



Date	July 2015
Key stages	EYFS- KS2
School type	LA maintained, primary
Themes	Children Looked After, pupil premium

Maximising the progress of Children Looked After

Central Primary School

Context

Central Primary School is a smaller than average school located in Watford. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium Plus funding and those for whom English is an additional language, is above average.

During the academic year of 2014 to 2015, the school supported 13 Children Looked After (CLA). Throughout the year, intensive and tailored provision has enabled a number of children to transition successfully to new placements, adoptive parents and guardianships.

Brief description

The Headteacher at Central Primary School believes passionately that it is the responsibility of the most senior leader in the school to manage the education and wellbeing of Children Looked After. As the Designated Teacher (DT), his message is clear - the care and progress of CLA is a top priority for all staff. As a result of this relentless and continued focus, Children Looked After are making good, if not outstanding progress, with pupils on track to meet or exceed national age related expectations. In a number of cases, pupils made 3 levels of progress between key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Supporting the progress of Children Looked After

Headteacher is directly responsible for Children Looked After

Despite the large number of Children Looked After in Central Primary School, the Headteacher believes that the Designated Teacher role is “not a delegable job, it has to be with the head.” As a result, the Headteacher is actively involved with CLA pupils from the initial stages of their entry into the school through to supporting them with moving to new schools or placements and coping with the adoption and guardianships process. Strategically positioning the DT role at senior leadership level enables the Headteacher to intervene quickly and, if necessary, seek wider support, for example, from social workers and other outside agencies.

The school has a close and positive relationship with carers and social workers. Regular, if not daily contact with carers enables them to feel really involved with the school. There is an open door policy; issues and concerns from carers or pupils are dealt with quickly. This, together with the Headteacher's detailed knowledge of the care and adoption system, has resulted in there being a shared language between the school, home and social workers.

All staff are aware of the Children Looked After

All staff are aware of who the Children Looked After are in the school – as a group they are the 3rd priority action within the school development plan. Class teachers, teaching assistants and the learning support mentor are thoroughly aware of the PEP targets and remain in constant contact with the Headteacher about progress. All staff have had bespoke CLA professional development which is regularly updated and refined, for example, all staff have received training in developing emotional resilience skills.

CLA progress and achievement is high priority for Governors. The school's CLA Governor meets regularly with the Headteacher to review the CLA support. CLA pupils are presented as a separate group within data sets and their performance reported on termly at the curriculum committee meetings. Governors regularly challenge the use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding and the correlation of its use to impact.

Allocating and reviewing the individual pupil premium funding

The school has created an individual profile, similar to the local authority's Personal Education Plan (PEP), for each CLA. This overview enables all staff to monitor and track attendance, behaviour, progress and targets alongside allocation of funding and intervention. The school is therefore able to make a direct correlation between intervention and impact. Funding is allocated

through termly meetings with pupils, carers and social workers who all have an input in reviewing and considering intervention or further support activities.

The impact of interventions is constantly reviewed in termly pupil progress meetings. All subject leaders routinely monitor the work of CLA pupils which allows the school to have a rich set of data and understanding of the impact each intervention/activity is having. In the rare cases where intervention or activities have been deemed to be not as successful as expected, for example a pupil not responding to support, this is immediately reviewed and an alternative activity provided. Meeting the individual needs of the pupil is paramount when the school designs support and intervention.

To date the pupil premium plus funding has been used to fund or part-fund interventions such as smaller teaching groups, additional learning support assistants, counselling, early morning booster sessions, additional daily reading, maths fluency, music lessons and extra-curricular integration.

Promoting confidence and wellbeing of pupils

Targeting support which will build the confidence of an individual child is key in ensuring that CLA are in the best place for starting learning. At Central Primary School, CLA are often given opportunities to take part in 'pre teaching' activities to build confidence and self-esteem which either places them on same starting level or slightly above their peers. For example a CLA pupil was given swimming lessons before the rest of the class to enable him to feel more confident and have a demonstrable strength to build on. This support is further underpinned, where necessary, with counselling or life coaching. Wherever possible, the school uses aspects of its funding to build on the interests of CLA pupils to provide wider learning opportunities. As a result, CLA pupils have been able to access areas of interest such as Mandarin, gym and dance.

Smaller class sizes and more teachers

The school has invested heavily to facilitate the over staffing of teachers and adults in many classes. In key stage 1, there are always two adults in every class and an additional LSA works across the key stage. In key stage 2, the overstaffing is particularly evident in years 5 and 6 where there are two qualified teachers in each class. This additional support enables small group or individual focus activities to take place, for example, mastery of PEP targets. This allows for rapid intervention through small group and one to one mentoring sessions. Clearly this level of support and intervention is costly; however the school is committed to continue with this way of working and is currently planning to extend this additional provision to year 4.

Preparing Children Looked After for adoption and saying goodbye

Happily, a number of Children Looked After at Central Primary School move onto successful long term placements and adoption. Supporting children successfully through this process is a high priority for the Headteacher and vitally important to the school.

The staff at the school have given careful thought and consideration to creative and subtle ways of saying goodbye to pupils - often the school knows about a leaving arrangement before the pupil does. When appropriate, teachers deliver a 'special' PSHE lesson in which every pupil in the class is asked to write a memory about a named child. In each case, it is the CLA pupil who is leaving. These memories are then collated into a signed book and presented as a gift to the CLA from their peers.

Impact

Children Looked After are making good progress. 77% of CLA at Central Primary School are on track to attain at or above age related expectations by the end of the 2014-2015 academic year. Overstaffing in classes, particularly in upper key stage 2, has supported rapid and accelerated progress for the school's most vulnerable group of pupils. In 2014, one CLA pupil left year 6 with level 6 in mathematics and level 5 in all other subjects. 2015 data indicates that CLA in year 6 have again made more than expected progress across key stage 2 (3 or 4 levels of progress in some subjects).

Additional funding targeted at supporting social communication skills, interaction and the confidence of the CLA pupils has proven to be successful. CLA are becoming confident learners who enjoy school, feel safe and secure.

Contact	John Mynott, Headteacher at Central Primary School
Related documents and links	http://central.herts.sch.uk/

If you have an aspect of interesting practice that could be shared or are interested in finding out more about a case study please get in touch by emailing exchangingexcellence@hertsforlearning.co.uk

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