LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
Children Schools and Families Department

Job Title: Headteacher for the Virtual School for Looked After Children

Department: Children Schools and Families

Division: Education

Team: School Improvement

Grade:

Responsible to: Manager School Standards & Quality

Responsible for: The Virtual School Team

Job Purpose
The role of the Headteacher of the Virtual School is-
1) to champion the education of looked after children and young people within Merton;
2) to provide vision, leadership and direction for the Virtual School;
3) to lead and manage the Virtual School team in monitoring and enhancing the educational experience of looked after children, ensuring they are in appropriate provision and have access to good teaching;
4) To support schools and individual LAC pupils in maximising attendance and progress.

Specific Responsibilities
To champion looked after children in Merton by-
1) Working closely with LA officers and attending a range of meetings to ensure that LAC are prioritised in LA services including:
- Admissions policies and implementation of those policies.
- Statementing and special needs administration.
- School attendance service
- Inclusion service, managed transfers, admission to support units and PRUs
- Education psychology services
- Leisure services
- Work experience
- Diversity and inclusion training schemes.
- Their employment in council teams

2) Being proactive in making effective links and in engaging in collaboration with virtual school heads in authorities where Merton's children are being educated.
3) Working closely with the Corporate Parent steering Group to promote understanding of the needs and aspirations of LAC within the community by sharing information and liaising with external partners e.g. FE colleges, careers advisers, training providers, businesses and voluntary organisations.
4) Acting as champion for LAC with schools, with teams within the LA and with external agencies.

7)   Having the right to be consulted on care placement moves for the children Merton looks after where this is likely to mean a change in education placement;
8)   Vetoing educational placements of the children Merton looks after where a needs assessment shows the placement is unlikely to provide access to suitable education;
9)   Challenging the LA's social workers when they do not comply with the DfE'S statutory guidance that social workers should not make non-emergency care placement decisions without securing a suitable educational placement at the same time;
10) Ensure that the local authority considers an appeal against a school exclusion of any child it looks after and supporting the social worker through the process;
11) Working through Merton Education Partner manager and liaising with other MEP's to challenge those schools the children in care on roll are doing less well than those in similar schools;

To provide vision, leadership and direction for the Virtual School by;-
1)   Developing an annual action plan for the Virtual School;
2)   Working closely with the Virtual School group to agree vision and direction;
3)   Raising the profile of the Virtual School with other professionals;

To effectively manage the Virtual School team by;
1)   Deploying the VS team effectively to ensure the smooth running of the VS and maximising support for LAC;
2)   Line managing the VS team and monitoring their performance through the Merton performance management process;
3)   To ensure effective processes are in place for identifying the educational needs of individual LAC and providing extra opportunities.

To ensure sound monitoring of the education of LAC by;-
1)   Sound record keeping of
- personal and school details of LAC
- LAC attendance
- Attainment and progress
- Educational targets through individual PEPs
2)   Ensuring the quality of PEPs through regular monitoring
3)   Managing liaison with other authorities around sharing information;
4)   Analysing data on the attainment and progress of children and young people in the full range of educational settings, including those with SEN and disabilities, who are looked after by the authority and those being educated in the authority but in the care of another as though they attended a single 'virtual school';
5)   Working closely with the Research and Statistics Manager to ensure the availability of robust data which can be accessed and shared effectively to track the educational progress of children and young people in care;
6)   Regularly monitoring the progress of children in care in different schools and, where relevant, colleges of further education through interrogation of data and quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs);
7)   Producing an annual report and evaluating the work of the Virtual School setting out an assessment of the progress of all the children in care in the area.
8)   Monitoring school admissions for the children looked after by Merton to ensure that:
         i) they are placed in the school which best meets their needs;
         ii) social workers are adequately equipped to make that decision;
9)   Monitoring the effectiveness of private tutoring.

To ensure that the Virtual School improves the quality of support for LAC and Care leavers by:
1)   Working closely with social workers to raise their awareness about the importance of education for children in care and ensure they treat it as a high priority;
2)   Agreeing with school MEPs how, in partnership with others, to provide direct support to any schools where LAC pupils are not making expected progress or where there is a concern over provision;

3) Providing professional leadership and development for designated teachers;
4) Planning and facilitating joint training events and providing updated information and guidance for headteachers, school staff and governors, carers, social workers and other LA staff to drive up their awareness of the diverse educational needs of children in care;
5) Proactively disseminating good practice on working with schools which have children in care on roll, especially in relation to supporting schools and social workers to have high aspirations of them during their school career and in progression to further and higher education;
6) Working with 14-19 partnerships and FE providers to ensure that the needs of children in care are being met through the new collaborative arrangements;
7) Working with young people and LA officers to engage them in education and training from16-24.

Headteacher for the Virtual School for Looked After Children

Person Specification

Candidate should show evidence of experience and ability in the following areas. In your application please write a section for each of the main heading numbered 2 – 24.

Qualifications
1. Qualified teacher status

Experience
2. Recent or current successful senior management experience in a primary, secondary or special school.

3. Recent or current experience of support for vulnerable pupils in an education context.

4. Recent or current experience of working with looked after children and their foster carers.

Leadership Ability
5. Ability to champion individual children and young people.

6. Expressing a clear vision with an emphasis on high expectations and achievement.

7. Effective strategic planning to improve outcomes for pupils

8. Motivating and enabling others.

9. Persistence in pursuing policies through to implementation.

Management Skills
10. Working closely with social workers, SEN specialists and other partners.

11. Effective cross-borough working.

12. Delivering high quality support and training.

13. Skills in negotiation and persuasion.

14. Ability to delegate and co ordinate the work of others.

15. Showing sensitivity, enthusiasm and energy in building teams and working with a variety of professionals.

16. Effective line management skills.

17. Effective budget management skills.

18. Effective communication both orally an in writing with staff, pupils, carers and partners.

Understanding of quality and equality in education
19. Rigorous and accurate monitoring and evaluation.

20. Identifying and challenging poor practice.

21. Identifying and meeting the needs of the students.

22. Understanding pupil performance data and its use in target setting.

23. Commitment to fulfilling the requirements of the Every Child matters agenda.

24. Commitment to equal opportunities issues in practice and principal.