Corporate Parenting Board
26 November 2026
Virtual School Head's Annual Report 2025-26
For Decision

Cabinet Member:
Cllr C Sutton, Children, Families & Education

Local Councillor(s):

Senior Leadership Team:
P Dempsey - Executive Director, Children's Services

Report author and job title: Jo Smark-Richards
Job Title: Head of Children Thriving in Education and Virtual School Headteacher
Email: jo.smark-richards@drsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Dorset

Report status: Choose an item. Choose an item.

1. Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

The Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2025/26 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)

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 in 2025-2026. The report also identifies the next steps and the identified priorities for Dorset Virtual School 2026- 2027.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

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

Please note Appendix 1 is the Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2025/26

5. Alternative options considered

Not applicable

6. Legal considerations

Not applicable

7. Financial implications

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.

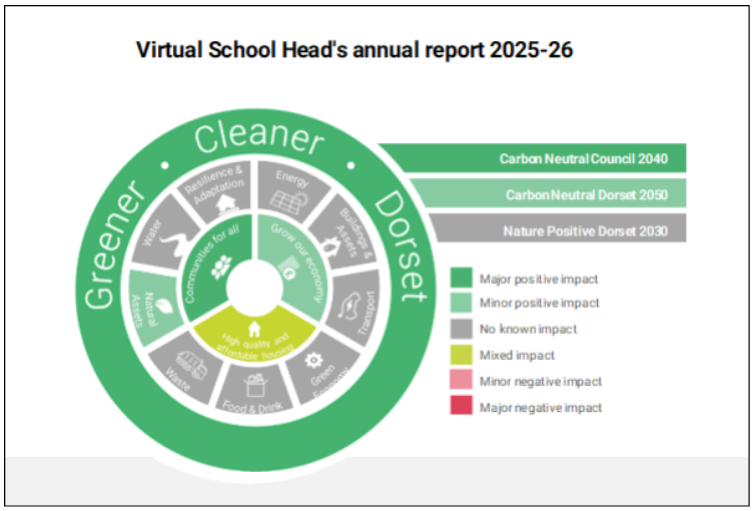
8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

Not applicable

9. Well-being and health implications

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.

10. Other implications



ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

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	minor positive impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact
Corporate Plan Aims	**Impact**
Grow our economy	minor positive impact
High-quality and affordable housing	neutral
Communities for all	strongly supports it

TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Responses -will this be incorporated into your proposal? How? And if not, why not?
Energy	
No recommendations found for this category	
Buildings & Assets	
No recommendations found for this category	
Transport	
No recommendations found for this category	
Green Economy	
No recommendations found for this category	
Food & Drink	
No recommendations found for this category	
Waste	
No recommendations found for this category	
Natural Assets & Ecology	
No recommendations found for this category	
Water	
No recommendations found for this category	
Resilience & Adaptation	
No recommendations found for this category	

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

13. Appendices

13.1 Dorset Virtual School Head's Annual Report 2025/26

13.2 Appendix 13.2 Dorset Virtual School 2025/26 attainment

14. Background papers

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 Assurance & Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Director for Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Cabinet Member(s)