



# Joint area review

Report for children and young people  
Rochdale

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## Report for children and young people about the services they receive in Rochdale

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and doing well at school and as they grow up
- Making a positive contribution to society
- Being successful in whatever they choose to do when they are adults

## Why should I read this?

The law says that inspectors must look at and then report on how well local services serve children and young people in an area. This is called a "review". Inspectors visited your area recently. You might like to read this, or the full report which you can find on Ofsted's website, to find out what they had to say.

## What did the inspectors do?

Nine inspectors visited Rochdale in May 2005 so that they could get a feel of what life is like for children and young people in the area. They:

- ❖ talked with children and young people;
- ❖ talked with lots of adults working with children and young people (like social workers, teachers, youth workers, nurses, doctors, police officers and councillors);
- ❖ spoke to parents and other people caring for children;
- ❖ heard from the council and other agencies what it thinks about the services it provides for children;
- ❖ read a lot of reports, and visited one neighbourhood to see things for themselves.

The inspectors also looked at how well particular children are doing, like those children in council care or those who have a learning difficulty or disability. They know that elsewhere these groups of children often don't get a good service and needed to check up on this locally.

## How well are children and young people doing in Rochdale?

- ❖ They are generally less healthy than found in other areas of the country.
- ❖ They are reasonably safe although a high number attend accident and emergency at hospital.
- ❖ Children in primary schools generally don't do as well as pupils from similar areas but in secondary schools pupils' achieve at least as well as, or better than, pupils from similar areas.
- ❖ Children from minority ethnic groups in secondary schools do as well or even better, than those in similar areas.
- ❖ Students studying for A levels and those on work-based courses are improving but slowly.

- ❖ More young people over 16 are in education, training or employment than in the past.
- ❖ They are encouraged to make a contribution to their community.

### **What were the main things children and young people told inspectors about your area?**

- ❖ They feel safe in school but less so outside of school where they worry about road traffic accidents, drug users on the streets, racial harassment and a lack of safe play and leisure areas.
- ❖ Work to combat bullying in schools was very good and that most schools are sensitive to their needs and provide them with support. There is still confusion about what a racist incident is and children and young people think it is important that this is cleared up.
- ❖ They like the help they get to prepare for working life but some feel they get better education after 16 years of age if they travel to colleges outside of Rochdale.
- ❖ They often use the recreational facilities in Rochdale but the facilities available are not always what they want.
- ❖ They like the way they are encouraged to participate in decisions that affect them.

### **What things did the inspectors say are good for children and young people in my area?**

- ❖ The council and its partners are ambitious for children and young people and are clear about what the priorities for improvement are and how to achieve them.
- ❖ Overall the services for children and young people are satisfactory and some aspects of them are good. The inspectors felt that there is a good likelihood that services will continue to improve. Local services are trying hard and working well together to keep children and young people healthy.
- ❖ When children and young people are thought to be at risk of serious harm, all the agencies work well together to try and protect them.
- ❖ A high priority is given to children and young people attending school and to do their best.
- ❖ Children under five years of age get a good education and receive a wide range of services.
- ❖ Children looked after by the council are encouraged to do better at school.

- ❖ Many groups, including the council provide good support to help children and young people develop socially and emotionally.
- ❖ Children and young people are encouraged to help make decisions that affect them.
- ❖ There is a good range of opportunities to help young people prepare for working life.
- ❖ For young people leaving care there is good support to help them get into education, training or employment.
- ❖ Those with learning disabilities and difficulties are given good support.
- ❖ A lot of work is done to try and encourage all children and young people from different backgrounds to live happily together in Rochdale.

### What things are not so good for children and young people?

- ❖ Children and young people can find it hard to see a local doctor and get regular dental treatment.
- ❖ Too many children and young people attend accident and emergency and there is only one children's nurse in the department.
- ❖ Some young people aged between 16 and 18 have to wait too long to see a mental health worker and if children and young people need to go into hospital because they are mentally unhealthy there are no hospital beds available in Rochdale.
- ❖ A few children and young people who are thought to be at risk of serious harm sometimes have to wait short periods of time to get a social worker. Some looked after children who are well settled do not have a social worker.
- ❖ Sometimes schools are unclear when it is right to tell a social worker about concerns they may have about children and young people.
- ❖ Children and young people who need to see a social worker sometimes have to wait too long.
- ❖ The attainment of some children and young people at school.
- ❖ Children and young people are confused about what a racist incident is and there are differences in how these are recorded in schools.

This report is the result of a pilot inspection, undertaken by in May 2005 by ten inspectorates and commissions listed in section 20 of the Children Act 2004 to test methodology for Joint Area Reviews (JARs).

**An Update (November 2005):**

**Since the inspectors visited Rochdale, some other good things have happened:**

- ❖ When this year's school test results are made public, it will show that children in primary schools did very well.
- ❖ Local health services overall, were judged to be amongst the best in the country.

**Because of these good things, the inspectors think services are likely to go on improving.**