

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: September 2022

Ratified by Governing Body:
Dr. G. Merrett (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.

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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 (CLA) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), irrespective of their placing authority.

Lowton West recognises that CLA and PLAC 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 Designated Teacher for Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children – Statutory Guidance on their Roles and Responsibilities. DfE, February 2018.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

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
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2022

1. The Role of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance.

The Designated Teacher is the central point of initial contact within Lowton West Primary School. They ensure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child’s learning.

The Designated Teacher is Mrs N. Gould

The Designated Teacher will take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. Our school will make sure that all staff:

- Have high expectations of 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 and trauma informed practice).
- Understand how important it is to see children as individuals.
- Appreciate the central importance of the CLA’s PEP.
- For PLAC, understand the importance of involving the child’s parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child’s education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child’s progress at school.

The Designated Teacher will have a direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of CLA and PLAC. They will:

- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures.
- Ensure the pupil premium plus is used effectively within school to have the greatest positive impact on children’s learning. This includes: ensuring parents and guardians of PLAC are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PP+.
- Ensure CLA and PLAC are prioritised for support; listened to; encouraged to participate; and believe they can achieve through an ethos of aspiration.
- The Designated Teacher will co-chair Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings and make a record of discussions and decisions, so that each child has access to the support they need to achieve. These meetings will take place a minimum of three times per academic year to review support and deploy effective resources.
- The Designated Teacher will closely monitor school attendance and suspensions. When a child is at risk of either a fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher - working with the VSH, social care and the child’s carers - will be asked to consider what additional assessment and support is needed to address the cause of the child’s behaviour and prevent the need for suspension.

The Designated Teacher works in partnership with the Head Teacher when considering Exclusions or other disciplinary measures for CLA and PLAC, will understand that CLA and PLAC 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.

The Designated Teacher maintains an overview of CLA attendance and ensures the Virtual School Team are contacted if there are any concerns. They will ensure that the CLA attendance protocol is followed if a CLA reaches the threshold for attendance monitoring meeting. 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 VSH prior to authorised absence being considered.

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. They will ensure that any SEND concerns are dealt with appropriately, that referrals are timely and outcomes achievable.

In line with the school's Equality Plan, the Designated Teacher ensures fair representation of CLA and PLAC in prestigious positions e.g. School Council, Eco Council, Buddy jobs, House Captains, Play Leaders and works with the VSH 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. There are no barriers to CLA and PLAC 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).

The Designated Teacher must ensure that:

- 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;
- 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;

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

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

The Governors will carry out their role in line with statutory guidance. The governing body of Lowton West Primary School is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. The governing body recognises the need to champion performance, for CLA and PLAC, and is committed to improving outcomes for them.

The Designated Governor in school is Dr. G. Merrett

The governing body is committed to ensuring that CLA and PLAC are supported as fully as possible and will ensure that the following are in place, and are working effectively:

- A Designated Governor for CLA and PLAC
- A Designated Teacher for CLA and PLAC
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- The Designated Teacher, as a minimum, will have two days a year for training opportunities specific to factors that impact on the attainment of CLA and PLAC.
- All staff in school will have a clear understanding of the issues that affect CLA and PLAC; their learning needs; how to support them in school and issues relating to confidentiality.

The Governing body will hold the school to account on how it supports its CLA and PLAC, including:

- How the Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is used
- The level of pupil progress

3. The role of the Headteacher and Leadership Team

- Provide an annual report on the provision for, and progress of, CLA and PLAC, to the Governing body.
- Ensure staff are aware that the provision to support CLA and PLAC is a key school priority.
- Give the Designated Teacher for CLA and PLAC, the time and facilities to carry out his / her job description and to support them at all times in their work.
- Ensure the voice of CLA and PLAC is a vital part of successfully understanding and meeting their needs.
- Ensure Pupil Premium Plus is allocated and used for the benefit of CLA and PLAC to support progress, attainment, engagement and well-being.
- Provide continuing professional development for staff on issues pertaining to CLA and PLAC, such as Attachment and Trauma.
- Work in partnership with the Virtual School, Children's Social Care and other relevant services to share information and promote progress and achievement.

4. The role of all staff in school

All School staff will:

- Have high expectations of and aspirations for CLA and PLAC's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
- Be 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 CLA and PLAC 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 legal status.
- Appreciate the central importance of the 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, Virtual School Heads and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child;

- For PLAC, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

5. 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.

- 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
- The Designated Teacher will always be mindful of the child's legal status and will advise accordingly on the issue of **Parental Responsibility**.
- The Designated Teacher will ensure they are clear who has parental responsibility and who has powers of authorisation via delegated responsibility from the social worker.

6. Communication with Carers

The school will:

- understand the importance of the carer's role in partnership working and ensure they establish good communication links with all carers/parents/ residential home staff and that they are aware of school policies and procedures for CLA.
- ensure the carer knows who the Designated Teacher is and feels welcomed by the school and able to ask questions etc.
- ensure information is given 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, special events at school etc
- also receive information from carers and others and ensures that it is recorded and processed appropriately.

7. 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 486180) or email the Virtual School Team to request this support. There is no formal referral process for this support.

<https://be.wigan.gov.uk/thevirtualschoolteam>

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