



Harrow Virtual School Newsletter

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Harrow Virtual School

Autumn 2020

Letter from the Virtual School Headteacher



Dear Colleague,

Welcome to our Autumn Term Newsletter.

I would like to say a huge thank you for all the hard work with our students over the past year. We have witnessed unprecedented change in the way in which we go about our daily lives and, more pertinently, the education of our children.

The last academic year saw a 40% rise in pupil numbers with 55% educated within the local authority. The start of the year was no exception with increasing numbers coming into care. Thank you to all our partners in education in supporting our children with a smooth transition into their new year groups and in a number of cases, new schools. As you are aware transition times can be very unsettling for our looked after children and it is at these vulnerable points in the year that they need our support the most.

In the absence of public exams last academic year, all students in Year 6 and Year 11 achieved their expected standards and grades. I would like to extend a big thank you for completing our PEPs within timescales; these continue to be returned at 100%. Well done, everyone! Since March 2020 all PEP meetings took place remotely and very successfully. Online PEPs have continued this term too.

It was good to 'see' so many of you at our online DT and DSL Network Meeting earlier in November and then at our virtual DT Seminar on 1st December for those who are new to role or needing a refresher course. We had record numbers being able to join virtually including many DTs outside of the borough including as far afield as Kent. Please see [page 3](#) and [page 6](#) for further training dates this academic year.

I would also like to give a huge thanks to those schools that contributed to our Model CLA Policy for schools. The final policy is now available and included with this newsletter for you to adapt and personalise as you deem fit. We will continue to welcome any feedback throughout the year so that we can update this at its next review.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter and if you have any items to share please let me know at mellina.williamson-taylor@harrow.gov.uk.

Thank you again for all your hard work and have a well-deserved rest over the Christmas Season.

Mellina Williamson-Taylor
Headteacher Harrow Virtual School



Post –16

Key Workers, Anil Dev, Malik Niazi and Philip Miller, who support many of our post-16 students in semi-independent placements, have been instrumental in arranging college enrolments and further support with setting up laptops for UASC students.

Without their unwavering support, these students would otherwise not be able to progress their education.

They have also been in constant communication with our post-16 Advisory Teacher, Kat Robinson, and schools and colleges through-

out the first Lockdown period and continue to regularly keep in touch.

HVS provided laptops for all CLA that did not previously have access to their own in their home placements.

“School have noticed marked progress on returning to school this year” (Foster Carer)

Early Years

One of our younger CLA, a 4 year old boy engaged in home learning thanks to his carer, Roselyn Welch, who has been a key person in supporting him to make progress in his learning and well-being. She created a mini nursery setting in her home. For example, she made a toy shop and set

up different learning zones for him to utilise, as if he were at school.

All learning was themed and she dedicated 1:1 learning time with him so that he could practise his numbers and phonics. She kept a daily record of his learning through pictures, so that this could be shared with the

school, upon his return. Due to all of her creative ideas and close, consistent communication with the school, our CLA progressed really well. This was noted upon his return to school.

“The Foster Carer initiated fortnightly conference calls with his school and SW...”

Secondary

Another one of our CLA in Year 11 had missed lots of education prior to settling into his new placement. His carer, Sainab Hashi, supported him with the following: good school attendance, to engage with his Educational Psychologist and Speech and Language Assessments, to apply for local colleges

and attend after school tuition. He has since made remarkable academic progress.

At the start of the lockdown the FC had had frequent contact with his DT to check that she had understood the home learning tasks set by his teachers and she initiated fortnightly

conference calls with his school and SW to help put in place a plan around his education.

Foster Care Fortnight 2020

The Fostering Network set up Foster Care Fortnight™ as an annual campaign in order to raise awareness of how fostering can transform lives and celebrate its community.

This year's event included looking into what FCs were doing to help CLA with their learning during lockdown. NAVSH

(National Association of Virtual School Heads) were inundated with stories from VSHs (Virtual School Heads) and they decided to compile a booklet of contributions.

HVS also contributed to this and is delighted to have some of the excellent work done by our FCs featured in this compilation and now also

featured in this newsletter.



Picture: Courtesy of Fostering Network



Click on images to go directly to the websites



AC Education Online Training

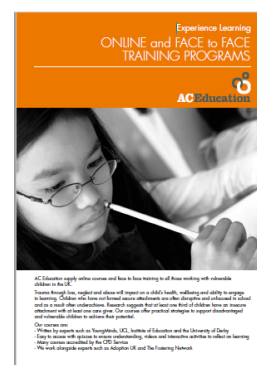
AC Education have launched a YouTube Channel with some of their trainers providing free webinars to support parents, carers and school staff during this time. The link to the channel is https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCc_5iBjgS4p0Jtspgzllw

AC Education invite school staff to share these links further with parents/carers and the wider school community.

HVS continues to offer AC Education's Online Training modules free to schools. For the latest available courses, click on the image to the

right of this article to direct you to the latest courses. There are currently 43 places left. Courses can also be completed in the Summer Term as long as participants enrol before 30th April 2021.

To register please email Michelle Tyson at virtu-alschool@harrow.gov.uk



Click on above image for direct link to learning programs

The Dates for Termly DT & DSL Seminars

The termly Safeguarding in Education Seminars for Designated Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads will continue to take place via Teams.

On:

Tuesday 2nd March 2021

Tuesday 1st June 2021



The Harrow School Online Tuition



Pupils in Years 9-12 participated in 1:1 lessons to include English, Maths, Science and Art.

One session was dedicated to career's advice.

The programme started in the Summer Term to support children's learning during the disruption to schools and lessons have continued into the Autumn Term.

As a result of the success of

the 1:1 tuition, the programme was extended to Primary aged-pupils with another independent school, Orley Farm Primary, joining the project.

Students from Barnet VS have now joined us in this programme.

Discussions are currently underway regarding the feasibility of the Thursday evening study club and enrichment activities resuming. Hopefully this

would be in the New Year.

At the time of writing this newsletter, an end of term Quiz is in the pipeline!

A special thank you to Tim Dalton, Programme Lead (The Harrow School) and all the teachers from The Harrow School and Orley Farm Primary School who have kindly volunteered their time.

We Belong
Virtual Afternoon Tea
July 2020

While we are waiting for everyone to join, think about

What has been your favourite creative activity during lockdown?



A NEW DIRECTION



'We Belong' By A New Direction (Virtual Afternoon Tea Feedback Session)

'We Belong', is targeted at Post-16 students and care leavers.

The event highlighted some of the work the young people had taken part in over the course of the programme.

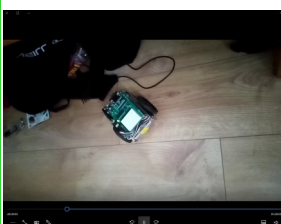
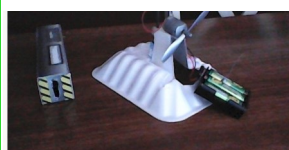
We worked together with young people from Ealing Virtual School.

Creativity and culture were at the heart of the activities which ranged from digital music, stop motion animation, lino drawing, fashion design and circus skills.

The young people also created a very poignant film, 'Changing Attitudes', You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITqOGyL2jpk>

which expressed their views on how CLA are perceived.

Although, the afternoon tea event was run virtually this did not prevent the young people from attending. Everyone joined in the fun and brought and a bite to eat and beverages!



Excitec - Virtual Summer Camp 2020

This project focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Employability and Life Skills. It is targeted at pupils in Years 8 and above.

Last year our students attended Brunel University, however, due to COVID-19, it was moved this year to an online summer school. The project ran for 5 days during the summer

holidays via Microsoft Teams. Resource boxes were posted to the young people ahead of the programme.

The children planned and designed the following: Hovercrafts, BeeBots - moving robots programmed to 'dance' and move, paper bridges, slime, bath bombs, lip balms and colourful corrosives. All

low concentration chemicals and protective equipment was additionally provided.

Feedback was very positive and of course our students can't wait for it to take place again— hopefully back on the Brunel campus!

Equine Summer Camp

This was our second year of attending this project which has supported our CLA with managing and regulating their emotions and behaviours. With COVID-19 safety measures in place, four students attended for a week during the summer holidays.

The feedback from the students for all the

enrichment activities was very positive.

For those new to Equine Assisted Therapy, 'Strength and Learning Through Horses' is a charity partnership operating from a specialist stables which exclusively serves vulnerable or disadvantaged young people and adults. All their work focuses on empowering people to

make positive change in their lives through building relationships with horses.

Since mid-October, Saturday sessions have begun with 6 CLA of mixed ages. These have been very successful to date. We were joined by students from Ealing and Barnet Virtual Schools.

"...I really like the horses!" (Pupil)



Jamie's Farm Oasis Waterloo

Oasis Waterloo is a small urban farm with a few animals such as goats, pigs, sheep and guinea and pigs. Fruit and vegetables are also grown. Oasis Waterloo is a part of Jamie's Farm. From our previous experiences of Jamie's Farm we know they provide a very welcom-

ing and nurturing experience for young people. A group of CLA from years 5 - 8 from Harrow, Ealing and Brent Virtual Schools attended over October half term. It was a lovely experience for all the children.



"...should be very proud of the way she conducted herself at the farm and the way in which she threw herself into doing new things and learning new skills..." (Therapist, Jamie's Farm)

"...I was impressed by the way he was 'himself' at the farm and with a new group of people." (Therapist, Jamie's Farm)

Phoenix Outdoor Centre

Over October half term, Harrow's CLA from Years 5 - 8 spent a day participating in outdoor activities. The day included 2 hours orienteering and 2 hours kayaking at Phoenix Outdoor Centre & Canoe Club.

With all the safely measures in place the children had an enjoyable. Feedback from the day was very positive and we hope to do this activity again in the near future!



PHENIX
OUTDOOR CENTRE
& CANOE CLUB



Civic Centre
Station Road
Harrow

Office Telephone Line
temporarily closed due to
COVID-19

virtualschool@harrow.gov.uk

**We are now on the
web:
[www.harrow.gov.uk/
virtualschool](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/virtualschool)**

***Acronyms used in this edition:**

HVS: Harrow Virtual
School
VSH: Virtual School Head
VS: Virtual School
CLA: Children Looked
After
UASC: Unaccompanied
Asylum Seeking Children
FC: Foster Carer
SW: Social Worker
DT: Designated Teacher
DSL: Designated Safe-
guarding Lead
CP: Clinical Psychologist
MH: Mental Health
YP: Young Person

Achieving Excellence Together

Meet The Team

Headteacher: Mellina Williamson-Taylor E: Mellina.Williamson-Taylor@harrow.gov.uk

Assistant Headteacher: Sarah Moriarty E: Sarah.Moriarty@harrow.gov.uk

Senior Education Officer: Joanne Tortipidis E: Joanne.Tortipidis@harrow.gov.uk

Education Support Officer: Michelle Tyson E: Michelle.Tyson@harrow.gov.uk

Advisory Teacher: Kat Robinson E: Kathryn.Robinson@harrow.gov.uk

Clinical Psychologist: Sara Dawson E: Sara.Dawson@harrow.gov.uk

Teaching and Learning Consultant: Anu Jain E: Anupameya.Jain@harrow.gov.uk

VS Designated Teacher Forum

Our Clinical Psychologist, Sara Dawson, along with our Education Support Officer, Michelle Tyson, are running termly DT Forums. The sessions are open to all DTs and are a place to learn more about issues pertaining to looked after and other vulnerable children. It is an opportunity to share knowledge, challenges and success stories with other colleagues.

Each forum will have a topic determined ahead of time and will include a presentation by Sara or a forum member and then followed by a group discussion.

The forum will take place via MS teams. If you would like to attend please contact Michelle virtualschool@harrow.gov.uk. The first topic covered 'Engaging children looked after and previously looked after in education'. It took place earlier this week. We look forward to seeing as many of you at our next forum in January.

From **2 - 3.30pm** via **MS teams** on:

Thursday 28th January

Thursday 18th March

**SAVE
THE
DATES!**

