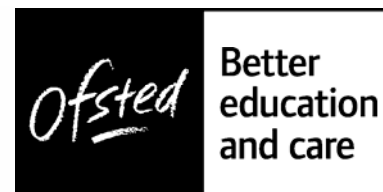


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Making Social Care  
Better for People



Ms Anna Crispin  
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**1 December 2005**

Dear Ms Crispin

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 6 July 2005 to assess the performance of the education and social care services within your authority. We are grateful for the information which you provided to support this process and for the time made available by yourself and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

**Being healthy**

Outcomes in this area are good. There is an effective co-ordinated partnership approach to promoting children's health through the National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS), with many schools working towards achievement of NHSS status. The council is targeting middle schools currently to achieve this standard. The 'Smiling for life' programme aims to improve the oral and nutritional health of 0-5 year old children and a pack has been developed for all Early Years settings. The HYPE programme (Helping Young People through Peer Education) raises awareness of substance abuse and is having a positive impact. Conception rates for teenagers are the second lowest in country, with a reduction of 15.6% between 1998 and 2003. Over the last three years, the pregnancy rate in the looked after children cohort has been zero.

Limited evidence from recent school inspections indicates that the range and quality of sports clubs and activities provided by schools, together with participation rates are at least satisfactory in secondary schools and mostly good in primary schools and nursery settings. Recent inspection outcomes also show that all schools comply with sex and relationships education. In 2002/03, nearly 850 children took part in a consultation prior to the development of the Children's Fund Programme. The council has acted upon the outcomes of the consultation through the developments of the 'Get Active' programme and provision of a holiday scheme for children with disabilities. Nearly all looked after children receive regular health checks. The council has arranged

dedicated health staff input for looked after children and into the new family centre. Foster carers gave clear examples of how the health needs of looked after children are promoted. The council co-operates effectively with health authorities in early identification and support arrangements for children with special needs.

## **Staying safe**

Outcomes in this area are adequate with firm indications of continued strengthening performance.

There is a comparatively low rate of referrals to children's social care services but the council has thorough quality assurance arrangements in place to ensure that decision-making about access to service is safe and reflects consistent application of eligibility criteria. The timeliness of the completion of initial and core assessments of children and families referred to social services has improved significantly so that initial assessment is close to the average for your family of councils and above average for core assessments. This is good, but with scope for further improvement.

The rate of child protection registration is low but there was an increase in registration activity in 2003/04 that was followed by increased de-registrations in 2004/05. The council acknowledged that this was a result of some inconsistency in decision-making in the Child Protection processes in 03/04, which was ascribed to a lack of a permanent CP co-ordinator during part of that year. The council has a permanent child protection co-ordinator but needs to remain vigilant about safe and appropriate use of the child protection register. There is evidence of good co-ordinated multi-agency training on child protection. Information provided by the council indicates sound multi-agency arrangements for the management of risk to children posed by sex offenders in the community.

All Child Protection cases and looked after children have an allocated qualified social worker and all reviews of Child Protection cases and of looked after children's care plans were carried out within the required timescales. Adoption continues to be provided as an option for looked after children with a good percentage over the past five years for whom this was achieved, with continued good prospects. The inspection of the council's adoption agency found that the agency is well-managed with good practice evident, and makes good use of links with other councils in the area through the East Berkshire consortium and the council managed pan-Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service.

There has been an improvement in the range of family placements offered for looked after children, with an increase in the percentage of looked after children who are fostered and of those cared for by their extended family. However, the rates of this level of family-based care are still lower than comparator councils and more children proportionately are placed in residential care than other similar councils. Of the looked after children population, 30% are placed more than 20 miles out of borough, though

this is a reducing percentage from 53% in 2003/4. These are mainly older children and young people (thirteen and over) who have specific needs through disability or educational needs which could not be met by local resources. A review of all out of borough placements established that the current placements were meeting the needs of the young people.

The council has identified that the lack of specific services to support families with children with autistic spectrum disorder, particularly those children with challenging behaviour, as a significant factor in the higher use of out of borough placements.

The council's Permanency Monitoring Group ensures that clear plans are made and followed through for looked after children.

There is evidence of a partnership approach between Education and Social Services in the arranging and funding of these placements, and of co-operation with health though this did not extend to joint funding arrangements where appropriate. Work on a continuing care protocol with health is underway.

Looked after children largely enjoy stable placements in care, though longer-term stability is at a comparatively low level possibly reflecting an historic picture of a shortage of foster placement choice. The council is confident that this picture will continue to improve through good recruitment and support to foster carers now in place. Successful recruitment of foster carers in the last year has increased capacity and the range of placements. The employment of a professional foster care officer has proved effective in developing the service. The most recent inspection of the fostering service found it met most national minimum standards and was well managed.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

Outcomes in this area are very good overall. Inspection outcomes of early years settings show that: children's development and well being are promoted effectively and helps them to meet early learning goals; the quality of day care and child minding is better than the national average, with more 'very good' judgements made through inspection of nursery education compared to the national average. Where there are weaknesses they are still at a level of national averages. There is good provision for parents of children with disabilities, e.g. the Early Bird Project and the Children's Development centre.

The authority's strategies and procedures for working with schools causing concern have been sharpened. There are no schools in special measures or serious weaknesses. However, one secondary school sixth form has been recently judged to be inadequate, with the key weaknesses being related to viability, curriculum breadth and unsatisfactory leadership and management. Students' achievement and standards and the quality of teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory overall.

Overall, all key attainment indicators are above or well above the national averages in all subjects. For all key stages, pupil's achievements are broadly in line with statistical neighbours, with the exception of Key Stage 4 1+A\*-G attainment, which significantly declined in 2003/04 to a level below statistical neighbours. Most improvement trends are in line with statistical neighbours, with the exception of this 1+A\*-G indicator.

Pupils make good progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 and Key Stages 2 and 3. Although progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 is above the national average, pupils' make less progress between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

The authority's draft education strategy (2005-06) acknowledges the overall attainment figures mask significant variation in pupils' attainment between schools and some groups, notably boys and some pupils from ethnic minority groups. The document states that specific performance targets based on schools' self-evaluation are being developed to help schools raise attainment in these groups. The inclusion strategy sets out clear aims, objectives and priorities for action to: raise achievement; narrow the achievement gap for vulnerable pupils through early intervention and progress; enhance learning and teaching; tackle disaffection and increase participation and enjoyment; develop the roles and functions of special schools and support services; to continue to develop the continuum of provision.

The attendance of primary and secondary pupils is broadly in line with or above national and statistical neighbour averages. The level of authorised absence in primary schools has declined and is below statistical neighbours and well below national average. Although unauthorised absences at primary schools are broadly in line with the statistical neighbour and national averages (03/04), the proportion has risen over the last 3 years. The level of authorised absences in secondary schools was broadly in line with statistical neighbour and national averages in 2003/04. The level of unauthorised absences in secondary schools, although increasing slightly, is in line with statistical neighbour averages and has been consistently below the national averages for a number of years.

The proportion of primary school aged pupils permanently excluded in 2002-2003 was above the national and statistical neighbour averages. However, local data now indicate that there has been a significant improvement and that there are now no exclusions in this phase. Strategies to reduce exclusions in the secondary phase appear to be having a positive impact. In secondary schools, the percentage of permanent exclusions in 2002-2003 was broadly in line with statistical neighbours, but lower than national averages. Data for the most recent year supplied by the authority show a notable reduction at Key Stage 3. One pupil is currently excluded from the special school. The authority recognises that the reintegration of excluded pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4, is an area for further development, and officers are endeavouring to improve staff recruitment and retention.

The proportion of children for whom the authority maintains a statement of special educational need is in line with statistical neighbour and national averages (3.4%). Overall, the attainment of pupils with special educational need is good. In 2004, 23% of statemented pupils with special educational needs achieved 5 + GCSE A\*-C compared to 6% nationally. Data supplied by the authority show that post-16 participation rates for this cohort are good, with approximately 70% staying on at school or progressing to college.

The number of looked after children in each year cohort is small, with a higher than average proportion having special educational needs. For this reason, attainment by looked after children at GCSE is below comparators. All looked after children have a personal education plan and the number of them missing more than 25 days of schooling has decreased. A successful 'High Hopes' conference to celebrate the achievement of looked after children was held earlier this year.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are good. Recent inspections of nursery education show that personal, social and emotional development is mostly very good. Partnerships with parents are generally good or better.

In schools, recent inspection evidence, although limited, shows that strategies to minimise incidents of bullying and other forms of harassment are effective. The Behaviour Support Plan (April 2005) sets out comprehensive costed actions to improve children's social, emotional and behavioural development, and the activities described in the plan will be reviewed from September 2005.

Children and young people are encouraged to participate in decision making. Nearly 850 children took part in consultation events in 2002/03 prior to the development of the Children's Fund programme. The consultation identified children and young people disadvantaged by poverty or disability found it extremely difficult to access out of school activities, and this is now being addressed through the development of the 'Get Active' programme and a holiday scheme for children with disabilities. An extensive consultation with 1000 young people is planned for summer 2005.

Youth Offending information show that over the period October 2003 to September 2004, the number of first-timers in the Youth Justice system reduced at a greater rate than nationally and the rate of re-offending has reduced and is below the national rate.

All looked after children contributed to their reviews and were consulted about the format and design of the materials used for consultation for their statutory reviews and Personal Education Plans. There is an individual communication strategy for each disabled looked after children. Advocacy services for looked after children are available from Voice for the Child in Care.

## **Achieving economic well-being**

Outcomes in this area are good. Cross-borough development and implementation of the 14-19 strategy has led to improved collaboration, planning and coordination of learning provision. Data supplied by the authority and Connexions show that overall post-16 staying on rates are high, at 84% compared to 72% nationally. The improved support from personal advisers and better data collection have contributed to a significant reduction in the number of young people recorded as not in education, employment or training, from 6.25% in 2003 to 2.8% in 2004. However the authority recognises that the range of education, employment and training opportunities for young people with special educational needs should be improved further. The percentage of looked after children in employment, education or training at age 19 has been consistently in line with comparative data. There are relatively small numbers, less than ten each year, but this enables a very personalised approach to finding appropriate ways of engaging and recognising the achievements of looked after children in further education, training and employment. The council has successfully offered work experience placements itself for looked after children.

All looked after children over fifteen have pathway plans which support their progress in education and into employment or training. The Ways into Work programme supports pupils with physical disabilities and mental health difficulties in the transition to a work environment.

The authority acknowledges that provision of vocational courses at level 2 remains limited. Nevertheless, the Maidenhead consortium has improved the range of programmes and has increased post-16 participation rates. Data supplied by the authority show an increase of 130 students staying on in school sixth forms over last two years, with an overall increase of 10% in staying on rates in Maidenhead.

In 2002/03 and 2003/04, overall post-16 attainment was broadly in line with national and local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) averages but below statistical neighbours. In 2003/04, the proportion of post-16 students achieving other advanced qualifications was significantly below national and LSC averages, although the proportion gaining intermediate vocational qualifications was above the LSC and national averages. Value added data supplied by the authority show a significant improvement in the progress made by GCE A level cohorts over the last three years and places them in the upper quartile when compared with other areas.

## Summary:

| Strengths   | Areas for improvement   |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teenage pregnancy strategy</li> <li>• the number of schools participating in National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS)</li> <li>• range and quality of sports clubs and activities provided by primary schools and nursery settings</li> <li>• compliance with sex and relationships education</li> <li>• good support for promoting health of looked after children.</li> </ul> | <p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proportion of schools gaining NHSS status.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promptness of initial and core assessments</li> <li>• all Child protection and looked after children have an allocated qualified social worker and their reviews are carried out within the required timescales</li> <li>• the promotion of adoption as an option for looked after children</li> <li>• increase in foster care and kinship care.</li> </ul>                      | <p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruitment of foster carers to increase the range of placements offered, including respite care for children with disabilities</li> <li>• further development of local resources to support families of children with autistic spectrum disorders.</li> </ul> |
| <p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• early years provision</li> <li>• early support for parents of children with disabilities</li> <li>• school improvement strategies</li> <li>• pupil's attainment at key stages 1 to 3</li> <li>• attainment at 5+ GCSEs A*-C</li> <li>• progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.</li> </ul>              | <p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increasing the proportion of KS4 pupils achieving 1+ GCSEs (A*-G)</li> <li>• improving the progress of pupils in KS4</li> <li>• embedding the inclusion strategy to raise attainment of underachieving groups.</li> </ul>                            |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• procedures for consulting with children and young people and responding to their comments</li> <li>• school strategies to minimise bullying and other forms of harassment</li> <li>• reduction in offending behaviour</li> <li>• comprehensive and costed behaviour support plan</li> <li>• contribution of and consultation with looked after children to reviews and personal education plans.</li> </ul>   | <p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• early intervention and support for looked after children who offend.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the range of partnerships for 14-19 provision leading to high and improving post-16 participation in education, employment and training</li> <li>• high post-16 staying on rates</li> <li>• significant reduction in young people recorded as not in education, employment and training</li> <li>• the progress young people make between Key Stage 4 and post-16 qualifications</li> <li>• work experience scheme for looked after young people.</li> </ul> | <p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expanding choice in the level 2 14-19 curriculum</li> <li>• attainment on alternative level 3 provision for 16-19 year olds</li> <li>• proportion of young people with special educational needs in education, employment and training.</li> </ul> |

## Service management

The education service is well led and managed. School improvement strategies have been very effective in raising standards and intervening early in schools causing concern. Needs analyses are thorough. Surplus places in schools are generally well managed. The LEA has responded well to recommendations of the previous LEA inspection report.

There are clear and challenging ambitions for children and young people set out in council strategic and operational plans. These plans and the council's APA self-assessment report summarise the key priorities which have been agreed with partners. These will be monitored and managed through a detailed project plan. There is insufficient emphasis placed on attainment and the range of provision at post-16.

Both directorates are actively working together to plan for the integration of children's services, together with other partners. For example, the directorates are working



together to reduce the number of unfilled full-time teacher vacancies through improving the availability of housing for key workers. The Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership provides an effective means for multi-agency planning and priority setting. Within the council, the annual budget round provides early opportunities for members to shape the direction of investment and there is evidence of good member involvement through the corporate parenting panel.

Within social care there has been effective management in following an improvement programme and the provisional data indicate sustained improvement in performance. There has been a significant reduction in days lost to sickness among social care staff, the turnover of children's social care staff continues to fall and vacancy levels remain low, in both instances much better performance than comparator councils.

New facilities and services have been developed this year which indicate the council's use of capital investment to improve efficiency and outcomes, such as the new family centre in Maidenhead and the implementation of a new information system. The pattern of spend in children's social care services indicates good support for preventive services and there is an effective Local Preventative Strategy overseen by the C&YPP, making good use of partnerships with the voluntary sector. Support to the community and voluntary sectors is good and there is an agreed compact in place. The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people is good.

## **Areas for exploration in the joint area review**

### **Being healthy**

*Action is taken to promote children and young people's mental health:*

- development of CAMHS and local access to services
- progress with the provision of improved support for young people with learning disabilities, children with autism and those in hard to reach groups.

### **Staying safe**

*Looked after children live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation:*

- progress on a local placement strategy for looked after children and young people.

*Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation:*

- development of local services for children with autistic spectrum disorder.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

*Children and young people who are looked after are helped to enjoy and achieve:*

- attainment of looked after young children and young people.

## **Making a positive contribution**

*Children and young people are encouraged to participate in decision making and in supporting the community:*

- outcomes of consultation with looked after children and young people.

## **Achieving economic well-being**

*Children and young people who are looked after and/or disabilities are helped to achieve economic well-being:*

- education, employment and training opportunities for looked after young people and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Final judgements**

Please see your final annual performance assessment judgements attached at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely



**FLO HADLEY**

Divisional Manager  
Office for Standards in Education



**JONATHAN PHILLIPS**

Director – Quality, Performance and Methods  
Commission for Social Care Inspection

## APA final judgements 2005: Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

| Areas for judgement   | Final judgements <sup>1</sup> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| The contribution of <i>the local authority's social care services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people | <b>2</b>                      |
| The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.      | <b>4</b>                      |
| The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people. | <b>3</b>                      |
| The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people  | <b>3</b>                      |

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**1**

| Grade | Service descriptors   | Capacity to improve descriptors |
|-------|---|---------------------------------|
| 4     | A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users         | Very good                       |
| 3     | A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users | Good/promising                  |
| 2     | A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users               | Adequate                        |
| 1     | A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users            | Inadequate                      |