

VIRTUAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2024

HELPING EVERY CHILD TO THRIVE



Meet the team

Hi my name is
Katie Smith

I am the Virtual School lead for children and young people with SEND. I am a primary trained teacher but much of my career has been in special education, teaching young people with a range of needs including Autism and severe learning difficulties.

I enjoy supporting young people to foster a love of learning, particularly those who may face obstacles due to their additional needs. It is a privilege to work with young people with SEND, they inspire me to continue developing my practise so I can offer the support they need to reach their potential.



COMING SOON

THE ASPIRE ONLINE READING LIBRARY

The Aspire Virtual School has purchased an online reading resource to support our young people across their different ages to enjoy reading. This library currently has 1,810 books and still counting, in over 15 different languages. It is a fantastic library of fiction and non-fiction ebooks with supporting audio, theme music, animations, storytelling and, of course, learning resources. This is an amazing resource that would enable our young people to fall in love with reading. We would like to encourage all Designated Teachers, Foster Carers and Social Workers to help us promote this with their young person.

You are specially invited to the Aspire Online Reading Library Training. This has been designed to showcase this library and show professionals all its features. As we would love you to support our young people to take advantage of this amazing reading resource.

NEXT FOSTER CARERS COFFEE MORNING

The Virtual School is hosting
a coffee morning for all Foster Carers

on 12th Sept 2024

Time: 9.00am - 11.00am

at **Couleur Cafe**

Opp Barking and Dagenham Town Hall

THEME

"TIPS AND TRICKS FOR SETTLING
CHILDREN IN THEIR NEW SCHOOL
YEAR".

Come and meet our Transition Lead
Dr Jean Mayala

Breakfast & drinks will be provided.

ON WED 10TH JULY
AT 9:30AM
ONLINE

To attend this training please contact;
Jose Omolu- Josephine.omolu@lbbd.gov.uk



THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL'S EXTENDED ROLE

KINSHIP CARE

THE DFE HAS
RECENTLY EXTENDED
THE ROLE OF THE
VIRTUAL SCHOOL TO
INCLUDE SUPPORTING
KINSHIP CARERS.

Kinship carers are people other than parents who are looking after a child for 28 days or more at a time (this includes grandparents, other family members and family friends). These carers may require support as these children:

- MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA
- COULD BE VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED
- COULD PRESENT WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Kinship Carers require support because their willingness to help, introduces a big change into their family dynamics both physically and emotionally, which if not well managed can impact negatively on their own mental health.

The Virtual School is available to help this group in the same capacity of advice and support that we currently offer to PLAC (Previously Looked After Children). This term we sent out information to school heads on a training for Kinship Carers. We will continue to share information on training and support opportunities for Kinship Carers. We would appreciate it if you could make your families aware of training for Kinship Carers in your newsletters and through your other communication forums when we share the information with you.

For any clarification regarding Kinship Care contact Angelina Ikeako:

angelina.ikeako@lbbd.gov.uk

E-LEARNING PLATFORM



As most of you will be aware, the Aspire Virtual School have been working in partnership with BDSIP to create an online CPD platform for the borough.

We started this year with two units on Trauma and Attachment and from the end of this term we will add to that collection with ASD for the mainstream classroom, SEMH in the mainstream classroom, Speech and Language Development for the primary classroom and Speech and Language Development for the secondary classroom.

The online learning units take around an hour and consists of short videos and information sections followed by learning checks in the form of quizzes. At the end you are given a mark and, if you reach the pass threshold, a certificate of completion. This is not to replace all day training but rather to act as an immediately accessible training for new staff who may arrive mid CPD cycle, and as short refreshers for current staff. It is designed for ALL staff including support, admin and mid-day not just teaching.

The platform runs through the BDSIP and the Aspire Virtual School websites. To get your staff onto the platform you will need to contact NICOLE LEAH nicole.leah@bdsip.co.uk in BDSIP to create logins.

If any schools have further requests for a short course CPD for their staff, please email adela.kay@lbbd.gov.uk as we are looking to develop the platform with more useful short courses and we would like these to meet your needs.

INSPIRING SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

If there is one need, we know our young people have, it is the **NEED FOR MOTIVATION**. This is why the Virtual School has commissioned Action Jackson, a motivational speaker, to support our schools in Barking and Dagenham by running motivational assemblies known as:

▶ FUTURE READY ASSEMBLY ▶ DREAM BIG ASSEMBLY

60 MIN ASSEMBLY

This assembly is designed to Entertain, Educate and Empower your students to raise their aspirations by sharing stories and strategies successful people have applied in order to develop a future of success in their careers. They will laugh, they will interact, they will be inspired to reach for more!

Young people who have attended these assemblies have been positively impacted by it. To book a FREE ASSEMBLY contact
KATHY ADAMS
kathleen.adams@lbbd.gov.uk

THE ASPIRE CAREERS SHOW

31st Oct 2024 : 10:00am - 3:00pm

Dagenham and Redbridge Football Club
Victoria Road, Dagenham RM10 7XL

OUR THANK YOU CORNER

PARNITHA



has served Barking and Dagenham Council diligently in her role as Service Manager for the Fostering Team. Parnitha has a wealth of knowledge and expertise which she is always happy to share to support colleagues and ensure that Looked After Children to Barking and Dagenham are appropriately cared for and looked after. One of Parnitha's roles is panel adviser for the Fostering Panel and her skill set has ensured that the panel has functioned according to guidelines and remained open to serving and responding to the complexities of each case.

All of us at the Virtual School will miss Parnitha dearly and wish her continued success as she embarks on the next stage of her career. She is certainly a colleague who will be an asset to any organisation and we are sad to see her leave. Parnitha thank you for all your support.

SAVE THE DATE

Designated Teachers Networking Forum
AUTUMN TERM

2nd Oct 2024 : 8:30am - 12:30pm

SPRING TERM

5th Feb 2025 : 8:30am - 12:30pm

Venue: Aspire Alliance Building,
Warren Junior School
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
RM6 6DA

An event for introducing young people to a wide range of jobs and role models that they can aspire to become, broadening their horizons and encouraging them to aim high.

Some of London's most successful business leaders and professionals would be present to share their knowledge and experience with over 50 young people Year 5 - Age 25.

Organisations represented include British Airways, Bloomberg, PRS for Music, Royal Air Force, CU London, City University, St Thomas Hospital, TBrown Construction and Youth Employment.

Research by the Confederation of British Industry has found that young people who recalled four or more business interactions were five times less likely to be a NEET (not in education, employment, or training) and earned, on average, 16% more than their peers.

For more information on this contact **TINA CUMRAKU** tina.cumraku@lbbd.gov.uk

TIPS FOR TRANSITION - JEAN

SURVEY RESULTS of our young people's hopes and worries when they join the secondary school: **More than 80% of respondents gave the following classification:**

POSITIVE THINGS OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAID THEY LOOK FORWARD TO



WHAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAID THEIR WORRIES AND CONCERNS ARE:



KEY FEATURES TO ENSURE A SMOOTH SCHOOL TRANSITION

IDENTIFY: Education Needs

RESEARCH: Search on the internet and speak to people to find various options for the young person

CONTACT: Ensure you contact the prospective school

APPLY: Go on the council's website to make the application

FOLLOW-UP: Contact the school to follow-up and ensure that the young person gets the school of their choice

SUPPORT: Arrange face to face meetings and attend open days as this reassures the young person

SUMMER PLANS



This summer promises to be exciting. The Aspire Virtual School has a line-up of activities for our young people.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CAMP AUSTRIA

27th July - 3rd August 2024

This trip to Austria will be a special time in the Alps. It promises to be an exciting time as young people will have the opportunity of exploring Austria and will engage in various activities and workshops including a cultural day. The motto is "We are Nature". Other young people will join from France, Poland, Eastern Germany, and of course, Austria.

PLAYFUL CODING

7th - 9th August 2024
at London South Bank University

This event will give young people the opportunity to work on robotics-related projects, produce innovative ideas, and test their limits. It gives young people a great way to enjoy coding and apply their knowledge and skills to solving real-world problems.

TREWERN

20th - 23rd August 2024

The Virtual School has organised a free residential trip to Trewern - August Tuesday 20th - Friday 23rd August (inclusive). This will be in the lovely region of Wales where young people Yr 7, Yr 8 & Yr 9 in mainstream school will have an opportunity to network and access fun activities. The activities will include Mountain walking, caving, Gorge walking, canoeing, climbing wall, bushcraft and BMXing.

For more information on any of these events please contact **KATHY ADAMS**
kathleen.adams@lbbd.go.uk

