

Education- children in residential care.....

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supporting improvement for children

February 2021. Chris Freestone

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We know:-

- That outcomes for children in care vary and can be poorer than their peers.
- This report sets out to explore the settings for these young people in terms of grading and other factors and is the start of an ongoing exploration.



Findings of the February 2021 report

- Analysis carried out between 1.4.2018 and 31.3.2019
- Sampled 2,600 children living in children's homes across a wide range of parameters
- 2,165 children (83%) attended educational provision eligible for Ofsted inspection
- 9% attended unregulated provisions
- 6% were not in education, employment or training
- 2% attended educational provision inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
- Of the 2,165 children in the sample who attended an educational provision eligible for Ofsted inspection:
 - 57% were in special schools (35% independent special schools and 22% in state-funded special schools).
 - the remaining 43% of children attended mainstream education (6% independent mainstream education and 37% state-funded mainstream education).

Findings of the February 2021 report:

- Children living in children's homes are **20 times** more likely to be in special education than all children nationally.
- Nationally, for those attending state-funded educational provision, around **three quarters** of children living in children's homes had an education, health and care (EHC) plan or were receiving special educational needs (SEN) support.
- Children living in children's homes were **18 times** more likely to be attending a pupil referral unit (PRU) than all pupils attending state-funded provision nationally.



Some potential factors in lower attainment for children and young people

- Entering care during secondary years
- Repeated placement changes
- Having higher levels of emotional and behavioural responses
- Poor school strategies and support
- Poor support from foster carers / residential care
- Not enough good schools in the area
- Less appropriate provision in the area e.g. SEND schools, alternative provisions
- Low aspirations for the young person
- Peer relationships
- Not getting the right support when in school



For the child in care.....

- Statutory guidance states, that the local authority should prioritise education provisions that Ofsted have judged good or better.
- Research shows that primary schools have a more flexible approach to children in need; secondary schools less so.
- Schools' responses are hugely variable- why?
- Residential settings responses vary too- from secure advocacy to leaving it to the school / SW/LA to sort out



Advocacy and support

- Who should act for the child or young person?
 - schools/ teachers
 - Virtual heads/ headteachers
 - Social Workers/ LA's
 - Health professionals
 - Leaders/ workers in the residential setting
 - Families
 - Advocates / guardians/solicitors



Thoughts for small group discussion:

- Could living in a children's home be a protective factor for children and young people in terms of education outcome and experience?
- How? Why?
- How can you ensure that the child's access to and experience of education is the best they can have ?



Thoughts :

- Know your local provisions and their Ofsted outcomes
- Know key people to contact
- Understand the education offer including vocational courses
- Understand the functioning of EHC plans and funding
- Be aware of monies such as PPP which can be used by the school to support better outcomes
- Contribute to PEPs
- Be aware of what the young person is able to achieve.....
- Consistency / continuity
- Stability
- SEMH- being addressed in school and at home- consistent approach
- Effective school / home strategies shared
- Peer relationships supported effectively
- Advocacy and support for their voice to be heard
- Knowledgeable and trained staff



Resources and references

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-education-of-children-living-in-childrens-homes/the-education-of-children-living-in-childrens-homes>
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/915661/What works to improve the educational outcomes of Children in Need of he....pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/915661/What_works_to_improve_the_educational_outcomes_of_Children_in_Need_of_he....pdf)
- <https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/author/yvette-stanley/>
- Nuffield studies 2017-2019
- Oxford review of Education 2019- various studies and authors.
- nb. The study by Ofsted excluded RSS and short break provisions.



Looking ahead

- This will be an ongoing piece of work by the Department for Education and is likely to have a raised importance as schools return post the third national lockdown.
- Key focus for HMI education and probably so for social care too.

