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Reflective Tool

Meeting the needs of children known to Social Care

Education Inspection Framework

November 2025



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WEST SUSSEX VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Purpose of the Reflective Tool

The renewed Education Inspection Framework (EIF), effective from November 2025, places greater expectations on schools to demonstrate how they identify and meet the needs of children known (or previously known) to social care.

These children include

- Children We Care For
- Previously Looked After Children
- Children supported by Child in Need (CiN) or Child Protection (CP) planning (or have been in the last 6 years)
- Children in Kinship Care arrangements

Whilst the entire framework highlights the importance of inclusive practice for all vulnerable or disadvantaged learners, the following document identifies those statements relating to children known to social care.

Used alongside the full inspection toolkit, this tool may be useful for education providers in reviewing their practice, collating evidence, and identifying priorities for development.

The tool will be developed and refined in response to feedback from providers and any subsequent changes to the framework. It is intended for use alongside, not instead of a schools existing monitoring and quality assurance processes.

* The Ofsted framework refers to Looked After Children and this is mirrored in the criteria below; within West Sussex these children are referred to as Children We Care For (CWCF)

Inclusion

No.	Framework criteria	Possible Evidence	Notes/Actions
1	<p>Pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, including looked-after and previously looked after children are well supported by leaders who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a secure understanding of these pupils' needs and the progress they make use social care status to inform decisions about promoting their welfare (academic, attendance, well-being). have high expectations and take a graduated approach identify needs quickly and accurately, including for pupils known or previously known to children's social care. work well with social workers, virtual school heads, and other professionals to plan and provide multi agency support 	Cohort/ individual attainment and progress data Pupil voice feedback Personal Education Plans Individual support plans Transition plans Attendance analysis Evidence of multi-agency working and relationships School development plan	
2	Designated Teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children is qualified and experienced.	Evidence of relevant qualifications Evidence of relevant continuous prof. development and engagement in training Evidence of engagement with Virtual School	

3	<p>Every looked-after child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP) that improves their learning and wellbeing opportunities and experiences.</p>	<p>Completed PEP's Quality assurance feedback from VS Examples of SMART targets within PEPs linked to academic, social and emotional development</p>	
4	<p>Appropriate evidence is used to inform the pupil premium strategy</p>	<p>Robust strategy that reflects the needs of the cohort</p>	

Curriculum and Teaching

No.	Framework criteria	Possible Evidence	Notes/Actions
1	The curriculum is designed to give pupils known (or previously known) to children's social care the knowledge they need to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in later life	Curriculum planning	
2	Leaders can explain how they identify significant barriers to teaching and learning and how they take action to reduce those barriers	Learning walks and feedback to staff Staff knowledge of individual children Whole school training when need arises	
3	The school's approach to the curriculum and teaching draws explicitly on the best available evidence, including high-quality research relating to supporting those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care	Staff knowledge and implementation of trauma informed practice CPD records	

Achievement

No.	Framework criteria	Possible Evidence	Notes/Actions
1	Pupils known (or previously known) to children's social care generally make suitable progress from their starting points	Evidence of progress tracking	
2	The school provides a high-quality education for all pupils (the impact), especially disadvantaged pupils, those who are known to (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and or wellbeing	Evidence of progress of all pupils from their starting point Evidence of APDR being used School curriculum – planning documents and policies	
3	The progress of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the progress of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally	Comparative data	
4	Any gaps between the attainment of the school's disadvantaged pupils and the attainment of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally are closing	Robust strategy that addresses the needs of the cohort to narrow the gap Evidence of gap narrowing	

Attendance and Behaviour

No.	Framework criteria	Possible Evidence	Notes/Actions
1	Promote good attitudes to learning and regular attendance for those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care	<p>Attendance data analysis</p> <p>Attendance related targets set in PEPs</p> <p>Pupil voice and parental feedback</p> <p>Evidence of education/attendance focus in Social Care meeting records</p> <p>Attendance strategies meet the needs of the cohorts, taking into account the previous experiences of pupil</p>	
2	The school is a place that pupils want to attend	<p>Attendance data analysis</p> <p>Pupil voice</p> <p>Engagement with extracurricular activities</p> <p>School council minutes</p> <p>Parent/carer feedback</p> <p>Learning environment audit</p>	

3	<p>Leaders work with parents, carers, local authorities and other agencies, including the virtual school head, to communicate expectations about attendance and improve it</p>	<p>Evidence of multi-agency engagement eg DST Collaboration with parents/carers Evidence of engagement with VS School development plan</p>	
4	<p>Leaders recognise that bullying takes various forms, and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example because a pupil is adopted or in care</p>	<p>Record keeping identifying how school policies are implemented where bullying has been identified A robust anti bullying policy A PSHE curriculum proactively addresses and teaches inclusion and acceptance of difference. Pupils are engaged in the creation of policies relating to bullying</p>	

5	Leaders work with the local authority, other agencies and partners, where necessary, to support effective and continuing improvements to behaviour	<p>Application of the graduated approach to responding to behaviour</p> <p>Meetings with VS</p> <p>Evidence of training attendance</p>	
6	Any reasonable adjustments, alternative provisions, part time timetables or adaptations to attendance and/or behaviour strategies are timely, appropriate and monitored both daily and over time including for those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care	<p>Network meetings around the young person</p> <p>P/T timetable guidance</p> <p>Clear chronologies to evidence support and impact over time</p> <p>Clear rationale for all interventions</p> <p>Evidence of regular reviews with an aspirational exit strategy</p>	
7	Leaders analyse attendance information closely for different groups to identify patterns and trends and use this analysis well to identify the causes of poor attendance, intervene early and remove barriers, and attendance is improving for those groups	<p>Attendance policies reflect trends identified by school leaders and this is clearly noted</p> <p>Attendance policies are research based and expectations are communicated with pupils</p> <p>Evidence of early intervention</p>	

8	<p>Staff have the necessary expertise, confidence and support to adapt behaviour policies and practices appropriately and consistently for pupils with specific needs</p>	<p>Staff knowledge and implementation of appropriate adaptations Evidence of reasonable adjustments to policies Whole school records of training, gaps identified and regular reviews of what training needs to be in place</p>	
9	<p>Relationships between pupils and staff show kindness, courtesy, empathy and respect, reflecting a positive culture</p>	<p>Pupil voice Staff surveys Parent / carer surveys Records of learning walks Awareness of emotional environment</p>	
10	<p>Leaders staff and pupils have established a culture across the school where relationships between adults and pupils are open, respectful and harmonious</p>	<p>Pupil voice Staff surveys Parent / carer surveys Records of learning walks</p>	

11	<p>Leaders and staff pay close attention to the needs of those who are known, or previously known, to social care, so that they attend regularly and come to school on time.</p>	<p>Evidence of building a sense of belonging to the school community</p> <p>Evidence of robust transition planning e.g. new starts, year to year</p> <p>Team around the child plans</p> <p>Engagement in extracurricular opportunities</p>	
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Personal development and wellbeing

No.	Framework criteria	Possible Evidence	Notes/Actions
1	Promoting equality of opportunity so that all pupils can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique	Implementation of school vision and values Accessibility of opportunity to learning and extra-curricular opportunities regardless of personal circumstances RSE curriculum	
2	Leaders and staff know their pupils and are vigilant in identifying individuals or groups who need additional pastoral support	Effective relationships and communication with parents/carers and students – home school communication Evidence of wellbeing reviews/interventions Pupil/ parent voice	
3	Pastoral support is well matched to pupils' needs and targeted at those who may need extra guidance or care, or support for their emotional health or well-being; it deals with immediate issues and any underlying issues, in order to prevent problems recurring	Evidenced through individual learning and pastoral support plans	

4	Effective relationships with parents, local authorities and other external agencies are drawn on to strengthen pastoral support	Evidence of multi-agency network involvement	
5	All pupils, including those known (or previously known) to social care benefit from high-quality personal development extra-curricular opportunities and participate and benefit universally.	Accessibility of opportunity to learning and extra-curricular opportunities regardless of personal circumstances	
6	Pupils feel welcome, valued and respected and that they belong within the school community	Pupil voice	
7	Pupils who attend alternative provision continue to receive a suitable personal development and relationships and health education (RHE)/relationships and sex education, health education (RSHE) programme	Evidence of effective communication and monitoring between school and AP provider	

Leadership and governance

No.	Framework criteria	Possible Evidence	Notes/Actions
1	Governors and trustees are knowledgeable about their statutory duties and carry them out effectively	Monitoring reports Records of governor engagement Governor impact report Governor induction and training records Skills audit/self-evaluation Certificates of completed training or modules	
2	Governors and trustees hold leaders to account appropriately and effectively for the school's support and provision for pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care	Meeting minutes Governor visits reports Headteachers performance management	
3	Professional learning includes purposeful collaboration between teachers on the necessary adaptations for those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care	Evidence of collaborative planning Production of Learning support plans Evidence of consistent application of reasonable adjustments	

4	Leaders establish and maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues across other public services to improve educational outcomes for all pupils and to meet their statutory duties	Application of the graduated approach and collaborative working with wider professionals	
5	Leaders, including, governors forge constructive relationships beyond the school so that they can successfully engage and work in partnership with parents and the local community	<p>Newsletters</p> <p>Events</p> <p>Surveys/engagement opportunities</p> <p>Community engagement e.g. religious/voluntary organisations</p>	

Early Years

No.	Framework criteria	Possible Evidence	Notes/Actions
1	Leaders take all reasonable steps to make sure that all children have access to an ambitious curriculum	Curriculum planning	
2	Leaders work in partnership with parents and carers to promote children's learning and development and to raise their awareness about supporting children's readiness for starting school	Evidence of information sharing and collaboration with carers/parents	
3	Children known (or previously known) to children's social care achieve well from their starting points and are generally ready for the next stage of learning	Progress tracking	
4	Leaders and staff quickly and accurately identify children who face any barriers to their learning or well-being	Observations and Progress tracking	
5	Leaders ensure that staff provide effectively for children's personal, social and emotional development, including making sure that they feel safe, secure, stimulated and happy.	Curriculum planning Parent/Child voice Evidence from observations Individual records SDQ's (Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire)	

6	Staff develop positive relationships with children to help them form secure attachments and to support their wellbeing and attendance	Evidence from observations Parent/child voice Transition planning Key adult approach	
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Post 16

No.	Framework criteria	Possible Evidence	Notes/Actions
1	The school or college has a high-quality 16 to 19 study programme, which gives children known (or previously known) to children's social care the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life, and for the next stage of their education, training or employment	Evidence of a range of inclusive study programmes for different levels of attainment Evidence of careers advisor/YP meetings	
2	Leaders reduce barriers for students who are known (or previously known) to children's social care so that they achieve the best possible outcomes and are prepared for life beyond school	Learning walks and feedback to staff Staff knowledge of individual children Whole school training when need arises Allocation of bursaries	
3	Teachers adapt the curriculum and their teaching to overcome the barriers for students who are known (or previously known) to children's social care and those students get the support they need to access their study programme.	Evidence of reasonable adjustments	
4	Students who are known (or previously known) to children's social care have access to, participate in and benefit from the range of opportunities provided through the curriculum and through personal development opportunities	Accessibility of opportunity to learning and extra-curricular opportunities regardless of personal circumstances	

5	<p>Structured careers education and guidance provides tailored support so that students who are known (or previously known) to children's social care are able to make informed decisions about their next steps.</p>	<p>Exploration of appropriate pathways Completed careers section of CWCF Post 16 PEP</p>	
6	<p>Leaders have considered the needs of students in their curriculum design and approach to teaching and adaptations to the curriculum or teaching for students who are known (or previously known) to children's social care are appropriate and enable students to achieve well.</p>	<p>Curriculum planning and policies Evidence of reasonable adjustments</p>	