



Birmingham Virtual School Newsletter

2025 | September |

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Welcome to Birmingham Virtual School's Activity and Event Newsletter

This newsletter is dedicated to celebrating the achievements, talents, and progress of Children in Care in Birmingham. It serves as a vibrant platform to share updates on the wide range of activities, events, and opportunities available through Birmingham Virtual School. From creative workshops and educational outings to well-being initiatives and enrichment programmes, each edition highlights the inspiring efforts of our young people and the dedicated professionals who support them. Whether you are a carer, educator, or part of our wider community, we hope this newsletter keeps you informed, engaged, and proud of the incredible work happening across Birmingham Virtual School.

Junior Award Scheme (JAS) – All Places Now Filled!

We are delighted to announce that all places on the Junior Award Scheme (JAS) Programme for Autumn 2025 have now been filled! Delivered by Learning Journeys Consulting, the JAS Programme offers Children in Care a fantastic opportunity to develop new skills, build confidence, and enjoy a wide variety of enriching experiences. JAS sessions run on both Wednesday and Thursday evenings for two hours, providing participants with a diverse range of activities designed to challenge, inspire, and support personal growth. Sessions include sailing taster experiences, archery, canoeing, orienteering, campcraft, bushcraft, skiing, and climbing and artificial caving. Each activity is carefully planned to promote teamwork, resilience, and independence in a safe and supportive environment. A key feature of the JAS Programme is that young people have the opportunity to work towards and achieve recognised awards. These awards celebrate their commitment, progress, and achievements throughout the programme, providing a sense of accomplishment and pride.



Although all spaces for the September to October sessions are currently full, places on the JAS Programme regularly become available. If your young person (CiC) is interested in joining, please contact their allocated Virtual School Worker, who can add them to the waiting list and keep you informed about future opportunities. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who continues to help make this programme a success. Your ongoing support and dedication ensure that Children in Care have access to meaningful opportunities and experiences that truly make a difference.

[Junior Award Scheme for Schools \(JASS\) | Birmingham City Council](#)





The REP – The Boy with Wings Birmingham Virtual School

the
Rep

This August, Birmingham Rep staged the vibrant, family-friendly production of *The Boy with Wings*, adapted from Sir Lenny Henry's children's book. The show follows Tunde, a twelve-year-old boy living with his adoptive Ma, who discovers he has wings and is drawn into a cosmic adventure that challenges him to embrace his identity and differences. The story gently explores themes of belonging, family, and self-acceptance, making it especially relevant and affirming for Children in Care.

Birmingham Virtual School was pleased to secure a special discounted ticket offer for young people and families known to Birmingham Virtual School, as well as staff. This initiative enabled many to experience the show first-hand, helping to foster cultural engagement and provide positive, relatable representation on stage. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with families and professionals describing the production as "brilliant," "imaginative," and "a great opportunity for our young people."

Several Birmingham Virtual School staff attended the performance and truly enjoyed the experience. Staff members commented on the show's uplifting atmosphere, the creativity of the cast and crew, and the powerful messages woven throughout the story. Many remarked on how wonderful it was to see children and families so engaged, and how the production's themes of courage, acceptance, and self-belief resonated with the young people in attendance. The opportunity to share this cultural experience together was seen as both inspiring and memorable, further strengthening the sense of community within Birmingham Virtual School.

The production was packed with energy and imagination, featuring rap battles, puppetry, cosmic chaos, and plenty of humour. Audiences were treated to dynamic performances, with standout moments including Tunde's transformation, lively rapping, and the hilarious feline character Juba, whose meowing and rhyming delighted children and adults alike. The show's creative use of music, movement, and visual effects made it accessible and engaging for young people, including those in blended or adoptive families.

The REP's commitment to inclusive theatre was evident throughout, with performances designed to be welcoming for all, including accessible options such as BSL and audio-described shows. *The Boy with Wings* not only entertained but also encouraged children to see their differences as superpowers, reinforcing messages of courage and community.

For those interested in future opportunities, be sure to look out for upcoming productions at Birmingham Rep. Birmingham Virtual School sometimes has additional discounts and opportunities available for young people known to Birmingham Virtual school, so please contact your allocated Virtual School Worker to find out more or to be notified about future offers. Thank you to everyone who supported and promoted this fantastic show—your enthusiasm helps bring the arts to more children and families across Birmingham.

Myles, Aaminah, Anita, and Nadia from Birmingham Virtual School pictured outside The REP after enjoying an inspiring performance of "The Boy with Wings".





Care to Dance Birmingham Virtual School Sign Up and Step into Something Amazing!

Are you looking for a fun, creative, and confidence-boosting activity for a young person in care? Care to Dance is now open for new sign-ups, and we'd love to welcome even more young people to join our vibrant dance community!

Birmingham Virtual School has been working alongside Care to Dance for several years, supporting children and young people in care to access high-quality dance opportunities. This partnership has enabled many young people to discover the joy of movement, build new friendships, and develop valuable life skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Care to Dance is a weekly dance programme designed especially for Birmingham Children in Care and Care Leavers. Sessions are held during term time at the ACE Space in Digbeth every Tuesday evening, with additional groups running in Dudley and Sandwell for those who live closer to those areas.

This year, we're excited to announce that Care to Dance has expanded its age range. The existing group, previously for young people aged 10–18, now welcomes children as young as 7 and young people up to 25 years old. This means even more children and young adults can join, learn new dance styles, and enjoy the benefits of this supportive and creative programme.

Why Join Care to Dance?

No Experience Needed: Whether you're a complete beginner or already love to dance, everyone is welcome!

Try Different Styles: From street and contemporary to creative movement, there's something for everyone.

Gain Qualifications: Young people aged 12+ can work towards Level 1 and 2 Dance Leadership Awards, building valuable skills for the future.

Perform and Celebrate: Take part in social events and two major celebration performances each year, showcasing your progress and talent.

Make New Friends: Join a friendly, inclusive community where you can express yourself and have fun.

Fully Funded Places: All places are fully funded by Birmingham Virtual School, so there's no cost to join for Birmingham Children in Care.

What to Expect:

Each session is led by at least two trauma-informed dance teachers and a Social Worker, ensuring a safe, supportive, and encouraging environment. Workshops last 1.5 hours and are designed to help young people express themselves, build confidence, and enjoy the joy of movement. For those interested in leadership, dance leadership workshops are available for young people aged 12 and above.

How to Sign Up:

Spaces are available now for a September start, but places fill up quickly! If you know a young person who would love to move, express themselves, or simply try something new, don't miss out—now is the perfect time to join.

To register or find out more, contact:

Beth:

beth@caretodance.co.uk

Call/Text: 07868 897816



Upcoming: West Midlands Virtual School CiC Foundation Podcast Workshop Birmingham Virtual School

Are you ready to become the next podcast superstar? The West Midlands Virtual Schools Children in Care Foundation is excited to announce a free Podcast Workshop for children in care aged 11–18, linked to Birmingham, Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton, and Walsall Virtual Schools. This hands-on event will take place on Tuesday, 28 October 2025, from 11am to 1pm in Smethwick, B67 7DW.

What's Happening?

This workshop is all about giving young people the chance to create their own podcast from scratch.

You'll learn how to:

- Develop creative ideas and write scripts.
- Record and edit your own show.
- Share your voice with the world.

No experience is needed—just bring your energy, creativity, and ideas! Whether you're passionate about music, gaming, sports, or simply love to chat, this is your opportunity to step behind the mic and be heard.

Who Can Join?

The event is open to children in care aged 11–18 who are connected to any of the five West Midlands Virtual Schools. It's completely free to attend, thanks to the support of the West Midlands Virtual Schools Children in Care Foundation.

Each Virtual School—Birmingham, Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton, and Walsall—has been allocated 5 free tickets for this exciting workshop. Birmingham Virtual School has 5 free tickets available for children in care aged 11–18.

If you know a Birmingham child in care who would enjoy the Podcast Workshop, please contact the young person's Virtual School worker. They will be able to signpost you to the Development Officer, who can then direct you to the site to secure tickets. Due to the limited number of tickets, demand is extremely high—if you are interested, please contact Birmingham Virtual School as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

Who's Leading the Workshop?

The session is organised by Performing Perfectly, as part of The West Midlands Virtual Schools Children in Care Foundation, a creative training provider dedicated to helping young people unlock their potential in the arts and media.

How to Register:

Spaces are limited, so make sure to secure your spot! For more details and to register, please contact your Virtual School or the Development Officer.
BirminghamVirtualSchool@birmingham.gov.uk

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to learn new skills, build confidence, and connect with others. We look forward to seeing you there!

ON AIR



1:1 Music Lessons for Birmingham Virtual School Pupils (Children in Care) Services For Education (SFE)

Services
For Education

Birmingham Virtual School is proud to continue its partnership with Services For Education, providing high-quality 1:1 instrumental and vocal music lessons for children in care from Year 4 upwards. This programme is designed to support musical progression, achievement, and attainment for young people across Birmingham, helping them discover their talents and build confidence—regardless of background or circumstances.

Funding and Costs for 2025–26:

For the 2025–26 academic year, lessons for children in Year 4 and Year 7 are fully funded by Birmingham Virtual School, meaning there is no charge to the school for these year groups.

For children in Years 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11, the total cost of lessons is £453.75 per academic year. This covers 33 weekly 30-minute one-to-one lessons, including the loan of an instrument. The cost is equivalent to £151.25 per term, and schools can fund this using the Pupil Premium Plus termly amount of £500 provided for each young person. This fee already includes a 50% subsidy from Birmingham Virtual School and the Music Service. Services For Education will invoice schools directly on a half-termly basis. If extra funding is needed, schools can contact their Birmingham Virtual School Worker for support.

Programme Details:

Lessons should be recorded in the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP), with targets around engagement, practice, and progress. Pupils are encouraged to join Music Service ensembles and participate in instrument days organised in partnership with Birmingham Virtual School. Young people are also supported to care for their instrument and keep it safe at home.

Celebrating Success:

The impact of these lessons is clear in the voices of the young people themselves:

"My lessons are challenging but there are also easy parts. I really like the fun lessons and the sound of my instrument. I'm happy I completed the Copper music medal." – Year 4

"The lessons have made me happy. I feel more confident singing. I like all of it." – Year 4

"I feel proud that I have reached grade 1. I'm really looking forward to continuing my lessons next year." – Year 5

"I like how in music making you can start from scratch to create an entire new song... I am focused on the drumming—this has improved." – Year 6

"My favourite piece this year was where I had to improvise my own music... I hope to play in a concert at the end of year." – Year 7

"I like music and acting and want to work towards it for a future career." – Year 9

Special Events and Performances:

This year, Birmingham Virtual School and Services For Education celebrated young people's achievements at events such as the Winner Up! Event at Midlands Arts Centre and the Youth Proms at Symphony Hall. These events gave children the chance to perform in front of their families and peers, showcasing the skills and confidence they've gained. Staff and families were amazed by the talent and enthusiasm on display—highlighting the transformative power of music education.

How to Apply:

To continue with this provision or sign up in 2025–26, please complete the online booking form: [Music Booking Form 2025/26 - Services For Education](#). In September 2025, the Music Service will contact the named teacher at school to organise lesson timetables.