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# Blackpool Virtual School

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## Our vision

We are passionate about our children's future in Blackpool. Our role is to nurture, enrich and encourage each of our children to grow and blossom into happy, resilient and aspiring young people. **We dream big.**

## The role of the Virtual School

When a child becomes looked after to Blackpool Council, the authority acts as their corporate parent, responsible for their care and support.

The team takes the lead in ensuring that all of our looked after children have the best educational opportunities possible and that there is consistency of approach across schools where our children attend.

Imagine that every looked after child and young person in Blackpool attends the same school - this is the Virtual School and the people who support these children are known to pupils as **Our Children Education Team.**

The Virtual School acts as a local authority champion to bring about improvements in the education of looked after children and young care leavers, promoting their educational achievement as if they were in a single school. We work in partnership with schools, social workers and other professionals to ensure that:

- All our children have an appropriate school place
- All our children have a high quality personal education plan
- All our children achieve good outcomes
- The educational achievement of our children is promoted and celebrated

## Our values

Together we grow and blossom:

- Think positive, be positive. Develop mind-sets with a can-do attitude to all aspects of life

- Build on our strengths - We all have amazing capacity for building happy, resilient and aspirant lives
- Dream big and then plan what we need to do to get there. One step at a time, with support we can get there
- Work together to make it all happen. Building successful relationships is the difference that makes the difference

## Our strategic objectives

We are committed to ensuring our children have high aspirations by ensuring that all have a broad and balanced curriculum and are taught in environments of high expectation.

- Each have a stable, full-time education
- All are stretched and challenged to enable them to achieve national qualifications that meet their needs
- They enjoy school life, succeed and, where able, excel
- Are provided opportunities to develop personally and socially through sport, culture and leisure activities
- Each school's ethos is one of high expectation for Our children

We are committed to closing the educational gap for our children and helping them to make progress at each key stage in line with that of their peers.

- Ensure the stability of school placements and that all children receive their full entitlement to learning and remain in mainstream education
- Progress is well tracked and monitored in line with children's assessed needs
- All children are confident in their reading and writing in order that they can access learning
- Champion evidence based interventions to help close the educational gap for our children

Ensure that inclusion features highly in the work that we do for Our Children. When things don't go to plan, there are well thought through alternatives

- Admission arrangements for children in care ensure timely access to education
- Rigorous monitoring of attendance and exclusions and act promptly where there are concerns to minimise absence and reduce exclusions
- In conjunction with social care and other partners, there is an unrelenting focus on child placement stability
- Alternative provision provides the right range of engagement activities

Ensure that young people leaving care enter into further education, university, employment or an apprenticeship

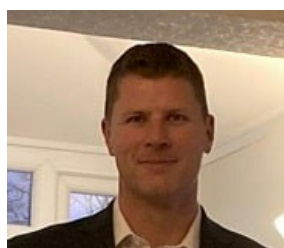
- Informed and timely careers information and guidance (CIAG) is provided well in advance of children's transition at 16
- Each care leaver receives the support of a named personal adviser
- Virtual school staff are central to partnership working activities across the area aimed at ensuring care leavers remain in education, employment or training. NEET levels are tackled
- The training, employment, apprenticeship and education offer encompasses the full range of levels
- Engage in innovative programmes specifically for Our children to increase awareness of Post-16 options and enrich their aspirations

Ensure that the virtual school team represents the needs of children and works effectively with partners to meet these/its key objectives

- As corporate parents, children are fully supported
- Champion educational stability and have strategies in place to support transition
- Robust systems in place to delegate Pupil Premium Plus to our school placements and we use funds strategically to raise attainment and improve pupil wellbeing. We routinely monitor the impact of this spending to enhance student outcomes
- Robust systems to ensure up-to-date, effective and high quality PEPs which drive forward improvement
- The capacity of designated teachers and school leaders is developed to support the emotional and educational needs of children in care
- Foster carers are supported individually and collectively to enable them to engage confidently with children's schools

## Meet the team

### Mark Cowell





## Head of Schools' Standards, Safeguarding and Inclusion

- Lead on raising aspirations and improving outcomes for all children in care of school age in Blackpool
- Corporate equality group member
- Blackpool Inclusion strategy lead

**Telephone:** 07387533864

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## Helen Piggott



### Head for Virtual School

- VS data lead
- VS SEND link
- VS literacy lead
- Annual reporting for local authority
- VS link for corporate parent
- Managing Virtual School budget
- Managing Virtual School training programme
- NAVSH representative
- Designated teacher meeting for our schools
- Managing Virtual School team members' performance

### Cohort

- EHCP
- Risk of NEET

Telephone: 07341 065601

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## Elaine Shotliff



### School's support officer

- Virtual school administration

- Support for safeguarding

**Telephone:** 01253 477027

## Jane Shepherd



Education officer

- Primary school link
- Advocate for primary school children's learning
- VS PEP lead
- VS CME lead
- Admissions link
- Virtual Nursery

Telephone: 07551075833

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## Mandy Coleman



Pupil achievement support officer

- KS4, Post 16 and UASC Lead
- Advocate for secondary school children's learning

Telephone: 07557486771

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## Jessica Fitton



Pupil achievement support officer

- KS2 Link
- Intervention lead
- Monitoring and tracking

Telephone: TBC

## Sam Price



Pupil achievement support officer

- KS3 link
- Intervention lead
- Monitoring and tracking

Telephone: TBC

## Penny Shead

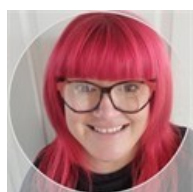


- EHCPs
- Year 10-13 link
- Intervention lead
- Monitoring and tracking

Telephone: TBC

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## Faye Wieszka



Education officer for disadvantaged children

- Championing Blackpool children with a social worker and promoting their education
- CP and CIN link

- Kinship Care link
- Academic Tutor and Mentor link
- CDOP panel member- Blackpool Rock's Implementation Group
- DSL meetings for schools co-lead

**Telephone:** 07500857511

## Contact

### Virtual School for Our Children

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## Additional information

[Children with a social worker](#)

[Pupil premium plus](#)

[Blackpool's pledge to our children and young people](#)

[What Works for Children with a Social Worker](#)

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