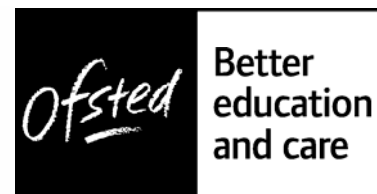


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Making Social Care
Better for People



Ms Anji Phillips
Designate Director of Children's Services
London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames
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1 December 2005

Dear Ms Phillips

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 26 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

The outcomes in this area are good and are monitored by the council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A wide range of strategies and effective inter-agency partnerships between health, education, youth and social services, ensure that health and welfare are promoted and that needs are met and addressed in a co-ordinated manner. This includes children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable, black minority ethnic and looked after children.

The Primary Care Trust's immunisation programme has good take-up rates and the School Nursing Service works closely with schools on the annual needs audit. Health initiatives, such as the screening for obesity in Year 1 pupils, have had positive outcomes in identifying a small percentage of children for specific support. Although teenage pregnancy rates in Richmond are well below the national average and a range of strategies are in place to reduce the number further, the National Public Service Agreement (NPSA) target has not been met. The looked after children and school nurses are trained in family planning, and from September 2005, school nurses will be able to provide advice on contraception. A high proportion of schools are participating in the 'Healthy Schools' Initiative, many receiving a level three kite mark and all primary schools are involved in 'walk to school' campaigns. The majority of schools in the borough provide a very good range of sports activities for pupils. Although substance and alcohol misuse is not a problem compared to national averages, as the result of the local audit in 2001, the council has appropriately chosen to make it a local

priority in conjunction with the Youth Service and all secondary schools deliver a drug prevention programme.

A multi-professional health and education team focuses on identifying and meeting mental health issues. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Commissioning Group has led in key service developments, with more integrated frontline delivery. These include support workers placed in the multi-agency Adolescent Resource Team, Looked After Children Team and Youth Offending Team. The Youth Offending Team perform well above the national average in addressing the acute mental health needs of young people who are sentenced and are improving performance with non-acute mental health needs.

Staying safe

The outcomes in this area are good. Policies, plans and procedures are in place to ensure that children and young people, including those who are looked after and those with disabilities, are provided with the safe environment to which they are entitled. Although the numbers of black minority ethnic children within the authority are low, appropriate planning is in place to meet their needs. The authority has implemented the Integrated Children's System (ICS) which has improved procedures and practice with cases referred to the service and has enabled better monitoring of support and performance. All schools in the borough comply with child protection legislation and are at least satisfactory, with the majority being good or very good in caring for children's welfare, health and safety needs.

The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised. Referrals of children in need are low and reducing but the number of children on the child protection register is rising. Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities are involved in their assessments and reviews, and almost all have transition plans in place at age 14+. Safeguarding protocols are in place and fully operational for looked after children placed out-borough and all looked after children have a named social worker. Systems are in place for missing children. All young looked after children are now placed in foster care or for adoption. All child protection cases are reviewed at the required time intervals. The safeguarding of children is led through the Area Child Protection Committee supported by the Workforce Development Unit which provides appropriate training on safeguarding issues and promotes joint working with partner agencies. The council's Children's Quality Services Group also monitors performance through regular audit and reporting.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are good. The overall quality of early years provision is good, effectively promotes children's development and supports them well in meeting the early learning goals. However a small percentage of providers require action following inspection and this is higher than the national average.

Standards at the end of Key Stages 1,2,3 and 4 are above national averages, although there is no consistent improvement trend for GCSE 5 A* - C, and the value added between Key Stage 2 and 3 is below the national average. Appropriate support is provided to ensure that educational provision is of a good quality and that national strategies are implemented effectively. The authority has worked well with schools in difficulty or causing concern and has improved support for minority ethnic pupils and travellers so that it is now highly satisfactory. A very high number of schools are graded good or very good for overall effectiveness following inspection. There has been good recognition of areas for improvement which include addressing value added overall, boys' underachievement and developing a flexible curriculum at Key Stage 4. The authority has worked successfully with external partners to introduce improvement programmes and to supplement areas where in-house expertise is not available.

Although improving, the educational achievement of looked after children is poor relative to national and statistical neighbours. A multi-disciplinary team supports looked after children, all have personal education plans and their progress is monitored. There are training forums for identified teachers and therapy advice is available. Individual tutoring is purchased for looked after children where necessary.

Attendance rates within the authority have been unsatisfactory and are now improving, with the result that in both primary and secondary schools attendance is now in line with national averages. However, unauthorised absence in secondary schools remains higher than national average and statistical neighbours, as does the absence rate of looked after children.

The rate of primary exclusions is below the national average but in secondary is above. A good range of provision is offered to pupils out of school and all receive a minimum of 20 to 25 hours per week of tuition, with all Key Stage 4 pupils taking part in accredited courses. Connexions Personal Advisers support all children on these programmes.

Many schools in Richmond provide a good range of extra curricular activities and wrap around services for their pupils. A co-ordinated programme of recreational activities for all children including those with SEN or disability is provided by a number of council, school and voluntary providers and almost 40% of children and young people make use of the Youth Service. Children and young people are also engaged via arts projects and have free access to arts and culture events.

The number of children for whom the authority maintains a statement for SEN is in line with the national average. Children with SEN are involved in their assessments and reviews and are able to voice their views through their representative group to the Youth Forum. A broad range of vocational education is in place and youth offenders of school age are offered appropriate alternative educational provision.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are good. Through the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership, a range of 'Hear By Right' workshops and training events enabled children and young people in Richmond to identify their priorities for the services which they receive and subsequently develop a shared vision with the council. Participants included children with special educational needs and disabilities, care leavers and looked after children. "Hear by Right" cited the council as an example of best practice in engaging young people. In addition, a "Black Pupils Voices" video has been produced and individual agencies have systems in place for obtaining client feedback. Vulnerable users report well of the services they receive.

Children, young people and their parents are well supported at key points in their life. Statutory reviews are given appropriate status to ensure that plans are in place for the next stage of school or adult life and as a result, almost all looked after children and children with SEN contribute to their assessments and statutory reviews. Transitional plans are in place for all care leavers. The cohort of youth offenders is small compared to national figures, but the Youth Offending Team works effectively with young people and partner agencies and, as a result, has seen a reduction in offenders and re-offenders. There is a strong downward trend in the number of final warnings and convictions of looked after children. The Youth Offending Team has systems in place to identify and work with children and young people at risk of offending before they do so.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are good. There has been a significant increase in the number of 14-19 year olds in education, training and employment (ETE) and targets have been exceeded, including that for post 16 black minority ethnic pupils. The multi-agency 14-19 Strategy Group is effective, with all key partners in place. The 14-19 School and College Operational Group supports curriculum planning, pastoral support and guidance for young people across schools and colleges. The result is a co-ordinated range of vocational and academic provision.

Successful programmes are in place for the range of different groups of pupils, which include vulnerable young people, pupils at risk of exclusion and gifted and talented pupils. A joint partnership agreement and action plan exists between Connexions, looked after children and the Leaving Care Service to ensure that appropriate support is provided 14-19. All eligible pupils have Pathway Plans in place. The percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training is almost in line with the general population for this age group.

Summary

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective inter-agency partnerships • high proportion of schools participate in the 'Healthy Schools' Initiative • good range of sports activities. • drug prevention programme in place in secondary schools and the youth service. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy and meeting the LPSA target.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well established Area Child Protection Committee • electronic Integrated Children's System has improved monitoring and performance • safeguarding protocols are in place, and fully operational with training available. 	

<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality early years provision. • Standards above national averages at end of KS1,2,3,4 • Good range of extra-curricular and wrap-around services • Co-ordinated programme of recreational activities for all children and young people. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the small number of actions against EY providers • improving the attendance and educational achievement of looked after children • reducing unauthorised absence in secondary schools • reducing the rate of exclusions.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good engagement with children and young people • transitional plans in place for all care leavers • systems in place to identify, and work with, children and young people at risk of offending. 	
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high number of care leavers in education, training and employment. • good partnership arrangements between Connexions, looked after children and the leaving care service • pathway plans in place. 	

Service Management

The council has consulted well with stakeholders and the Local Strategic Partnership to gain their views and commitment to partnership and a wide range of partnerships are in place. The Community Plan is clear and sets out the vision for the authority and the outcomes by which it will measure success. There is consistency across other key plans with identifiable links to the Community Plan and these also reflect the concept of partnership and cross-cutting priorities identified with stakeholders.

The council responds well to external review, learns from this, and develops plans to address areas of weakness. The council maintains a sound performance management framework. Capacity is used efficiently and action has been taken to modernise specific services and strengthen others. Resources are appropriately re-allocated to fund improvement priorities. The financial position continues to be strengthened but challenges remain for the future. There is a rigorous approach to financial planning, with clarity between members and senior management about financial risks and problems. Efficiency savings have been identified although the recruitment of foster

carers needs to be improved in order to help meet needs. Capacity is enhanced through improved partnership and procurement arrangements and the local authority is well placed to move forward. The council has a good capacity to improve. The new Children's Schools and Families Department will come into operation in May 2006. The Director of Social Services and Housing, remains statutory director of Children's Services, with the Director of Education, Arts and Leisure as the Director Designate of Children's Services.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review:

Being healthy

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

- In reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy
- In meeting the LPSA target.

Staying safe

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

- The impact of the restructuring of the Area Child Protection Committee into a safeguarding board and the effect on the safeguarding of vulnerable children.

Enjoying and achieving

Early Years provision promotes children's development and well-being and helps them meet early learning goals:

- The progress made in reducing the small percentage of providers who require action following inspection.

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

- The action taken to improve the attendance and the educational achievement of looked after children
- Reduce unauthorised absence in secondary schools.

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: London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

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	3

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