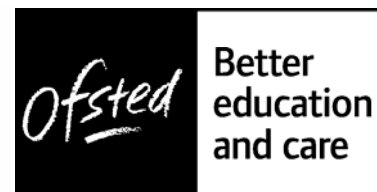


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Making Social Care
Better for People



Dr Paul Gray
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1 December 2005

Dear Dr Gray

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

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 25 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 you and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

Being healthy

Outcomes for the health of children and young people are good. The majority of schools are taking part in the healthy schools initiative and personal social and health education is supported in all schools through training and guidance.

Teenage conception rates are lower than national averages for both under-16-year olds and under-18-year olds and there has been sustained improvement over time. The work on promoting health is supported by strong partnerships across agencies. Teachers and nurses share training and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) team capacity is strengthened and supported by a good level of social workers.

Alongside the universal support and action, there is good work targeted on the most vulnerable children. Looked after children have a dedicated worker, who gives further advice and support to reduce teenage pregnancy and raise awareness of the risks of drug and alcohol abuse. The health of looked after children has improved consistently and faster than in comparable areas in recent years and is now in line with them.

The extent to which the council works to identify the specific health needs of black and minority ethnic (BME) young people and Traveller groups, needs improvement. Inspection of residential special schools has shown that insufficient attention is given to the health needs of pupils with special needs in these settings. There are examples of looked after children influencing the planning and delivery of services. One example involved a Youth Forum of service users advising on which services should be offered by the new CAMHS HOPE Service.

Staying safe

Outcomes in this area are good. There is good coordination between agencies and children and young people receive strong police support to prevent anti-social behaviour.

There has been a reduction in the numbers on the child protection register this year which is half the national average. Surrey has clear referral systems; families and children at risk are identified early and the quality of preventative support is good. All cases are now reviewed within the required timescale. All on the child protection register are allocated a named social worker and 80% of looked after children have a named qualified social worker. The authority believes there are robust supervision arrangements for the 20% of children without a qualified social worker allocated. All non-qualified staff are involved in a staff development programme that includes child protection training.

The numbers of looked after children have reduced and are stabilising. There is good stability of placements. There is very good short term stability of placements and long term stability is improving.

There has been an increased level of foster carer recruitment, which has exceeded targets for two years running. However, placement levels do not show improvement and this is significantly lower than comparator averages. The number of looked after children in residential care is rising. There is a two-year training programme for new foster carers to gain skills and experience to manage the more difficult cohort of young people remaining in residential care. Therefore, a significant reduction in the numbers in residential care is unlikely until 2007.

There are now three specialist nursing posts for looked after children, an example of good joint working with health partners. Children with disabilities are receiving increasing support at home through investment in a range of respite and holiday schemes.

Enjoying and achieving

Overall outcomes for children and young people in their enjoyment of learning and their achievement are very good. Inspection of early years' provision confirms that it is good. Also take up of training amongst early years' providers is strong. Educational performance of pupils is above national levels at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, and also for those achieving five or more GCSEs at A* to C grades. For those achieving one or more A* to G grade at GCSE, performance is in line with both national figures and those of similar authorities. Where there has been a recent dip in GCSE performance (at five or more A*-C grades), the local authority has been quick to act with targeted work on those schools most in need of improvement.

Inspections found that there were good opportunities for enrichment and that the range of provision available outside of regular school hours was wide. Attendance at school is showing a positive trend of improvement for primary-aged children, but at secondary level there has been a rise of unauthorised absence to a point above that of similar authorities. Looked after children have considerably better attendance rates than those found nationally. Where poor attendance of vulnerable groups or underperforming schools was identified, support has been quickly targeted.

Looked after children perform at a similar level to national averages, and specialist teachers work with them to raise their attainment.

Juveniles under supervision are engaged in education, employment or training at a rate that is slightly below the national level and well short of the target level of 90%. Pupils with statements are over represented in exclusion figures and over half of special schools are not meeting national minimum standards for individual support for pupils.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are good. There is an improvement in young offenders involved in education, employment and training, but there is a rise in first-time offending. Surrey has a wide range of projects to combat the rate of youth crime amongst looked after children, but their impact has not been analysed.

The percentage of reviews completed within statutory timescales is good. The local authority has strategies to help children and young people with disabilities and special education needs to manage the key transitions in their lives. There are good examples of services working effectively together, with strong early years' partnerships with parents and pupils with special needs in helping to design the services they want.

The majority of looked after children communicate their views to a statutory review, however higher rates are required. There is a growing opportunity for children and young people to influence policy by talking to elected members and children and young people know that their views on policy change have been acted on.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are good. Academic achievement for young people over 16 is in line with that found nationally. There is a strong partnership between the Learning Skills Council, colleges, the Connexions Service and the council, leading to a high number of young people going into employment, education or training and to low levels of unemployment. Provision is based on a careful needs analysis that has identified relatively low take up of vocational courses.

Looked after children do well after they are 16, with sustained improvements in the proportion that are in employment, education or training. Performance for this group is now very good. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities also do very well, with significantly more getting into employment, education or training compared to regional or national averages. However, whilst direct payments are used to promote independence, the rates are lower than those found nationally. The council promotes equality of opportunity seriously in its 14-19 strategy and is using area learning partnerships to meet local needs.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low teenage pregnancy rates • CAMHS Service • improvement in health checks of looked after children. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two residential special schools have failed to meet requirements and need to demonstrate improvement against regulatory standards • lack of focus on the health needs of BME and Traveller groups.

<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordinated behaviour strategy across schools and care settings • improved local foster carer recruitment • short-term stability of placements sustained very good performance over a number of years • the development of family support services. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbers of children in residential care.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4 achievement • early years' provision • educational support outside school hours • attendance of looked after children. • primary school attendance • fast response to accurate identification of weaknesses in individual school performance. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exclusions for pupils with special educational needs • attendance of secondary school pupils.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early years' partnership with parents • pupils with special needs helping to design the services they want • improvement in the proportion of offenders in education, training or employment • youth service inspection outcomes are predominantly good. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children contributing their views to statutory review • a reduction in numbers of first time offenders in the youth justice system.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proportion of care leavers in education, training or employment showing sustained improvement • partnership work with Learning and Skills Council, Connexions Service and colleges • the high proportion of children with disabilities staying in education, training or employment • quality of opportunity in the 14-19 strategy. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low take up of vocational courses • use of Direct Payments.

Service management

Surrey has collaborated closely with relevant partners in analysing needs and setting appropriate, challenging targets for improvement. A new post of Head of Performance and Development has been created to add to senior management capacity and the strategic direction of the service is aligned with priorities in *Every Child Matters*.

Performance management was slow to develop but is now embedded within the service. The Family Support Service is a good example of how Surrey has tackled its duties in preventing harm to children and the authority has provided additional resources to secure improvement.

The pace of integration between social care and education has improved. Staff recruitment in social care is encouraging. Recruitment problems and excessive surplus places in primary schools are being tackled. The education service has a clear knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and this is reflected in the quality of its self assessment.

Joint planning for improved children's services is strong and integrated training is taking place. Improvements are required to meet National Minimum Standards within special schools and action is already being taken to address this. As with a number of developments in this section it is too early to measure the improvements.

Capacity to improve is good.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Being healthy

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

- evidence of link between the authority's *Being Healthy* priorities and actual provision at local community level.

Staying safe

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

- how secure are children in special schools?

Enjoying and achieving

Educational provision is made for children who do not attend school:

- exclusions of pupils with special educational needs.

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

- impact of activities to promote achievement of looked after children.

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:

- strategy to improve vocational take up and its effect
- shift from service provision to Direct Payments
- provisional judgements.

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: Surrey 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	2
The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	4
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	3

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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