

## Role Profile

### Job Role for the Head of the Virtual School

<b>Service:</b>	<b>Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS)</b>
<b>Employer:</b>	<b>London Borough of Barnet</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Colindale</b>
<b>Post Number:</b>	<b>505523</b>
<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Head of the Virtual School</b>
<b>Grade:</b>	<b>Soulbury EIP scale, SCP 18 to 21 (+ 3 SPAs)</b>
<b>Reports to:</b>	<b>Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning (BELS)</b>

#### **Barnet Education and Learning Service**

There is a legal requirement that the Virtual School Head (VSH) should be a local authority employee. However, the Virtual School is one of the services provided by BELS as part of its strategic partnership contract with the London Borough of Barnet.

Therefore the VSH will be employed by the council but will report to, and be line-managed by, the Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning.

For most purposes the Virtual School Head should regard themselves as belonging to BELS. As the Virtual School Head is responsible for discharging the local authority's duty to promote the educational achievement of its looked after children and all children with a social worker, they will also be accountable for the discharge of that duty to the council's statutory Director of Children's Services.

#### **Core Purpose**

- To promote the educational achievement of children looked after by the London Borough of Barnet, regardless of where they are placed and all children with a social worker overseen by Barnet Family Services
- To monitor and track the educational progress of the children looked after by the London Borough of Barnet as if they are attending a single school.
- To support the council's statutory Director of Children's Services to exercise his/her responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of the children looked after by the authority, by working with BELS and Virtual School colleagues to plan how this is achieved.
- To promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children in the local authority area by providing information and advice to:
  - any person that has parental responsibility for the child;
  - providers of funded early years education, designated teachers for previously looked-after children in maintained schools and academies; and
  - any other person the authority considers appropriate for promoting the educational achievement of relevant children.
- To provide advice and guidance around education for children in kinship care and have strategic oversight of all children with a social worker or who are previously looked after

- To provide high quality leadership and management to Virtual School staff, leading by example and role modelling excellent practice in the pursuit of good outcomes for all children on the roll of the Virtual School.

## **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES - Main Duties and Responsibilities**

### **Leadership and Management**

- To support the Chief Executive (BELS) in developing the vision, values and overall strategic plan for the Virtual School.
- To produce an annual school self-evaluation and a service improvement plan for the Virtual School.
- To provide a termly summary report on service issues to the statutory Director of Children's Services and to the Virtual School Challenge Committee including relevant performance statistics and an evaluation of key issues facing the service, including progress on service improvements and planned actions for the coming term.
- To respond to changing policy and practice from the DfE and Ofsted as well keeping abreast of developments in education thinking and ensuring the Virtual School complies with legal requirements and statutory guidance.
- To plan and manage the Virtual School budget including the appropriate targeted use of the PPG grant, Post 16 funding and funding for extended duties.
- To manage the operational functions of the Virtual School, including managing staff, systems, data, budgets and reporting.
- To lead on setting, reviewing and evaluating targets for the Virtual School and devising and implementing operational plans, policies and procedures to promote pupil progress and achievement through improved outcomes
- To contribute to the London Borough of Barnet's corporate plans and, Family Friendly vision and Education and Skills service and team plans.
- To contribute to the Children and Young People's Plan and to monitor, evaluate and report on actions for the Virtual School and progress against targets within the plan.
- To provide effective leadership and management to the staff of the Virtual School and to ensure staff in the Virtual School are held to account for their performance, including carrying out performance management for staff within the structure.
- To ensure appropriate statistical data is collected, analysed and reported in relation to the attainment, progress, attendance and destination information of looked after children and all children with a social worker as required
- To ensure health and safety requirements are met in respect of the Virtual School.
- To ensure the Virtual School is inclusive, culturally sensitive and accessible by disabled children and children with special educational needs and to ensure the development of a culture of quality, diversity and equality and to actively oppose and, as far as possible, eradicate all forms of discrimination in employment and service provision.
- To deliver the council's commitment to equality of opportunity in the provision of its services. All staff are expected to promote equality in the work place and in the services the council delivers.

### **Admissions/school placements**

- To monitor school admissions processes to ensure that looked after children are given priority and access to schools, which best meet their needs, and have maximum stability of placement at a school, particularly minimising mobility at key points in their educational

career.

- To ensure the rapid and effective exchange of information where children looked after move placements or educational settings.
- To ensure that the Virtual School prioritises stability of educational placements for looked after children and young people.
- To plan and implement creative and supportive ways to minimise permanent and fixed term exclusions and work closely with Pupil Referral Units to minimise children in care being educated outside of mainstream schools.
- To work closely with the SEN Team and social workers to ensure that there are effective and joined-up processes in place to meet the special educational needs of looked after children.

### **Support for pupils**

- To ensure that looked after children and young people participate and progress within a wide range of educational and broader activities within, and extending beyond, schools.
- To offer appropriate support to looked after children and young people in education settings within the borough and outside it and to offer signposted support for those in the care of other authorities but placed in Barnet schools or settings.
- To ensure appropriate advice and information is provided in relation to previously looked after children, all children with a social worker and those in kinship care in line with DfE guidance.
- To ensure rapid and effective support for looked after children where problems arise at school, e.g. exclusions, attendance, underperformance.
- To liaise with colleagues in the SEND and Inclusion service to ensure that looked after children with Education, Health and Care Plans have their special educational needs met in accordance with their EHCP and are involved in review and planning of their provision.
- To act as a champion for looked after children ensuring that their voice is heard and responded to positively, including the development of a school council.
- To contribute to the Local Authority Corporate Parenting role, including ensuring appropriate presence to support looked after children and young people at performances, sporting events, options evenings, parental consultations etc.

### **Raising Achievement**

#### ***Achievement***

- To be the lead educational professional who monitors the quality of teaching and learning for children looked after and provides appropriate educational, curriculum and pedagogic advice to schools to ensure the highest possible levels of attainment and progress.
- To raise attainment and progress of looked after children through tracking and monitoring their progress, giving advice and holding other workers to account who directly engage with the looked after children and young people.
- To work with partners to seek to achieve the KPI targets for attainment and progress of looked after children.
- To monitor school attendance of individual children looked after and to work with colleagues to identify strategies and approaches to improve attendance where it is poor.
- To identify and disseminate widely good practice in relation to educational provision and education for looked after children.

## **PEPS**

- To ensure initiation and review procedures are in place for Personal Educational Plans and that they are of high quality, informing provision.
- To ensure that all looked after children have a Personal Education Plan that supports the personalised learning of the child and forms an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked-after children to enable them to make at least expected progress and fulfil their potential.
- To ensure that PEPs reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the identified educational needs of the child, raises aspirations and builds life chances and that the PEP process involves the child (according to understanding and ability) and, where appropriate, the child's parent and/or relevant family member.
- To ensure that PEPs are of a high quality and that KPI targets are met in relation to this (currently: 85% for 0-16 year-old looked after children have a PEP that has been quality assured as good; and 70% of post-16 young people looked after a PEP that is compliant with core requirements).

## **Tracking**

- To ensure appropriate baseline data is maintained on the cohort of looked after children and to monitor progress and carry out appropriate analyses to allow comparisons with similar authorities and national figures and to establish appropriately challenging targets for individual pupils and for the local authority as a whole.
- To ensure that the progress and outcomes of looked after children are tracked and that school leaders are held to account for addressing issues such as potential underachievement or incomplete education plans.

## **Extended Duties**

- To oversee the extended duties ensuring that all statutory duties are met.

## **Work with Partners**

- To work with a wide range of professionals both internally and externally, including partners in educational settings, Social Care and Health to improve educational outcomes for looked after children and young people and to ensure partners consider and prioritise the educational needs of looked after children in their service planning and are responsive to, and informed by, the voice and needs of looked after children.
- To work in partnership with the Learning Network Inspectors, School Admissions, SEN Coordinators, Educational Psychologists, SEN Specialist Advisers, headteachers, Designated Teachers, Social Workers, and other educational and social care specialists within Barnet and in all other local authorities where Barnet children looked after are placed, providing support and challenge in relation to educational provision for looked after children and their achievement levels.
- To ensure all schools have a Designated Teacher and to facilitate appropriate networking and professional development arrangements for them.
- To participate in the delivery of training to a range of stakeholders, about the additional needs of looked after children within a planned training programme.
- To establish and maintain links and communication with Headteachers, including Virtual School Headteachers, in areas where children in the care of Barnet are placed.
- To challenge and support schools in relation to the quality and range of provision, and the achievement and attainment of looked after children.

## **Promotion of Corporate Values**

- To ensure that customer care is maintained to the agreed standards according to the council's values.
- To ensure that a high level of confidentiality is maintained in all aspects of work.

## **Flexibility**

- The jobholder may be required to carry out other reasonable duties commensurate with the grade, as requested by the Chief Executive (BELS)
- This job description is not exhaustive and may change as the post or the needs of the Council and BELS develop. Such changes will be subject to consultation between the post holder and their manager.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **Education/professional qualifications,**

- Degree level qualification or equivalent (Essential)
- Commitment to continuous professional development (Essential)

### **Knowledge and Experience**

- Minimum of five years' experience working with children and young people in an education setting (Essential)
- A track record of successful leadership and management experience at a senior level, including at least two years of experience of senior management in a school (Essential)
- Experience of working with children and young people across the Primary and Secondary age range (desirable)
- A sound understanding of how children learn, how teachers can best teach, and how to raise standards through careful monitoring and target-setting (Essential)
- An understanding of strategies for raising outcomes for children and young people (Essential)
- Extensive knowledge and experience of education and the issues and challenges facing the sector (desirable)
- Be familiar with relevant legislation and guidance including The Children Act 1989 & 2004. The Education Act 1996/2000 & Statutory Instruments: The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) regulations 2006 No 128, Children and Families Act 2014, Keeping Children Safe in Education May 2018 (desirable)
- Have knowledge of the statutory frameworks and good practice for curriculum delivery and assessment (desirable)
- Experience of working with vulnerable children and young people and understanding of the complex issues facing children with a social worker including children in care and care leavers and understanding how these impact on their learning needs and academic attainment (desirable)

- Experience of devising, implementing and reviewing individual and service plans; experience of monitoring and evaluating performance and practice and delivering change (desirable)
- Experience in more than one appropriate key stage. (desirable)
- Experience of coaching, guiding and mentoring individuals and teams (desirable)
- Experience of managing a budget (desirable)
- Experience of promoting a school vision clearly (desirable).

### **Attributes**

- High aspirations for all children (Essential)
- A 'can do' attitude. (Essential)
- Personal integrity and honesty (Essential)
- Resilient, a positive disposition and strong work ethic. (desirable).
- A desire to engage and work collaboratively with carers (desirable).
- A commitment to pupil development and the development of inclusive practice for all members of the school community (Essential)
- A commitment to continuous professional development for self and other staff (Essential)
- A commitment to collaborative ways of working through a team approach (Essential)
- A willingness to make him/herself approachable to all members of the school community, and listen to their opinions and ideas (desirable).
- A commitment to safeguarding children, and ensuring all members of the school community share that commitment (Essential)

### **Skills** (desirable)

- The ability to manage change and enthuse and motivate others
- Ability to demonstrate presence and gravitas
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good judgement including the ability to assess and balance risks and opportunities
- Personal integrity and honesty
- Solution focused and not deflected by obstacles and problems
- Emotionally resilient including the ability to remain calm in difficult situations
- Ability to perform calmly and effectively under pressure
- Good communication skills, both written and oral
- Excellent problem solving, negotiating and decision-making skills
- Ability to meet deadlines and prioritise appropriately