1. Birmingham Virtual School Re-Alignment

The Birmingham Virtual School has re-aligned its teams to work more closely with our Social Care colleagues over the Autumn Term. This will result in a number of children, schools and Designated Teachers having a change in outreach worker during the Spring Term. The changes have been introduced gradually to ensure that no pupil or school is left without support and should be finalised by this terms individuals e-PEP meeting. A comprehensive handover programme is currently underway within the Birmingham Virtual School ensuring that any changes are as effective and efficient as possible.

2. LACES – CiCES

The Board of Governors have decided to review the title of the service provided by the Birmingham Virtual School, with LACES becoming the Children In Care Education Service (CiCES) from the start of the Spring Term.

3. Going For Success Programme

(a) Going For Success - Primary Reward Event

An excellent celebration event was hosted on Saturday 19th November, at John Willmott School to recognise the achievements of over 200 primary-aged Children in Care. The Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress and Councillor Barnett presented the awards announced by MC Gary James (made TV – Midlands) and the children their Carers and families enjoyed the fun of the Winter Wonderland after the ceremony.

(b) Attendance

I would like to thank Birmingham schools for ensuring that the children of the Virtual School enjoy good attendance. The Virtual School has recognised over 300 pupils with excellent (98%/99%) or outstanding (100%) attendance during the Autumn Term through an individual letter and certificate.

(c) Going For Success - Key Stage Three Reward Event

The next Going For Success Reward Event is to be held on Wednesday 15th March (6.30pm) at The H Suite on Ickfield Road Edgbaston. This will celebrate the successes of Key Stage Three pupils. The nomination forms have been circulated to schools.

(d) Going For Success – Careers Event

The first event was held at Aston University in November around STEM areas of employment. There were around 100 young people with their Carers in attendance, with the second event scheduled for March 2017.
4. **Going For Success Raising Aspiration Programme**

This programme has been developing with school holiday periods to complement the courses and opportunities offered in schools. There are event planned for all school holidays for the remainder of the academic year.

5. **Emotional Well-Being**

I was delighted to see so many Birmingham Schools represented at the launch event hosted by Birmingham for the Attachment Research Community (ARC) in December. This will help ensure that the work in our schools helps to inform and influence developments at a national level.

The Virtual School is working closely with the Educational Psychology Service to develop a city-wide approach to Attachment Aware training and development. There are two areas (South West – via Educational Psychology Service and Erdington – via Thrive) currently being focussed upon, with a third being added in 2017 (via KCA training). This work is being integrated into the research being conducted by the REES Centre (Oxford University).

The Virtual School continues to work with a number of partners to support the emotional well-being of Children in Care in Birmingham Schools including Birmingham Centre for Arts Therapy (BCAT), Dare2Dream and Malachi.

6. **National Conference for Virtual Schools**

The Virtual School national conference is being hosted in Birmingham on Wednesday 22nd and Thursday 23rd March 2017. The theme is ‘Changing The Narrative’ with regional Virtual Schools adding performances by children. This is a tremendous opportunity for a number of our young people to demonstrate the talent they have across the Arts as we have been invited to participate in a West Midlands Choir and provide ‘acts’ under the Birmingham banner.

7. **Supporting CIC to remain in education**

There continues to be a fantastic collaborative effort to ensure that no child in care is permanently excluded from their school. The Virtual School very much recognises the challenges that some of our children can present, but are very appreciative of the effort, care, patience and support schools and their staff give so generously to some of the most vulnerable individuals in education.

We welcome the continuance of these effective partnerships to be able to successfully include all Children in Care in full-time education, following the best learning pathway for each individual.

In the event that a Head Teacher wishes further information about any areas in relation to the Virtual School, please contact Andy Wright – [Andrew.wright@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.wright@birmingham.gov.uk)