



Making Social Care
Better for People



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Dear Mr Wood

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 20 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. Healthy lifestyles are being promoted by a range of multi-agency initiatives including healthy schools, the Health of Looked After Children (HELAC) service, Youth Offending Team and Children's Fund programmes and the ongoing roll out of children's centres. Programmes cover the promotion of physical, emotional and mental health needs. A robust teenage pregnancy service operates across the county with provision reflecting the needs of local communities, including the developing clinic in a box (contraception and sexual health) service targeted on areas in the rural south of the county and the allocation of additional detached workers to an identified area of high deprivation and high under-18 conception rates in the north of the county. School participation in a range of healthy lifestyles initiatives including sex and relationship education, sport and nutrition is good. The health indicator for looked after children is very good and above Institute of Public Finance (IPF) comparator and England averages. Investment in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) has taken place with good access to services for looked after children and young offenders. Further multi-agency investment is planned, with a particular emphasis on prevention. Specific initiatives are in place to ensure that the needs of children from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds are met.

Staying safe

Outcomes in this are generally good. The Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) works effectively with partners. School inspections confirm compliance with child protection protocols and procedures. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear. A shared risk assessment model is in place, as are arrangements for information sharing. Performance on child protection indicators is good or very good. Child protection reviews and duration on the register have both improved from 2003/04 and reflect the impact of clear actions to address performance in these areas.

Referral rates, initial assessments and child protection activity have all risen. Child protection case conferences are chaired by Independent Reviewing Officers to ensure consistency in decision-making across the county. Core assessment activity is below IPF and England. This has been identified by the authority as an area for review and plans are in place to increase core assessments completed and recorded during 2005/06.

The authority is working to expand its prevention and support services. This forms a key strand of the multi-agency work being undertaken by the Children Act Project team. Neighbourhood Nurseries are operating in the 7 most disadvantaged wards in the county and there are 3 Sure Start programmes running. Children's Centres are being developed on a phased basis. The 12 centres in phase 1 are mainly based on existing services such as Sure Start, Early Excellence Centres and Neighbourhood Nurseries and already offer many core services. One of these centres has been officially designated with 2 more due for designation in September 2005. The remaining centres in this phase are due to be designated by 31 March 2006. Second phase development is at the planning stage and should deliver a further 20 centres (approximately) between April 2006 and March 2008. Other family focused support and prevention initiatives include investment in family support workers, parenting support and family group conferencing.

Adoption and fostering performance is good. The strength of these services is supported by regulatory inspections. Use of residential care is minimised. Support arrangements for the health, education and well-being of looked after children are well established and effective. The long-term stability of looked after children indicator is being affected by a small group of young people placed in residential school and at home. Whilst acknowledging this proviso, work to improve performance on this indicator should continue.

Transition plans are in place for more than 90% of young people with complex disabilities at fourteen plus. Multi-agency protocols, planning and review processes are in place. An integrated service for children with disabilities is being established, starting with children with disorders on the autistic spectrum. Plans are in hand to provide fully integrated services to all children with disabilities by April 2006. Further work is needed to ensure that children in need with disabilities survey figures fully reflect actual service provision.

Work has been completed to ensure services are reaching children in need from BME backgrounds and this continues to be monitored. Spend on children in need from BME backgrounds has increased.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are generally good. There are some specific weaknesses, predominantly for those young people with specific needs and often living in deprived areas. For each of these areas of weakness, the authority has analysed the nature of the problems and introduced programmes which have a strong potential to solve them, albeit in several areas they have yet to have a full impact on outcomes.

There is a very high level of provision for children under five which, through Neighbourhood Nurseries and Sure Start schemes, concentrates its most intensive work in the deprived areas of the county. Four inspections of Local Education Authority (LEA) nursery provision took place in 2004/05, two were nursery schools and two were nursery classes. One school was judged to be good and one very good. In both nursery classes provision and outcomes were deemed to be very good.

Attainment at the ends of key stages 1, 2, and 3 is consistently above national levels and in line with levels in similar areas. Value added between key stages 1 to 2 and 2 to 3 is slightly above statistical neighbours and national average. In the GCSE, at the level of 5+ A*-C passes; the authority is in line with both similar authorities and with national figures. However the value added between key stage 3 and key stage 4 falls below the expected level. Combined with this, there is a need to raise attainment in disadvantaged areas. Although the authority has yet to improve attainment at the age of sixteen, it has a comprehensive programme of activity to do so, and one which seeks to improve provision for those groups of pupils whose attainment is relatively poor. The Education of Looked After Children (TELAC) service is having a positive impact on their attendance and attainment. The challenge to close the attainment gap between this group of children and their peers remains. In addition the youth service, particularly through detached youth workers is taking effective steps to engage hard to reach young people. Attendance in both primary and secondary schools is good.

The speed of completion of statements of special educational need (SEN) is slow. Only 18% are completed within the 18 weeks target. The LEA's work in this matter is strong, but problems have arisen where health service contributions are needed. The LEA has been collaborating with the health service to improve matters and early evidence suggests that completions are now likely to occur more quickly. Similarly, improved joint working with youth justice services is likely to increase the currently low numbers of young offenders in employment, education or training.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are generally good. The authority provides an extensive range of opportunities, across education and social care, for children and young people to be involved and consulted. These cover a wide range including school councils, forums for looked after children, consultation on major service change – for example “Vision for Children’s Services” and appointment processes for chief officers. The percentage of young people contributing to reviews is slightly lower than IPF and England averages. Creative ways to involve children with communication difficulties in reviews has been identified as an area for further work in 2005/06. The authority has provided some good examples in both education and social care of how the views of children and young people have impacted on service design and delivery.

Advice, guidance and training for registered childcare are not impacting on all services prior to and post registration. Initial registration inspections of childcare by Ofsted resulted in more actions being issued, for example in relation to Equal Opportunities, Behaviour and Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers than the England average. Most inspections of nursery education in non-maintained full day and sessional daycare settings rated performance on personal, social and emotional development as very good or generally good. A small percentage, but higher than the England average, were rated as having significant weaknesses.

The Youth Offending Team has good multi-agency support but is not currently reaching all key Youth Justice Board targets, for example on education, employment and training. Work is ongoing to maximise ability to meet these targets. The service, and partner agencies are well aware of a core of hard to reach young people and strategies are in place to identify, target and meet the needs of this group.

Employment, education and training of care leavers is very good. Effective action has been taken to reduce the number of looked after children receiving cautions or convictions. Work to extend the range of housing options available to care leavers across the county is ongoing but not yet complete.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are good. Developmental work in the 14-19 phase has a strong potential to bring about further improvement.

Inspections show sixth form quality to be good. No school has a sixth form shown by inspection to be inadequate and the average point scores show that their students’ attainment is above national levels and levels in similar authorities. In further education colleges also, attainment is above national levels. Only 5.4% of the county’s 16-19 year olds are not in employment, education or training. This is one of the lowest levels in the country. The proportion of young people progressing into education after 16 has now

reached 75.5%. The proportion of care leavers in education is high, supported by good joint working with Connexions.

The area has pathfinder finance for 14-19 developments. Its priorities are well chosen. They provide for a wide range of vocational and academic needs and the progress report on the implementation of proposals and on progress as measured by performance indicators shows that the work is leading to improved provision for young people.

The annual rate of progression for boys is 70%, 10% lower than for girls. There is a programme aimed at improving boys' performance in the GCSE, which has the potential to narrow this gender gap but at present there is insufficient data analysis to provide information about the progress made by different groups, post-16. A sub-regional tracking project, involving the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Connexions and Coventry and Warwickshire LEA's is running, which will develop better value added data and is intended also to enable better area analysis of outcomes by gender, ethnicity and in the different areas of the county. There is good transition planning for those school pupils for whom the authority maintains a SEN statement. Such planning is, however, of less consistently high quality for those with SEN but without a statement. The authority has a multi-agency programme dealing with this issue.

The level of direct payments to children with disabilities and their carers is low.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multi-agency working to promote healthy lifestyles for children and young people. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring of the take up and impact of health initiatives.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support to looked after children • child protection procedures and multi-agency working arrangements • transition planning and protocols for children with complex disabilities • adoption and fostering. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • level of completion and recording of core assessments • accuracy of data on services provided to children in need with disabilities • long term stability of looked after children.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision for under 5's • attainment and progress in key stages 1, 2 and 3 • school attendance • joint working to support looked after children and the impact of this on their attainment and attendance. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the progress made by pupils in key stage 4 • educational outcomes in disadvantaged areas • the time taken to complete SEN statements.

<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range of consultation and participation opportunities for children and young people • identification and targeting of services to young people in multiple risk groups. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accommodation options for care leavers • take up of training, advice and support for registered providers through local authority retained functions.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proportion of post-16 year olds in employment, education or training, including those leaving care • attainment in school sixth forms and in further education colleges • pathfinder status for 14-19 developments and success with implementing them. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the level of direct payments.

Service management

The authority is well managed with strong leadership and a clear vision for the future shape of its children's services. Political leadership and cross party commitment to change for children has been clearly demonstrated. This includes year on year investment. Arrangements are in place to maintain momentum during a period of change, pending the arrival of the newly appointed Chief Executive and the pending appointment of a Director of Children's Services. The authority has a history of working closely with a range of partners and this is reflected in the membership of and work being undertaken under the auspices of the Children Act Project Team. The authority has established performance management and information systems which have been used effectively to inform, achieve and sustain service improvements. Assessment and inspection information across education and social care confirm that the authority is able to learn, develop and sustain service improvements. The authority has identified weaknesses in some aspects of its performance and management information and is actively working to improve these areas. Planning for integrated services is well advanced and now needs to be put into place on the ground. The authority is aware of the challenges ahead but is planning well, keeping partner agencies and stakeholders on board and has a good track record of improvement.

The council has excellent capacity to improve further.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Being healthy

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

- impact of investment in CAMHS on cross-county access to services.

Looked after children's health needs are addressed:

- impact of the HELAC approach on the health outcomes of looked after children.

Staying safe

Agencies collaborate to safeguard children according to the requirements of current government guidance:

- impact of the commissioning strategy for vulnerable children on services available to and outcomes for children and families.

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

- impact of the integrated disability service and of transition planning at 14+.

Children and young people are provided with a safe environment:

The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:

- referral, assessment and child protection activity figures.

Children and young people are provided with a safe environment:

- impact of strategies to deal with racial incidents and bullying in schools.

Enjoying and Achieving

Action is taken to ensure that educational provision 5-16 is of good quality:

- secondary education, particularly in KS4.

Making a positive contribution

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

- impact of children and young people's views on service delivery and development.

Children and young people, particularly those from vulnerable groups, are supported in managing changes and responding to challenges in their lives:

- early years: quality of support for registered childcare provision and of guidance prior to registration.

Achieving economic well-being

Action is taken to ensure that 14-19 education and training is planned and delivered in a coordinated way, and to ensure that education and training (16-19) is of good quality:

- 14-19 provision and progress with pathfinder priorities.

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

Cc. Marion Davis - Director of Social Care and Health

APA final judgements 2005: Warwickshire County Council

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

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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