Some great things have happened in schools despite lockdown...

Transition Designated Teachers have been working hard to support school moves across county, organising tours, meeting key people and helping pupils feel welcome and included - despite all the restrictions in place. Schools making transition videos for new year 7s to show new pupils what school will look like in September. Schools working proactively and creatively to ensure proper endings and acknowledgement of new beginning for pupils starting secondary school. Online video meets for foster carers with heads of year and form tutors, one page transition profiles to share wishes, feelings and views of pupils. Enhanced pastoral support in place for September.

Designated Teachers making sure they have face to face contact with pupils - doing home visits and chatting on the driveway. Many schools thinking about how to maintain connections with pupils who are home learning. One school provided a plant for every child to take home to ‘look after’ until school returns. Designated teachers have been phoning home to support home learning and ensure well being checks are personal.

Schools thinking about meeting emotional needs and considering how to smooth transition on return to school. Great work in the Children in Care Council- school staff supporting and encouraging pupils to join into the mini meetings. One pupil who was supported by head of year has now contributed to meetings and been involved with an interview panel for a new apprentice in the CiCC.

Use of pupil premium has been creative and used to support pupils’ wider interests and encourage engagement in extra curricular activities such as gardening supplies, starter kits for hair and beauty and cooking equipment for pupils interested in catering courses. Lots of our pupils have received Kindle vouchers or magazine subscriptions to support their interests. Many schools are doing their best to support over summer holidays by offering contact support and setting up virtual school tours for early years children.

Laptops have been a mission but hopefully the last few due to be circulated from OCC have reached their destinations.
A big thank you to all the designated teachers both in and out of county.
What a year this has been.
Thank you for working so hard to support all our children and young people.
We have made some strong relationships over the year and the Virtual School team has really valued getting to know more about how individual schools work and how best we can work together to provide the best opportunities for our youngsters. Through the challenges of lockdown we have developed stronger ties with social care and carers. We have all been forced into trying different ways of working and whether we took to this like ducks to water (or not!), video conferencing and distanced working is here to stay and in some cases it has enabled us to attend more meetings and be more available to schools. A positive!
Designated teachers play a vital role in schools and possess valuable information and approaches that school will value even more when we all return to school building in September. The importance of listening, observing, being non-judgemental and flexible will be key in supporting all pupils back to school successfully.
Have a great summer and replenish the energy reserves. We will meet again next term!