

Isle of Wight Virtual School Impact Report Spring 2024

The Isle of Wight Virtual School is committed to responding to the individual needs of our children. We work closely with education settings to support children and young people who are looked after by the local authority. We also provide advice and guidance, to professionals, in support of those living with the support of a social worker, who are living under a permanence order (adopted/CAO/SGO) and those living in kinship care arrangements.

All our children and young people are individuals, therefore our response and support are also individual to their needs.

Examples of how we have supported our young people to engage, progress and succeed during 2023-24

What was needed...	What we did...	What went well...
Children and young people on the Isle of Wight have limited access to cultural trips. This can make writing exercises complex due to limited exposure to vocabulary and stimuli. Families who have faced adversity are less likely to take up opportunities locally or have the ability to access off Island experiences.	Two primary schools, with high number of children working with social care involvement, have access to a class set of virtual reality headsets in order to bring experiences to life from the classroom.	‘All 5 LAC have made at least expected progress in writing and of 3 out of 5 the pupils have made accelerated progress in their writing’. ‘[The headsets]...are also building children’s cultural capital through virtual experiences, knowledge and understanding, for example, ‘visiting’ a Buddhist temple. They create great excitement and lots of speaking and listening opportunities, encouraging pupils to utilise new vocabulary to point things out to one another’
As a cohort our children are often below age related expectations in literacy. They have limited vocabulary and comprehension skills compared to their peers. Access to books is limited. In 2023, more children who received free school meals (FSMs) told us they did not have a book of their own compared with the year before (12.4% in 2023 vs 9.7% in 2022). <i>National Literacy Trust</i>	All looked after children, previously looked after children and children with a social worker aged 0-5 can access Dolly’s Books. This scheme delivers one free book per month to the child’s address until they are five. All schools educating 4–13-year-olds can apply for funding for Letterbox Club.	All looked after children aged 0-5 are signed up to Dolly’s Books. A growing number of CiN, CP, PLAC and Kinship care children are signing up. These children now have 12 books of their own each year. Schools are identifying literacy gaps and meeting that need through Letterbox funding. ‘We feel very lucky to receive the books from BookTrust and, look forward to them when they arrive. We’ve had books on Egypt, engineering, planets and even worms, from BookTrust, as well as storybooks. The children will put the books in their bedroom on their bookshelves and take them with them when they leave. It may be the first book that they own.’
26% of pupils live in areas that are amongst the 20% most deprived for Health. 21% of pupils live in areas that are amongst the 20% most deprived for Education. Our Looked After Children’s early life experiences and opportunities have been significantly limited in comparison to their peers	Class set of bikes to improve their physical coordination, health and wellbeing and social interaction with peers. Long term, this would support developing road and safety awareness and independence.	‘Her focus and excitement were wonderful to see. The headteacher spoke to dad and there is now a possibility of her getting a bike for home too’. ‘Resilience and focus have developed due to the physical and mental skills required to ride a bike’.

Responding to the Individual

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Specialist education provision whilst awaiting an EHCP assessment	Funded specialist education provision and supported the EHCP process to ensure timeliness.	Children have been able to access appropriate education provision without delay and without further educational failure due to placement (both care and education) breakdown.
Space to access a sensory diet / receive therapeutic services / breakout space	We have funded a sensory shed, the re-purposing of a disused space into a breakout space and a specialist sensory room.	<p>‘The funding enabled us to create a new, personal break out space for the child, he now has a space where he knows he is safe and he is able to have some time out of class, there is also a laptop for him to access bespoke learning to his needs’.</p> <p>‘We have created a safe space and an area for children to manage their sensory needs, enabling them to focus better on their learning’.</p> <p>‘These resources will support these students for years to come, these students work at the earliest stages of development for their whole lives and the repetition and rich visual, auditory and olfactory stimulation they will now be able to receive will promote engagement and interaction and ensure a positive impact on their wellbeing as well as desensitisation support for their families’.</p>
Children who are living, or have previously lived, through traumatic experiences often find building relationships difficult. Some of our young people need adult support, from the same trusted adult, to enable growth in this area.	<p>We have financially supported schools to release key staff to focus on one child for a period.</p> <p>We have supported with mentoring or specialist services.</p> <p>We have enabled the commissioning of alternative provision to meet specific needs.</p>	<p>‘X is now able to access the classroom and engage in learning. Their independence is growing, and they are more able to take risks’</p> <p>Multiple children have secured EHCPs to sustain their provision following a period of bridging funding.</p> <p>Children have transitioned between schools successfully and no longer require an EHCP or support services due to timely intervention.</p>
Access to resources to support learning based on interest or stage	The Virtual School have provided funds to schools to buy specific resources to support a child’s learning journey or to allow the resources to move through the school without disadvantaging other children.	Some of our children have ‘choosing trolley’s’ stocked with resources to enable them to support their learning and provide an element of choice within their day. We have provided schools with sensory resources to enable zones within classrooms or transitional objects to support certain times of the day.

The options are endless because the needs are unique... if you’re facing a barrier let us support you with finding a way forward!