared for children school age population (Reception – Yr13) in total is 223 (SEND Support + EHCP).

- 45% of the cared for population have an identified SEND.
- 137 or 28% receive SEND support in school with some support of external agencies.
- SEND Support 64% male, 36% female
- 86 or 17% receive more intensive support due to having an EHCP.
- EHCPs 81% are male 19% female
- 71 or 82% of those with an EHCP attend specialist educational provision in Sunderland and out of area (23 or 27%) too.
- As previously stated in earlier reports, compared with national data (LAIT 2019) we do not have as many cared for children with EHCPs as other similar authorities. However, our SEND support (K) is higher than the national figure. The reason behind these figures is currently being considered with schools and the SEND Service.
- Primary Need for those identified as in need of SEND support (national data in brackets):

SEMH	32% (47%)
MLD	25% (20%)
Communication and Interaction (ASD)	5% (12%)
- Primary Need for those with and EHCP (national data in brackets);

SEMH	49% (40%)
Communication and Interaction (ASD)	14% (12%)
Communication and Interaction	18% (10%)

3.2.1 Analysis

Building on the graphs presented in Annual Performance report January 2021 the number of EHCP for cared for children is less than that nationally. An exploration of those currently receiving SEN support will take place to ensure that a move to an EHCP assessment is being considered where appropriate. This will be done in conjunction with schools and the SEND service and will influence policy and practice. Further work will focus on the gender and timeliness of SEND identification and assessment. Predominantly boys are more likely to have an EHCP than girls, we need to consider if girls needs are being fully met. SEND identification and EHCPs tend to increase towards the later stages of KS2 and KS3. Work is currently being done to determine how this correlates with when a child becomes cared for and the period leading up to this decision i.e. when a child may have been a child in need (CIN) or had a child protection plan (CP) and whether their SEND needs were identified during this period.

3.3 Ethnicity (current)

ETHNICITY	NUMBER	%
Asian Or Asian British Any Other Asian	3	0.48
Asian Or Asian British Bangladeshi	1	0.16
Black Or Black British African	4	0.64
Black Or Black British Any Other Black	3	0.48
Gypsy/Roma	4	0.64
Information Not Yet Obtained	2	0.32
Mixed Any Other Mixed Background (White & Any Other)	7	1.00
Mixed White & Asian	7	1.00
Mixed White & Black African	3	0.48
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	1	0.16
Other Ethnic Group - Other	8	1.00
White Any Other White Background	6	0.90
White British	574	92.0
TOTAL	625	

Nationally the figure is 74% white and 7% Black or Black British. The remaining categories are similar to Sunderland. This data reflects that of Sunderland's population demographic where 93.6% are White British.

4 Progress and Achievement

There will be no nationally reported data for any of the key stages in 2021. The Virtual School will collate the outcomes (teacher assessment) for Key Stage 4 directly with schools when the data is finalised.

Progress and achievement at individual child level is monitored termly through the EPEP.

5 Attendance and Absence monitoring

Autumn Term 2020	ACTUAL	94.9%
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Spring Term 2021 up to March 4 th 2021			
attendance	60.9%	(40% nationally all SW)	
authorised absence	38.4%	remote learning	
pupils full time	57%	230	
pupils fully remote learning	24%	101	of cohort (416)
blended learning	21%	85	

Spring Term 2021 March 8 th up to 23rd March 2021		
Primary	99% returned to school	93% national
Secondary	96% returned to school	87% national
Current attendance overall	93.2% actual	90% national

The Virtual School monitors attendance daily through Welfare Call and contacts carers to ensure attendance at school is a key priority if concerns arise. Analysis of the detail behind the data occurs termly and virtual school staff work closely with schools, carers and social workers to ensure attendance is improved.

There will be immediate checks on return after Easter to ensure cared for children have returned to school and that this is maintained throughout the summer term.

6 Suspensions and Expulsions

(previously known as fixed term and permanent exclusions)

Autumn 2020			
Expulsions (Permanent Exclusion)	0	0	0
Suspensions (Fixed Term exclusion)	40	151.5 days	22 children

8 Cared for Children received more than 1 suspension

5 Cared for Children received more than 3 suspensions:

- 2 are in specialist provision (both EHCP)
- 2 are in residential homes
- All have had more than 3 placements
- 3 are currently placed out of the area

The Virtual School works closely with schools, carers and social workers when suspensions occur to understand the antecedents and to ensure appropriate support and plans are put in place to prevent further suspensions. This includes the use of the SEND ranges to ensure needs are identified and resources are put in place, but also referrals to other agencies are aligned such as CYPS, CAMHS for example. The EPEP should include targets related to any social and emotional or mental health needs.

7 EPEPS

All Designated teacher were fully trained in June 2019 for full implementation in September 2019 for cared for children in Reception through to year 11. 94% of EPEPS were completed during this period within statutory time frames. There was dip in

compliance during the summer holiday period due to the statutory time frame falling during school closure period (20 days from becoming cared for). IROs received their training in December 2019 and had full access to their children's EPEPs via Welfare Call. It was agreed social workers would be trained in March 2020, this delay was due to the fact they were fully involved in Signs of Safety training at that time. Due to Covid restrictions this training eventually took place in September 2020 (75% have completed the training and the remaining 25% is underway).

In conjunction with Next Steps and the Careers and NEET service a Post 16 EPEP was developed and introduced in September 2020. An Early Years EPEP has been developed in conjunction with Early Years Providers and this was implemented in January 2021.

Currently 97% of Reception through to year 11 EPEPS are complete. 96% of Post 16 EPEPS are complete. 75% of Early Years EPEPS are complete in the context of lockdown three this is an impressive figure. The summer holiday period dip has been resolved an interim PEP will be completed by the Virtual School and will be finalised as soon as schools return in the September of the new term.

Quality assurance has been a key area of focus. Each section of the EPEP is assessed and this is fed back to schools using a RAG rating. If there are concerns about the quality of the EPEP a meeting is held to consider how it can be improved. Virtual School staff are also involved in moderation exercises to ensure a consistency of judgements. This will be expanded in future training with Designated Teachers.

8 CURRENT COHORT INFORMATION – OFSTED CATEGORY

CATEGORY	TOTAL E Y - KS5	%	PRE	PRE %	Primary	Primary %	Secondary	Secondary %	KS5	KS5%
Outstanding	70	14	11	21	19	9	31	15	9	22
Good	328	65	41	77	161	80	103	48	19	46
Requires Improvement	71	14	0	0	17	8	41	19	13	31
Inadequate	38	7	1	1.8	3	2	34	16	0	0

79% of cared for children were in good or outstanding schools.

As stated in previous Board reports we do not automatically remove a cared for child from a school who goes in to a Requires Improvement or Inadequate category. The Virtual School does initially check the OFSTED report to see what is said about the performance of vulnerable children and what is reported in the "Behaviour and Attitudes" and "Personal Development" sections. Another check is how closely the curriculum matches the needs of the school population "that it is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged the knowledge to succeed in life".

If a child is seeking admission to school, we fully expect that the child would be admitted to a good or outstanding school. Interesting data is emerging on a national level that suggests that cared for children perform as well across all categories of schools (NCER). The EPEP is also used to monitor progress and achievement on a termly basis.

9 GOVERNANCE

We have re-established the Governing Board following a review by a National Leader of Governance. A new Scheme of Delegation has been finalised which clarifies the unique nature of the role of the Governing Board in the context of the governance provided by the Corporate Governing Board and the role of the local authority through Together For Children. The Board holds three full governing Board meetings annually and a further three Support and Challenge Committee meetings.

We have successfully recruited additional governors and now have Head Teacher representation across all phases including special. Sunderland College is represented, and the Head of Cared for Children and Provider Services is also a key member.

Sadly, our Chair of Governors Cllr Geoff Walker died suddenly. He was a great advocate of the Virtual School and wanted the absolute best for our cared for children. I will miss him greatly.

I am pleased to confirm that Cllr Claire Rowntree has been appointed to the governing body and we look forward to her involvement. In the interim the Vice Chair Yvonne Gray has chaired our meetings.

10 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

To be an effective Virtual School partnership work is essential. The school has ensured membership of key groups which include;

- Secondary HT
- Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships
- Vulnerable Pupils Panel
- SEND Panel
- Corporate Parenting Board
- North East Virtual School Head Teachers (Chair)
- National Association of Virtual Schools (Board Member)
- Previously Looked After Forum
- Primary HT
- Special School HT
- Primary and Secondary
- External Placements Panel
- Children with Complex Needs
- Social Care Team meetings

11 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Pupil Premium Grant will be fully utilised in support of improving educational outcomes as expected by the DFE Grant conditions. The local authority receives £2345 per cared

for child. Schools receive £1800 per cared for child annually (paid termly to schools) and the Virtual School retain £445 per child. School directly receive £2345 per previously cared for child (adopted, Special Guardianship Order and Child Arrangement Order) if schools are aware and have included the child on their January Census returns.

Centrally retained funding is used for:

Tutors	Alternative Provision	On-line learning
121 tuition	Transport	Premises
Salary Costs		
Welfare Call (attendance, exclusions, Analytics and EPEP)		
Education Psychology reports		

12 COVID RESPONSE January 2021

The Virtual School in conjunction with School Improvement and Social care considered how to support young people during this third lockdown.

The Virtual School specifically:

- RAG and Risk assessment was agreed and actions communicated to schools with expectation of schools re Welfare checks
- VS maintained welfare calls for those deemed most vulnerable
- Checked all those working at home and those that were part in school and at home (blended learning) had laptop and access to school remote learning if appropriate
- Checked all cared for children attending - 60.9% attended (40% nationally)

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

14 CONTACT

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