



## Education Select Committee

28 January 2013

### DESIGNATED TEACHER REPORTS ON CHILDREN IN CARE TO SCHOOL GOVERNORS

#### **Purpose of the report:**

This report from Surrey's Virtual School for Children in Care provides information to those with a corporate parent role on the effectiveness of scrutiny by School Governors, with similar responsibilities for raising expectations and monitoring the educational progress of children in care attending their schools.

#### **Introduction:**

- 1 All schools are required to nominate a Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care to 'champion' the specific needs of this group of young people. Designated Teachers (DTs) must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally should be placed to influence senior management decisions and policy in schools. Part of the Designated Teacher role is to ensure Governing Bodies receive the necessary information and data to fulfil their own responsibilities around the education of children in care.
- 2 The Annual Report on Children in Care to Governors is no longer a statutory requirement in schools, but very much considered 'good practice' and would form part of evidence requested by Ofsted to inform the outcome of any school inspection.

#### **Survey Findings**

- 3 The Virtual School requested information and copies of Annual Reports to governing bodies from Surrey Headteachers. The findings from this survey are;
  - 3.1 Not all schools with children in care produce a report for the governing body.

- 3.2 Some schools have alternative arrangements in place for reporting to sub-groups, such as an Inclusion or Safeguarding Committee, or arrangements for DTs to meet directly with a Governor.
- 3.2 Schools without children in care would rarely see the need for producing any type of reporting, even where this would provide a review of school policy.
- 3.3 In general, those schools who do report to governors do so on a termly basis, with an annual update on assessment results.
- 3.4 A number of schools have elected a Governor with specific responsibility for children in care.
- 3.5 The quality of reporting from those schools with children in care is varied, but all make mention of academic progress – either as a brief comment or as a full set of data.
- 3.6 The better quality reports include information on overall attendance including exclusions of pupils in care; information around actions taken for Key Stage transitions and the use of pupil premium funding.
- 3.6 Very few reports make mention of other key areas such as staff training, workload challenges for DTs or personal education plans.
- 3.7 Many schools felt they would benefit from further advice on the content of a Governor's Report and would welcome a standard template to complete.

<b>Conclusions:</b>
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- 4 There are actions that can and should be taken to further improve the reporting of educational outcomes for children in care to school governors.

### **Financial and value for money implications**

- 5 Pupil Premium LAC (for looked after children) is a growing sum of funding. This uniquely 'follows the child' as local authorities are able to determine the payment mechanisms. Whilst there is no obligation for schools to report on the specific spend for this funding, there are obvious value for money implications for our children in care which reporting to governors would highlight.

### **Equalities Implications**

- 6 Governing bodies need to continually consider how well their school ensures equality of opportunity for all its pupils with especial reference to those in care. They need to ensure they narrow the gap between children in care and all pupils both in the context of achievement and access to opportunities.

## **Risk Management Implications**

- 7 There is compliance risk for Governing bodies in terms of meeting national and professional standards for Designated Teachers and statutory obligations in terms of completion of Personal Education Plans and the monitoring and tracking of children in care. Failure to comply will have implications in terms of Ofsted inspection.

## **Implications for the Council's Priorities or Community Strategy/Local Area Agreement Targets**

- 8 It is essential for the Council to continue to lead the drive towards higher ambition and aspiration for children in care - ensuring others who have similar statutory accountabilities around the progress and achievement of these children are receiving timely and appropriate information to inform policy and practice, is key to improving outcomes.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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- (a) To make available to all schools the Templates now designed, for regular reporting to governors for schools with, and schools without children in care (copies attached). Aspects of these templates have been taken from the better examples schools made available to us, and from national best practice examples provided by Virtual Schools.
- (b) To promote the best practice of reporting to governors through both Designated Teacher and Governor Training.
- (c) To monitor on-going receipt of governor reports and undertake to report back an overall evaluation on content to schools.

<b>Next steps:</b>
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The Virtual School will work closely with Surrey's school improvement service to engage all schools in this aspect of their responsibilities.

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**Sources/background papers:**

**Children in Care Reports to Governors – Surrey Templates**

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