

Corporate Parenting Board

11 December 2025

Virtual School Head Annual Report 2024-2025

For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr C Sutton, Children's Services, Education & Skills

Local Councillor(s):**Senior Leadership Team:**

P Dempsey, Executive Director of People - Children

Report author and job title:

Jo Smark-Richards

Job Title:

Service Manager (Virtual School Headteacher)

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Statutory Authority: Dorset

Report status: Choose an item. Choose an item.

Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

1. The Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2024/25 evaluates the progress, attendance and outcomes for our Children in Care and Care Leavers during the academic year. The report also evaluates the work undertaken through the Extended Role of the Virtual School to provide strategic leadership and oversight for all children with a social worker, children in kinship care arrangements and children who have previously been in care.
2. **Recommendation(s)**
 - 2.1 Members of Corporate Parenting Board are requested to note the content of this report which captures the work of Dorset Virtual School over the last academic year and progress made against our priorities 2024-2025. The report also identifies the next steps and the identified priorities for Dorset Virtual School 2025- 2026.
3. **Reason for the recommendation(s)**
 - 3.1 As Corporate Parents, all members of the board seek to stay informed about Dorset children in care and care experienced young people, to offer challenge and support. The Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report provides members with an opportunity to review the work of the previous year, to

consider what has worked well and to plan priorities for the next academic year.

4. The report

4.1 Please note Appendix 1 is the Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2024/25

5. Alternative options considered

Not applicable

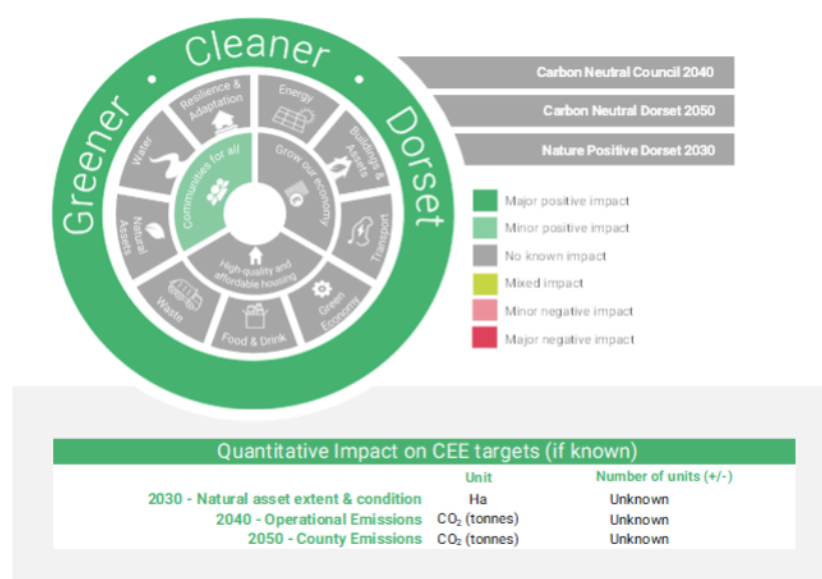
6. Legal considerations

Not applicable

7. Financial implications

7.1 The Virtual School receives DfE funding each year to support children in care, those previously in care, and those with a social worker as per DfE guidance.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications



Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	No known impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	No known impact
Green Economy	No known impact

Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact

Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Grow our economy	Neutral impact
High-quality and affordable housing	Neutral impact
Communities for all	Minor positive impact

9. Well-being and health implications

- 9.1 The report evaluates the impact of the work of the Virtual School to supports its children in education; the report considers the impact of interventions on well-being and progress of young people. Due to the nature of the work, working with children in complex family situations and children who have experienced trauma there are risks to the virtual school leads wellbeing and need for additional support. To mitigate against this there is a Dorset Council allocated link educational psychologist who provides group supervision to the staff of the virtual school.

10. Other implications

- 10.1 None

11. Risk implications

- 11.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

12. Equalities

- 12.1 None

13. Appendices

- 13.1 Appendix 1: Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2024/25

14. Background papers

- 14.1 None

15. Report sign-off

- 15.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)