

Glasgow Project Report

Supporting Looked After Children and Young People at School: A Scottish Case Study

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research outlined in this report had two aims at the outset. These were: firstly, describing the experience of using self-evaluation indicators to evaluate and improve practice in relation to the education of looked after children and young people; and secondly, examining the extent to which the use of the indicators is related to improved outcomes for looked after children and young people in the study population.

As the research developed, a broader approach emerged as being more appropriate: to study the arrangements for supporting looked after children in schools, including the transfer of information between social work and education, knowledge of the children, the awareness of key staff of the appropriate school and care environments, and the role of the designated senior manager with responsibility for looked after children.

The research employed a case study approach, based on one 'learning community' (i.e. a local cluster of schools) within the City of Glasgow, Scotland. The learning community comprised a secondary school, four primary schools, two nursery schools and a pre-school children's centre. The research approach involved interviews with key informants and more informal contact, both in person and by email. Other important elements in the project included completion of a comprehensive data sheet for each young person and provision of mentoring support for the learning community via informal advice, passing on information, and by the provision of a training course for teachers and carers.

The key findings of this small-scale case study of the support arrangements for pupils who are looked after can be summarised as follows.

1. There was lack of clarity about the precise looked after status for a high proportion of the young people in the sample. The exact status was unknown by the school for 30 of the 49 looked after pupils identified.
2. While the schools were mainly clear about which children were looked after and accommodated, there was confusion in relation to the looked after at home category.
3. Information available to schools through the electronic management system (SEEMIS) about looked after children, was not always up to date. The pre-5 sector was not connected to the SEEMIS system.
4. In most cases (30 out of 49), the designated senior managers (DSMs) said they had not been provided with any information from the *Looking After Children* materials and that they had been involved in providing information in only half of the cases.
5. For two-thirds of the sample of children, DSMs felt that communication with social work services was either inconsistent or unsatisfactory. Although schools usually had contact details for the children's social workers, in eight out of 49 cases this information was missing. The DSMs

were concerned about the frequency with which children's social workers changed.

6. There was uncertainty about whether pupils had had any contact with the school nurse in 10 out of 49 cases and for 21 out of 49 cases in relation to contact with a specialist looked after children's nurse.
7. Thirty-one out of 49 pupils had attendance rates of less than 90% and for four pupils the attendance was not recorded. This pattern of poor attendance is similar to the national characteristic of looked after children.
8. The 5-14 National Assessment data for the sample, similarly to national data, confirm how some looked after pupils are at risk of falling behind in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in the older age groups.
9. The term 'designated senior manager' (DSM) was familiar in the primary and secondary sectors but not in the pre-5 sector. However, none of the DSMs was aware of the local authority's protocol for looked after children with its list of suggested duties. While the DSMs were able to articulate understanding of their responsibilities, they worried about whether they were performing the role adequately.
10. The extent to which support for looked after children featured in development planning varied in the pre-5 establishments and primary schools but in the secondary school considerations of the needs had influenced arrangements for pastoral care and department planning.
11. Only two out of 11 DSMs said they had used the *How Good Is Our School* self-evaluation indicators for looked after children, though they indicated that this was done as part of a general audit rather than one specifically related to support for looked after pupils. Awareness of the indicators varied between schools. The DSMs were not keen to conduct an audit solely for the research but there were plans to use them as part of the Joint Assessment Meeting.

The research has identified shortcomings in the provision of information, in communication and in support for schools, but has also highlighted the importance of the DSM role in relation to knowing about individual looked after pupils and in facilitating the arrangements for their education. The shortcomings have clear implications for the first of the eight key messages in *Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better* (Scottish Executive, 2007), i.e. the importance of the corporate parent role. There need to be efficient arrangements in place so schools know who their looked after children are, including contact details for social workers and relevant care planning information from the *Looking After Children* materials.

The importance of the DSM role is also one of the eight key messages of *We Can and Must Do Better* and national guidance will be provided for local authorities and schools. Clearly the role needs to include responsibilities for monitoring attendance and attainment, for liaison with carers and for helping to arrange specialist learning support and medical attention if required. Two policy developments are important in the context of improved provision. The first of

these is the maturing of the concept of the Integrated Community School which provides a framework for collaborative working. The use of the Joint Assessment Meeting (JAM) both in planning the support for individual children and in discussing the arrangements for looked after pupils generally within the learning community is a positive development. The second policy development is the government's aim to introduce the integrated children's services planning framework, as proposed in the Implementation Plan for *Getting It Right for Every Child*¹.

The research has also identified a number of areas for further inquiry. For example: observing the operation and development of the JAM; closer examination of the way in which information about individual children is handled within schools; consideration of the support provided for learning where looked after pupils have fallen considerably behind in basic skills; examining support arrangements for looked after children in pre-school/early education; learning more about the perspectives of the young people themselves in relation to their experience of education and the role of learning in their development.

¹ See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/131460/0031397.pdf> for the Implementation Plan and <http://www.iriss.ac.uk/opencontent/assessment/index.html> for useful training materials related to the Assessment Triangle.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief outline

The research employed a case study approach, based on one 'learning community' (i.e. a local cluster of schools) within the City of Glasgow, Scotland. The learning community comprised a secondary school, four primary schools (five at the beginning of the research but two merged in July 2006), two nursery schools and a pre-school children's centre. The project had two aims at the outset. These were: firstly, describing the experience of using self-evaluation indicators to evaluate and improve practice in relation to the education of looked after children and young people; and secondly, examining the extent to which the use of the indicators is related to improved outcomes for looked after children and young people in the study population.

As the research developed, a broader approach emerged as being more appropriate: to study the arrangements for supporting looked after children attending the learning community's schools, including the transfer of information between social work and education, knowledge of the children, the awareness of key staff of the appropriate school and care environments, and the role of the designated senior manager with responsibility for looked after children. In concert with this approach, was an aim to influence the development of practice in relation to the support of looked after children through the provision of an element of mentoring and training.

The policy context for the research lies within one of five priorities for education in Scotland which aims 'to promote equality and help every pupil benefit from education' (Scottish Statutory Instrument, 2000). More specifically, the research aimed to describe the perspectives of professionals in relation to their efforts to improve the quality of support for looked after young people in education. The project was specifically concerned with the work of schools to provide effective support within the general culture of self-evaluation of *How Good is Our School* (HMIE (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools), 2006a) and the more specific framework provided in *Evaluating Education and Care Placements for Looked After Children and Young People* (HMIE (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools), 2003). While the research was being conducted, the government published a detailed policy document, *Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better* (Scottish Executive, 2007), which set out an ambitious agenda for improving both the educational experience and attainment of children in public care in Scotland.

The approach adopted in the research was mainly qualitative, involving interviews with key informants and more informal contact, both in person and by email. Other important elements in the project included completion of a comprehensive data sheet for each young person and provision of mentoring support for the learning community via informal advice, passing on information, and by the provision of a training course for teachers and carers.

1.2 Looked after children and education

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 adopted the term 'looked after', taking a lead from the earlier Children Act 1989 in England and Wales, because the expression 'in care' had become pejorative and stigmatising. A child or young person can become looked after on a voluntary basis, where the family is unable to provide care. More usually², becoming looked after is as a result of compulsory measures of supervision or a court order (McRae, 2006). In Scotland, a child under compulsory measures of supervision can be looked after by the local authority while continuing to live at home with family.

The uniquely Scottish 'at home' category accounted for about 40% of the 14,060 children who were looked after by local authorities on 31 March 2007. Children are looked after 'away from home' in residential schools, secure units, group houses in the community (children's units) and in foster care settings. Around a third of all looked children live in foster care settings.

Concerns about low achievement in education by children and young people in public care were first noted in the 1980s (Jackson, 1987). The former Scottish Office Education Department commissioned a detailed review of research (Borland, Pearson, Hill, & Bloomfield, 1998) and this helped to inform a highly influential inspection report of provisions for children looked after away from home (HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools) and SWSI (Social Work Services Inspectorate), 2001). The publication of the *Learning with Care* report is generally accepted as the stimulus for a range of political and professional activity in subsequent years. The report highlighted instances of good practice but made seven important criticisms (summarised below) that became the benchmarks against which subsequent improvements would be measured. A more detailed account of the inspection is available in a paper by the report's authors (Maclean & Gunion, 2003).

- Limited planning of care and placements and vagueness about children's attainments.
- High levels of exclusion (half the children and young people had been excluded at least once and some had been excluded many times).
- Just over half of the 25 primary age children were underachieving in comparison with their peers.
- Concern by children and young people about how confidential information would be used by teachers.
- Lack of training concerning the education of looked after children and young people of carers, social workers and teachers.
- Lack of involvement of natural parents in the education of their children.

² In 2006-07, 9% of children became looked after under CSA 1995 Section 25 (voluntary) provisions. See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/204913/0054519.pdf>

- Little evidence of local authority policies on the education of looked after children and young people or of arrangements to collect data about their attainments.

The government responded by providing a one-off fund of £10m 'to provide books, equipment and homework materials for every looked after child in Scotland' (Scottish Executive, 2001) and reminding local authorities of the right of all looked after children to receive a full-time education, the statutory obligation for a care plan which adequately addresses educational needs and a new requirement that schools should have a designated senior manager to champion the interests of these children (Scottish Executive, 2002). Materials to support professional training were commissioned³ and the development process was described in an article by members of the contractors' team (Furnivall & Hudson, 2003). An information booklet aimed at carers, teachers and social workers was also published (Connelly, McKay, & O'Hagan, 2003). A further £6m was provided to support a range of activities, including for pilot projects: '...to explore new ways of boosting educational attainment' (Scottish Executive, 2004).

In the subsequent three years there was evidence of considerable effort to raise awareness among professionals, notably as a result of the formation of networks concerned with the education and the health of looked after children. This period of activity culminated in the publication of, *Looked after children & young people: We can and must do better*, a report structured around five themes (working together, becoming effective lifelong learners, developing into successful and responsible adults, being emotionally and physically healthy, feeling safe and nurtured in a home setting) and outlining 19 actions (Scottish Executive, 2007). Responsibility for the actions was devolved to eight working groups: corporate parenting; training for professionals; data gathering and sharing; web site development; becoming effective lifelong learners; developing into successful and responsible adults; being emotionally, mentally and physically healthy; feeling safe and nurtured in a home setting.

In policy terms, the Scottish Government has highlighted the educational difficulties of the lowest-performing 20% of school pupils, a group which includes most looked after children and young people (Scottish Executive, 2005). By age 21 around 13% of looked after young people in Scotland are not in education, employment or training. They are much more likely than average to suffer mental health problems and to have a criminal record, and are much less likely to have educational qualifications (HMIE (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools), 2006b).

The policy and practice issues which lie behind *Learning with Care* and *Looked after children & young people: We can and must do better* are discussed in more detail in two journal articles (Connelly, 2007); (Connelly & Chakrabarti, 2007) and a bibliography of research sources, most of which are accessible electronically, is available via the Jordanhill Library of the University of Strathclyde⁴.

³ The training materials are available at:

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/LWC%20Training%20Materials.pdf>

⁴ See: <http://www.strath.ac.uk/jhlibrary/sr/eyp/>

1.3 The rationale for the research

In line with one of the recommendations of the *Learning with Care* report, schools had been asked to designate a senior manager (DSM) to have particular responsibility for looked after children. Some local authorities, including Glasgow, had described the role in guidance materials (Glasgow City Council, 2003). There was, however, considerable anecdotal evidence from professionals in the field of poor understanding of what was expected of managers, varying commitment to the tasks, lack of clarity about which children were looked after and difficulties in relationships with carers and social workers.

The role is too new to have featured in the research literature, other than passing references to its existence. A similar role in England dates from guidance issued in 2000 (DFEE, 2000). A literature search failed to find any research paper wholly concerned with this role. One paper about personal education plans for looked after children in England included the perceptions of 10 designated teachers. The issues raised by these teachers are also familiar in the Scottish context: the role simply appearing on the job description; primary head teachers feeling they could not delegate the role because of teachers' classroom workload; lack of identified time to undertake the role; the problems of competing priorities; difficulties in being released from teaching duties to attend meetings; completing documentation feeling more like compliance than being practically useful (Hayden, 2005).

It was therefore decided to undertake a case study of a learning community, which would give researchers access to the experiences of school designated senior managers, pastoral staff and others with whom they had contact. The research was to be concerned with schools' experiences in evaluating and improving practice in relation to supporting looked after children and young people. An important element of the research involved clarifying which pupils were looked after and collecting detailed information about these children, particularly in relation to their education and attainment. The research also aimed to collect some follow-up data on the children after about one year to 18 months.

No young people were involved directly as participants in the research. Although a young person's perspective is important, it was decided that the focus in this particular study should be solely on the support arrangements and the responses of professionals.

1.4 Funding of the research

The project was funded by the Scottish Government as part of the Education Analytical Services Sponsored Research programme and supported in kind by the University of Strathclyde and the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC). An advisory group (see Appendix 1 for details of membership) provided support for the researchers, particularly in relation to the selection of potential sites for conducting fieldwork and in the design of the pupil data sheet. The fieldwork upon which this report is based was mainly conducted between the summer of 2006 and the autumn of 2007.

SECTION 2: THE RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Selection of the learning community

The plan was to identify a learning community in whose schools around 50 looked after children were known to be enrolled. This was thought to be a reasonable target number of children about whom data forms could be completed. Also, it was judged to be important to demonstrate a significant involvement with looked after children to gain the co-operation of school managers.

The local authority's senior officer for the education of looked after children made a presentation to the research advisory group, showing the database records of school enrolment of looked after children. Three potential sites were identified as having the target number of looked after children and this information was intimated to the Council's Principal Officer (Inclusion). Following consultation within the local authority, the research team was informed that one learning community was regarded as a suitable site, the other two having been ruled out because there had been recent changes in senior management and collaborating in research would have been an additional burden. Permission was given to approach the principal of the learning community directly and an exploratory meeting was then held with representatives of the schools to help the researchers to understand the support arrangements for looked after children.

2.2 The research elements

It was originally planned that the project should begin with appropriate training / briefing, which would respond to the needs of staff attending and also concentrate particularly on the potential of the self-evaluation indicators for identifying areas of practice improvement aimed at enhancing the educational experience of looked after children. However, there was a delay in beginning the project while access arrangements were negotiated within the local authority and an exploratory meeting with key staff in the learning community was held in May 2006. It was therefore decided to begin the research with fieldwork interviews and to run the training early in the autumn term.

The fieldwork employed two research instruments: a comprehensive pupil data form and a semi-structured interview schedule for use in interviews with school managers (see Appendix 3 and Appendix 4). Drafts were presented for discussion at a meeting of the research advisory group and final instruments prepared based on the advice received. The interview schedule was piloted in one secondary school and one primary school in a different area of the city. Two researchers conducted one interview each and discussed the experience. The pilot interviews were also used to discuss the pupil data form.

Field interviews were conducted with the designated senior managers in each of the selected learning community's schools and pre-school establishments between May and August 2006. The interviewing task was shared between two researchers. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and subsequently analysed. Interview transcriptions were reviewed at an advisory group meeting and this exercise was important in identifying a framework for the analysis.

Schools were asked to provide information about the number of looked after children on the school roll prior to conducting interviews. The original plan was to invite managers to complete the pupil data forms at the time of interview. In the case of the primary schools and pre-5 establishments this was unproblematic, though due to time constraints some managers chose to complete the data forms on their own for collection by the researchers later. The forms requested general information about the young person, including date of birth and looked after category, as well as detailed information about health, attainment, attendance, behaviour and softer information about the young person's achievements and interests. We also indicated the intention to collect follow-up information approximately one year later; this was to allow us to introduce a small longitudinal element into the research so we could track change in care status, change in care placement and school and educational progress. In the event, we had limited resources for follow-up and this aspect of the research was not particularly successful.

An important aim of the case study research was to stimulate developments in practice within the learning community in relation to providing support for looked after children. Two elements were envisaged: a staff training event for school managers and other relevant professionals; and mentoring by the project team and local authority advisors. The staff development event took the form of a two-day training course held in the secondary school library, and attended by the designated senior managers of each of the educational establishments, members of the Glasgow City Council's Social Work Services Department, members of the Education Department's Looked After Children's Support Team, the New Learning Community's nurse and the unit manager of one local residential unit (the unit manager of a second unit was unable to attend due to staffing problems). The course was run by the researchers, with guest presentations from education, social work and health professionals (see Appendix 2). Feedback from the training course was positive, with suggestions that such an event should be held annually.

The mentoring aspect which was outlined in the research proposal operated more informally. The researchers kept in touch by occasional email, and drew attention to relevant reports, and the principal teacher of the Looked After Children's Education Support Team provided additional support. This aspect of the case study project was not specifically evaluated. Considerable support was given to DSMs to help them to be clear which children were looked after when it came to collecting data using the baseline questionnaires, particularly in relation to those looked after at home. The data collection procedure generated a great deal of interesting and stimulating conversation and debate about the role of the schools in collecting this sort of data, and how information is shared between the various 'corporate parents'.

It was hoped that each school would conduct a formal audit using the self-evaluation instrument, *Evaluating Education and Care Placements for Looked After Children and Young People*. A proposal was discussed during the training course, but school managers were concerned about the time involved for such an activity, pointing out that they had been required to carry out audits in respect of other aspects of school life. There was little enthusiasm for doing another audit and this aspect of the research did not progress, though it was agreed that the principles of both the audit tool and the local authority's joint education-social work protocol would be used by the learning community's Joint Assessment Meeting to focus on developing the quality of support provided and the Chair of the meeting confirmed that this has happened.

2.3 Ethical issues

A meeting was held with the local authority's Principal Officer (Inclusion) in January 2006 to discuss the parameters of the research. An official application was made using the authority's standard pro-forma for research, and approval was subsequently given by the Executive Director of Education. A meeting was then held with the principal of the learning community and the proposal was subsequently discussed at a meeting of the NLC management group. The Easter break then intervened.

We met the schools' designated senior managers in early May 2006 to discuss the project. Representatives of the pre-school establishments were inadvertently omitted from the invitation, though information was passed on after the meeting.

Ethical approval was given by the ethics committee of the principal researcher's department within the University of Strathclyde. No particular ethical issues were identified for this project, particularly as young people were not involved as participants. Fieldwork was to be conducted with professional staff and in the usual practice an information sheet and interview consent form for participants were prepared as part of the ethical approval procedure.

SECTION 3: RESULTS

3.1 Description of the learning community

The learning community selected as the site for the research was one of 29 within the City of Glasgow. The concept of a learning community arose from the plan to have all publicly funded schools designated as Integrated Community Schools (ICS). The move to ICS arose from government sponsored piloting of New Community Schools (NCS) between 1999 and 2003. Among the 'essential characteristics' of NCS, according to the original *Prospectus*, was: 'integrated provision of school education...social work and health education and promotion services.'⁵ According to Glasgow City Council's web site, the central aims of learning communities are to raise attainment, improve social inclusion and to achieve integrated working.

There is a strong focus on attainment and achievement. The New Learning Communities promote continuity between the stages of every child's education encompassing learning, health, safety and general well being, and to assist them to maximise their health chances⁶.

At the start of the research, the composition of the learning community was a secondary school, four primary schools (one with an integral autism unit) and three pre-5 establishments. During the research period two of the primary schools amalgamated. The wider geographical area within which the learning community is located was designated a Social Inclusion Partnership Area in 1999, in response to the relatively high levels of social deprivation, poverty and unemployment. It was also one of eight 'areas of focus' identified in the 'City Plan' in 2003, regarded as requiring significant planning intervention. A revised 'City Plan 2' in 2007 reported that there had been substantial public and private sector investment, resulting in improved housing, better community facilities and new employment opportunities in the area.

3.2 Identifying the looked after pupils

Designated senior managers were provided with data forms and asked to complete one for each looked after pupil entered on the school roll in August 2006. Eleven forms were returned from primary schools, and four from pre-5 establishments. At the secondary school, the task was devolved to members of the pastoral care team who had the most direct knowledge of the young people. Initially six completed data forms were returned, all for children accommodated by the local authority.

⁵ See: www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-w3/ncsp-00.htm

⁶ See: <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/Residents/GoingtoSchool/NewLearningCommunities/>

A total of 21 looked after children had by now been identified. However, we had expected to find around 50 children. Further discussion with the secondary school's pastoral care team took place, and this included providing an explanation of the 'looked after at home' category. This discussion helped us to understand the difficulties that school staff experience in being clear which pupils are looked after. We explained that we were interested also in those children who were looked after but not provided with accommodation in the community (i.e. in foster care or children's units) and who can be looked after at home with their families, or with relatives or friends, because they have supervision requirements resulting from a Children's Hearing. The reference to care provided by relatives proved to be confusing, since the pastoral care team initially thought this category might include more than 100 children, a figure which turned out to include a significant number of children known to be cared for by relatives as a result of private agreements within extended families.

Following clarification about the 'looked after' definition, data forms for 28 children in the looked after at home category were completed and returned at the end of November 2006. The total population of looked after children in the learning community was confirmed as 49. The distribution of looked after children is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Looked after children enrolled in the schools

	Number	%
Pre-school establishments	4	8
Primary schools	11	23
Secondary school	34	69
Total	49	100

The primary schools and the secondary school were asked to provide some follow-up information about the children in December 2007, approximately 12 months after the last of the data sheets in the first wave of collection were returned. The Pre-5 establishments were not asked for follow-up data, as it was expected that the children would have moved on to primary schools. Where a child was no longer on the school roll, DSMs were asked to provide information about the move. It was not an intention in the follow-up to collect data about young people who had come on to the school roll after the initial data collection, though the schools were asked to provide information for any looked after pupils who had come in to S1 or P1, from primary schools or pre-5 establishments within the learning community, as data would already have been collected for these children. Follow-up information showed that:

- Twenty pupils for whom data had been collected in the first wave had left or moved school outside the learning community at follow-up. Schools were not therefore able to provide any follow-up information for these pupils.
- One pupil who had attended a primary school in the previous year was thought to have transferred to the secondary school, but no follow-up information was received from the secondary school about this pupil.

- None of the primary schools provided data for the four children who had previously been registered with pre-5 establishments.
- Follow-up data forms for 10 other pupils were not returned by the cut-off point. We were unable in the time available to seek more information about these pupils.
- A total of 15 follow up forms were received, representing 14 pupils now at the secondary school and for one pupil still at a primary school.

3.3 The young people

In this section we provide a summary of information taken from the completed data forms.

3.3.1 General information

Of the 49 young people, there were 24 boys and 25 girls. In the secondary school, there were more looked after girls (20) than boys (14), while for the primary-aged children there were seven boys and four girls. In the pre-5 establishments, there were three boys and one girl. The age ranges at the time of collecting the initial data were: pre-5 (age 3 to age 4); primary (age 6 to age 12); secondary (age 12 to age 16). At the time of follow up the children were one year older. All of the children were recorded as either 'white Scottish' or 'white British'.

3.3.2 Care details

The schools were asked to provide information about the looked after status of the pupils. The analysis indicated that seven pupils were known to be looked after under a child protection measure, three pupils had a supervision requirement 'away from home' (residential care), eight pupils had a supervision requirement 'at home' and one pupil was accommodated under Section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (i.e. voluntary care). However, for 30 of the 49 (61%) either no information was provided or else 'don't know' was recorded. We do not know whether this information had not been transferred from the social work care planning materials, or whether it was also not recorded in the social work records either.

We were also interested to know whether schools had information about the underlying reasons for the children becoming looked after. This information was indeed known for all of the pupils. Multiple reasons were given for 14 (29%) of the pupils. The most common reasons given for the remaining 35 (71%) related to drug or alcohol misuse by parents (16; 33%) and lack of parental care (12; 25%). Two pupils were looked after to provide the families with respite care. Five pupils were looked after for more specific reasons: offence committed against a sibling; death of parent or guardian; beyond parental control; offences committed against the child; parental mental health problems.

In terms of care placements, the most common arrangement for the pupils in the study was that they were living with one or both parents on a supervision order (26 pupils or 53% of the total). A further 13 (27%) pupils were living with relatives, six (12%) with foster carers, and three (6%) pupils were accommodated in a local authority residential unit. In one case the school was unable to provide care placement details. Schools were also asked to provide information about the number of separate care episodes the pupils had been through: in 37 cases of the total 49 (75%), schools were not able to provide this information (or did not complete the question for some other unknown reason). Of the remaining 12 cases, seven pupils (14%) had experienced only one episode of care. Three pupils had experienced two episodes; one pupil had experienced three episodes, and the remaining pupil had experienced more than four separate episodes of care.

3.3.3 Care planning

Communication with social work services

Schools were asked to provide information about the extent to which they had engaged with the *Looking After Children* materials⁷: firstly whether the school had been provided with information from any part of these materials; and secondly, whether the schools themselves had been involved in providing information for the materials.

For the majority of pupils in the study (30; 61%), our respondents said that the schools had not been provided with any information from the *Looking After Children* materials. For 14 pupils (29%), information had been provided and for five pupils (10%) respondents were unsure. The pre-5 sector respondents were clearer than those in the primary schools and secondary school about whether they had received information from the materials for each of their children. Respondents were able to provide a definitive 'yes' or 'no' answer for all four pre-5 children, for nine (82%) of the primary pupils, and for 31 (91%) of the secondary school pupils. The pre-5 sector respondents reported that they had also been provided with information by social workers from the *Looking After Children* materials for all of their looked after children, while information was provided for only two (18%) of the primary pupils and eight (24%) of the secondary school pupils.

Schools had been involved in providing information for the *Looking After Children materials* in only 24 (49%) of cases. In four cases the member of staff completing the form was unsure. The pre-5 establishments had provided information for all of their looked after children, while information had been provided for four (36%) of the primary school pupils, and 16 (47%) of the secondary school pupils.

⁷ The 'Looking After Children in Scotland: Good Parenting, Good Outcomes' materials are used by social workers to facilitate information gathering, planning, assessment and review for looked after children. Information about the materials and a report of research on a file audit can be accessed here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/06/19439/38253>

On this analysis, the information transfer in relation to the *Looking After Children* materials seemed to be mainly from schools to social work. For example, in the case of the secondary school information was received for eight children, whereas the school provided information for 16 children.

We were interested to know about communication between the schools and social work services in relation to care planning. For 40 pupils (82%), the school had contact details for social workers. For eight pupils (16%) the school did not have contact details, and for one pupil there was uncertainty about whether the details had been provided. The pre-5 sector had contact details for social workers for all their looked after children, the primary schools for only four children (36%), while the secondary school had this information for 32 (94%) of their pupils.

Respondents were asked to describe communications with social work services. Responses were provided in respect of 34 (69%) of the pupils. Twelve comments were positive (typically describing frequent or effective communication), 12 comments described limited or inconsistent contact, and 10 comments described negative communication (typically describing little or no contact, or unsatisfactory contact). Illustrative comments are shown below.

- Three comments describing positive communication:

Excellent communication with SWD.

Frequent / relevant contact.

Regular telephone conversations and meetings between myself and social worker. Social worker also attended meeting in school on pupil's return from exclusion to discuss support plan...

- Three comments describing limited communication:

Patchy. I feel I could be kept more informed at times.

Contactable. Discussion before reviews. Some visits.

Occasionally difficult to make contact.

- Three comments describing negative communication:

Contact is minimal by [social worker]. Relatives caring for child have expressed concern over limited contact with [social worker].

If they need something they are in contact. The school can't find anything out though. Someone always has a day off and a lot of job sharing goes on. Very low [level of] communication.

Student social worker just finished placement. School hears nothing. At last review there was no [social worker] present.

Approximately one year after receiving the initial pupil data forms we attempted to collect some follow-up information and details were received in respect of 15 pupils. In relation to communication with social work services, the perceptions of the respondents indicated that:

- Communication was originally positive and stayed the same in one case
- Communication seemed to improve in two cases
- Communication was originally negative and stayed the same in five cases
- Communication seemed to decline in two cases
- Five forms could not be compared as no data was provided either initially or in the follow up

Communication with parents and carers

We also asked about the level and effectiveness of communication between the schools and parents / carers. Information was given for 35 (70%) of the pupils and the experience was regarded as mostly positive. For 23 cases comments were positive or very positive while the other 12 comments described limited or negative communication.

- Three comments describing positive communication:
Excellent links between carer and school.
Good communication. Continual meetings. School supporting the family...
Excellent. Carer regularly attends nurture meetings, class teacher meetings and head teacher meetings.
- Three comments describing limited or negative communication:
Difficult at times.
...It has been very difficult to liaise with mother.
Doesn't open door to anyone.

Perceptions of changes in communication at the follow-up point were as follows:

- Communication was originally positive and stayed the same in three cases
- Communication seemed to improve in three cases
- Communication was originally negative and stayed the same in two cases
- Communication seemed to decline in one case
- Six forms could not be compared as no data was provided either initially or in the follow up

3.3.4 Health characteristics

Respondents were asked about the health characteristics of their looked after pupils, including involvement they had had with various health professionals and whether there had been any health issues. Eleven pupils (22%) had had contact with a school nurse, while only one pupil was reported as having been seen by a specialist looked after children's nurse. However, there was uncertainty about contact with a school nurse in the case of 10 pupils (20%) and for 21 pupils (43%) in relation to specialist looked after children's nurse.

In relation to health needs screening, it was reported that 10 pupils (20%) had been screened, nine (18%) had not, and for 30 pupils (61%), there was uncertainty. Comments related to health issues were given for only 10 pupils, suggesting that this information was not known in most cases. Some examples of the comments are provided below.

Has self harmed. Involved with drugs and alcohol. Generally a healthy child though.

Pupil's parent has advised of asthma as a major reason for school absence.

Generally healthy but several absences through minor ailments.

Child first accommodated due to failure to thrive, however paediatrician has decided child has gained enough weight and will always be a smaller child.

Child has experienced difficulty with his bowels. Health staff were concerned mother did not provide appropriate diet.

Generally health ok, although looks 'slight' in build and under weight.

3.3.5 Educational characteristics

Attendance

Table 2 shows attendance rates for all looked after pupils in the study. Most pupils had attendance rates above 71%, almost evenly divided between the 71-90% attendance band (12 pupils; 25%) and the 90-100% band (14 pupils; 29%) who attended 90% of the time or higher. Five pupils (10%) were recorded as having 100% attendance. In four cases (8%) the respondent did not know the attendance rate of the pupil. Attendance of looked after children in Scotland averages at 87%, compared with 93% for those not looked after. Children looked after at home have a lower average rate of attendance (84%) compared with those who are accommodated (92%)⁸. Therefore the pupils in our case study had attendance rates similar to the national average.

⁸ See <http://openscotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/11160723/0>

Table 2: Attendance rates for looked after pupils

Attendance rate (%)	Number of pupils
0-10	2
11-30	4
31-50	5
51-70	8
71-90	12
91-100	14
Unknown	4
Total	49

The open-ended comments from our respondents provide an insight into the difficulties faced by looked after pupils. The following illustrative comments relate to pupils with less than 70% attendance.

Since beginning this school pupil's attendance and timekeeping has caused concern. In recent weeks attendance has broken down completely.

Pupil is school refuser. [Same phrase used to describe five pupils]

Virtual non-attender.

Child's attendance erratic before becoming looked after and accommodated.

Improvements since moving to father.

This child's attendance was previously quite erratic when in the care of previous relatives. Attendance and punctuality now improved since child's change of supervision to other relatives.

. Follow up information in relation to attendance showed that:

- Attendance was good initially and stayed about the same in three cases.
- No pupils increased their level of attendance.
- Attendance was bad initially and stayed the same in three cases.
- There was a decrease in level of attendance in nine cases.

Attainment

We asked primary and secondary school respondents to provide details of 5-14 National Assessments in reading, writing and mathematics to give a very basic description of the attainment of the pupils in comparison with the minimum expected levels expected for their educational stage. Table 3 on the following page shows both information about the expected levels for most children at different school stages and also a comparison between the assessed levels for looked after children and non-looked after children nationally in 2003. This

information has only been made available publicly once and is no longer collected as a result of the developments associated with Curriculum for Excellence. The table shows clearly the overall low achievement of looked after pupils compared with their non-looked after peers.

Table 3: National Assessment Data, Scotland 2003⁹

School stage	Level attained	English Reading		English Writing		Maths	
		Not LAC	LAC	Not LAC	LAC	Not LAC	LAC
P2	A or above	52%	29%	42%	20%	76%	57%
P3	A or above	88%	74%	85%	69%	95%	89%
P4	B or above	81%	56%	75%	50%	79%	52%
P5	B or above	92%	73%	88%	64%	92%	73%
P6	C or above	86%	59%	75%	40%	80%	46%
P7	D or above	73%	34%	60%	20%	69%	24%
S1	D or above	74%	42%	65%	30%	70%	31%
S2	E or above	59%	15%	50%	12%	53%	12%

Table 4 below provides a summary of national assessment data for the primary and secondary age pupils in our sample. The columns show the numbers of pupils reported as having been tested and having met the expected levels, compared with the numbers who have not met the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The four pre-5 children are of course not included. Also, no information was provided for one primary pupil and for three of the secondary pupils, giving a total of 41 pupils for whom 5-14 data were available. No information was provided about writing for one P7 (primary) pupil and one S1 (secondary) pupil. Clearly, as a result of the small sample size, the data are not useful for generalisations about looked after children. However, they do illustrate the low performance of the older children, conforming to the national picture, and highlight the difficulties that looked after children are likely to have in coping in secondary school subjects in general, as well as in English and mathematics.

Table 4: National Assessment Data for the Case Study Sample

School Stage	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
P1-3	3 out of 3	3 out of 3	3 out of 3
P4-5	0 out of 1	1 out of 1	0 out of 1
P6	2 out of 2	2 out of 2	2 out of 2
P7-S1	6 out of 8	3 out of 6	4 out of 8
S2 and over	6 out of 27	5 out of 27	5 out of 27
N	41	39	41

⁹ See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/10/20121/45478>

Our respondents mostly did not provide additional information in the open-ended question related to attainment, but the comments that were provided helped to illustrate the disadvantages of looked after pupils, though the comments were not all negative.

Underachieving massively due to fragmented attendance through exclusion/behaviour. (S2 pupil)

Pupil has ability but erratic attendance and low commitment to learning may hinder academic performance. (S4 pupil)

Battle between [nurture group] and classroom. Misses some maths and reading for nurture but trying to balance her out, bring up her social side. Now wants to learn, enjoys the praise... (P4)

Had extra support in maths to attain Level C (national average). (P7 pupil)

Excellent report card. (S3 pupil)

Softer measures

The data form provided space for comments about softer measures, such as the application, motivation, confidence and self-esteem of the pupils. The forms were generally not completed in great detail, presumably due to questionnaire completion fatigue. For this reason, and also because of the relatively small sample of children, it is not possible to make generalisations about the personal competence of the young people as observed within the school context. Nevertheless, the teachers' comments provide some insight into their perceptions of the young people, and their strengths and difficulties. There were few truly positive comments of the kind illustrated by the examples below.

Excellent worker. Wants to work in science. Good self esteem but does not want any attention regarding LAAC [looked after and accommodated] status.

Fairly low self esteem on entry from primary school but now blossoming.

Most comments, however, were more indicative of difficulties or challenges.

Pupil may appear to lack confidence but when in her own environment is fine. Pupil may appear to lack motivation but can make progress despite attendance difficulties.

Pupil generally works well. On the surface appears fine but often hides true feelings, in my opinion.

Quiet, hard working, needs lots of encouragement and reassurance.

In S1 no major concern. In S2 attendance became a real issue. Application and motivation varies depending on mood, response to teacher, etc. Quiet but seems confident enough.

Not applying himself to school work. Motivation all geared at social group out of school.

Poor motivation, absolutely no application.

More of an observer than a participant. May well be issues of poor self esteem and lacking in confidence.

Lacks confidence, has dyslexia, poor self esteem.

Doesn't enjoy school. Lacks motivation.

Doesn't enjoy school. Poor motivation and lack of self esteem.

Absolutely no motivation, not attending.

Our teacher respondents were also asked to comment about the relationships the looked after pupils had with those around them, both in and out of school. Again the comments were not particularly detailed and the examples below are provided simply for illustration. Some described more positive relationships:

Excellent, friendly.

Good relationships.

Good relationships with all.

Good for the most part.

Friendly towards peers and staff. A very pleasant [pupil]. Good relationship with [carer].

However, comments indicative of difficulties in relationships or with behaviour were rather more numerous:

Leader amongst peers. Poor behaviour towards staff and parents.

Confrontational with teachers but a really pleasant laid-back boy.

Enjoys good relationships with a few peers and some staff. Tends to hide in the bigger crowd.

Generally ok but can have fall-outs with peers. Has problems with one teacher - probably because she will not participate in lessons.

Good relationships with staff. Difficulties with peers.

Pupil seemed to lack confidence and self esteem. Reluctant to attend certain classes.

Tends to be a bit of a loner. Has acquaintances rather than friends.

Recent exclusion, bullying incident.

Can be confrontational with staff.

3.4 Interviews with the designated senior managers

3.4.1 Introduction

The role of designated senior manager (DSM) in the schools was performed by the head of the pre-5 establishments and the head teacher in all four primary schools. In the secondary school the DSM role was being undertaken by the head teacher at the start of the research period but following a review of management roles in the school a depute head took over this responsibility.

Interviews were conducted with a total of 11 DSMs. These included the two successive occupants of the role in the secondary school and the head of a semi-autonomous autism unit co-located with one of the primary schools. The interviews focussed on the communication / co-ordination aspects of the role, the DSMs' interpretations of the role itself and their awareness of the *How Good Is Our School* (HGIOS) self-evaluation indicators¹⁰.

3.4.2 Communication / co-ordination

Receiving information about the children

Information about the looked after status of pupils is communicated to the schools through the electronic management information system (SEEMIS¹¹) also used to record details of attendance and attainment. Information about a pupil becoming looked after or changing looked after status, and contact details for the carer and social worker, should be seamlessly transferred to the SEEMIS system from a separate electronic management information system used by social work services (CareFirst¹²). A refinement of the system permits the two-way transfer of information, from both social work services and schools, and its deposit in a file-store known as the 'mirror school' which can then be accessed by certain local authority managers for the purposes of monitoring and reporting.

At the time of conducting the fieldwork, the SEEMIS system was in use in the primary schools and in the secondary school but it was not available to the pre-5 sector. Successful communication is dependent on social workers updating the CareFirst system, and doing so as soon as possible after a decision is made relating to a child or young person. However, the local authority's standard practice guidelines indicate that the default arrangement should be for the social worker to inform the DSM directly.

The DSMs expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the electronic transfer of information and also pessimism about whether the situation would improve.

¹⁰ See <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgioslac.pdf>

¹¹ See <http://www.seemis.gov.uk/main/home.php>

¹² See http://www.olmgroup.com/olm/application_store/products/carefirst/carefirst.cfm

Ideally it would be wonderful to have a system...where you could literally have access to social work or health or all the other bodies that would be involved with the child. But it doesn't exist at the moment. I know they're hoping to eventually have something like that, where it would be one file per child and you could literally add in to it. There should have been some kind of information on the system where we could say, oh right, there is social work involvement there, I know who to contact now. But it doesn't work like that. Not at the moment. Whether it will in the future...(Primary School DSM)

Experiences of the provision of information directly by social workers varied. The fact that the secondary school had an attached social worker was regarded as an important advantage: 'We have a dedicated social worker who is very, very good at helping us to keep our lists up to date.' While one primary DSM spoke about having no lack of information from social work, another said: 'It's hit and miss sometimes. You can get a social worker who really keeps you up to date and you know exactly what's going on, but that's a rarity I've got to say.' The same DSM was nonetheless sensitive to the demands on social workers: '...I can't sit here from my perch and knock them. But there isn't a good liaison.' Meanwhile, another spoke about relying on other sources of information.

From social work getting back to us it's hopeless, absolutely hopeless. The only information that's on the SEEMIS about looked after children we've put it there, basically to say that this is a looked after child...Sometimes children do transfer to the school and we're relying on the parent to tell you that there is social work involvement, and sometimes you don't know that a child's on a supervision order until a report's looked for by the Reporter and you think, oh golly, I didn't know about that.

As a result of our interviews with DSMs, we discovered further complications in relation to information transfer. The schools were in transition between an older Unix-based system (known colloquially as 'the blue screen') and a Windows-based system (known colloquially as 'click and go'). Since the blue screens are located solely in school offices and because their operation requires knowledge of Unix commands, in practice this system is used almost exclusively by clerical staff. One important advantage of click and go is that information (with access limiters) can be made available directly to teaching staff who can use networked computers in their own classrooms and offices, although the primary schools were not as advanced as the secondary school in relation to networking. Another advantage of the Window's based operating system is the familiarity to most users of the environment.

At the time of conducting interviews, we found that the information about looked after children was coming to the schools from CareFirst to the older blue screen system. A school clerical officer would need to remember to log into the old system regularly to receive the messages and then log into the new system to amend a pupil's record. This complicated addition to the chain of information transfer clearly opened up the possibility of loss, error or delay. For various reasons - e.g. forgetfulness, lack of awareness of the need to update information regularly or not being told to do it, or lack of knowledge of the steps involved - this important additional administrative exercise did not always happen. Breakdown in

communication resulted in delays in updating records for pupils across the learning community and, we learned from contacts, resulted in a large backlog of records to be up-dated at schools across the local authority. This difficulty in information transfer also contributed to the lack of clarity about which pupils were looked after, referred to in the previous section of this report.

Knowing about the children

The range of staff members who would know that a pupil was looked after varied across the sectors, though there were also differences between schools within the pre-5 and primary sectors. In the pre-5 establishments the information was typically held by four people: the head, deputy head, team leader and the child's key worker. However, heads could make a judgement about sharing information more widely. This would involve releasing certain information to particular colleagues who might have more direct involvement with a child: 'If it was that a child had been abused it would only be on a need to know basis, but staff are very discreet.' In other situations all staff might be provided with information.

We might have a staff meeting and I might disclose certain things about a child and say 'this child is looked after and there are a few wee problems and the behaviour might be a bit iffy,' just so the staff would know why a child is behaving in a certain way. It could be that the child doesn't like big groups, so if he doesn't want to join in don't force the issue so they would not make things worse.

A particular feature of the pre-5 sector was a recent change in policy within the authority so that all suitably qualified staff could be engaged in senior roles, whereas previously only teacher-qualified staff would be considered. It was clear that heads who were themselves teacher-qualified were adjusting to the change in culture where staff members with a child development officer background held promoted posts.

Things have changed quite recently in nurseries though. They've taken teachers out. Whereas before the teacher would probably know as well as the head teacher. So the role of the team leader is changing slightly, so now with the changes she might know a wee bit more than the rest of the staff.

A consistent theme emerging from the interviews with the primary school DSMs was a concern to protect the personal privacy of looked after children and their families, while ensuring that teachers and other relevant staff were properly informed about pupils in their classes: 'Sometimes it's hard to know how much information to give out and how much information to keep quiet.' Most DSMs spoke about sharing information on a 'need to know' basis: 'Only certain people come into contact with them, so therefore it's not fair on the child for everyone to know.' Primary heads were clear that it was necessary for the child's class teacher to have information that might be relevant to the teacher-child relationship. However, they were also aware of the fine distinction between giving essential details and breaching privacy.

The biggest thing is that it's not for general staffroom conversation. It's very much on a need to know basis.

In certain special circumstances all the staff would know that a pupil was looked after. For example, in the small, more intimate setting of the autism unit:

We have to have very close communication with all the children - we can't allow anything to slip between the nets. The children are constantly observed as a matter of course, so all our staff are constantly involved in that. So I think all staff should know.

In an open-plan primary school:

Say for example a child is in a situation where you're told that the natural parent must not have access to that child. Everybody needs to know that because you might have a clerical member of staff or a pupil-support person, unrelated to that child's learning during the day, and someone comes to the door and says 'I'm here to collect "John"', you can't say 'Oh well yes, on you go'. Or they might say, 'I'm his mother'. 'Oh right then John off you go!', when in fact John's mother should not have access to that child.

In a primary school classroom context:

...so often a teacher could say something off the cuff that in ordinary circumstances wouldn't matter. Or if you're doing a talk on drugs, and the child's parents are drug addicts that would have to be handled very carefully.

In the secondary school, the pastoral care system was the vehicle for both the maintenance of security and communication of information. The pastoral care teachers were promoted members of staff (principal teachers) with responsibility for a year group and remained with that group of young people as they progressed through the school. The pastoral care team reported to a deputy head teacher. During the period of the research, the school decided that it was appropriate for this deputy to assume the DSM responsibilities. The DSM was responsible for setting up the communication and reporting procedures and the pastoral care teachers provided direct support to the pupil. The clerical officer in the pastoral care office also had access to information about the young people. Because secondary schools are much larger institutions, deciding which staff should be routinely provided with information about children is a more complex matter. Clearly providing all teachers with full information about all children is unnecessary and risks breaching privacy. However, just how much should a teacher know about the children who are in their classes?

...we have an 'at risk' register that is given to all heads of department and is updated on a regular basis...most staff would know of a child's situation, but not the details. If there was anything significant to report then we would choose who to tell and how to tell them. It's to do with confidentiality really but obviously if something awful kicks off then staff need to know to be aware that the child or

young person might come in to school quite troubled and to try and support them as best they can. (Secondary School DSM)

The manner in which information is communicated to teachers is also important. DSMs were clear that while certain details, such as the legal background and care history could be accessed from files by those deemed to 'need to know', advice for teachers about relationships in the school context needed to be provided at first hand.

...the pastoral care team member and/or myself would go round the staff and let them know, actually speak to them...we'd normally go at it from 'this is a child who needs extra support.' (Secondary School DSM)

The deputies would know simply from a management perspective. They could look at the files but I generally just give them a brief summary and say: 'keep a wee eye at playtimes, lunchtimes, or if you're called to the classroom because there is a problem...bear in mind that the child has gone through such and such.' (Primary School DSM)

We asked the DSMs whether they would typically discuss with looked after pupils the communication of information or other aspects of being looked after. In the secondary school, this responsibility was normally devolved to the pastoral care team. In the pre-5 establishments, age generally precluded direct discussion with the children, although it was regarded as good practice to explain the role of the key worker and to begin to include children as much as possible in planning for their development. Discussion about communication of information would tend to be with the carer: 'I would explain that I would have the child's file and that I would have all the pertinent information so that they would know to come to me first.' Having good lines of communication with carers becomes important when complex situations arise.

...maybe a parent had turned up at the carer's home and there were scenes caused, or the child wanted to go on a visit and something had happened on that visit. We would expect to know because that could have quite an effect on the child's behaviour and demeanour. And the more information we've got the easier it is for us to deal with the child.

In pre-5 establishments, typically the key worker would make the direct relationship with birth parents. The DSM could become involved where a child started to be looked after for some reason, or where:

...social work are working at rehabilitating the child back into the family. We would act as a contact point for access to the child. We've got accommodation where the parent could maybe come and see the child or on some occasions the family or the parent has been asked to be involved in the collection of the child from nursery.

All the primary school DSMs said they would involve a looked after child in arrangements for communication about their circumstances, but that the extent and nature of involvement would depend on the child's age. One DSM pointed out that the educational background form for the Reporter to the Children's Panel contains a question about whether the report has been discussed with the child or carer. Another said that the child would be involved in the formal review of progress which happened once per school term.

We go through the care plans with the child. They do their part, we do ours which is the educational assessment part of the plan, and that's gone through with the unit, the care workers at a formal meeting with the child. So that the child knows what targets and goals are being set.

Discussion with the child was a routine feature in the autism unit attached to a primary school, where all children, parents and carers were involved in individualised educational plans (IEPs) and future needs assessments¹³. DSMs spoke about wanting to avoid unnecessarily invading privacy, while providing appropriate emotional support when needed.

This child will talk quite a lot about her present home situation with her carer. It's not a matter of 'let's talk about this.' There have been occasions when she's been getting picked up by social work to visit her birth parents and on quite a few occasions it didn't happen, for various reasons...I had spoken to her about that a few times and asked how she felt about it...she was probably quite blasé about it sometimes – other times she'd say, 'I'm quite sad.' Her mother was having another child and she was quite excited about the baby, though the baby was taken away from mum. So there was a whole load of upset around that, though I would only bring that up if there was a reason to bring it up, if I had to say, 'I'm really sorry but you can't go and visit your mum today because this has happened. But I'll phone [your carer] and she'll come and get you. How do you feel about that? Are you a bit disappointed?' Some days she'll say 'No it's OK.' But I would only bring up the conversation if there was a purpose to it, to give her information or to try to explain something.

Communication with carers

In the pre-5 sector, contact with carers and parents was typically conducted informally: 'Communication would mostly be reactive to how the child is and how the child is doing.' However, all of the DSMs said they would follow up a matter by telephone, note or letter, depending on a judgement about the appropriate degree of formality required. As in the other sectors, parents' meetings are held twice per year and non-urgent issues could be discussed at these. One DSM told us that the lack of a formal system for communicating with parents/carers had been the subject of comment by inspectors (HMIE), but the DSM felt that there had been a lack of guidance about this aspect.

¹³ For more information about additional support arrangements for pupils in Scotland, refer to the Learning and Teaching Scotland web site:
<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Inclusiveeducation/aboutinclusiveeducation/researchandreports/approachesinclusiveeducation.asp>

I think it would be better to have a clear system for pre-5 now we're involved in the new learning communities and if the primaries and secondaries do have a set way of dealing with it, it would make sense if we adopted it.

An example of more formal communication is the review meeting involving education, social work and psychological services staff, and the carer would also routinely be invited to participate. Meetings would be formally minuted and letters sent to all those invited to attend. However, the primary and secondary DSMs also emphasised the importance of developing good, informal relationships with carers.

I always had a system whereby if they were picking up at the end of the day they always came to see me. Now of it's just to say that they're fine, they're doing well, it can be in the playground, but if there was more than that we would go to my room and just chat through it.

One primary school DSM gave an example of difficulties in seeking to develop a relationship with the carer in a residential context, and demonstrating both the importance of being persistent and also how easily it would be to abandon attempts to make contact where communication does not run smoothly.

The new wee lad I've got in: I've spoken to a few different people because he's in social work care up the road, but I feel I've not really...it's 'Oh I'm just the house parent, this is my shift,' and every time I phone I speak to someone different, so I'm not happy with that. I'll need to do something about that until I get a link person. But I need to get social work in here and the parent carer and get the support plan set up and get thinking about things.

Involvement in case conferences and children's hearings

Two of the three pre-5 DSMs had direct experience of case conferences or children's hearings¹⁴. It was not the practice of pre-5 staff to attend hearings, though they contributed to reports and received copies. In the primary schools the DSM would normally attend hearings, while in the secondary school the relevant pastoral care teacher would attend, if possible. The teachers said that they found it helpful to have a fuller picture of the child/young person and the family situation.

I've been glad to put that kind of information in and to hear about others. People don't know what's happening in other departments. You need to know that information to maybe change your thinking. At the hearings I have thought, I didn't know that, so it's helpful to be invited.

¹⁴ For more information about the children's hearings system in Scotland, please refer to this government web site: <http://www.childrens-hearings.co.uk/>

During the research period, the new learning community put an Integrated Support Team (IST) in place, including in the membership representatives from all three school sectors, social work services, psychological services and health. The fortnightly meetings were chaired by the DSM of the secondary school. The purpose of the IST was to have a more planned approach to monitoring the support arrangements for looked after children within the community. It was hoped that this more formal approach would help to provide a better interface with the review and the hearings systems, and would help to get around the difficulties which arise because school staff are not always able to rearrange commitments to permit attendance at meetings.

Access to specialist help

The DSMs were very aware of the range of specialist services available and felt generally positive about the additional supports available to them and provided for the children: 'There is a psychologist attached to the school – we phone her for advice. We've got strong links with her.' However, there were also frustrations, tinged with realism, both about the pressure on services and also the sense that some problems are unfortunately beyond help.

Everyone does the bit of support that they can do. Sometimes you feel a wee bit helpless though when you think of all the agencies involved and you think, we can't stop this child failing as they grow up, which is frustrating. You know but quite often it's drug addiction within the family and you can just see that the child is going to go the same way. It's very depressing.

Despite understanding the workload and staffing pressures in specialist services, DSMs felt that the level of response they received was not always satisfactory: 'I know how difficult the resources are for social work but from my own experience, at a lot of meetings social work didn't turn up.' The experience of support from social workers was varied. A consistent complaint from the DSMs was the apparent frequency with which social workers assigned to a child changed, making it difficult to develop a professional relationship. The DSMs were also aware of the case load pressure on educational psychologists but relationships seemed to be easier to develop and maintain, possibly because the psychologists work within the broader education service culture. One pre-5 DSM described more philosophical differences in assumptions about desirable outcomes in decision making.

...social work were pushing for them to go back to the natural birth parents and I felt, as did the psychologist and the health visitor, that it was the worst thing that could happen. But they seemed to think that's where the children belong, with the natural parents, and I felt, as did the psychologist and the health visitor, that it was the worst thing that could happen...We really fought hard with that one and I have heard that the children are still with the gran [grandmother] which really, really pleases me.

Some DSMs spoke about good relationships developed over the years with carers. The secondary school DSM and pastoral care staff spoke very positively about the preventive work being done in the community by a national voluntary organisation project based in the school. Two DSMs described a desire that they could have more direct access to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and one expressed disappointment that a family's GP had been unable to make a referral to a clinical psychologist and had requested that the school make a referral for support from an educational psychologist, a route which the DSM felt would not meet the child's needs.

3.4.3 *Interpreting the role of designated senior manager*

The term 'designated senior manager' was familiar in the primary and secondary sectors where it had been written into the job-specifications of the relevant head teacher or depute head teacher. It was not a term previously familiar to the pre-5 heads. In the secondary school, the head teacher had initially subsumed the role within broader child protection duties but following a review it had become clear that a more appropriate location for the role was with the depute head teacher line managing the pastoral care team. In the primary schools it was assumed that the head teacher would have the DSM responsibility, although some aspects of the role might be delegated to the depute head. None of the DSMs was aware of the existence of the local authority's protocol which included a list of duties ascribed to the role until it was introduced at the training course.

Despite being unfamiliar with the protocol document, the DSMs were mostly able to articulate their understanding of the responsibilities.

Well my role is to make sure that the child is safe, they're well cared for, to alert any agencies that need to be alerted if there is a difficulty, to communicate to try to make things better for them, to work together with other services – so pull together and to be a support team, and to actually make sure that the child is safe and well. (Primary School DSM)

However, there was also uncertainty about the DSM role and worries about whether it was being performed adequately.

I don't think there is anything about DSMs in the job description or handbook...There's no set of rules to follow, I'm just aware, and especially if you are part of the management team you are aware of the rules and responsibilities attached to that. When you know that a child is looked after or cared for, you are particularly aware, especially if there is a care support plan, that there are certain things that have to be in place, and that you need to fulfil your role (Primary School DSM).

I don't think that I would know enough as to whether I'm doing it absolutely correctly...I would welcome some more advice as to the specific role of the designated teacher in Pre-5 ...I think there obviously is a clear role for the team leader as manager to be fully informed. But at the moment I think with most head

teachers it's their role, and they take that forward...I just hope that I would be able to do it full justice and perhaps its something that we need to split down the middle with the team leader. (Pre-5 DSM)

The role was described by some as beginning with an overall, clear knowledge of whom the looked after children are and their home/school lives:

The DSM should know at the drop of a hat who the children are. He or she should know them all, and therefore be a support to them. They shouldn't need to consult anyone else on the basics of it. They should know that the school has in process a plan for each of these children, they should be confident that plan exists, and possibly they might have some kind of additional carer contact. (Secondary School DSM).

Being the conduit for teachers in sharing understanding of the child's home situation was also stressed as being an important element of the role:

Being aware of the whole child as opposed to just the educational side of things. You feel with these children, I'm more concerned about their psychological state. Making them feel happy at school, making them want to come to school and want to learn as well. Giving them a measure of success. (Primary School DSM)

There was also a sense of an organisational aspect to the role, not only in having an overview of the child within the school, but also in liaising with family, carers and various agencies involved with a looked after child.

I suppose I'm mainly a facilitator, in that I make sure there are procedures, pathways and options available to the child, the carer and the teacher...I try to put in as many small steps as possible to make myself more accessible to the child...I'm a hands-on facilitator. I like to be involved. I'd rather be down there and know what's going on. (Primary School DSM)

I think it's about knowing who the children are but not being in their face...Formally and informally tracking them. There is a formality to it in that that first filing cabinet as you come in the door is my locked filing cabinet with the confidential list, the statistics in there of the children and their progress. Names of looked after, looked after and accommodated children, guidance teacher, attendance, exclusion rates, length of exclusion and status. But on a week to week basis I speak to pastoral care and I would maybe check in with the pupils as well if I felt that they maybe needed a bit of extra support. (Secondary School DSM)

Perceptions of the extent to which consideration of the needs of looked after children had impacted on the school's development plan varied. A view shared by a number of DSMs in the primary sector was that this is simply an extension of the arrangements made for all children: 'To me it's just part of the natural process of the school. What I've said with regards to a looked after child applies to any child in the school.' Similarly in the pre-5 establishments it was apparent that formal arrangements for looked after children had not featured in the

development plan, but there was a recognition that this was something which should be reviewed. One primary school DSM was able to articulate in some detail how the needs of looked after pupils impacted on the school's development plan, both in relation to support for learning services and also in monitoring the pupils' progress.

The development plan would be how we're going to develop the curriculum and in part of that it might show up that children who are looked after aren't progressing and that I'll need to look at that specifically and say, well, why aren't they making that same level of progress I'd be expecting them to?

Provision for looked after children did feature in development planning in the secondary school, both at school level in the pastoral care arrangements, and also in individual subject departments' development plans in relation to the provision of support for pupils. The DSM felt that having a clear policy in the school development plan was particularly helpful in making decisions in sensitive situations, citing the case of exclusion from school as an illustration.

...unlike any other exclusion I would know the next day when a looked after child is involved. With regards to looked after and accommodated children, we try never to exclude them. They [pastoral care teachers] would come to me and say, look here's all the data, it's looking like and exclusion, but you're the guy in charge of looked after children...We had an example last year where the staff member wanted blood in a case, you know he wanted a hanging and I refused to give in to him. I explained to him why I wasn't doing it and took a different route. But that was because of knowledge that I was aware of and then was able to go to pastoral care for updates. In that case I had to tell the teacher the reasons but the teacher, by looking at the 'at risk' register should have known that the child was looked after.

Using the self evaluation indicators

We asked the DSMs specifically about use of the *How Good Is Our School?* (HGIOS) self evaluation indicators for assessing the school's provision for looked after pupils. Only two DSMs said they had made use of the indicators, and this was as part of a more general HGIOS audit, rather than one specifically related to provisions for looked after pupils. The pre-5 establishments used the *Child at the Centre*¹⁵ self-evaluation guide, rather than HGIOS.

I am aware of them...I would know where they were if they were needed. (Primary School DSM)

Well I haven't had a great deal of time to use it. I have looked at it. I think at one in-service at the beginning of the year I passed it around. Other than that we haven't used it, it's not in use (Primary School DSM)

I've just had a wee peek in but we haven't actually put that on our development plan or targeted that area, because I thought that we were actually doing ok. But yes I have dipped in to it and I refer to it. (Primary School DSM)

¹⁵ See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2000/06/6177/File-1>

One primary school DSM said the indicators had been used in a general sense to help with understanding the role of the school in relation to looked after children, even though a formal audit had not been conducted: 'When we very first had children that were looked after, yes it's something we used, but it's not something that we bring out a lot, its awareness raising.'

Some DSMs felt that the indicators would be a resource for monitoring and training, with one suggesting they could be a useful tool for reassuring staff that they are 'on track'.

They really make you think. You can chart your progression with what you think you're doing and what you're actually doing...I've got to say I feel they're pretty thorough. I think it's really important that you're honest. HMI can walk in, and quite rightly so, and if you say to them, no, look, we don't think we're doing well enough here but this is what we're going to do about it....As long as you can show evidence that you are actually trying to improve things, I mean we've always got to improve. I don't know anyone that says, well, we've done it all. (Primary School DSM).

It does raise awareness, and I think it makes people think about specifics rather than just the [looked after] umbrella. And especially for new teachers coming in, maybe that is an argument for it to be used every year, because obviously there is a changeover of staff, so it's making sure that new staff are up-to-date and aware of what they are looking at specifically. I think it's important that awareness is raised every year. (Primary School DSM).

However, as we indicated earlier in this report, there was resistance to our suggestion that the schools might conduct a formal audit of their procedures and support arrangements for looked after pupils using the indicators, specifically in connection with the case study research. This was not in any way unwillingness to co-operate, but simply borne out of a feeling that schools had been 'quality assured to death' recently and this quality fatigue was clearly keenly felt. Since the case study research had been prompted by the existence of this national guide to self-evaluation, it was disappointing that we were unable to learn more about its use. Nevertheless, the research provided access to very valuable data about the support of looked after children in the school setting, particularly about the arrangements to inform schools about who is looked after and about the role of the DSM.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS

The research began with the twin aims of describing the experience of using self-evaluation indicators to evaluate and improve practice in relation to the education of looked after children and young people, and examining the extent to which use of the indicators is related to improved outcomes for looked after children and young people in the study population. As the research progressed, for reasons described in this report, it developed into a more general study of how the learning community approached the support of looked after children at school, providing particular insights into the role of the designated senior manager (DSM).

It would be surprising if the characteristics of a small case study sample were to mirror those of the wider Scottish population of looked after children they are drawn from, and in any case the research did not aim to consider demographic characteristics. It is nevertheless useful to know the extent to which our sample is similar to the national characteristics of looked after children.

The even gender balance of 24 boys and 25 girls in the case study sample is only a little different from the 55% male / 45% female split found nationally. The age spread is, however, a little different. Our sample included less than half the proportion of pre-5 looked after children found in the national population and just over twice the proportion of secondary age pupils. The lack of any children from a minority ethnic background (2% nationally) is also not typical. Also atypical is the distribution of type of care placement. While 53% of our sample was looked after at home, the national figure is 10% lower. The proportion looked after by relatives in our sample (27%) is much higher than the national figure (15%), while the proportion looked after away from home (18%) is considerably lower than the national figure (38%). The irony in the case study statistics is that they tend to emphasise the common misperception in schools which characterise the looked after child as being 'in care', i.e. accommodated in foster care or residential care settings.

The high proportion of the pupils in the sample for whom 'don't know' was recorded in relation to the precise looked after status (30 out of 49, or 61%) is considerably in excess of the 3.6% for whom this information is missing in the national statistics. The explanation is likely to lie in variations in the extent of the provision of background information from social work services to schools. The problems in communication between schools and social work services noted in relation to the *Looking After Children* materials was also found in a larger audit by the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) of the files of accommodated children (Vincent, 2004). The SWIA researchers highlighted problems in sharing information between social work and education agencies and in some cases they found evidence that agreed protocols for exchanging information within local authorities had not been implemented. In a worryingly high proportion of our sample of pupils (two-thirds of cases), school respondents felt that communication with social work services was either inconsistent or unsatisfactory, while the communication with parents or carers was positive in two-thirds of cases.

The information returned in some sections of the extensive pupil data forms was limited and therefore we were not able to build up as detailed a picture of the children and young people as we had hoped. In some cases, this was undoubtedly due either to children presenting no particular difficulties for schools, or symptomatic of disengagement from education. The lack of detail in information about the educational achievements of looked after children is consistent with other research findings (Jacklin, Robinson, & Torrance, 2006). Completion of the forms, however, was not a priority for our teacher respondents who had many competing demands on their time and it would be improper to draw firm conclusions without further probing into the details of the educational experience of the young people. We were nevertheless grateful for the co-operation we received and for the considerable detail with which the schools' DSMs answered our interview questions.

The research highlighted problems in relation to being clear about which pupils were actually looked after, particularly in relation to the looked after 'at home' category and in the transfer of information. This obviously has important implications for the extent to which schools can fulfil their corporate parent responsibilities. The difficulty in the receipt of information from social work services experienced by schools was a particularly disappointing finding, though it mirrors the finding from a larger sample by Jacklin, Robinson & Torrance of 'ambiguities and discrepancies' in the information in children's files. We have learned that the problems with the electronic management information systems are likely to be resolved soon, which is encouraging, although the DSMs had been told that the system was working efficiently at the time of our interviews. It is also clear that schools should expect to receive a consistent level of service from all social workers in relation to the communication of information relevant to the care planning process.

The DSMs were critical in general of the degree of support provided to schools by social work services, although examples of positive relationships with individual social workers were given. There was understanding of the workload and caseload pressures of social workers but frustration that the level of response was not always satisfactory.

The general view among the DSMs was that information should be shared with other teachers on a 'need to know' basis. In pre-5 establishments the fact that a child was looked after was known to the key worker and in primary schools a child's class teacher would also know. In the secondary school, the year group pastoral care principal teacher would know that a pupil was looked after. Also in the secondary school, an 'at risk' register alerts heads of subject department, and therefore class teachers, about potential vulnerabilities, though without disclosing details. All the DSMs regarded it as important to discuss arrangements for communicating information about home circumstances with the child or young person concerned.

It was clear that the DSMs accepted the importance of their organisational role in coordinating the support for looked after children attending their schools, and that they were offering considerable support in a range of valuable ways. Although there was a general lack of awareness of the local authority's joint protocol for looked after children, the managers had worked out for themselves a meaningful

understanding of the DSM role. There was, however, uncertainty about whether the role was being interpreted correctly, and the extent to which the specific needs of looked after children were reflected in school development plans varied between the schools. The pre-5 establishments were not entirely clear that they were part of the formal arrangements for looked after children within education, though this was perhaps part of a more general process of developing understanding about the culture of the learning community encompassing services for children from early years to adolescence.

The primary and secondary DSMs were aware of the HGIOS self-evaluation indicators but had not used them to conduct formal audits of their support arrangements. Some had used the document to help with a more general understanding of their role. The pre-5 sector was not using the HGIOS framework (though they were using *Child at the Centre*) and this means that there may be a need to clarify the arrangements for supporting looked after children throughout the entire learning community. The implementation of an Integrated Support Team (IST), with fortnightly meetings, was a response both to the national priorities for looked after children and also the more general philosophy of integrated community schools, providing access to a full range of education, social work and health services for children. Although the principal function of the IST was to make decisions about children, the members were also engaged in discussion about their function and relationships. The IST chair told us that the training in general and the self-evaluation indicators in particular had been significant in providing an agenda for development.

The key findings of this small-scale case study of the support arrangements for pupils who are looked after can be summarised as follows.

1. There was lack of clarity about the precise looked after status for a high proportion of the young people in the sample. The exact status was unknown by the school for 30 of the 49 looked after pupils identified.
2. While the schools were mainly clear about which children were looked after and accommodated, there was confusion in relation to the looked after at home category.
3. Information available to schools through the electronic management system (SEEMIS) about looked after children, was not always up to date. The pre-5 sector was not connected to the SEEMIS system.
4. In most cases (30 out of 49), the designated senior managers (DSMs) said they had not been provided with any information from the Looking After Children materials and that they had been involved in providing information in only half of the cases.
5. For two-thirds of the sample of children, DSMs felt that communication with social work services was either inconsistent or unsatisfactory. Although schools usually had contact details for the children's social workers, in eight out of 49 cases this information was missing. The DSMs were concerned about the frequency with which children's social workers changed.

6. There was uncertainty about whether pupils had had any contact with the school nurse in 10 out of 49 cases and for 21 out of 49 cases in relation to contact with a specialist looked after children's nurse.
7. Thirty-one out of 49 pupils had attendance rates of less than 90% and for four pupils the attendance was not recorded. This pattern of poor attendance is similar to the national characteristic of looked after children.
8. The 5-14 National Assessment data for the sample, similarly to national data, confirm how some looked after pupils are at risk of falling behind in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in the older age groups.
9. The term 'designated senior manager' (DSM) was familiar in the primary and secondary sectors but not in the pre-5 sector. However, none of the DSMs was aware of the local authority's protocol for looked after children with its list of suggested duties. While the DSMs were able to articulate understanding of their responsibilities, they worried about whether they were performing the role adequately.
10. The extent to which support for looked after children featured in development planning varied in the pre-5 establishments and primary schools but in the secondary school considerations of the needs had influenced arrangements for pastoral care and department planning.
11. Only two out of 11 DSMs said they had used the *How Good Is Our School* self-evaluation indicators for looked after children, though they indicated that this was done as part of a general audit rather than one specifically related to support for looked after pupils. Awareness of the indicators varied between schools. The DSMs were not keen to conduct an audit solely for the research but there were plans to use them as part of the Integrated Support Team Meeting.

This case study research has identified shortcomings in the provision of information, in communication and in support for schools, but it has also highlighted the importance of the DSM role in relation to knowing about individual looked after pupils and in facilitating the arrangements for their education. The shortcomings have clear implications for the first of the eight key messages in *Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better* (Scottish Executive, 2007), i.e. the importance of the corporate parent role. There need to be efficient arrangements in place so schools know who their looked after children are, including contact details for social workers and relevant care planning information from the *Looking After Children* materials.

The importance of the DSM role is also one of the eight key messages of *We Can and Must Do Better* and national guidance will be provided for local authorities and schools. Clearly the role needs to include responsibilities for monitoring attendance and attainment, for liaison with carers and for helping to arrange specialist learning support and medical attention if required. Two policy developments are important in the context of improved provision. The first of these is the maturing of the concept of the Integrated Community School which provides a framework for collaborative working. The use of the Integrated

Support Team Meeting (IST) both in planning the support for individual children and in discussing the arrangements for looked after pupils generally within the learning community is a positive development. The second policy development is the government's aim to introduce the integrated children's services planning framework, as proposed in the Implementation Plan for *Getting It Right for Every Child*¹⁶.

The research has also identified a number of areas for further inquiry. For example: observing the operation and development of the IST; closer examination of the way in which information about individual children is handled within schools; consideration of the support provided for learning where looked after pupils have fallen considerably behind in basic skills; examining support arrangements for looked after children in pre-school / early education; learning more about the perspectives of the young people themselves in relation to their experience of education and the role of learning in their development.

¹⁶ See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/131460/0031397.pdf> for the Implementation Plan and <http://www.iriss.ac.uk/opencontent/assessment/index.html> for useful training materials related to the Assessment Triangle.

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APPENDIX 1: THE RESEARCH TEAM AND ADVISORY GROUP

Principal Researcher: Graham Connelly
Researchers: Judy Furnivall
 Lindsay Siebelt

Advisory Group

Andrew Kendrick, SIRCC
Alison Ritchie, Save The Children (Scotland)
Anne Gibson, HMI
Anne-Margaret Mitchell, Scottish Government
Denise Carroll, Kibble School
Frankie Ingram, Teacher
Graham McCann, Scottish Government
Jackie Dougall, NHS Glasgow
Lesley Mortimer, Glasgow City Council
Lorna Walker, HMI
Pauline Boyce, Who Cares? Scotland
Sandy Cunningham, Glasgow City Council

APPENDIX 2: TWO DAY TRAINING COURSE OUTLINE

Day one

- Who the looked after children/young people are
- Looked after children's experiences of education.
- Communication and confidentiality.
- CareFirst and SEEMIS.

Day two

- Advocacy for looked after children
- Being a corporate parent
- Health aspects
- Care planning for education
- Auditing the educational environment for looked after children

APPENDIX 3: PUPIL DATA RECORDING FORM

Looked After Children: Evaluating the use of self-evaluation indicators

Pupil data collection pro-forma

Part A: General information

1. Child code
2. Date of Birth
3. Gender M F
4. Ethnic group (Please circle one number)
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. White British | 2. White Irish |
| 3. White Scottish | 4. Irish Traveller |
| 5. Other White background | 6. Black or Black British – Caribbean |
| 7. Black or Black British – African | 8. Other Black background |
| 9. Asian or Asian British – Indian | 10. Asian or Asian British – Pakistani |
| 11. Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 12. Chinese or Other Ethnic background Chinese |
| 13. Other Asian background | 14. Mixed – White and Black Caribbean |
| 15. Mixed – White and Black African | 16. Mixed – White and Asian |
| 17. Other Mixed background | 88. Other _____ |
| 99. Not known | |

Part B: Care details

5. Statutory reason(s) for being looked after (Please circle one number)
- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Accommodated under Section 25 | |
| 2. Parental Responsibilities Order | |
| 3. Supervision Requirement at Home | |
| 4. Supervision Requirement away from Home (excluding Residential Establishment) | |
| 5. Supervision Requirement away from Home (in a Residential Establishment but excluding secure) | |
| 6. Warrant | 7. Child Protection Measure |
| 8. Criminal Court Provision | 9. Freed for Adoption |
| 88. Other _____ | |
| 99. Unknown | |

6. Underlying reason(s) for being looked after (Circle as many as apply)

1. Beyond parental control
2. Death of parent or guardian
3. Illness or hospitalisation of parent or guardian
4. Parent or guardian in prison
5. Respite care
6. Lack of parental care
7. Offence by child
8. Offences committed against child
9. Drug or alcohol misuse by parent or others
10. Drug or alcohol misuse by child
- 88 Other _____
- 99 Unknown

7. Space for comment

8. Type of care placement (Please circle one number)

1. Living with relatives
2. Accommodated with foster carers
3. Accommodated in local authority residential unit
4. Accommodated in voluntary organisation residential unit
5. Living with parent(s) (i.e. supervision order)
88. Other _____
99. Unknown

9. Is child looked after by another local authority? Y N

10. If YES, which local authority? _____

[If NO, go to question 13]

11. If YES, have there been any difficulties in co-ordinating arrangements between the school and other local authority?

Y N

12. Please describe

13. In your view, is this placement the preferred choice to meet the needs of the child?

Y N D/K

14. Space for comment (e.g. reason for view, preferred placement)

15. Are special arrangements made to transport the child to school? Y N

16. If YES, please give details of reason and journey.

17. How many episodes of care has the child had?

1 2 3 4 >4 Unknown (99)

18. Date of start of current episode of care

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

19. Number of care placements in current episode

1 2 3 4 >4 Unknown (99)

20. Space for comment about number of care placement and moves

Part C: Care Plan

21. Has the school **been provided with** information from any part of the Looking After Children materials? Y N

22. If YES, indicate which of the following apply: (Please circle all that apply)

1. Essential core record and placement agreement
2. Essential background record
3. Care plan
4. Day to day placement arrangements
5. Review of the care plan
6. Assessment and action records
88. Other _____

23. Space for comment (e.g. copies of forms in file, details extracted from documents provided by social worker, DSM's notes of meeting or phone call):

24. Has the school **been involved in providing** information for any part of the Looking After Children materials? Y N

25. If YES, indicate which: (Please circle all that apply)

- 1 Essential core record and placement agreement
- 2 Essential background record
- 3 Care plan
- 4 Day to day placement arrangements
- 5 Review of the care plan
- 6 Assessment and action records
- 88 Other _____

26. Space for comment (e.g. how school was involved etc.)

27. Does the school have contact details available for the pupil's social worker? Y N

28. Space for comment about communication with social worker.

29. Space for comment about communication with carers and parent(s).

30. Who receives school reports/invitations to parents' evenings? (Please circle all that apply)

- 1. Parents
- 2. Mother
- 3. Father
- 4. Other family member: _____
- 5. Foster carer
- 6. Residential carer
- 7. Social worker
- 88. Other: _____
- 99. Not known

31. Space for comments

32. Which professionals are currently involved with child? (Please circle all that apply)

1. Educational psychologist
2. Child and adolescent psychiatrist
3. Social worker
4. Foster carer
5. Residential carer
6. Speech therapist
7. LAAC support teacher
8. Interrupted learner service
- 88 Other _____
99. Not known

33. Space for comment:

34. Space for comment about school's links with home/carer

Part D: Health

Is there or has there been:

35. School nurse involvement? Y N D/K

36. LAC nurse involvement? Y N D/K

37. Other health professional involvement? Y N D/K

38. If YES please detail (e.g. paediatrician) _____

39. Has there been health needs screening? Y N D/K

40. Space for comment about health issues:

Part E: Educational assessment

Total number of schools attended at each level of school

41. Pre-school

1 2 3 4 >4 Unknown (99)

42. Primary school

1 2 3 4 >4 Unknown (99)

43. Secondary school

1 2 3 4 >4 Unknown (99)

44. Current stage in school (Please circle one number)

1. Pre-school

2. P1 3. P2 4. P3 5. P4 6. P5 7. P6 8. P7
 9. S1 10. S2 11. S3 12. S4 13. S5 14. S6

Number of absences August 2005-June 2006, by reason (SEEMIS codes in brackets)

45. Sickness without education provision

46. Very late (K)

47. Authorised holidays (E)

48. Exceptional domestic circumstances (Q)

49. Other authorised (A)

50. Unauthorised holidays (G)

51. Truancy or unexplained absence (U)

52. Exceptional domestic circumstances (unauthorised) (R)

53. Other unauthorised (O)

54. Temporary exclusion (X)

55. Rate of attendance August 2005-June 2006 %

56. Space for comment about attendance, absence and/or exclusion, and punctuality

57. Number of behaviour reports August 2005-June 2006

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58. Space for comment (e.g. explanation, management plan)

59. Number of Merit awards or other positive reports received August 2005-June 2006

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60. Space for comment (e.g. details)

61. Is an Educational Support Plan (ESP) in place?

Y

N

D/K

62. Current / updated?

Y

N

D/K

66. Parent involved?

Y

N

D/K

64. Child involved?

Y

N

D/K

65. Space for comment

66. Is an Individualised Educational Programme (IEP) in place?

Y

N

D/K

67. Date of last update

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68. Space for comment

69. Is a Record of Needs/Co-ordinated Support Plan in place?

Y

N

D/K

70. Space for comment

71. Is any part of education contracted out to another agency? Y N

72. If YES, which? (Please circle)

1. Further education

88. Other _____

99. Unknown

73. Pre-school assessment data available? Y N

74. Space for writing in key details of assessment

Current 5-14 level (Please circle)

75. Reading: 1. A 2. B 3. C 4. D 5. E

76. Writing: 1. A 2. B 3. C 4. D 5. E

77. Maths: 1. A 2. B 3. C 4. D 5. E

78. Space for comment

79. Details of Standard Grade or National Qualifications obtained, with grades (write in)

80. Other details about attainment (e.g. from Report Card)

81. Is homework done regularly?

Y

N

D/K

82. Space for comment

Part F: Soft Indicators

83. Comments about application / motivation / confidence / self-esteem

84. Comments about appearance (personal hygiene, clothing etc.)

85. Comments about relationships (e.g. with teachers, carers, peers)

86. Comments about involvement in school clubs / teams

87. Comments about involvement in outside clubs / sport

88. Comments about participation in school excursions, exchanges etc.

89. Involvement in Summer Academy (S3 pupils)?

Y

N

D/K

90. Space for details

91. Space for comments about involvement in mentoring (or similar) activities

92. Space for comments about involvement in work experience

93. Career advice provided (S3+)?

Y

N

DK

94. Space for comment

95. Space for any other comments

APPENDIX 4: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Communication/co-ordination

1. Who knows about children (designated teacher or another role)?
2. Which staff would know a child was looked after and how are decisions made about who knows?
3. What would they know?
4. Discussed with child/carer?
5. Impressions of the SEEMIS notification?
6. Is there a plan/arrangement for communication with carer(s)? Pro-active/reactive?
7. Involvement in care conferences/children's hearings?
8. Access to specialist help (social work/psychological services/medical – speed of access/perceptions of supportiveness)?

Role

1. Interpretation of the role of designated teacher?
2. Impact within school/centre development plan?

Self-evaluation indicators

1. Awareness of?
2. How have they been used?
3. Perceptions of usefulness?
4. Impact on school/centre?
5. Training

Other?