Welcome to the sixth edition of the regular Designated Teacher input which provides updates, reminders and tips for navigating Personal Education Plans, using pupil premium effectively and supporting you to raise the attainment and well being of your Looked After and Previously Looked After pupils.

Please circulate to any staff who are involved in completing review meetings nor to any staff who are working with your looked after or previously looked after pupils.

Michelle Johnson, Head Teacher of the Oxfordshire Virtual School, opened the conference reflecting on how we can connect with each other in the shifting landscape of education, social care and health services. Communication and collaboration are key messages.

Approximately 800 Oxfordshire children are looked after. 60% are in care in Oxfordshire and 40% are placed out of county.

Attainment of our year 11s -10% of our looked after pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs. This year, this will rise and we need to push to close the gap by aiming to improving this figure by double each year.

Most exclusions of Oxfordshire looked after pupils are from Oxfordshire school - fewer out of county pupils are excluded. The exclusion rate for looked after children has reduced in the last 8 months with real collaboration between schools and the Virtual School.

Best Practice for Designated Teachers workshop
DTs face challenges such as resources for additional support, good alternative provision and how to give vulnerable pupils the confidence to get into mainstream classes. It is difficult to manage the individual needs of pupils. The transience of admission and changes in placements can be tricky to coordinate for schools. Secondary schools tend to have more access to support whereas smaller primaries have less resources to draw from.

Ideas
• Whole school ethos-trauma informed
• Get pupils into classes straight away and provide support outside lessons
• Highly bespoke packages
• Listen to pupil voice
• Nurture provision
• Staff training and awareness
• Strong key worker relationships
• Use Virtual School links
• Use the PEP to focus on tangible outcomes that are realistic
• Engage foster carers as much as possible in school life

Research – Aoife Higgins at University of Oxford is doing some research into the experience of schools working with parents/foster carers. EEF research here for ideas.

Ideas/requests for content of upcoming issues; contact rachel.cosgrove@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Betsy De Thierry key note - Trauma

Trauma—an experience of terror and powerlessness at the same time. If left unresolved-toxic.

5 components of Trauma recovery
- Relationship
- Psycho-education; understanding your own brain
- Co-regulation
- Processing subconscious and body memories
- Integrative narrative—story of their life

Teenagers are all about relationships. In adolescence the limbic system is king. Teach pupils about the brain.

Self regulation develops from experiences of kind/empathetic interactions. You can’t learn it from a worksheet. Shame causes depressions, anxiety, aggression, agitation, dysregulation—it is toxic. Reduce shame for pupils.

‘Those who need live the most ask for it in the most unloving ways’ (de Thierry 2019). Children who have been hurt in a relationship need to heal in a relationship.

Link to website here.

Hester Riviere Key note - Wellbeing in the age of austerity

The school workforce is under stress. Wellbeing is the balance point between an individual’s resources pool and the resources they have to do the task.

Teachers wellbeing is closely linked to pupil wellbeing. Pupils in classrooms with stressed teachers show elevated stress themselves.

Relationships matter—teachers with positive relationships with pupils report lower levels of disruptive behaviour. When teachers are not coping—they perceive higher levels of defiant behaviour and are more likely to use reactive strategies—resulting in a negative cycle.

Relationships have to be at the heart of how we think about teacher wellbeing.

What can be done?
- Context—whole school approach which models and commits to inclusive practice, taking an interest in and involving staff in decisions.
- Competence—pro-social classroom model—staff feeling that they make a difference.
- Coping—mindset makes a difference so reduce teacher isolation and share problems.

Further information in Ofsted report on teacher wellbeing can be found here.

Laura Beveridge key note—Independent Care Review Scotland

Laura shared her story and how she came to be working for the care review in Scotland—which is a wide reaching review of the care system—the First Minister is now starting the implementation.

The care review is lead by care experienced people who shared their stories. 5000 voices contributed. Look after people as sharing your story is hard.

Emphasis in early intervention and not relying on meeting certain criteria/threshold to receive support.

Care experienced people said love needed to be at the heart of the review. Care system in Scotland is costly but outcomes are poor. Key messages around rights, stigma and love.

Read the review in full here.

Luke Rogers key note—The Care Leaders

Luke is passionate about stories. He is running a film project working with children in care in Oxfordshire. Society has a narrative about the care system and the only way to overcome negative assumptions is to share stories.

Strategic hope—plant a seed in a young person that might grow into something in their future.

Key message is that we need to give trust rather than expect people to earn your trust. Key relationships make a huge difference. Isolation is not OK—quality of moments make a difference to children’s lives. More about Luke here.