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Making Social Care  
Better for People



Mrs Julie Jones OBE  
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**1 December 2005**

Dear Mrs Jones

## **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF CITY OF WESTMINSTER 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, with particular strengths and little evidence of weakness. Improvements have been made and maintained around the health of looked after children (LAC), in part through health care training for foster carers. There are strong partnerships with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and both the local acute and mental health service trusts, which have contributed to significant improvements in the health of children and young people.

Within education, the authority has clear targets and standards in place for schools to achieve in relation to the healthy schools programme. There is a strong Connexions service within the authority.

Effective strategies have been developed for the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to allow greater choice, improved access, attendance and assessment. The authority has developed, with partners, an inter-agency protocol for children with disabilities and their representatives to promote a smooth transition to adult service provision. This operates at both a strategic and individual level and those young adults and their representatives who use the service have indicated that it works well.

The authority currently funds a young carers project, which provides tailored services. This service works in partnership with education, health and community groups. The

authority and the PCT are developing a joint strategy for all carers, which will include young carers.

The immunisation rate for children is currently below the national average and although the partnership arrangement to address this is NHS led, the part that the council plays in promoting this will be important.

## **Staying safe**

Outcomes in this area are generally good, and there have been improvements in a number of areas. The number of initial assessments completed within the required timeframe has improved. There are, within education, strengths relating to pupils' care, welfare, and health and safety, which are evidenced by Kerbcraft, the central pupil database, the safe schools environment and a domestic violence prevention pack and video. There is a strong commitment to robust anti-bullying strategies and plans to implement these to cover all schools are ongoing.

Looked after children and young people are involved in their reviews and are, therefore, able to express their views. The authority has suitable policies in place to ensure the safety of young carers, and children and young people with disabilities.

There are positive and effective partnerships in place to ensure a commitment to safeguarding children and young people. There is evidence of robust systems for information sharing and the monitoring of practice across partner groups.

Placement choice and stability for looked after children are the subject of individual scrutiny by the council and decisions address individual needs. Although the percentage of looked after children adopted has increased, there has been a decrease in the number of older looked after children who are either in fostering placements or placed for adoption. Performance regarding non-residential placements for younger children has continued to be good and the individual needs of these children guide placement decisions.

There are areas where there has not been sustained improvement. These relate to duration on the child protection register and re-registrations, which remain high. The council reports that this is due to the small number of children involved. However, both performance areas require ongoing monitoring to ensure timely decisions do reflect the best interests of individual children.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory overall, but are not consistent across the 3-19 age range. Although pupils in primary schools achieve well, many in secondary schools are not making sufficient progress. The authority recognises the difficulties and work is underway to address them. However, most of the initiatives are either recent or

planned and have yet to make the necessary impact. Ofsted has not identified any schools in formal categories of concern. The number of surplus places, previously an issue for the authority, has been addressed.

The quality of early years provision is good and supports children well in meeting their early learning goals. Attainment during Key Stages 1 and 2 compares very well with similar authorities. Progress at Key Stage 2 is excellent, with achievement levels in English and mathematics, which are above those nationally and there has been demonstrable improvement by both Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi pupils. Support for primary school managers is good. Where concerns about standards are identified, there is good targeting of support, and leadership and management issues are addressed vigorously. This benefits the pupils.

At secondary level, the progress made by many pupils is too slow and the overall value added at Key Stages 3 and 4 is low. Until very recently, school improvement issues have not been tackled with the same determination as in the primary sector. At Key Stage 3, standards are in line with similar authorities but below national levels. Standards have improved over the last four years and there have been notable improvements in the performance of Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupil groups. At Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A\*-C is below similar authorities and continues to be below the national level. There has been improvement since 2000, but this was not sustained in 2004 and in two schools less than 30% of pupils achieved the nationally expected standard. The performance of looked after children is generally good with an above average proportion achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\*-C.

The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) is mixed, but improving. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A\*-G is just below the national average. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the pupils with special educational needs progress more slowly than in similar schools overall, although the standards achieved by pupils attending the pupil referral units have improved at Key Stage 3 and are good at Key Stage 4. The authority has been slow in responding to the Ofsted 2002 LEA inspection, which recommended revision of the strategy for SEN and inclusion. However, intensive support for two special schools has resulted in significant benefits for pupils. Enhanced support for pupils with visual impairment is also helping to integrate young children into mainstream schools.

Attendance in primary schools is good and improving, but, at secondary level, unauthorised absence is too high. The authority's recent targeted support is beginning to improve the attendance of individual pupils.

Exclusion rates are high, especially at secondary level, although the levels have recently begun to fall.

Opportunities for enrichment and support for learning outside the school day are generally good. Children have access to a good range of sport, recreational and voluntary learning opportunities.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are very good. The majority of children and young people are given good support at major transition points in their lives and targeted support for vulnerable young people is effective. Learning mentors are making a useful contribution to raising motivational levels of individual pupils as they approach the end of Key Stage 4. The contribution of looked after children to their reviews is good and this is even better among care leavers. The quality of youth work is good.

Access to services for children and young people is promoted through the youth passport and opportunities for young people and parents to affect decision-making in many services are well established. Children and young people make a significant contribution to service planning and evaluation. The contributions made by very young children, pupils who have SEN and those who have disabilities are often very good. The results of a recent survey commissioned to explore the views of children and young people about the services they receive have been acted upon, leading to significant improvements.

All secondary and most primary pupils have the opportunity to join school councils or the equivalent and can express their views through the youth forum and the youth parliament. Children and young people are also encouraged to participate in a range of community and voluntary activities. Citizenship and volunteering is encouraged through a wide range of schemes. For example, young care leavers organise and run an annual event at the Tate Gallery and Black Caribbean pupils have recently run a successful event for all the schools in the borough.

Action taken to deter offending is very effective. There was a reduction in both re-offending and overall offending levels in 2004 and the rate of offending among looked after children is low.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

Overall, outcomes in this area are good. Despite the slow progress made by many pupils at Key Stage 4 (see under "Enjoying and Achieving"), the percentage of young people in education, employment or training post-16 is high, and for those with learning difficulties and disabilities it is increasing. However, outcomes in sixth forms are somewhat variable and performance at GCE Advanced level is below similar authorities.

A local employability scheme, involving the council and a number of local employers, is particularly effective in securing employment and training opportunities for looked after

children and care leavers. A reparation justice scheme is also having some success in targeting young offenders, although the proportion of offenders in education, employment or training post-16 is consistently well below national levels. Youth work and pre-employment programmes are effective. For example, many attending the authority's vocational 'Friday Programme' are successfully re-engaging in learning and achieving Level 1 National Vocational Qualifications, where previously this looked unlikely.

Very good progress is being made in extending vocational or work-related provision for pupils at Key Stage 4. Links between the schools and the local Further Education colleges are providing good opportunities. For example, for young people in the north of the borough can develop their information technology skills and those in the south have the opportunity to develop their catering skills. Take up of places on the DfES Increased Flexibility Programme has been good. Ongoing work to improve the quality of careers education and guidance in schools is also helping pupils to develop their awareness of more general training and employment opportunities.

Pupils with SEN and their families are generally well supported in preparation for leaving school. Transition reviews are in place at 14 and over and for children with disabilities a detailed register is contributing to better-co-ordinated support. Over 90 per cent of young people with disabilities transferring from children's to adult social services have a person-centred transition plan.

Financial support for young people 14-19 is good. There is a high take-up of education maintenance allowances and a low drop-out rate among those receiving learner support grants. A bursary scheme provides good support for looked after children and the direct payments scheme is particularly helpful in enabling black minority ethnic families with disabled children to recruit carers from their own community.

## SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improving performance regarding the health of Looked After Children regulated services meet required National Minimum Standards (NMS) in relation to this outcome</li> <li>• specialist CAMHS team working with LAC</li> <li>• training for foster carers to raise awareness of health needs</li> <li>• primary school sports and the school sports' co-ordinator programme has improved quality</li> <li>• healthy schools programme rapidly expanded</li> <li>• drugs education positive</li> <li>• healthy living centres are tackling health inequalities at a local level.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• influencing partnership working with the PCT to improve immunisation rates.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved initial assessments completed within required timeframe</li> <li>• regulated services meet NMS in relation to this outcome</li> <li>• the ACPC has an independent chair and the Council considering the move to establish a Local Safeguarding Board</li> <li>• joint working with housing in relation to domestic violence and children at risk</li> <li>• victims of youth crime, nearly 100 per cent are referred to YOT safe school environment</li> <li>• low levels of racial incidence</li> <li>• Kerbcraft for 5 to 7 year olds</li> <li>• central pupil database (missing children).</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looked after children in foster placements or placed for adoption have decreased</li> <li>• duration on the Child Protection Register</li> <li>• increased percentage of re-registrations on the Child Protection Register</li> <li>• anti-bullying strategy to be fully implemented in all schools.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Enjoying and achieving</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good quality early years provision</li> <li>• attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2</li> <li>• progress made by pupils at Key Stage 2</li> <li>• improvement in performance of some minority ethnic groups, e.g. Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi pupils</li> <li>• attendance in primary schools.</li> <li>• no schools designated in Ofsted categories of concern</li> <li>• good range of recreational and voluntary learning.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attainment and progress of pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4</li> <li>• exclusion rates in secondary schools</li> <li>• support for secondary school improvement</li> <li>• unauthorised absence in secondary schools</li> <li>• implementation of the SEN strategy.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support from learning mentors</li> <li>• quality of youth work</li> <li>• opportunities for children and young people to contribute to service planning and evaluation</li> <li>• participation by young people in community and voluntary activities</li> <li>• action to deter offending.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• none.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high proportion of young people in education, employment or training 16+</li> <li>• good financial support for learners 14-19</li> <li>• expansion of work-related learning provision at Key Stage 4</li> <li>• the local employability scheme.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low proportion of youth offenders in education, employment or training consistently 16+</li> <li>• performance at GCE Advanced Level.</li> </ul>

## **Service management**

The authority has a clear management framework to implement the Children Act 2004. The Deputy Chief Executive has taken on the role of Director of Children's Services. Clear, well-developed and forward-thinking strategies are in place for the delivery of integrated children's services.

The elected members and officers have clear ambitions for delivering the Change for Children programme and a lead member for Children's Services was appointed in May 2005. There are well established performance management systems in place, elected members undertake a programme of visits to schools and other services to observe service delivery and to meet children, young people and staff.

There are ambitious plans to improve the performance of secondary schools, building on the recent emphasis on schools taking greater responsibility for evaluating their own effectiveness. The capacity of the education service to support schools is also being enhanced.

There is integrated front line delivery for services for disabled children and young people. The Children's Disability Service won a regional Health and Social Care award for the way in which services have been integrated to provide support. Children, young people, families and carers are involved in the decision making and planning of service delivery and outcomes.

The authority has a Beacon Award for Supporting Social Care Workers. The development of staff is central to the delivery and improvement of services. The proportion of gross expenditure on training for staff working with Children and families is high.

The authority has effective arrangements in place for achieving efficiency, economy and effectiveness in the use of resources at its disposal. A number of joint commissioning arrangements are already in place for children and young people's services.

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

### **Being healthy**

*Healthy life-styles are promoted for children and young people:*

- influencing partnership working with the PCT to improve immunisation rates.

### **Staying safe**

*Children and young people are provided with a safe environment:*

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

- areas requiring further monitoring concern outcomes relating to placements of looked after children, and re-registrations and duration on the child protection register.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

*Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to attend and enjoy school and to achieve highly:*

*Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to enjoy and achieve:*

- standards achieved by pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4, and the effectiveness of the SEN strategy.

### **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*

- the proportion of young people achieving Level 2 and 3 qualifications by age 19.

## Final judgements

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

Yours sincerely



**FLO HADLEY**  
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Office for Standards in Education



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

## APA final judgements 2005: Westminster City Council

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>3</b>
The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	<b>2</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