



# VSK NEWS

Kent's Virtual School for Children in Care and Young Care Leavers Autumn Term 2017

## Welcome

Since the start of this academic year I have no doubt there has been a turnaround of our fantastic Designated Teachers for CiC, so I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and ask that you review this newsletter as an opportunity to find good practice and highlight important training opportunities around the county, such as the Designated Teacher Update Training and the Attachment Training that the Virtual School provides.



We at the Virtual school have also seen considerable change, in saying farewell at the start of the academic year to our amazing Ann Parnell and Malcolm Thomas (Deputy Headteachers) who took a well-earned retirement in the summer leaving Marian Smith holding the fort. I am sure you are already familiar with my new Senior Leadership Team but I would like to introduce you to Rachel Calver (Deputy Headteacher Post16), Joanne Kelly (Deputy Headteacher Secondary and North & West Kent), our wonderful Marian Smith (Deputy Headteacher Primary and South & East Kent) and Joanne Carpenter (School Bursar & Project Officer) who has strategic responsibility for Participation and Engagement and also finance. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome back Carole Bailey (Assistant Head South East Kent) who joins us with a wealth of relevant experience and I am sure she will make a fantastic impact in South Kent.

With Christmas fast approaching, it is a good time to reflect back on what has been achieved so far this year. At Key Stage 2 despite assessment changes last year, the Summer of 2017 saw Kent's CiC achieve the greatest results on record. We outperformed both the South East and the National average by between 4 and 13% in Reading (R); Writing (W); Mathematics (M); Grammar Punctuation and Spelling (GPS) and RWM Combined. It has been difficult to evidence the amount of academic progress made this year in the secondary school phase as the DfE has significantly changed the assessment methodology, however we have seen some fantastic individual performances, great progression to Further Education pathways and record numbers of young people going on to Higher Education to study at University. In addition to this we have seen a three year improving trend in reducing our young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Our young people along with the support of their network and the VSK Post16 Team has seen NEET reduce by almost 70% over the past 3 years! I am sure you would agree a fantastic achievement. These achievements along with many others were celebrated once again at our fantastic Awards Ceremony held at Canterbury Cricket Ground on the 17th September and it was great to meet so many inspirational young people and colleagues. As ever our Participation and Engagement Team including our fabulous apprentices have been working at breakneck speed around the county and as well as hosting two awards days since September have also delivered a host of activity days.

Please take the time to look at what is happening across the virtual school and feel free to contact us and let us know how you think we are doing and what other support you feel would be beneficial. Have a great Christmas and New Year

*Tony Doran*

**Headteacher, Virtual School Kent**

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## ePEP NEWS

### Staff update

We are sure many of you will have heard the news by now that Mike Polley has moved on to a new and exciting role within KCC. Rico and Mike have been the main contact for Designated Teachers over the last two years and we know Mike will be sadly missed by many of you. However, we are delighted to inform you that Maria Collins has been appointed to take over Mike's role and will be working seamlessly with Rico to provide a continuing high level of support when you need it.

### Term 2 Progress & Attainment

As usual at the end of Term 2 we shall be collecting the first tranche of Progress & Attainment data for our school age CiC. An e-mail reminder will be sent out at the beginning of December. This data can be entered into 'Data Drop 1'. Clicking 'save' at the bottom of the form will drop the information into the grid.

### Targets and Pupil Premium +

Please ensure you update any outstanding targets accordingly and add new ones along the way. **Any targets requiring PP+ funding will need to be submitted by 12/01/2018** for consideration in the next round of funding.

### Closing of PEPs

You may be aware from recent contact with Assistant Heads that the target for closing a PEP is now within 10 school working days of the PEP meeting. Your Assistant Head will then quality assure the PEP and should any amendments be required there is a further 10 school working days for your Assistant Head to inform you of those requirements and for you to make those changes. This is to ensure not only more accurate recording of the PEP Meeting itself but also to promote a more timely pattern of meetings. As well as the normal cycle it is worth noting that a PEP should be held at any point of **significant change** especially if a child has recently started at a new school.



03000 415353 - Rico and Maria



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## VSK AWARDS 2017

On 17th September Virtual School Kent held its 7th annual awards ceremony to celebrate the academic and personal achievements of children in care.

210 young people in care and care leavers received awards at the ceremony attended by carers, social workers, parents and council members. The awards were for various academic and personal achievements, ranging from excellent GCSE results to excelling in karate.



The day started with the Awards Ceremony for our KS1 and KS2 students which was led by Tony Doran, Headteacher of Virtual School Kent. This was followed by a BBQ lunch and entertainment for the children to enjoy which included a Rodeo Bull, Wrecking Ball, Total Wipe-out Inflatable, Archery, craft stands and several Birds of Prey from Falconry South-East.

The raffle was drawn at 1.45pm with many prizes kindly donated by local attractions in Kent and all proceeds going towards future participation events for children in care and young care leavers.



Our guest speakers were Sophia Dunstan, VSK Participation Support Assistant who spoke about the Children in Care Councils and some of the fun events that took place during the summer break, and Emma Jenkins from Kent Children's University.

The following awards were presented:

- ◆ 184 young people received Bronze awards of Medals, Arts & Craft Sets and WHSmiths vouchers.
- ◆ 20 young people received Silver awards of Medals and Kindles.
- ◆ 6 young people received Gold awards of Medals and iPads.
- ◆ 31 young people received 'Star of 2017' awards for their involvement with the Super Council and Our Children & Young People's Council.



### Gina Turner, Assistant Head (Canterbury)

Tel: 03000 419420 or Email: [gina.turner@kent.gov.uk](mailto:gina.turner@kent.gov.uk)

A new academic year is upon us and it is time to take the opportunity to reflect on our successes and achievements. A huge well done to those students who worked so hard to gain GCSEs in the summer – good luck to all of you in your next step and future endeavours!

I would like to officially welcome Debbie Briant to the Canterbury locality team. Debbie has been working in Swale and joined the Canterbury team in September to work alongside John Ollason and Lynn Griffiths. These three Education Support Officers oversee groups of schools and are on hand to advise and support wherever they are required.



This year we will be running the **Paired Reading Scheme** with the Educational Psychology service again. The scheme has seen children make significant progress with their reading ability and we hope to make a real difference for more children this year.

The response to the **iPad lending scheme** has been phenomenal with all the Canterbury iPads currently allocated and we have a waiting list! Many thanks to John Ollason (secondary) and Debbie Briant (primary) for administering this scheme. The iPads are without a doubt one of our most popular and effective resources!

We continue to run our projects **promoting emotional and mental health and well-being** amongst Kent children in care within collaborations of schools. Our deep gratitude to Herne Bay High for co-ordinating the Coastal Alliance Project and St. Anselm's RC School for co-ordinating the Canterbury City Project. I am sure we all agree that this work is extremely important to support our vulnerable learners.

In other news, VSK are now delivering an updated **Attachment Training** package which is free to schools! The training comes in two parts: Part 1 looks at the causes of disrupted attachment, the emotional and physical effects of childhood trauma and how this may present in an educational environment. Part 2 deals with how to manage these behaviours and support children within schools and classrooms. Please contact Amanda Roback ([Amanda.roback@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Amanda.roback@kent.gov.uk)) if you would like us to deliver this training in your school.

Here are our other training opportunities this academic year:

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018: Attachment Training 1.30pm at Brook House**

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2018: DT Update Training 1.30pm at Brook House**

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018: Attachment Training 1.30pm at Brook House**

**Please also look out for our annual Multi-Agency Day, date coming soon!**

### Joanne Hayes, Assistant Head (Swale)

Tel: 03000 415679 or Email: [Joanne.Hayes1@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Joanne.Hayes1@kent.gov.uk)



We have been very lucky to welcome two new members of the team to Swale; Mandeep Viridi and Laura Hunt both joined us in September and have been working very hard to get to know the children and the schools that they will be working with.

We have also had a number of children who have needed school places in the Swale area since the summer. Thank you to the schools who have worked so hard to ensure that their transitions have been successful ones and who are continuing to work hard to support these and all of our children and young people.

The children of Swale have also been working hard and we have had some excellent outcomes across all the age ranges over the last academic year. Their achievements were celebrated in style at the Awards Ceremonies in September and October. We hope the children are all very proud of their achievements as they were very well deserved.

Looking ahead to the rest of this academic year we have some training that will be provided for Designated Teacher and Support Teaching assistants. This includes Drawing and Talking and the Solihull Approach. We will be in contact with details about dates and venues in the near future. We are also planning a Multi-Agency Day with colleagues in East and South Kent to provide a relevant and interesting programme of events that we hope you will find useful.

Many thanks for your continued support of the children in our care.



### FOSTER CARE PARTNERSHIP AWARD

The Foster Care Partnership award goes to a member of staff from VSK, who has provided extensive support to the Fostering Service and our children and young people over the last year and we are delighted that Jo Carpenter has been recognised for her hard work and contribution supporting children in care. The award was presented by Caroline Smith, Head of Fostering who said:

*"This has involved arranging participation events, supporting our young apprentices and supporting the VSK awards. For this member of staff, nothing is too much trouble, everything is done with such warmth and enthusiasm. Often working additional hours and over weekends, totally focused on ensuring children and young people have a voice and participate in events across the county. Jo was such a support to myself as the Head of Fostering during the Ofsted inspection, arranging for groups of children and young people to speak with the inspectors and guiding them through the process. It is a privilege to work with her and be able to showcase her commitment to the children in our care."*

## NEWS FROM THE EAST

### Simon Fosse-Collins, Assistant Head (Thanet)

Tel: 03000 418601 or Email: [simon.fosse-collins@kent.gov.uk](mailto:simon.fosse-collins@kent.gov.uk)

So Term 1 is already over and the summer is now a long distance memory. We sadly said goodbye to Ann Parnell, Amy Barnes and Michael Kelly. Ann retired after many years of working with children in various roles and will be deeply missed by the whole team. Amy returned to frontline teaching and now works in a special school, while Michael accepted a job with the police. I am sure you will all join with me in thanking them all for their hard work and wish them the very best for the future.



We are pleased to welcome some new members to the Thanet team. Leigh Knell joins us as our KS4 Progression Advisor. Leigh used to be the lead for the Mind the Gap Project and will support those children in Yrs10/11 to establish their Yr12 plans. Steve Green and Keira Kinsella also joined us as ESOs. Both have been with VSK for a number of years with Steve predominately working with our UASC cohort while Keira worked in Canterbury and Swale. Both have a wealth of knowledge and a range of skills to support our young people going forward.

One change that many of you will have noticed is our new ways of working. Each school now has a dedicated ESO who will be your first point of contact with VSK. The ESOs now have a dual role, to support schools with PEPs and planning for the education of our children with you, and provide direct support to your young people when required. This tweak in their role brings Thanet in line with the rest of County team.

We also offer support through our **IPad lending library**. The iPads are loaded with a huge range of apps for both primary and secondary children which are curriculum specific and will help boost skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. Please contact your ESO for more info on how this scheme works.

We are looking again at running our popular **Paired Reading Scheme** in Thanet. We last ran this project 3 years ago and saw some significant results with a number of children. This will be run in conjunction with the Educational Psychology service and we will be sending more information out regarding this project soon.

Finally a massive **Well Done!** to all those children who achieved some amazing results at the end of the last academic year and to those who received awards at our annual awards ceremony. The Thanet team are really proud of you and are always here to support you going forward.

#### **Attachment Training** - An open session for all staff

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018 13:30 – 16:30  
Green Banks Thanet MASH, CT9 5PA

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018 13:30 – 16:30  
Green Banks Thanet MASH, CT9 5PA

To book a place please contact  
Laura James – 03000 411852  
[laura.james@kent.gov.uk](mailto:laura.james@kent.gov.uk)

#### **Update Training for CiC Designated Teachers**

An opportunity for DT's to receive up-to-date national guidance & local developments to support them in their statutory role

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 13:30 – 15:30  
Green Banks Thanet MASH, CT9 5PA  
CPD Online course code: SCH 17/375

### Jo Kelly, Deputy Head (North and West Kent)

Tel: 03000 412777 or Email: [Joanne.Kelly@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Joanne.Kelly@kent.gov.uk)

#### What have our children and young people been up to?

- Several North Kent children earned special VSK awards for their contribution to the VSK Councils, well done!
- One of our fabulous young people at a special school went on to achieve 4 GCSEs and is continuing at sixth form along with college, we are very proud of you !



Let us know other great news about what they've been doing in their next PEPs...

#### RESULTS for our Children in North Kent - a GREAT year for our children and young people!

42%\* of North Kent children met the expected levels across the board in combined subjects - including some children who had extra difficulties such as ADHD. This means the gap between North Kent CIC and all Learners is narrowing and the improvement from last year was a huge 36% change. Well done to everyone who supported our children – and we wish them good luck as they have now moved into their new secondary schools. (*\*Before changes to the locality districts*)

16% of North Kent young people achieved 5A\*-C including English and Maths – this is good progress considering all the changes in the system that the young people faced – plus back in 2011 only 5% of our young people achieved this standard. The more young people who we can help to get good results at this stage will have enhanced life chances and so it is a key feature of the work the VSK team do. Individual letters went out to our students who did very well at whatever level they managed to achieve.

83% of North Kent young people were getting ready to go on to post 16 education / training and this number will be even better now. It's great to see them progress on to their destinations.

#### Changes in North Kent at VSK

Some changes have taken place in North Kent VSK

- Malcom Thomas retired in the summer and we wish him all the very best in his next adventures. I have been appointed as the Deputy Head for North and West Kent at VSK and I'm very pleased that Margaret Hamlyn has taken over the Assistant Head reins. Margaret is also the SENCO for the North, West and South West Kent areas so brings all that expertise with her.

**Margaret Hamlyn, Assistant Head**

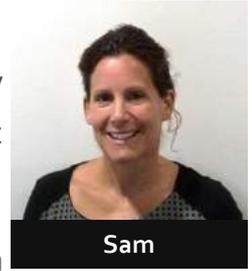
Tel: 03000 412777 or Email: [margaret.hamlyn@kent.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.hamlyn@kent.gov.uk)



Margaret

## NEWS FROM THE NORTH

- North Kent at VSK now covers the areas of Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks and Medway.
- Fortunately some things remain the same... Lisa Thistlethwaite, Amanda Ormond, Jenny Finch, Michelle Matthews and Amanda Lihou continue in their roles – and we are lucky that new members of the team have joined them :
  - ◇ Sam Armstrong Mills is our new KS4 Progression Advisor and can be contacted on [Samantha.Armstrong-Mills@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Samantha.Armstrong-Mills@kent.gov.uk)
  - ◇ Wendy Richard is a new ESO and can be contacted on [Wendy.Richard@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Wendy.Richard@kent.gov.uk)
- Eddy Ibude is our new Business Support Administrator and can be contacted on [Edwin.Ibude@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Edwin.Ibude@kent.gov.uk) (Jessica Denny is on maternity leave and congratulations go to her for the birth of her son Harley)



I look forwards to introducing these colleagues to you and also continuing to be a key part of developments in North Kent going forwards!



### Maths Mastery Project

Lisa Thistlethwaite is leading this new project in North Kent which brings together several Gravesham schools to develop Maths Mastery in their Curriculum and the aim for VSK is to raise Maths attainment and progress for our Children in Care. This work is in conjunction with Westcourt, Whitehill, Lawn and Kings Farm Primary Schools project where a specialist Maths Teacher Kieran Mackle is developing the approach.

Lisa visited these schools last week and was able to enjoy seeing some of the activities that are really engaging the children, such as Times Tables Rock Stars!

### The LAC Solihull Approach Training

The VSK North Kent team, working with Kelly Davies from CIC CAMHS are currently delivering the LAC SOLIHULL APPROACH training in South Kent as we expand this training across County for schools - and also CIC CAMHS practitioners so that it can bring new ways of working to their Care Pathways in working with Foster Carers. The aim is to train professionals working with children who are fostered or adopted in this psycho-dynamic and behavioural approach - and to develop their knowledge and skills supporting children and other professionals through the challenges that arise.

We look forwards to seeing those taking part on day 2 in November! Do get in touch if you are interested in taking part in future training...



## NEWS FROM THE NORTH

### Paired Reading

Last year this project had excellent outcomes for our children – and across the county an average of 10.2 months gain in reading accuracy was made in just 16 weeks! Thank you to all the fabulous Foster Carers who took part in the training and did the regular reading with the children every week, it made such a difference for the children.



The Celebration event included a brilliant visit from the children's author Jeremy Strong – he read some of his stories and signed books for the children. It was lovely to see some social workers attending as well, along with schools and foster carers.

This year North and West Kent VSK colleagues have joined up as a team again and we look forward to great things for the new group of children taking part...

Schools - we will be in touch if any of your children are selected for the roll out but please do contact us if you would like attend the free training event for all schools.

### Kent Nurture Mini-Meet

On 14<sup>th</sup> September VSK North Kent organised a mini-meet inviting schools from across Kent to attend. Amanda Ormond took the lead for our team and worked in conjunction with The Nurture Group Network to organise this fantastic event. Over 30 delegates, ranging from senior leaders to teaching assistants attended and at least 30% of the delegation were new to nurture. 93% of delegates rated the conference as either good or very good so it was great to see the very positive feedback.

And back in July, our six North Kent schools completed day 3 of their accredited training with the Nurture Group Network – so they are now in the flow of getting their room/resources and interventions started, as well as completing their assignments of course!

Due to the success and interest shown from other schools, we are now looking ahead to use PP+ to organise more free accredited Nurture Group training for schools this year – and expanding this to include schools from across Kent. Please email [Amanda.Ormond@Kent.gov.uk](mailto:Amanda.Ormond@Kent.gov.uk) if you are interested in your school taking part.

### And last but not least, look out for:

- The North Kent PP+ Support Map – see what you can access at a glance. All the things we have ready to offer your school/carer/young person. Email [Margaret.Hamlyn@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Margaret.Hamlyn@kent.gov.uk) for a copy



*Have a great term and look forwards to seeing you soon! Joanne Kelly (Deputy Head), Margaret Hamlyn (Assistant Head) and the North Kent team*

## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH EAST

### Carole Bailey, Assistant Head (Dover & Folkestone)

Tel: 03000 417216 or Email: [carole.bailey@kent.gov.uk](mailto:carole.bailey@kent.gov.uk)

I am delighted to write a short introduction to the work in South Kent this term. Well done to all students who did well in their summer exam results. Three of our students from South Kent have progressed onto Universities this term (Surrey, Leeds Beckett and Canterbury). Congratulations and we wish them well in the new chapters of their lives.

As well as supporting our young people in their learning, we are also looking to upskill our own abilities to provide even better support. Two of our education support officers are embarking upon additional studies that will mean we will be able to provide even better support! Emma Wills has commenced her training to become SENCo qualified, and is keen to work with schools where children in care have specific additional educational needs. Abigail Ingram will shortly commence work towards a qualification in speech and language which will provide further expertise within our team.

Finally, I should like to introduce myself. My background is as a Kent secondary Headteacher, and I have previously worked as an Assistant Head for Virtual School Kent covering the Thanet locality. I am delighted to be recently reappointed to lead the Dover and Folkestone locality. I should like to thank my colleagues, Margaret Hamlyn and Jen Kemp for “holding the fort” in South Kent and covering this locality in addition to their own for this interim period. I will be spending time in term 2 getting to know the schools, designated teaching staff and of course, understanding the needs of our children.



### NURTURE GROUP TRAINING ACCREDITATION

Congratulations Amanda Ormond on passing the Nurture Training Accreditation with a MERIT. The Nurture Group Network exists to promote the development of nurture groups and to ensure the continuing quality of their delivery through accredited training programmes, research on effective practice, relevant publications and information exchange. Its aim is to make the nurture group approach available to all pupils who need it and also to ensure that the connections between learning and early development are understood throughout education. To find out more please visit their website: <https://nurturegroups.org/about-nurture>



### FREE EDUCATION GUIDES FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS & SCHOOLS

PAC-UK and Adoption UK have published two complementary education guides, for school staff and adoptive parents respectively, to help ensure adopted children get the best possible educational start in life. The guides explain why these vulnerable children may need additional support in school, what educational entitlements they can attract and what support is available for them. For more information visit: <http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/news/16-11-2017-pac-uk-and-adoption-uk-free-guides-for-adoptive-parents-and-school-staff>

## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH WEST

### Jen Kemp, Assistant Head (Ashford, Romney Marsh & Tunbridge Wells)

Tel: 03000 415685 or Email: [Jennifer.kemp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Jennifer.kemp@kent.gov.uk)

No sooner had I said a fond farewell to the Shepway Rural area than I am welcoming back schools in Romney Marsh! Due to an internal promotion, there was a further re-shuffle and I am happy to confirm that my locality has settled into its final position. I am now the Assistant Head for Ashford, Tunbridge Wells and Romney Marsh so I look forward to some much needed stability for our team and for schools in South Kent.



Despite these changes we have continued to busy ourselves with new projects and work streams in South Kent. A new Paired Reading Project is about to be launched which I hope will bear as fuller fruits as it has done in the South East of our locality. If a pupil in your school has been identified to take part in the project you should hear about it at the PEP meeting or via our ESO Sam Pilcher or FELO Steve Orwin.

There has been a flurry of training opportunities of late including many South Kent schools attending the Sollihull Approach Fostering & Adoption training and an Introduction to Nurture Groups training. I'm looking forward to working with Designated Teachers to progress from theory into action, helping them to become truly attachment aware schools. An outcome for me from the training was to think about ways in which our Designated Teachers can be supported through 'informal supervision' opportunities and I would welcome your thoughts on this as to how VSK can support you to improve ways in which you can reflect on your practice with our most vulnerable children in care.

### DIGITAL PARENTING

- The NSPCC have updated their **#ShareAware** campaign with new resources to enable parents and carers to 'untangle' the online world. The campaign focuses on talking to children much like we do "real" world safety such as crossing the road, bullying and speaking to strangers. For more information visit: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>
- **Vodafone Digital Parenting** provides expert advice and strategies to help your children or pupils navigate the internet safely. For more information visit: <http://vodafonedigitalparenting.co.uk/> Topics covered include:
  - ◇ Social media can be positive, but constantly chasing 'likes' can make young people feel insecure. Psychologist Dr Linda Papadopoulos is here to help you find the right balance
  - ◇ IT teacher-turned-internet safety writer Yusuf Tamanna looks at how immersive virtual reality technology is being used to help children learn – and play
  - ◇ You don't have to be a tech genius to help keep your children safe online. Here are the three digital life skills that will serve them well, says Eleanor Levy, editor at Parent Info
  - ◇ Criminals are using sophisticated scams to get your family's personal details or cash online. Ann-Marie Corvin describes their methods, and how you can stop them.

### Jemma Page, Assistant Head (Tonbridge, Maidstone & Malling)

Tel: 03000 412777 or Email: [jemma.page@kent.gov.uk](mailto:jemma.page@kent.gov.uk)



The West Kent Team would like to congratulate Daniel Barton and Lewis Kelly who took part in a charity run to raise money for the homeless – Daniel particularly who was due to receive a VSK award at the Award Ceremony on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September of this year but choose not to attend the ceremony as Daniel felt it was more important that he help raise money for people less fortunate than himself. Daniel and Lewis both completed the run which was a fantastic achievement! Well done both.

Their carers Janetta and Tom Sams' said:



On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September, Daniel & Lewis along with their training partners Janetta & Tom took part in the **Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust Relay Run**. This charity runs two shelters in London for homeless vulnerable women and this event took place to raise money to keep Daisy the cook providing delicious and nutritious meals for those needing a place to stay. Hence our team names "Crazy for Daisy" 1 & 2

Daniel missed the VSK award ceremony where he was to collect a silver award as was keen to run for a charity that supports homeless people. He is sad to see anyone having to sleep on the streets and this was a way that he could help make a change in someone's life. He spent the week before collecting sponsors from school teachers raising almost £50. Additionally, he and Lewis donated £5 each of their pocket money.

With our faces painted with Daisy chains by the lovely social worker Rosa we headed to the start line, with supporters including the MP for the area.

With our wooden spoons, thinly disguised as batons, in hand we set off at a pace, made possible by extensive training, round the aptly named Park, Hillyfields in Brockley. The course was hard but both our teams persevered and, after 10k for each team, with red faces came through the finish tunnel strong.

Out of only 3 prizes, including fastest and oldest team, we were overjoyed to be presented with the Best Effort Prize, this was, in the organisers words..... *"for the team's face paint ID plus the enthusiasm and the foster care element which is of course something close to our and Sybil Phoenix heart as this project originated for her prolific fostering over the years."*

What a great day for a fantastic cause, we were all pleased with our efforts and particularly with our prize of 12 delicious assorted cupcakes!!

# PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

The VSK Participation Team has had a busy few months organising lots of fun activities for children in care.



## Annual Celebration Event

The summer started with our annual children in care celebration event where the members of our three children in care councils (YAC, OCYPC and the Super Council) got together to review and celebrate the excellent work they have done this year. First everyone took part in an activity identifying barriers as to why children don't attend council meetings, then we discussed ways we can ensure everyone feels welcome and is included. After a break for lunch we then held a sports day and invited the children's Corporate Parents to join in the fun!



## Participation Days

169 children in care and care leavers attended our participation events throughout the summer which included trips to Hever Castle, Thorpe Park, cycling and canoeing at Bewl Water and a trip to the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury to see The Railway Children.



The October half term was also busy with arts and crafts activity days, pumpkin carving and some really good work from our Super Council and OCYPC members, who are working on making a welcome book that can be given to new members of the Councils.

Please contact us if you would like more information about the activities we support or have children and young people that you think would like to get involved:



[VSK\\_Participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk)



03000 414214

Participation Team Photo taken at the Post16 Awards Evening (Chelsea, Sophia, Jo, Chloe and Reece)



## VSK Contact Information



[virtual.school.kent@kent.gov.uk](mailto:virtual.school.kent@kent.gov.uk)



Virtual School Kent



[www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/](http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/)

North & West Kent

03000 412777

Worrall House, 30 Kings Hill Avenue,  
Kings Hill, Kent ME19 4AE

East & South Kent

03000 421157

Brook House, John Wilson Business Park,  
Reeves Way, Whitstable, Kent CT5 3SS

## VSK Senior Leadership Team



Tony Doran  
Headteacher



Marian Smith  
Deputy Head (East & South)



Jo Kelly  
Deputy Head (North & West)



Rachel Calver  
Deputy Head (Post16)



Jo Carpenter  
School Bursar & Project Officer