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Key stages	KS3 - KS5
School type	Academy, secondary
Themes	Children Looked After, pupil premium

# Maximising the progress of Children Looked After

## Verulam School

### Context

Verulam School is a larger than average-sized secondary school for boys located in the St Albans district. The school currently has three Children Looked After (CLA). Most CLA remain at the school throughout their secondary schooling.

### Brief description

The Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and the Designated Teacher are collectively responsible for Children Looked After at Verulam School. The strategic positioning of these roles within the senior leadership team has resulted in CLA being a key priority for all staff. As a result of the strong culture of support at senior level and high aspirations for all pupils across the school, CLA at Verulam are making or exceeding expected progress. Success at the end of key stage 4 has allowed CLA to pursue higher education and training. All CLA have a target of 'stretch for university.'

The Assistant Headteacher is responsible for the allocation and monitoring of the pupil premium funding which has been used to provide a wide range of interventions including extended Connexions advice, study support, after school lessons in mathematics, English and science, extra GCSE support, small group teaching, residential visits and school trips.

### Supporting the progress of Children Looked After

#### The role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is actively and personally involved with all CLA and all staff are aware that this vulnerable group are one of his key priorities. An open door policy allows CLA to approach the Headteacher with any issues; this helps build a personal relationship which allows the Headteacher to support with academic and social issues both in and outside of school, and if necessary seek wider advice.

The Headteacher personally reviews and plays a key role in influencing the post-16 decisions of CLA. In the past he has negotiated with CLA about their further education options to ensure that their choices correspond with the high aspirations the school has for its other pupils. If CLA wish to stay at the school to complete their A-levels they are offered a variety of options and flexibility with entry requirements. This provides CLA with a further two years of consistency of support from the school and so avoids another potential period of transition and uncertainty.

The Headteacher is fully informed about the background of CLA who enter the school in year 7, receiving feedback from primary school visits completed by the Designated Teacher and head of year. All the staff are aware of who the CLA at the school are and the culture of support at senior level encourages open discussion of any issues.

## More ability groups in English, mathematics and science

The school has invested a significant proportion of its pupil premium funding to facilitate extra sets in English, mathematics and science at key stage 3. The Headteacher believes that this is key to the effectiveness of the school. The additional support enables CLA and other vulnerable pupils to work in groups which are more focused and tailored to their ability and, as a result of this, has accelerated their progress and increased their confidence.

Children Looked After are actively encouraged to make use of extra English, mathematics and science lessons after school in 'period seven' sessions.

## Monitoring the progress of Children Looked After

The pupil progress review group, which is run by the Assistant Headteacher, consists of the heads of faculty and year group. Data is monitored and reviewed every eight weeks to ensure that pupils are making good progress. At this point, intervention is implemented according to the individual circumstances and needs of the student. The head of year is normally involved in this decision to ensure that the pastoral aspect of the student's development is also met and enhanced where necessary. The Assistant Headteacher tracks the pupil premium spending for each pupil to measure the impact of each intervention provided.

Interventions are formally reviewed in termly pupil progress meetings and modifications are made to reflect the needs of every child. Interventions can be further modified and tailored more regularly due to weekly 'informal' evaluations. This has enabled staff to trial different strategies in the classroom to identify which approach works the best for each child and adapting activities proving to be ineffective.

Pupil progress information is regularly reported to the Governing Body and the safeguarding Governor works termly with the Designated Teacher to remain updated.

## Impact

Current data indicates that all CLA at Verulam are on track to make expected progress, both at key stage 3 and key stage 4, with two thirds making above the expected progress. Overall CLA are performing well in relation to their own and national targets. In recent GCSE examinations, one Year 11 CLA achieved highly, gaining 5 A\* to C including English and maths and progressing to the 6th Form having made 4 levels of progress in both English and maths and achieving a positive VA.

The academic impact of interventions, most notably the availability of extra sets in maths, English and science, has proven to be effective in accelerating progress. The support and advice that CLA receive from the Headteacher and other senior leaders has resulted in them accessing or expected to access high level post- 16 provision. Carers are engaged with the school and have a good relationship with the Designated Teacher who remains their key contact.

All CLA have at least 99% attendance.

Contact	Paul Ramsey, Headteacher at Verulam School
Related documents and links	<a href="http://www.verulamschool.co.uk">http://www.verulamschool.co.uk</a>

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