



Family Care Associates Educational Outcomes Report 2010-2011

BACKGROUND

Family Care Associates Ltd, Dalepeak Ltd, Young Alliance Ltd and Families@FamilyCare Ltd (collectively referred to in this report under the generic label Family Care Associates) continues to promote the educational achievements of the looked after children with whom we work. This applies whether these children are placed within our own school or educated in the wider community. Children supported by Family Care Associates will fall into three broad groups, those placed in our care in our children's homes, those placed with foster parents and those living with families in and around Shrewsbury but attending Access School. The significant majority of these children will be 'looked after'. We place the highest possible priority on education for all our children, who by and large, both thrive and prosper educationally at a level far exceeding the disappointing norm for looked after children.

Looked After Children are traditionally, if tragically, generally considered not to achieve their potential when compared to their non-looked after peers. Years of statistics make for disheartening reading as they catalogue their relative under achievement, poor attendance, high rates of exclusion and non participation in education. All of this contributes to disproportionate representation of formerly looked after children in relation to adult homelessness, drug abuse, criminality and other indicators of social exclusion. This demoralising data has successfully spawned the 'Quality Protects' initiative and the 'Every Child Matters' agenda which in many respects differ most significantly only in respect of the date that they were produced. We work from the basis that 'Every Child Matters', only if a key professional ensures that they can evidence that the child matters to them personally. The Government wants every child to grow up safe, happy, healthy, secure and loved. This is the only way that they will be able to fulfil their potential (Children in Care, Department for Education).

The term 'looked after children' includes:

- Those children who are in care through a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 and subsequent legislation
- Those accommodated on a voluntary basis through an agreement with their parents under section 20 of that Act or an agreement with that child if they are over 16
- Children placed away from home under an Emergency Protection Order
- Children on police protection/remand/detention (section 21 of the Children Act)

Looked After Children are wonderfully 'average' insofar as they are as every bit as able as any other cohort of children in Britain. What they sometimes lack is opportunity and consistency and perhaps an adult or a group of adults prepared to challenge the stereotypes and champion their causes. In its own modest way Family Care Associates seeks to do so by prioritising and supporting 'our' children's education.

METHODOLOGY AND PERAMETERS

Throughout this document the term 'Looked After Children' will be used to represent all looked after children and young people in our care irrespective of whether they are looked after at home or away from home.

Family Care Associates personnel continue to liaise with local authorities and other professional settings in order to help our children achieve and maintain high standards. This is achieved through normal review mechanisms within the social care and education fields but is supplemented by our Core Group System¹.

Over recent years we have established a practice of reporting the educational outcomes of all our children and young people. The reader should note that many of the children within the Company's services have experienced a disrupted education – in some extreme cases they have never had an established pattern of regular school attendance or participated in nationally measured tests. We suggest that this is typical of many Looked After Children.

Although data is often used for the purposes of reporting outcomes at a local and maybe national level, the primary reason for us collecting data is to identify and meet the needs of the individual looked after child. We do this in an effort to seek to ensure that however a child comes to be involved with our company they can expect to be supported and encouraged to recognise their abilities by their carers and teachers.

The publishing of information in relation to the educational outcomes of Looked After Children is collected and collated from carers, schools and where appropriate other educational professionals to ensure accuracy.

This report relates to the academic year 2010-2011 and not the financial year therefore making comparisons with non-looked after children easy and more relevant.

This report aims to provide evidence of meeting the following broader outcomes:

1. The experience of being looked after has improved the educational outcomes of the children and young people.
2. An increase in educational achievements outcomes year on year for Looked After Children.

There is evidence in some children's homes within the 'looked after' system that insufficient priority is given to education; this has been catalogued over many years and is an indictment of the looked after system. In the Family Care Associates group of companies we hope to prove that this may not be and in fact is not the case. We have the highest aspirations and expectations; no limit should be imposed on the capacity of the young people, children and learners to improve, develop and achieve. Whilst almost all of the children and young people referred to our services have had, at best, a disrupted education we accept this as a reality to be overcome not an insurmountable impediment or worse an excuse for limiting ambition.

We have some key messages that we hope to achieve in Family Care Associates:

- Maintaining high aspirations for looked after children depends on a focused leadership. If we do not have ambitious visions and we fail to make corporate parenting a high priority then we are putting up barriers to prevent high standards of education. Corporate parenting is vital if we want our young people to succeed in education.

¹ The Core Group system has been established for many years and is effectively a meeting of professionals in a forum convened by Family Care associates Ltd approximately every four to six weeks.

- A clear and consistent focus on education is vital. This involves us continually tracking the progress of Looked After Children and holding all schools accountable. We at Family Care Associates promote regular dialogue between schools and carers, ensuring that all carers have the skills needed to support study and support transition to learning beyond the age of 16.
- We acknowledge that, at times, some partners in the child's corporate parenting seem to struggle to fully undertake their responsibilities. If and when this happens then we as an organisation will advocate for children and when necessary agitate on their behalf to ensure that they receive the support to which they are entitled.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

"We believe that 'looked after' young people should be fully supported to maximise their educational potential."

(Barnado's; 'Giving Children Back Their Future')

As a minimum legal requirement, Looked After Children should be attending suitable education on a full time basis from the term following their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June in which they are to turn 16. The place where children receive their education will be based on their age, aptitude and ability and any special needs that they may have.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN?

- Research (Barnado's) shows that many young people in the care system have poor experiences of education and low academic achievement but perhaps contrary to perception, most of them know how important education is for them and poor academic results can contribute to continuing disadvantage and exclusion into their adult lives.
- Having investigated at length we have failed to uncover comprehensive and reliable official statistics maintained on either University entrance or 'A' level results for care leavers, it is estimated that only 1% of care leavers go to University compared to 37% of all other young people. (Department of Education 2010)

Looked After Children – Good Practice in Family Care Associates

Within Family Care Associates Ltd (Access School, near Shrewsbury), the key elements of our practice, focus on the progress and development of the young people in our care. (Within the remainder of the company's setting these elements are simply replicated in terms of our carers expectations of the schools the children attend.

The elements include:

- Engaging our children in learning and taking responsibility for their own learning
- Close and continual monitoring of academic, social and personal progress
- The involvement of Looked After Children in learning outside the classroom and having access to after school activities
- The early intervention if problems occur, such as with behaviour or attendance
- The successful engagement of parents and carers, encouraging them to be involved in the young persons learning
- All young people to have a designated teacher

We employ vigorous target setting and monitoring of all our young people. We continually encourage high levels of attendance and acceptable behaviour. Personal and social targets are also monitored and we include the young people in this decision making process. All our young people are involved in their personal educational and behavioural plans.

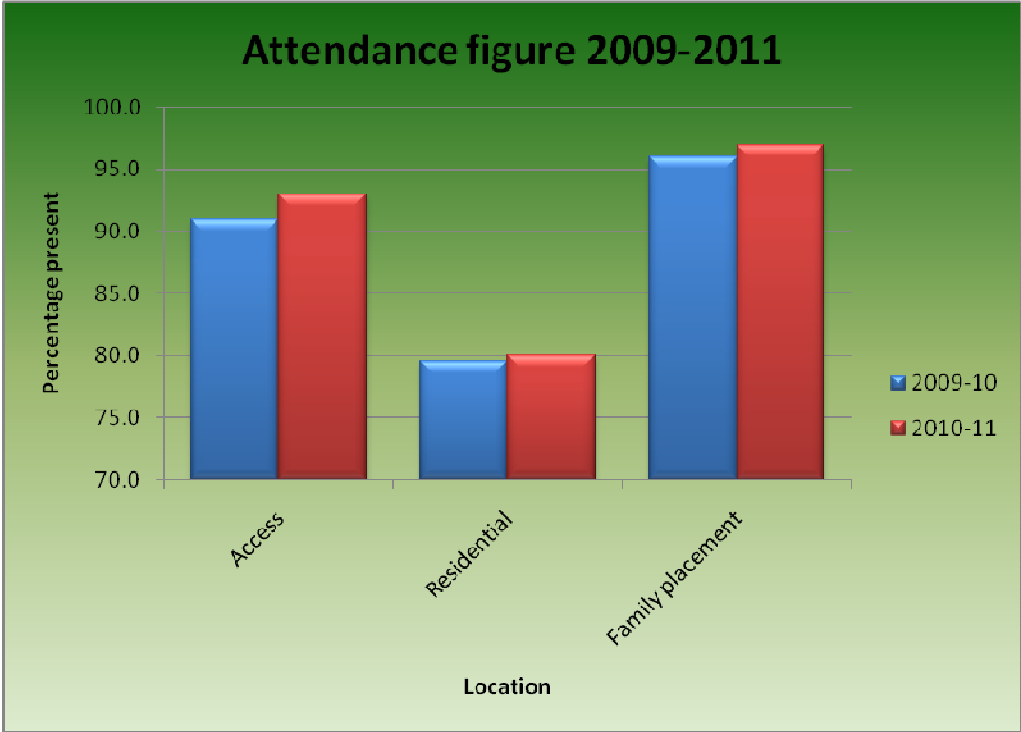
Within Access School we identify a designated teacher and for children educated outside of our school we ensure that we identify the person holding that responsibility in their school. We also identify and communicate with Virtual Head Teachers in the child's 'home' local authority and are in the process of supplementing this by characterising the Head Teacher of Access School as Virtual Head Teacher for all children and young people cared for by Family Care Associates. This is not to replace but supplement the responsibility of the identified Virtual Head Teacher in the child's Local Education Authority.

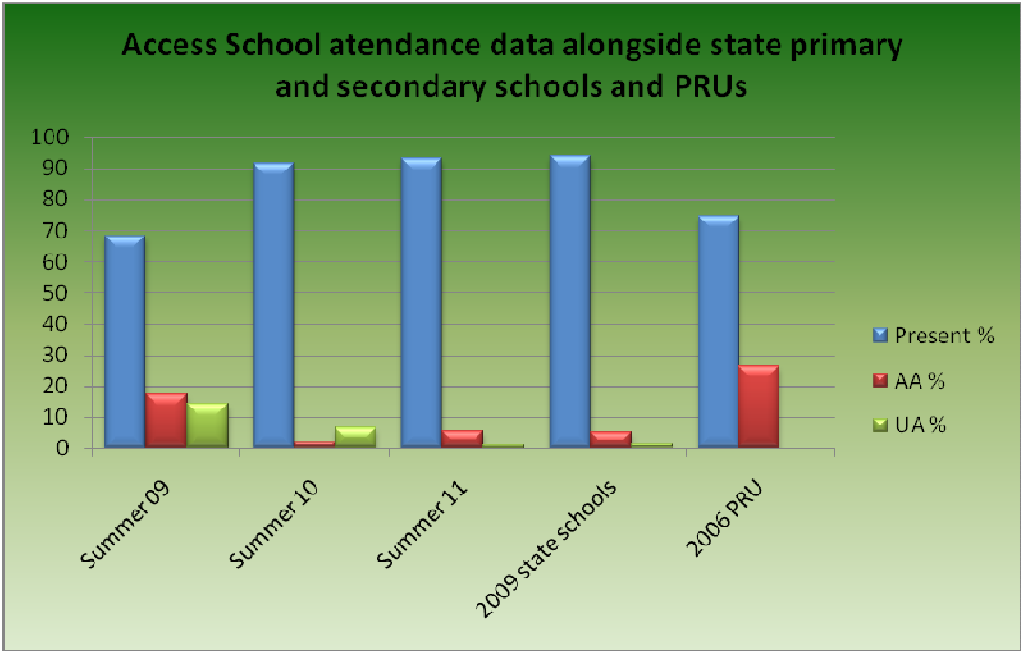
"All schools must appoint a designated teacher who has the responsibility for promoting the educational achievement for all Looked After Children the role of their school."

Whilst all of the above is easier to achieve within our school we work with a range of residential and foster care staff who have proved to be committed to ensuring that no effort is spared in prioritising 'our' children's needs.

ATTENDANCE – all children and young people within Family Care Associates

"There is a strong correlation between the amount of absence in school and the qualifications that pupils achieve" (Department for Education and Skills)





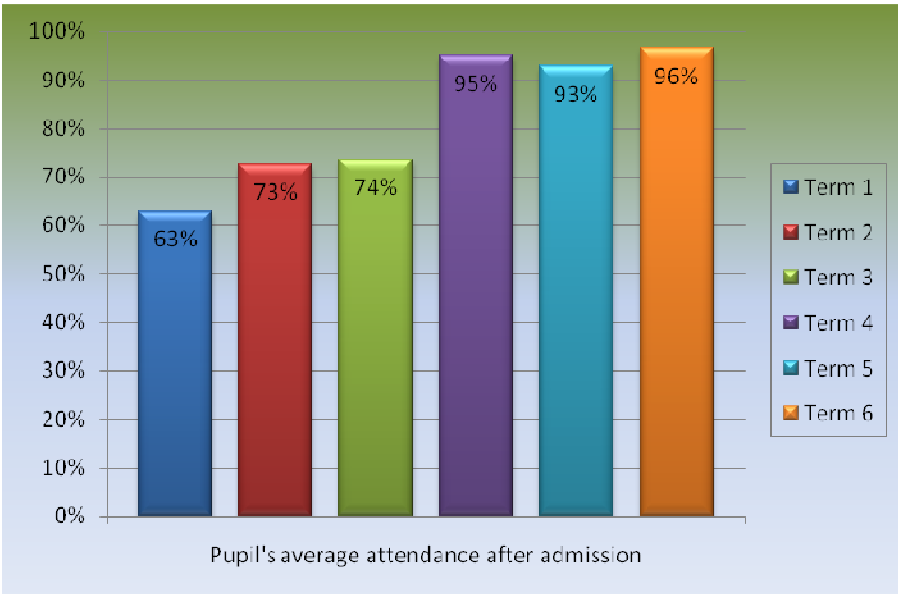
N.B. PRU data is not separated into authorised (AA) and unauthorised (UA) data and is shown amalgamated as authorised absence.

School average (real data)	Sum 09	Sum 10	Sum 11	2009 Maintained schools	2006 PRU
Present %	68.3	91.5	93.2	93.8	74.6
AA %	17.5	2.0	5.5	5.1	26.4
UA %	14.2	6.4	1.0	1.1	-

So % presence continues to increase and is comparable with state schools. In fact it is better than state secondary schools.

Authorised absence has increased slightly on last year (probably mainly due to two pupils being involved in therapeutic sessions within the school day) but despite this it remains comparable with state schools.

Unauthorised absence continues to fall and is now comparable with that recorded in state schools.



Family Care Associates excels itself in the attendance figures of our looked after cohort. Not only do we exceed the national norm, we are improving within the company all the time. This is due to the continual communication and close links that we have with families and/or carers. Parents and carers are positively encouraged to share responsibility for the young people’s education in order for them to thrive and achieve. Overall absence rates are actually lower for our Looked After Children than for all pupils. This can only suggest that good care has a relatively stabilising effect on a child’s education.

EXCLUSION

Family Care Associates seeks to ensure that all their young people have the best start in life and we want them to succeed in whatever they choose to do. We want our young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens and regular school attendance is key to this.

Although for some young people life presents a continual challenge and can be distracting for the young people. The department of education states:

“Pupils with SEN and statements are around 8 times more likely to be permanently excluded than those without SEN” (2009-2010 70% of Access with Statements of Educational Need) (70% of our children are statemented)

What we at Family Care Associates understand is that at times some of our young people may not be motivated in their learning and sometimes these matters are beyond their control. Non attendance may be an indicator of issues of difficulties that a child may be experiencing.

We like to promote positive behaviour and build relationships in school. Nationally, Looked After Children are 6 times more likely to be excluded from school than those in the non-looked after population. It is recognised that our cohort of young people run a high risk of exclusion and may need more support than non-looked after young people in a mainstream setting.

We understand that at times exclusions are inevitable and it is our role to support the child at this time and to maintain their learning while absent. This is to avoid our pupils struggling on their return, therefore avoiding them feeling further disengaged.

Within Family Care Associates we look carefully at the decision to exclude and a child's needs should always be taken into consideration when taking such action. If a child's behaviour warrants exclusion, then careful planning and preparation should be put into place on their return.

We would rather promote a positive behaviour attitude towards the young people and work with them in order to avoid exclusions. This enables the child and staff to work together to overcome difficulties. This approach particularly works at Access school as each child has a designated teacher who is there not only for academic support but pastoral support and can be the link between the school and the parent/carer.

Setting	Exclusion rates for academic years:	
	2009-2010	2010-2011
ACCESS SCHOOL	4.5%	0.7%
RESIDENTIAL	3.8%	0.53%
FAMILIES@FAMILY-CARE	0%	0.075%

(This has been calculated on a total amount of teaching days in an academic year - 190 against the amount of young people in each setting)

ATTAINMENT

Family Care Associates main priority is to considerably raise the achievements of the young people who we look after. Over the past year our staff and young people have shown hard work and determination to produce remarkable improvements across the company.

Access School

Average National Curriculum improvement over last 12 months - Consider the average pupil will improve by one national curriculum level every 2 years:

	KS2	KS3	Whole school
Eng - R	1.0	1.2	1.1
Eng - W	1.0	1.0	1.0
Eng - S&L	0.6	1.0	0.9
Eng - Tot	0.9	1.1	1.0
Mat - N	1.0	1.0	1.0
Mat - SSM	0.4	1.5	1.2
Mat - DH	1.1	0.7	0.8
Mat - UA	1.0	0.5	0.7
Mat - Tot	0.9	0.9	0.9
Sci - SI	3.0*	1.4	2.0
Sci - LLP	3.0*	1.2	1.8
Sci - MP	1.6	1.8	1.8
Sci - PP	0.7	1.7	1.3
Sci - Tot	2.1	1.5	1.7
Geog	1.4	1.0	1.1
Hist	1.5	0.8	1.1
Average	1.3	1.2	1.2

	Pupil 1	Pupil 2	Pupil 3	Pupil 4	Pupil 5	Pupil 6	KS2	KS3	Whole school
Eng - R	1.8	0.8	0.5	1.5	1.3	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.1
Eng - W	1.9	0.3	0.9	0.8	1.2	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
Eng - S&L	1.6	0.2	1.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.0	0.9
Eng - Tot	1.8	0.4	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.0
Mat - N	1.4	1.1	0.7	0.7	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
Mat - SSM	1.7	2.1	1.8	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	1.5	1.2
Mat - DH	0.7	0.4	1.1	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.7	0.8
Mat - UA	0.5	0.4	0.2	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.5	0.7
Mat - Tot	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Sci - SI	2.1	1.7	1.6	0.4	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.4	2.0
Sci - LLP	1.9	1.7	1.1	0.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.2	1.8
Sci - MP	2.7	1.7	2.2	0.8	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.8
Sci - PP	1.5		3.0	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.7	1.3
Sci - Tot	2.0	1.4	2.0	0.5	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.5	1.7
Geog	1.1	0.2	2.1	0.6	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.1
Hist	1.2	0.3	1.0	0.8	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.8	1.1
Average	1.6	0.9	1.4	0.7	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2

The above details the individual pupil's attainment for pupils in Access school showing the curriculum levels and the achievement for the academic year 2010-2011. This is due to the hard work and commitment of the staff team at Access school. With more thorough planning that is mapped across the school for all key stages, continual teacher assessment and differentiation to suit the young people's individual needs. Access school had no school leavers therefore no public examinations took place, due to the age range of the school in this academic year.

	Exams	Grades
Residential	Pupil 1 Pupil 2 Pupil 3 Pupil 4	Year 10 B/C 8 GCSE's 6 above C 7 GCSE's above D 4 GCSE's 4 above C
Family Placement	Pupil1	6 GCSE's above C

With the above results we can safely say that we are beginning to improve with the education of Looked After Children. In comparisons to last years outcomes report we have improved by 100%.

How can we increase flexibility in the curriculum to support our Looked After Children?

Within Family Care Associates and in Access school particularly, we understand that not all pupils achieve major academic success (though given the figures above it would suggest they do) are not able to fulfil what is required to pass GCSE examinations due to circumstances beyond their control. We ensure that all young people are able to maximise their potential given their circumstances and personal history.

We focus on the young people's interest for vocational routes and have adapted the curriculum to help achieve these by including lessons on land use and horticultural studies. We liaise with differing professionals, such as Connexions to arrange work experience and work based learning routes. We also encourage the young people to have an active participation in post 16 education, taking them to visit colleges and helping with the transition to these placements. This year we will be helping with the transition of 3 of our young people into further education.

At Access we believe that all our young people should be consulted in the decisions regarding their education and this should be part of the statutory review process.

Extra Curricular Activities

Across the company and all the settings for our young people, it is extremely pleasing to see that all of our young people are participating in extra curricular activities in and out of school. This gives the young people an opportunity to have a 'normal' lifestyle promoting social relationships and confidence building.

Some of the activities that the young people are participating in are as follows:

Football	Rugby	Cricket	Youth club
Boxing	Cubs	Taekwondo	Scouts
Gymnastics	Cadets	After school clubs	Swimming
Horse riding	Tennis	Dancing	Golf

It is nice to report that having researched and collated all the information approximately 98% of all our young people participate in extra curricular activities. When inspected by Ofsted under the heading '**Helping Children Achieve and Enjoy What They Do**', the majority of findings in our residential homes and fostering service were judged 'outstanding'.

CONCLUSION

Children who are Looked After are frequently expected to 'fail' in their education. However, we at Family Care Associates are proud to boast our continual and improving achievements of our young people. The children within our care need and get individually tailored support to get the best from their education. We work together as a company wide structure to ensure the young people have the best educational opportunities. We work with outside agencies to continually liaise with them in an effort to ensure the young people are not failed in any way.

This report goes some way to demonstrate that the needs of the young people are put first and Family Care Associates are immensely proud of their achievements. Given the commitment to the principles and reality of corporate parenting, we can demonstrate that our excellent channels of and commitment to excellent communication pays dividends for the children for whom we care. With the introduction of a 'Virtual Head' within the company I assume and will take responsibility to ensure that communication can and will get better and to give support to those carers and parents who do not feel comfortable with 'educational speak' as they will be able to utilise this service.

The standards that we should seek for Looked After Children must be no less than we would expect for our own children, the expectations should be every bit as high as an 'average parent.' It is everyone's responsibility to be a corporate parent and this is vital for the success of our young people.

We are immensely proud of the effort and achievement of our children who despite a range of difficulties and negative experiences do exceptionally well. For some time they have exceeded the 'norm' for Looked After Children in education and we remain committed to building upon and developing this success. Our foster carers, residential and family placement staff together with the educationalists accept their responsibility to promote our children's education and we are here to make a difference in their lives.

There will always be barriers for Looked After Children but it is our role within the company to break these barriers and challenge the norm for them as we are not prepared to let the 'Care system' fail our children. We are committed in our role in Family Care Associates to ensure that all our children have full access to high aspirations, stable relationships and adults who take time to listen and spend time with children. We need to provide care, education and support to enable these most vulnerable children to succeed. Evidence suggests that they have done so and commitment by the Company will ensure that this trend is ever improving.

Miss Verity White
Head Teacher, Access School

October 2011