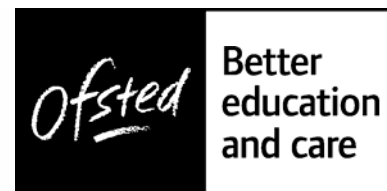


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Making Social Care
Better for People



Ms Sylvia Gibson
Chief Learning and School Improvement Officer
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1 December 2005

Dear Ms Gibson

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE 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

There are good outcomes to improve the health of children and young people in Redbridge. The Children's Trust has achieved successful integration of health care and is targeting resources effectively to meet local needs. This includes an expansion of the Community Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and effective performance to improve the healthcare of looked after children. Plans are in place to respond to health care needs of an increasingly diverse child population. The current review of sexual health clinics provides an opportunity to develop more effective and user-friendly services. The healthy schools programme is well established in some schools and developing in all others. Immunisation strategies need to be targeted to address areas of low take up.

Staying safe

Outcomes in this area are outstanding. Child Protection is a high priority with good interagency confidence and effective risk management. This includes effective work with faith groups to improve child protection. There is very effective performance and continuous improvement in safeguarding arrangements. The low number of looked after children and those on the Child Protection Register have been maintained and performance on timescales and reviews is very good. Corporate work on road safety has been prioritised given the high risk posed to children.

There is an extensive range of preventative services and more effective family support strategies are developing in the Children's Trust. This includes parenting courses and pilot schemes in schools to support families as well as the development of three Children's Resource Centres.

The wide range of outdoor and educational adventure trips available to children has increased due to an online referral system that reduces bureaucracy while effectively managing risk. The council has established a strong anti-bullying strategy and schools have improved their reporting of racist incidents with more effective data collection.

Given the rapid and continuing demographic changes, the authority needs to continue to respond effectively to the growing needs of black and minority ethnic children, ensuring that the individual and specific needs of children are met.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are good. There has been a large increase in the number of early years places, particularly in day care, which are of high quality. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 1 are generally in line with or better than the national average and those of the authority's statistical neighbours. Levels of achievement are generally static, however, and this has been identified by the authority as an area for improvement. There is high pupil mobility at Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and the authority is working to maintain and improve standards through targeted support to schools with particularly high pupil mobility and individual target-setting for pupils.

Young people do particularly well in tests and examination. Standards for Key Stage 2 are generally above the national average and in line or above statistical neighbours. There is good performance overall at Key Stage 3 and consistently high performance at Key Stage 4. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C was significantly above the national average and that of statistical neighbours. Four schools in the borough, however, have had static achievement rates for five or more GCSE grades A* - C for the past five years.

Pupils achieve better between Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 than is predicted from their prior performance and this is reflected in strong value added scores. The authority has prioritised the need to reduce the gap in attainment between boys and girls, with girls clearly outperforming boys in two schools in particular. The performance of pupils from some black and minority ethnic groups also show some differences. There has been a steady increase in the number of year 13 pupils taking GCE A levels. The average points score (APS) per candidate and APS per entry are improving each year, at a rate greater than that seen nationally, and are now comparable to statistical neighbours and national averages.

Looked after children have good performance for five or more A* - C GCSEs and substantially improved performance for one or more GCSE passes. A successful review

of the Family Centres has resulted in a substantial increase in resources available to children in need.

Continued improvement in attendance rates at primary and secondary schools has resulted partly from the work of multidisciplinary teams from social services and education. Effective support is offered to pupils with English as an additional language. A buddy scheme is in operation in which pupils are partnered with other young people who speak the same language. Support available for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. No pupils attending the council's special schools were permanently excluded in 2003.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are good with a wide range of effective consultation and participation opportunities for Children and Young People. The Youth Council is well established and a widely used forum with plans to develop services in ways young people have suggested. eg establishing website. Looked after children participate effectively in their reviews.

The successful expansion of direct payments for children with disabilities has included good take up from black and minority communities. A range of services ensure that children with special needs or disabilities are helped to contribute positively, including independent visitors, advocates, voluntary groups, summer projects and the work of the Children's Rights Officer. Foster carers receive specific support to help them meet the needs of children and young people from black and minority ethnic groups. A restructuring of the youth service is planned, to meet more effectively young people's needs.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are adequate. Overall, the quality of education provided for 14 to 19 year olds is good. One school sixth form was judged ineffective since September 2003, but has since been re-categorised. The authority has some of the highest participation rates in the country for 16 –17 year olds in full-time education.

Strategies to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training are successful and the council has the lowest number of young people in this group in the London East Connexions area. Effective work is targeted at vulnerable young people and young people from black and minority ethnic groups. Connexions personal advisers, placed in local organisations, support vulnerable young people, including those referred to the youth offending team.

The authority has formed a 14 – 19 strategy group comprising relevant and appropriate partners, including representatives from the local authority, the local Learning and Skills Council, Connexions staff, the Education Business partnership, schools, the local college, and work-based learning providers. A coordinator for 14 – 19 work is in post and a strategy has been agreed, with implementation beginning in May 2005. Progress is

slow, however, compared to many other authorities. For example, a 14 -19 curriculum mapping and development framework is only now being drawn up and is not yet available for young people to use or for strategic planning.

There is a shortage of work-based learning provision, with only two providers located in the borough, and insufficient places on Entry to Employment programmes. Efforts are being taken to increase the amount of vocational provision in schools, through initiatives such as the Increased Flexibility programme. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, attend a well-established Opportunities Fair and receive information, advice and guidance on careers.

Summary

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective integrated health services for Children • more effective use of CAMHS in the Children’s Trust • effective performance to improve Health Care of Looked After Children • healthy Schools Programme established. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • target specific immunisation strategies. • implement Sexual Health plans.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very effective performance and continuing improvement in safeguarding • extensive range of preventative services • work with faith groups on Child Protection • corporate work on Road Safety. • improved reporting of racist incidents. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to work to meet the needs of children from black and minority ethnic communities.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good and very good achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4, respectively • high value added performance from 11 to 14 years and 14 to 16 years • effective performance by looked after children in GCSEs • continued improvements in school attendance rates. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • static Key Stage 1 achievements. • underperformance by boys.

<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children and young people participate effectively in a wide range of consultative processes including Redbridge Youth Council • expansion of Direct Payments for children with disabilities • range of support to children with disabilities or special educational needs. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restructuring of the Youth Service to meet more effectively Young People's needs.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high participation rates for 16 and 17 year olds in full-time education • the numbers of care leavers in education employment and training • successful strategies to reduce school leavers at risk of not being in education, employment and training • effective targeting of vulnerable young people. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shortage of work-based learning provision and insufficient places on the Entry to Employment programme • slow progress in formulating a 14 – 19 curriculum framework.

Service Management

The authority has a successful and well established Children's Trust. There is a strong corporate responsibility for children's services and consistently good partnerships with health and the voluntary sector. Most services are integrated and pooled budgets extend the Trust's capacity to effectively deploy their resources. The Trust has clear and extensive ambitions, with strong commitment and motivation from staff and members, as noted by the Audit Commission.

There is very effective use of management information and rigorous performance management systems, especially in social care. There is good capacity within the Trust and evidence of more effective deployment of resources to improve services for example, the realignment of frontline staff at the Children's Resource Centre. There is substantial improvement in performance in both social care and education.

Strong and effective strategic planning is evident across the Trust as demonstrated by the detailed Children and Young Person's Plan. The authority's self assessment was thorough, comprehensive, evidence based and accurately reflected issues and challenges for the Trust's future development.

The Trust actively engages with children and young people to maximise their participation in the development of services. Workforce development initiatives are in place with a range of training and development schemes, some of which are specifically geared to developing careers of black and minority ethnic staff.

Further work will be aimed at ensuring recruitment continues to reflect the diverse population of the community.

The council's capacity to improve is good.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Being healthy

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

- How will the planned move of CAMHS improve services to children?

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

- Progress of healthy schools programme.

Enjoying and achieving

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

- Work to address the differences in attainment in gender and ethnic groups.

Making a positive contribution

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

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

- Has the restructuring of the Youth Service provided a better service for young People.

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:

- Progress and impact of 14-19 strategy, in particular the 14-19 curriculum Framework.

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 **Ms Pat Reynolds, Director of Children's Services**

APA final judgements 2005: London Borough of Redbridge

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	4
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