

Lowton West Primary School



Policy for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked after children

Policy reviewed by N. Gould
Date policy reviewed: June 2020

Ratified by Governing Body:
Mr B Cunliffe (Chair of Governors)
Mrs J. Westhead (Headteacher)

Lowton West Primary School



Aiming High Together

School Vision

To inspire, achieve and succeed, we will aim high and build dreams and futures together.

Mission Statement

Providing the highest quality education, care and support for the whole school community.

Our mission statement is based on RESPECT:

R = Recognising the needs of the individual child

E = Ensuring a unique and engaging curriculum

S = Supporting each other to learn and achieve

P = Passionate about providing the highest quality education

E = Encouraging creativity, self – expression and imagination

C = Creating confident, resilient, life – long learners

T = The voice of everybody is heard

All the above statements help us to understand how we can all make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community.

We will do this through our core values:

- Respect
- Resilience
- Kindness
- Confidence

We also, at Lowton West Primary School, strive to develop and uphold British Values.

The five British values that the Government has identified for schools to focus on are: -

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Developing personal and social responsibility
- Respect for British Institutions

There are more details on how our school demonstrates and develops these British Values in our British Values Policy and on our website.

Policy for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children

Is this good enough for my child?

Lowton West Primary School

“Though some do well, the educational achievement of Children and Young People in Care as a group remains unacceptably low. That is why the Children Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievements of Children and Young People in Care”.

(S52, Children Act, 2004)

Here at Lowton West Primary we understand and support the premise that as **Corporate Parents** we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education for looked-after pupils. Looked-after children have a right to expect the outcomes we want for every child. All schools and settings have a role in supporting the local authority to achieve the highest possible educational standards and outcomes for all Children Looked After, irrespective of their placing authority.

Lowton West recognises that looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger), sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transitions and change. This can impact on their behaviour and education.

Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress. The complexity of this fragmented educational experience with high incidence of SEN, needs careful assessment and planning.

Our school ensures there is a common understanding amongst all staff of the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and, staff are supported in identifying their areas of strength and their capacity to improve in their work with children who are looked-after and previously looked-after.

Our school policy is written in accordance with the statutory guidance from the Department for Education, issued under sections 20(4) and 20A(4) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. This means that the governing bodies of maintained schools, academy proprietors and the designated staff member at maintained schools and academies must have regard to it when promoting the educational attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

The DfE statutory guidance for Designated Teacher of Looked After and Previously Looked-after Children 2018 refers to the following legislation:

- Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (“the 2008 Act”).
- Section 20A of the 2008 Act inserted by section 5 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (“the 2017 Act”).
- Section 2E of the Academies Act 2010 inserted by section 6 of the 2017 Act.
- The Designated Teacher (Looked-After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulations 2009

1. The Role of the Designated Teacher

Lowton West Primary School has a named Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children, who has full Qualified Teacher Status, is in a position of authority, and, is able to influence and challenge school policy and practice. Our school's Designated Teacher is Mrs Gould, Deputy Headteacher. The Designated Teacher operates in accordance with the statutory duties as set out in the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

1.1 The Designated Teacher acts as an advocate for the educational needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

1.2 The head teacher ensures the Designated Teacher has sufficient time allocated in order to carry out their duties in supporting looked-after and previously looked-after children, their carers and families and social care staff.

1.3 The Designated Teacher and the Head teacher maintain and update the lists of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils on the school roll. The list provides accurate contact information, legal status, type of care placement, social worker's details, placing authority details (in the case of a Child from other Local Authority) etc including the name of the Virtual Head as appropriate. The Designated Teacher ensures that all staff are aware of individual looked-after and previously looked-after pupils on roll in our school.

The Designated Teacher will ensure that a previously-looked after child is eligible for additional funding by asking the child's parents for evidence of their previously looked-after status. For children adopted outside England and Wales, the child must have been looked after by a public authority, a religious organisation or other provider of care whose sole purpose is to benefit society. Where parents are unable to provide clear evidence of their child's status, the Designated Teacher will need to use their discretion. In such circumstances, the Designated Teacher may choose to discuss eligibility with the Virtual School Head (VSH) to agree a consistent approach. (Dfe guidance 2018, pg 7)

1.4 The Designated Teacher makes every effort to get to know the child/young person and will attend CLA Reviews and other essential meetings whenever possible: when necessary, the Designated Teacher will ensure attendance at such meetings by an appropriate deputy and ensures feedback and staff updates as appropriate. The Designated Teacher will get to know parents of previously looked-after pupils and ensure needs are identified and parents are supported by school and appropriate multi-agencies.

1.5 The Designated Teacher ensures that all CLA have a current, purposeful and meaningful PEP (Personal Education Plan) in place and that the child participates fully in the development of the PEP.

1.6 The Designated Teacher works with the child's social worker to ensure timely review of the PEP and supports distribution of the completed plan to all relevant parties

1.7 The Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring that accurate information re CLA and previously looked-after pupils on roll is conveyed at Census time to the local authority.

1.8 The Designated Teacher is responsible for collating the information re CLA Delegated funding spend and for accessing Pupil Premium Plus funding for individual children identified in the Personal Education Plan targets.

1.9 The Designated Teacher is responsible for providing up to date data on attainment attendance and progress to the Virtual School.

1.10 The Designated Teacher is responsible for providing accurate data recording spending of Pupil Premium Plus to the Virtual School.

1.11 The Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring high quality information is formulated for Head teacher use with SIPs, Ofsted, the SEF (or other self-evaluation mechanisms) etc.

1.12 The Designated Teacher is proactive in identifying ways in which the school can raise the attainment of all looked-after and previously looked-after on roll

1.13 The Designated Teacher maintains an overview of CLA attendance and ensures the Virtual School Team are contacted if there are any concerns

1.14 The Designated Teacher ensures that the CLA attendance protocol is followed if a CLA reaches the threshold for attendance monitoring meeting

1.15 The Designated Teacher will promote and support the authority's position re holidays in term-time for CLA and will ensure that the Head Teacher has all necessary information should an approach be made by carers requesting any such authorisation. The Designated Teacher ensures that reference is made to the child's social worker and Virtual School team prior to authorised absence being considered.

1.16 The Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Head Teacher when considering Exclusions or other disciplinary measures for looked after and previously looked-after pupils, supporting the authority's position that formal exclusions for children in care must only be used as a last resort and only after having sought the views of the Virtual school team and/or the inclusion team and, in accordance with the authority's policy in this matter. Looked-after children and previously looked-after children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. The school's Positive Behaviour Policy recognises pupils' additional needs in responding to children's challenging behaviour and the impact of attachment and trauma.

1.17 The Designated Teacher is instrumental in collating attainment data for looked-after and previously looked-after children and will use it to ensure the highest levels of achievement and attainment are promoted

1.18 The Designated Teacher ensures the understanding of all staff regarding matters to do with looked-after and previously looked-after children. Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:

- have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
- are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
- understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;

- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and
- for previously looked-after children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or carers in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or carers who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

1.19 The Designated Teacher inducts new staff in such matters and regularly reviews the training needs for all staff

1.20 The Designated Teacher is released for appropriate training as required (Designated Teacher training, PEP training, associated safeguarding etc) and has opportunities to feedback to staff.

1.21 The Designated Teacher and each CLA agree together which key members of staff should be aware of their circumstances

1.22 The Designated Teacher ensures that information is managed in a confidential manner, that records are kept, and that information is shared appropriately and in accordance with authority guidelines.

1.23 The Designated Teacher is mindful of potentially difficult periods in the child's life e.g. transition, change of care placement, SEND issues etc. and will ensure staff support and understanding as appropriate. The Designated Teacher is aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;

1.24 The Designated Teacher may wish to delegate certain responsibilities to other members of staff: whilst this may be practicable, the Designated Teacher is mindful of their statutory duties and will always ensure appropriate line management and support for staff when undertaking delegated duties

1.25 The Designated Teacher ensures that any SEND issues are dealt with appropriately, that referrals are timely and outcomes achievable. The Designated Teacher will ensure that the PEP is updated termly and the child's social worker and carer are kept informed

1.26 The Designated Teacher ensures priority is given to CLA in accessing in-school opportunities and equipment (e.g. Laptops, iPads) to boost learning e.g. 1:1 tuition, Homework Clubs etc.

1.27 The Designated Teacher will address any potential barriers to accessing these resources and will make strenuous efforts to ensure the child engages in any beneficial activities as appropriate

1.28 The Designated Teacher ensures fair representation of looked-after and previously looked-after children in prestigious positions e.g. School Council, Eco Council, Buddy jobs, House Captains, Play Leaders and works with the virtual school team and Start Well Services and others to ensure that appropriate support is given when choices need to be made e.g. transition to high school etc.

1.29 The Designated Teacher ensures that all school staff are knowledgeable about the additional obstacles to be faced by looked-after and previously looked-after children. They will support staff in raising the child's aspirations.

The Designated Teacher must ensure that school does not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;

- there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care; they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;
- there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
- there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning; a particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
- transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;
- thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment;
- when enrolling at the school, parents and carers of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+; and
- there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings). there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning;
- particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
- transitions to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;
- thought is given to the future, careers advice and guidance, and financial information about where appropriate further and higher education, training and employment;
- when enrolling at the school, parents and carers of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+; and
- there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings).

Top 5 Tips for Designated Teachers on listening to the voice of the child

- Be available, take the time to get to know me
- Notice if I am upset or angry and listen to me when I need help
- Understand that even though I've had a different past than most people, it doesn't mean I need to be treated differently
- Understand my experience of being looked-after
- Understand that my past will affect my present and my future behaviour even if I don't notice

2. Communication with Carers

The school ensures they establish good communication links with all carers/parents/residential home staff and ensure they are aware of school policies and procedures for CLA

2.1 The carer knows who the Designated Teacher is and feels welcomed by the school and able to ask questions etc.

2.2 The Designated Teacher ensures that school gives information to the carers in a timely way and takes a proactive role in ensuring that both carer and pupil are aware of important deadlines and dates e.g. SATs Week, Parents' Evenings, Year group Assemblies etc

2.3 The Designated Teacher ensures that information re trips, preparation for SATs etc is conveyed

2.4 The Designated Teacher will also receive information from carers and others and ensures that it is recorded and processed appropriately.

2.5 The Designated Teacher understands the importance of the carer's role in partnership working and fosters a collaborative working relationship with both carers and parents (as appropriate)

2.6 The Designated Teacher understands the need for flexibility when timing contact with a carer and/or social worker

3. Communication with Social Care & other agencies

The Designated Teacher will ensure all changes in the child's education are communicated directly to the social worker and any other involved agencies.

3.1 The Designated Teacher promotes strong, positive, working relationships between social workers, health professionals and others and all Lowton West school staff involved with the looked-after and previously looked-after children

3.2 The Designated Teacher recognises the importance of effective communication with all professionals involved and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that information is effectively passed between agencies

3.3 The Designated Teacher provides information as requested by social care colleagues or other professionals involved with the CLA

3.4 The Designated Teacher will always be mindful of the child's legal status and will advise accordingly on the issue of **Parental Responsibility**.

3.5 The Designated Teacher will ensure they are clear who has parental responsibility and who has powers of authorisation via delegated responsibly from the social worker.

4. Communication with the Virtual School Team

Every school has the opportunity to call on the help of the Virtual School Team through advice, training, attending meetings, PEP support and direct support for CLA. The Designated Teacher can always contact VST via phone (01942 486176) or email (r.clemow@wigan.gov.uk) to request this support. There is no formal referral process for this support.

4.1 The Designated Teacher understands that the Virtual School Team (VST) is the primary source of information concerning educational issues and, equally, the team must be kept informed of any developments in the child's life which may impact on educational progress and attainment e.g. exclusions for behaviour, initial concerns etc.

4.2 The Designated Teacher will provide any information requested by VST colleagues or other professionals involved with the CLA

4.3 The Designated Teacher ensures that the team is informed of any Designated Teacher name change

4.4 The Designated Teacher undertakes regular training, as offered by the VST, in line with statutory expectations. If this is not possible then the Designated Teacher understands that 1:1 training, advice and support is always available from the VST.

4.5 The Designated Teacher will ensure that all information requested by education Business Intelligence Unit (EBIU) on behalf of VST will be given the deadlines set by EBIU to ensure the VST can track and monitor the progress of the Virtual School Population.

5. The Role of Lowton West Primary School's Governing Body

The Governing Body will support the Designated Teacher and Head Teacher in carrying out their duties to support CLA. They will monitor the appropriate use of CLA funding as supported by Wigan's Elected members.

5.1 The Governing Body has a duty to appoint the school's Designated Teacher, ensuring that all statutory requirements are met and that the post holder has QTS. The Governing Body has agreed a clear job description.

5.2 The school has a named governor with responsibility for Children Looked After and the Local Authority's VST is kept informed of any change to the information. The Nominated Governor undertakes to attend CLA Governor Training as required. The Nominated Governor for CLA is Mr B Cunliffe.

5.3 The Governing Body is aware of the number of CLA on the school roll (and placing authority)

5.4 The Nominated Governor meets regularly with the Designated Teacher, as appropriate.

5.5 The Designated Teacher, supported by the Head Teacher, provides annual reports on the progress of looked-after and previously looked-after children in school and any other issues pertaining to their status. These reports do not have any names or personal details of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

5.6 The Governing Body ensures that the needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are recognised in all school policies.

5.7 The Governing Body has clear school policies for looked-after and previously looked-after children in relation to admissions, exclusions and access to school based services and opportunities.

5.8 The Governing Body ensures that the Designated Teacher workload is monitored and that he/she has sufficient capacity so that their statutory duties can be carried out effectively.

5.9 The Governing Body ensures that the Designated Teacher is able to attend as required and as appropriate.