**The Virtual School**

Following the retirement of the Virtual School Head in August 2015, it was agreed that the leadership and capacity of the Virtual School should be reviewed to consider a number of models that were developing both regionally and nationally.

In order to do this and to continue to increase the profile of the Virtual School, Handsworth Grange School accepted a one-year commission to provide its leadership – and appointed Bob Sawyer as Head, assisted by Tim Eldridge.

During the year, an evaluation of the existing structure and practices of the Virtual School has been carried out by auditing the provision in a number of neighbouring authorities and in discussions with special, primary and secondary headteachers.

As the commission with Handsworth Grange ends in August and to ensure there is still stability and continuity whilst we review different options for the future.

“I am delighted, therefore, to inform you that Tim Eldridge as Head of the Virtual School for 2016-17, will lead the Council’s Virtual School team,” said Jayne Ludlam, Executive Director, Children, Young People & Families. “Tim brings a wealth of experience of over 20 years as a Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher. I value the contribution, knowledge and experience he will bring to over 500 children in care. Tim will continue his work with Headteacher groups from the primary, secondary and special school. I am sure he will have the support of colleagues as he continues to drive the development of the Virtual School.”

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anne Quaille at Handsworth for accepting the commission for the year and Bob Sawyer and Tim Eldridge for both their support and challenge to our services and for the contribution they have made to the education of Children in Care,”