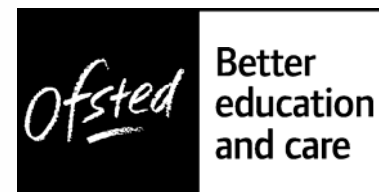


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
Email: edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr M Mehmet
Director for Children's Services
Peterborough City Council
Bayard Place
Broadway
Peterborough PE1 1FB

1 December 2005

Dear Mr Mehmet

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF PETERBOROUGH 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 which you provided to support this process and for the time made available by you and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

Being healthy

The council performs well in this area working with its partners to ensure the health and well-being of all children in Peterborough. There are good arrangements in place to encourage all aspects of health education including effective support for sports and physical fitness with many schools engaged in the Healthy Schools initiative. An effective teenage pregnancy strategy for under 18's is meeting its targets. Outcomes for young women under 16 years of age are less successful although the number of pregnancies is low. The council is using funds to extend the services available to teenagers based in or near to schools.

Referrals to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are well-managed. A CAMHS community-parenting programme has been initiated and includes a contribution to a coordinator of services for young abusers. Although the council has lower than the national average numbers of full time equivalent social workers employed in the CAMHS team, it is seeking to address the problem by recruiting appropriately qualified staff from a variety of backgrounds to enhance the skill mix of the team.

The council's performance on the health of looked after children is good. A health forum for looked after children (LAC) actively encourages them to have regular health checks. The forum has organised several successful events such as 'Phat to be fit'. The

council acknowledge delays in the health assessments of some older looked after young people. This is due in part to some young people refusing to have their health addressed and in part to staffing issues. The council has resolved the problem of long-term staffing absence by recruiting an extra member of staff.

Positive engagement and feed back from young people takes place around alcohol and substance misuse and sexual health and relationship education. Examples of this work include sexual health outreach projects such as SHOUT and the Peterborough Young People Information Network (PYPIN) website.

Staying safe

Performance in this area is adequate with some aspects showing improvement whilst others require more attention. The council has established a nationally recognised protocol relating to the use of video recoding of children in schools.

Previously good outcomes in the fostering service have continued to improve and are now highly effective. Long-term stability for looked after children is good with effective use of foster care placements and high numbers of adoption placements made. There are, however, a low proportion of children placed for adoption through a 'best interests' decision. In addition, whilst continuing to seek to reduce the high numbers of younger children placed outside the city in foster care placements, the council should consider developing further the existing use of kinship care in these cases.

Effective safeguarding arrangements and protocols are in place for most children and young people including those placed outside the city. Good arrangements for securing the care, welfare, health and safety are identified through nursery education inspection reports. The council recognises that de-registrations from the Child Protection Register (CPR) are high. In part this is due to the council being cautious with initial registrations and then de-registering a high proportion at the time of the first review. To help manage the situation better a full time manager has been appointed to the intake and assessment team and there is now less reliance on agency staff. Assessments remain an issue for the council with only half of the initial assessments completed on time. Only a small proportion of core assessments are completed and few of these are being completed within the nationally agreed timescale. All children on the CPR have a qualified social worker. Other than those on the CPR, not all looked after children have a worker attached to them and many of those that do have an 'approved' worker rather than a qualified social worker. The council recognises that this situation needs to be remedied.

Relatively few children on the CPR have been previously registered and all child protection cases are reviewed. Schools comply fully with local child protection arrangements and the council has good systems in place with head teachers to ensure child protection referrals are audited and, as appropriate, discussed with the police.

The council recognises that the system would be enhanced if the team manager undertakes the day-to-day auditing of the process.

The number of children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities on the CPR are low compared with similar councils. Concern at what action will be taken by the council when a child protection issue is identified is significant for community members and has inhibited engagement with the council. Assessing the impact of policies on promoting race equality and engaging ethnic minority communities are both recognised priorities for the council.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area meet only minimum requirements overall. The council recognises that whilst there is a generally improving trend, more needs to be done in order to raise levels of attainment for all children to those of national averages and statistical neighbours. New plans have been developed and agreed with schools but are, as yet, untested. The expansion of childcare provision is satisfactory with places for all 3 and 4 year-olds whose parents/carers require them. An effective training and qualifications framework is in place for all Early Years practitioners. School admissions are well managed with a good proportion of children gaining their first choice. Strategic planning is being used effectively to manage surplus places but a significant number of primary schools remain with more than a quarter of surplus places.

The quality of provision for Early Years education is in line with national standards. Pupils make satisfactory progress towards achieving the early learning goals expected for their age but this positive start is not built upon sufficiently at Key Stage 1 where attainment overall is unsatisfactory. A city-wide three year strategic plan for literacy involving a range of partners has been initiated and is targeted at adults as well as children. Limited improvement has been registered in recent years at both Key Stages 2 and 3. Although not yet validated, outcomes at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 in 2005 indicate a level of improvement better than statistical neighbours and national averages. At Key Stage 4, however, a good rate of improvement in the last two years has placed the council in the top quartile of improving schools nationally but still behind national averages and statistical neighbours. However, sixth form students do not achieve as well as statistical neighbours. The performance of boys is a particular cause for concern. In particular, while Pakistani heritage girls are a high performing group and although better than national average progress is being made in the attainment of young Pakistani men the council recognises more needs to be done.

Training in self-evaluation and the use of data are providing schools and the council with a better understanding of overall strengths and areas for improvement. However, a mixed picture of success exists amongst individual schools across all phases. New arrangements to provide differentiated levels of support to schools are enabling the

council to target its resources more effectively to improve opportunities for young people.

Provision for young people engaged with the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) is good. Effective support is provided for young people with a special educational need and for those in foster homes but this has yet to translate into improved levels of attainment. A high proportion of teenage parents under statutory age are in education or training. Young offenders engage in well-targeted work to reduce offending and levels of school truancy. Improvements by these groups, however, are offset by a reduction in levels of attainment overall and by looked after children in particular.

Attendance is well-managed at both primary and secondary education phases but levels of unauthorised absence are high in both phases. Effective systems are in place to ensure that young people excluded are supported back into school or into appropriate alternative provision.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. Good arrangements are in place to support looked after children transferring to secondary school. The PRS successfully supports children in the transition from out of school provision into mainstream secondary schools. For example, no year 6 pupils were retained at year 7 in the PRS. However, in relation to early years care and education, at registration a higher than average number of childminder facilities were criticised for not actively promoting equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

The youth service is satisfactory and improvements to its management and targeting of provision are leading to better outcomes for young people. Effective plans are in place for every youth project to operate an active involvement team through which young people will take responsibility for planning and evaluating programmes and contributing to decision-making.

The Youth Offending Team has achieved the majority of its targets and works well with a range of partners including schools the youth service and Connexions to prevent offending such as the SHARK project – a literacy and numeracy mentoring scheme. A high proportion of looked after children, however, receive final warnings and convictions.

The council consults with children and young people and enables them to contribute to local issues and activities in many different ways and through a number of organisations. These include school councils, local forums and youth action groups. In order that young people's voices and contributions can be more effective, the council is looking at ways to bring greater coherence and consistency to the work of these disparate groups. Opportunities exist for some children and young people with a

special educational need and/or disabilities in a respite facility to use a 'listen up' pack that enables them to express their views about the services provided. The council is adapting this pack to make it available and relevant to more young people. Looked after children have good opportunities to communicate their views. For example, some have redesigned consultation booklets for reviews, some have participated in the selection of youth workers and others have been consulted about out of school activities. Insufficient attention is given to consulting with young people from minority ethnic communities, refugees, asylum seekers and travellers groups.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes for young people in this area are satisfactory with examples of good practice. Good partnerships and multi-agency work with Connexions and other groups is enabling high proportions of young people to be in education, employment or training. Effective levels of support exist for looked after children, and care leavers that result in good outcomes. The Youth Offending team recognises that whilst there has been some improvement in the numbers of young offenders in full-time education, training or employment, it still has some way to go to achieve its target. Implementation of a 14-19 strategy is underway but progress is slow and not sufficiently driven by appropriately challenging targets. The attainment of 6th form students is below that of both national averages and statistical neighbours. Whilst the number of young people participating in post-16 education is higher than the national average, the figures have remained relatively static for the last three years. Arrangements to monitor the performance, participation in post 16 education and career routes of young people from BME communities and other priority groups are underdeveloped.

A Pathfinder project for young people with a special educational need successfully engages increasing numbers of young people to access post-16 education including mobility and independence training. The number of looked after children entering higher education is much higher than the national average. The proportion of care leavers entering employment, education and training at age 19, however, has fallen sharply.

Only a small proportion of young people with disabilities are receiving an acceptable level of service and low numbers of their carers are receiving direct payments.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> looked after children are encouraged to receive regular health checks good arrangements in place to support all aspects of health education including healthy schools initiative. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase full time equivalent social workers employed with or working with the CAMHS team.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective safeguarding arrangements and protocols are in place to protect children short-term stability for looked after children is good as is long term stability for older children; good use of foster care placements and high numbers of adoption placements made; very good care, welfare, health and safety for primary schools. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure all looked after children are allocated a qualified social worker reduce further the number of out of city foster care placements for younger children; assess the impact of policies on promoting race equality for children.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good education provision for young people in foster homes good provision for young people with an SEN and/or statement of SEN Pupil Referral Service provides good outcomes for its pupils. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve standards of attainment at all Key Stages for all young people increase the numbers of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least 1 GCSE at grades A*-G or GNVQ and who achieve 5 GCSE's at grades A*-C.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a high proportion of looked after children are able to communicate their views a good range of youth service activities to engage young people effective YOT support for prevention activities. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduce the number of final warnings and convictions for looked after children provide greater support and engagement with the BME population, refugees/asylum seekers and traveller groups reduce the number of actions in Early Years provision against equal opportunities criteria.

<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Children’s Services provides good leadership to build stronger links between children’s services and the existing ‘clusters’ of schools • good support in place for post 16 looked after children living independently • good partnership and multi-agency work with Connexions and other groups • good developmental work to support young people with an SEN/LDD. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the attainment of 6th form students • increase the pace of implementation of the 14-19 strategy and set challenging targets • increase the numbers of direct payments for carers of disabled children.
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Service management

Children’s Services are high on the council’s agenda with a particular concern for improving standards of educational attainment at all phases of education. Officers report bi-monthly to elected members on progress against a number of agreed targets. Effective partnerships are being developed. The move to a single directorate for children’s services and careful budget management provide reasons to be optimistic about the council’s future responses to the agenda set by Every Child Matters. An increasingly comprehensive needs analysis provides well-considered strategic and operational plans for education and children’s social care.

Following a period of relative instability a new Director of Children’s Services has been appointed. Many of the council’s plans, however, are quite new and their potential has yet to be translated into better outcomes for all young people especially for those from vulnerable groups such as looked after children.

The council’s attention has been focussed on developing appropriate plans and processes to underpin improvement. Not always sufficient emphasis has been given to what is being done well by and for children and young people. The areas for improvement especially for those young people from vulnerable and priority groups require well-targeted action plans to ensure the momentum of change is sustained. Having established a better foundation from which to develop services, the council, at all levels, will need to be very active in monitoring, reviewing and amending plans to ensure a sharper focus is maintained to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The council’s capacity to improve its services for children and young people is promising.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review:

Being healthy

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

- increase the number of full time equivalent social workers employed with or working with the CAMHS team to bring about further improvements.

Enjoying and achieving

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

- improve standards of attainment at all Key Stages for all young people
- particular attention is required to improve the educational performance of looked after children, care leavers and other priority 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:

- increase levels of support and engagement with the BME population, refugees/asylum seekers and traveller groups
- co-ordinate and give greater coherence to the range of opportunities for young people to contribute to and shape services.

Achieving economic well-being

Action is taken to ensure that 14-19 education and training is planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way, and to ensure that education and training (16-19) is of good quality:

- increase the pace of implementation of the 14-19 strategy and set challenging targets
- improve arrangements to monitor the performance, participation in post 16 education and career routes of young people from BME communities and other priority groups and extend the levels of support where necessary.

Final Judgement

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: Peterborough City 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.	2
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	2
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