

# Bulletin 3

Virtual School for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (0-25)

## In this issue:

- Virtual Art School
- Coram Voice Writing Competition
- Artefacts for Hire
- Training and Learning Opportunities from Microsoft
- Courses in Promoting the Achievement of Looked After Children (PALAC)
- The Martha Mary Fernback Annual Prize

**Welcome:** Thank you to all professionals working tirelessly with our looked after children to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes. It has been wonderful to meet many Headteachers and designated teachers to discuss ways to ensure every child is emotionally understood to allow academic challenge.



Michelle

This term is a big term for lots of year 11s with mock exams taking place. We have identified 30 of our current year 11 pupils who can achieve 5 grade 4 GCSEs including maths and English. If we can make this happen it will dramatically improve life chances post 16 for our young people. Nationally 6% of care leavers go to University and in Oxfordshire this figure is 3%.

This term we will also be starting our first 'Virtual Art School'. Sessions will take place across the county with practising artists delivering workshops to 11-17 year olds. We will hold a final show in the Summer at Ark T centre in Cowley. If you know of any potential artists who will benefit from this project please email the virtual school - [VirtualSchool.LAC@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:VirtualSchool.LAC@Oxfordshire.gov.uk) for more information.

A reminder that all PEPs need to be completed by Designated teachers by **Friday 15th February** to ensure allocated funding is released for this financial year.

Thank you again for your support in my first term as Headteacher of the Virtual School and I look forward to working together to create opportunities and educational curiosity for all our young people.

## Peep NOCN Accreditation Celebration:



Above shows foster carers who celebrated receiving their Peep NOCN accreditation certificates for the level 2 unit Supporting babies' and young children's understanding of mathematical concepts as part of everyday life. The ten-session course was jointly funded by the Virtual School and the Treatment Foster Care team and delivered by People practitioners. Feedback from the foster carers highlights the benefits for carers and children learning together:

"I really like the style of having children with you at the session as it makes the group more relaxed. The children love the play opportunities and everyone enjoys the songs, story and bubbles."

"I enjoyed the camaraderie and the safe space to share and learn information."

"I am more confident about helping the children I foster... lots of ideas that I hadn't thought about."

**Voices** Coram Voice Writing Competition: Coram Voices are excited to announce a writing competition for children in care and young care leavers.

If you are a child or young person up to 25 years old and have experience of the care system, our annual creative writing competition is for you. It's designed to promote a

positive image by showcasing young people's creativity and improving understanding of their experiences.

The theme for 2019's competition is **'Growing up'** and you could win up to £100 in shopping vouchers. Shortlisted entries are also showcased on a special app featuring writing from children in care.

The closing date is **10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2019** and the prizes include a tablet and up to £100 shopping vouchers. Shortlisted entries will be showcased on a special app. You can enter the competition by clicking [HERE](#).

[Reading International Solidarity Centre \(RISC\)](#) is a Development Education Centre close to the heart of Reading's town centre. They work with schools and community groups to raise the profile of global issues and promote action for sustainability, human rights and social justice. A unique collection of artefacts from around the globe are available to hire to use in the classroom by RISC—[RISC Artefact Loans](#)

Artefact boxes cost £25 each to borrow for half a term, plus a fully refundable deposit. Longer loans are available by agreement. Pick up and return from RISC World Shop. For any additional details and to book your loan, email : [artefacts@risc.org.uk](mailto:artefacts@risc.org.uk)



**MakerChampion Projects:** Makerchampion projects are hands on coding sessions that seek to place coding in real life scenarios on Minecraft and Micro:BIT. We have twelve challenges so far with a further three due for release. Each challenge is available online and can be completed by students with teachers, students by themselves and students with parents. You can find the challenges [here](#).



As part of ensuring parents, students and schools take advantage of the challenges, Microsoft can:

- Host train the trainer sessions for schools or kids clubs or digital champions
- Host sessions for kids supported by teachers

An example of a MakerChampion session can be seen here in this video: <https://youtu.be/T-UaQ9gNuH8>

**Careers guidance:** Microsoft has a vast network of interns and apprentices who travel the UK giving insight into Tech careers. They have also done research into the jobs of the future, to pique the non-traditional tech candidates' interest and break stereotypes. [The first of these pieces can be found here](#).

As part of raising awareness of tech careers and routes into digital, Microsoft can:

- Run careers sessions
- Train digital champions to deliver sessions

**Teacher Training:** Microsoft Education offers a ton of free resources for teachers including the Microsoft Educator Community which has a number of free courses, resources, lesson plans and skype in the classroom opportunities. There are events, training opportunities and our new Digital Skills Toolkit, which breaks down the types of digital skills MS believe are needed in education. [This can be found here](#)



Virtual School are publicizing two new courses within the Promoting the Achievement of Looked After Children (PALAC) programme.



The **PALAC Professional Learning Network (PLN)** will run over a total of five twilight sessions from December 2018 to June 2019. Aimed at Designated Teachers, Virtual School Professionals, Educational Psychologists and Learning Mentors, the PLN is an opportunity for professionals and practitioners to develop their knowledge in the field of looked after children. Delegates can attend any combination of the five sessions.

The **PALAC Dissemination Day** is an opportunity for Designated Teachers to explore the research and findings of the PALAC programme to date and discuss how they might contribute to the PALAC knowledge base. This one day course will be run on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019 and again on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019. Please see the leaflets attached for more information.

**The Martha Mary Fernback Annual Prize** supports young women throughout Oxfordshire from disadvantaged backgrounds who have faced exploitation. By using the art of creativity to encourage self-expression and to form dialogue, young women are supported on their journey of personal growth and transformation. Trauma counselling, monthly mentoring sessions (by an established female artist) and life-coaching are also provided as part of this annual prize. For further information visit the [Ark-T Centre](#), and see attached Application pack.

