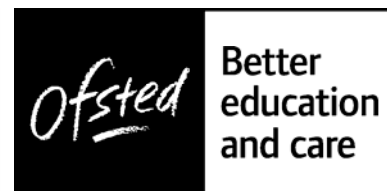


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Making Social Care  
Better for People



Mrs L Fisher  
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**1 December 2005**

Dear Mrs Fisher

## **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF PORTSMOUTH CITY 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 that you provided to support this process and for the time made available by yourself and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

### **Being healthy**

Outcomes for children and young people in this area are good. Effective planning has resulted in a co-ordinated health strategy that has had a positive impact. The multi-disciplinary health group uses key initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles. A sports' co-ordinator project has increased opportunities for children and young people to take part in sporting activities and participation levels in the majority of schools are good. Most schools provide water and fruit. Following consultation with children and young people, an increased budget means that improvements have been made to school meals. Over half of the schools have achieved the national healthy schools standard and the authority expects that all schools will have achieved this before the national target date.

The authority is meeting the health needs of looked after children effectively and this was reported in regulatory inspections of the council's children's homes. The number of teenage pregnancies, although still above the national average, has fallen. The authority is encouraging young people's participation in health issues through a magazine written by the children and young people. One of the topics addressed was teenage pregnancy.

There is a well-established inter-agency partnership Child and Mental Health Service (CAMHS) team who have responded well to the increased numbers of children accessing the service. However, there are shortfalls in the service with regard to time delays for access to a psychiatrist, the number of CAMHS social workers and the limited access to local mental health services for children with disabilities. The council has a strategy of investing in a range of specialist support and innovative use of an integrated workforce, thus building capacity within the teams and lessening the need for higher level intervention from specialists.

There has been an improvement in the performance of the Youth Offending Team and referrals by this team to CAMHS are in line with national figures although below the target set by the Youth Justice Board.

### **Staying safe**

Overall outcomes for children and young people in this area are good although there are areas which need to be improved. The council has taken some innovative action and has improved its performance on child protection issues identified as part of the last annual review. All children on the child protection register are allocated to a qualified social worker with a 100% of reviews being carried out on time. This is an improvement from last year's outturn of only 84%. New area child protection committee procedures have been developed in collaboration with three neighbouring authorities. There is an established multi-agency training programme for 1,000 participants from the main agencies and partner organisations.

The council recognises that it has a higher number of children on the child protection register than the average for the comparator group. Research has been commissioned to gain greater understanding of the issues that might account for the higher number.

During 2004/05 the council undertook a major reorganisation of the children and families teams as it recognised that referrals and assessments were not being handled in the most effective manner. Other initiatives include a recently published parenting handbook that has raised awareness of children's services in the community and a single point of contact for referrals. In the latter social care, education and health staff work alongside each other as a screening team to enable a quick response to referrals through the single point of entry. In addition, to increase the number of initial assessments and to ensure that initial and core assessments are carried out within timescales a new assessment team has been introduced. Currently however, performance in these areas is below national and comparator figures.

The council is performing well on the short-term stability of placements for looked after children, however performance on the long-term stability of looked after children, although improved from 2002/03, has remained poor for two years. In order to improve this, the council has developed a strategy which includes incentives, such as

monetary award for introducing prospective foster carers, a dedicated out of hours support line and the recognition of achievements by foster carers. These measures are valued by foster carers and are beginning to have a positive impact on the council's recruitment. It is anticipated that as the number of foster carers increases the long-term stability of placements will improve by increasing placement choice and the matching of prospective foster carers. Portsmouth has fewer children in foster care placed within the council's boundary than their comparator group. However the authority's geographical area is small and 59% of placements are within 5 miles of their home address. The council ensures that children's needs are met in terms of appropriate placements for visiting, access and maintaining local links.

The performance on adoptions is unsatisfactory and the council has created a new adoption team. Two members of staff are dedicated to children who are hard to place, such as large sibling groups with complex needs. The council judges that these strategies are now beginning to have an impact.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory with some good features. The quality of early year's provision is very good and supports children well to reach their early learning goals. The increase in childcare places is above the national average and the level of preparation by the authority prior to registration is very good.

The inspection of the LEA in May 2004 reported improvements in the performance of schools. The results at the end of Key Stage 1 are just above national averages in mathematics and writing, and standards in reading are in line. This shows an improving trend. Results at Key Stage 2 are below averages nationally but there has been some improvement in English. The education service recognises that progress between Key Stages 1 to 2 is below average and has therefore strengthened the primary team which supports schools in order to improve this.

Although standards at Key Stages 3 and 4 remain below averages nationally and for statistical neighbours, they had been improving between 2000 and 2003 and standards in maths rose consistently to 2004. In 2004 performance fell at Key Stage 4 and in science at Key Stage 3. However, the authority has been in the top quartile for improvement in 5 A\* to C passes in GCSE between 2002 and 2004. It identified weaknesses in teaching at secondary level and has used the secondary strategy to target schools for intensive support. Good use is made of individual pupil data in targeting support to schools and when external consultants are used, their impact is monitored. This enables effective intervention at an early stage. Monitoring of pupils' progress in these schools is showing an improvement in standards. However, progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 remains below average. The number of schools placed in Ofsted formal categories during the last year is lower than that of statistical neighbours.

The cohort of looked after children is small and their attainment is monitored through a cross service group. The number entered for more than 1 GCSE is higher than national averages and the proportion achieving 5 or more A\* - C grades at 10.7% is above that in similar authorities which average 7%. There are leisure passes for looked after children that provide access to subsidised facilities.

The council has a clear strategy to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and a higher proportion of resources are now delegated to schools. There is a strong commitment from members, parents and most school staff to the strategic direction on inclusion.

Although attendance is improving, unauthorised absence in both primary and secondary schools is above the national average and authorised absence in secondary schools is well above. The authority has identified barriers to improving this and believes that stronger partnerships with parents will bring about improvements. There have been no exclusions from primary schools and exclusions from secondary schools are in line with national averages.

The proportion of children and young people who are educated out of school is in line with the national average but too many are in alternative provision for longer than one year. The authority is seeking to use the good partnership with further education colleges to widen the curriculum offer for these young people. There remains a small group of pupils who are hard to place.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Overall outcomes in this area are good. Various multi-agency initiatives are in place to give children and young people the opportunity to contribute to consultations and planning exercises. The authority produced the Portsmouth 8, a multi-agency strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people, which pre-dates the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters*, and consulted widely before the final plan was produced. The majority of schools have school councils and the Council of Portsmouth Students meets regularly with the Director of Children's Services and elected members. The council uses innovative ways to give children and young people with severe learning disabilities opportunities to direct their questions to senior officers through pre-recorded voice boxes. It also effectively supports children and young people from black and minority ethnic groups in sharing their views. However, only 75% of looked after children communicated their views to a statutory review, which was lower than both national, and comparator figures. As a result the council has invested in the National Youth Advocacy Service and is publicising this to children and young people.

The proportion of all young people who re-offend is in line with the national average and there has been a reduction in the number of young people aged 10 to 17 committing an offence. However, the number of first time offenders has recently risen. The authority has a community strategy in place to reduce these figures. The number of young offenders in education, employment and training is in line with national figures. Final warnings and convictions of looked after children are higher than national averages and comparator figures. Research established that 80% of offences were in or around children's homes. The council has launched a restorative justice training programme that involves residential staff, police and foster carers, and the approach is being adopted in schools.

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

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory with some good features. The LEA's support for those aged 14 - 19 was judged highly satisfactory in the May 2004 inspection and, in partnership with the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the council has laid a firm foundation for developing post-16 education in setting out its strategy for 13-19 education.

Overall the quality of education provided for 14 to 19 year olds is satisfactory with an increase in the number of young people progressing on to full-time education. Only a small number have to leave the local area to follow relevant courses. However, the number of young people leaving school with no passes at GCSE is very high and compares very unfavourably with the national average. The authority has a range of action to improve this outcome designed to meet national targets by 2006. It is deploying teachers from further education to support the introduction of new vocational courses in secondary schools and there is also good collaboration with Higher Education and the local LSC. The number of young people not in education, employment and training has reduced significantly.

Children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are given effective support in making the transition to adult life and economic well-being. The number of care leavers in education, employment and training has improved and it remains at a very good level. The partnership with the Connexions service ensures that support for young people about to make the transition to further education, employment and training is good and all care leavers have pathway plans.

## Summary

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interagency working</li> <li>• good provision for looked after children</li> <li>• reduction in teenage pregnancy</li> <li>• effective support to schools on healthy lifestyles.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are some deficiencies in CAMHS.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of child protection cases being reviewed</li> <li>• all children on the child protection register have a qualified social worker</li> <li>• the number of looked after children with 3 or more placements during the year.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high number of children on child protection register</li> <li>• initial referral and core assessments</li> <li>• long term stability of looked after children.</li> <li>• the level and speed of adoptions</li> <li>• recruitment of foster carers.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very good provision for early years</li> <li>• improvement in attendance of looked after children</li> <li>• looked after children entered and achieving for one or more GCSE</li> <li>• effective strategies for improving outcomes in target schools</li> <li>• effective strategy for pupils with special educational needs.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• level of absence in primary and secondary schools</li> <li>• achievement at KS3 and 4</li> <li>• poor progress made by pupils from 11 to 16 years</li> <li>• re-integration back to school for children and young people in alternative provision.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effective multi-agency working</li> <li>• the range of consultation with young people and its impact on the 13 to 19 strategy.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• final warnings and convictions of looked after children</li> <li>• contributions of looked after children at statutory review.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training</li> <li>• participation of care leavers and young offenders in employment, education or training</li> <li>• all care leavers allocated pathway.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high number of young people leaving school with no GCSE passes.</li> </ul>

## **Service management**

Service management is good. The authority has effectively liaised with a range of partners and has a strong history of inter-agency planning. The self-assessment is accurate in identifying areas for improvements and has appropriately challenging targets in areas identified as priorities. This is built upon systematic processes and robust internal monitoring. The authority has shown commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people. Good progress has been made on establishing a children's service with the appointment of a Strategic Director and a lead member. There is strong alignment and coherence between the various plans and effective inter-agency planning. The authority has created virtual professional teams who regularly monitor each child and young person who is looked after and assess potential risks which may be a barrier to their progress.

The authority has a good record on recruitment and retention and has a very low number of vacancies. It has analysed the destinations of those who leave and the majority leave for promoted posts. In addition, it is building a strong corporate culture and support from elected members is strong.

The council's capacity to improve is good and promising.

## **Areas for exploration in the Joint Area Review:**

### **Being healthy**

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

- The recruitment of appropriate social workers for CAMHS.

### **Staying safe**

*The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:*

- The referral and assessment process
- Fostering and adoption services.

## Enjoying and achieving

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

- Standards at key stages 3 and 4.

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

- Attendance in schools.

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

- The reintegration of those young people who are out of school.

## 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:*

- Action to ensure that more young people achieve GCSE A\* to G.

## 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: Portsmouth 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	2
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

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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