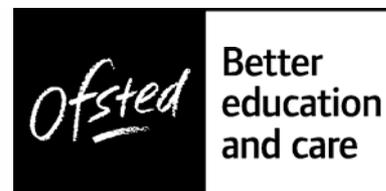


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Making Social Care  
Better for People



Miss Cynthia Welbourn  
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**1 December 2005**

Dear Miss Welbourn

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 18 July 2005 to assess the performance of the education and social care services within your council. 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. Participation in sport in schools is high throughout North Yorkshire. Participation in the Healthy Schools Initiative is above national average and that of similar councils. The Education Development Plan embeds aims and strategies to improve health. The council has worked closely with key partners to promote healthy lifestyles, and there is a good range of initiatives to improve health. Initiatives to reduce smoking and substance misuse are in place and there is good take up. The health of looked after children remains a strength but there is a downward trajectory. The council is aware of this trend, and has raised the matter with the Primary Care Trusts through the inter-agency Children's Strategic Board.

Impressively low teenage pregnancy rates have been achieved through good multi-agency work across the county.

With the Primary Care Trusts, the council has supported the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) team well, and transition protocols to adults' mental health services are in place. Delays in CAMHS responses to referrals by the Youth Offending Team (YOT) are recognised and work is in hand to address this.

## **Staying safe**

The county provides a generally safe environment. Outcomes in this area are good. The council fully meets all statutory obligations in schools for health, safety, care, welfare and child protection. There is a high level of commitment to child protection training in schools, supported by link advisors. There are good multi-agency arrangements and overall continuing satisfactory performance for child protection, pathway planning for care leavers, overall placement arrangements for looked after children, including stability in foster care and adoption.

The council responded quickly to remedy matters of safety identified in the regulatory inspection of one of its children's homes. Similar multiple issues were identified in November 2004 during the inspection of the council's boarding school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and an action plan was agreed, the deadline for completion of which has been extended.

Significant progress has been made in multi-agency arrangements to establish the local Safeguarding Board.

While performance data indicates there has been a downward trend in the percentage of initial and core assessments, more are actually being completed, and there has been a significant increase in referrals. Levels of repeat referrals of children in need have also increased. Whilst this may be affected by a change in definition for the indicator, the council should examine the application of thresholds and staffing capacity. The levels of child protection re-registration have increased, and the council believe this is affected by mobile populations across county boundaries and large sibling groups.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

The outcomes in this area are very good. The council's support for early years provision was highly satisfactory in Ofsted's recent inspection of the local education authority and the quality of provision was good overall. The council has improved its measures to support and train those applying to become childminders and the proportion of early years providers having actions imposed on registration has declined from the high level found between April 2003 and September 2004.

Attainment at Key Stages 1 to 4 is consistently above the national average and is mostly above similar councils. Progress made by pupils between Key Stages 2 and 3 is better than nationally, but below between Key Stages 3 and 4. The attainment of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least one general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) graded A\* to G is good. The achievement of five or more GCSEs graded A\* to C has declined but remains just above the national average. The proportion of young people supervised within the criminal justice system who are in education, training or employment has declined to 51% compared with a national average of 74%.

Attendance at school is good and exclusions are below the national average; for children with special educational needs they are in line with the average. Although the attendance by looked after children has declined, it remains above the national average.

Ofsted's inspection of the local authority judged the council's strategy for school improvement and its implementation as very good. There are few schools in Ofsted's formal categories of causing concern. The council's support for national strategies at Key Stages 1 to 3 is very good. Ofsted's inspections of schools undertaken between 2003 and 2004 show that the overall effectiveness of schools, their leadership and management, teaching and learning and pupils' achievement are mostly good or better. While the council acknowledges that there is low attainment in a few schools, all secondary schools exceeded the government's 2004 floor targets. The council pays close attention to the educational provision for looked after children. This was found to be highly satisfactory in the recent local authority inspection.

There is a good range of voluntary and recreational activities and good take-up by young people. For example, achievement of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is in the top 5% nationally. Participation in the activities provided by the youth service is above the national average and achievement by young people is usually good. However, the premises are not all accessible to those with disabilities. The council has in place well thought out procedures and projects that support schools in ensuring that all children and young people achieve their full potential in mainstream education. An alternative curriculum is provided where this is considered necessary to suit the needs and interests of pupils.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are good. Schools and early years providers offer a good environment for children and young people to make a positive contribution. Ofsted inspections in 2003–2004 show that the proportion of schools with freedom from bullying, racism and harassment and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development were higher than the national average. No secondary schools were found to be unsatisfactory in these respects. Strategies for the inclusion of young people with special educational needs in schools are effective.

The youth service helps young people develop civic awareness through participation in meetings and campaigning on local issues. Young people are involved well in consultations, planning and decision-making. Almost all secondary schools have a school council. A good proportion of looked after children communicated their views to their statutory reviews in 2003/04, and the council is ambitious to achieve even better performance. The council's performance for looked after children receiving final warnings, reprimands and convictions improved again for the third year, and demonstrates good performance, considered as such by other councils in the region. The Youth Offending Team's data show that re-offending has decreased but the proportion of first offenders has increased.

## Achieving economic well-being

The outcomes in this area are very good. The provision for education and training for 14 to 19 year olds is good overall with a well thought out strategy and good leadership and management. While the curriculum provision has gaps in some areas and duplication in others, learners' attainment and progression at 16 to 18 are good. The proportion of care leavers in employment, education or training at age 19 is the third best in England at 91%. The proportion of 16 year olds not in employment, education or training was well below the national average at 3.51% in 2004 and is reducing further. However, there is limited access to appropriate careers advice for some young people.

Local council support for vulnerable young people is good. The promotion of inclusion of young people with special educational needs is highly satisfactory. All young people with statements of special educational need have a transition plan from the age of 14. Connexions advisers are involved in all reviews of pupils with special educational needs to ensure appropriate post-16 and post-19 transition. However, the area inspection found that there were some shortcomings in the tracking of young people's destinations in years 12 and 13.

## SUMMARY

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Improvement</b>
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• range and take up of initiatives to improve health</li> <li>• overall levels of health of looked after children</li> <li>• impressively low teenage pregnancy rates.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trend in the health of looked after children.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• care for pupils' welfare, safety and protection in schools</li> <li>• support for children and young people on the child protection register</li> <li>• arrangements for foster care and adoption</li> <li>• pathway planning for young people leaving care.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completion of initial and core assessments</li> <li>• responses to referrals and level of repeat referrals</li> <li>• levels of child protection re-registrations</li> <li>• effectiveness of multi-agency preventative work at ground level.</li> </ul>

<p>Enjoying and achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision in schools and for early years</li> <li>• attendance at school and low rate of exclusions</li> <li>• targeted support for school improvement</li> <li>• attainment at all Key Stages and progress between Key Stages 2 and 3</li> <li>• proportion of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with at least 1 GCSE A*to G</li> <li>• range and take up of voluntary and recreational activities.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress between Key Stage 3 and 4</li> <li>• proportion of young people in the criminal justice system in employment, training or education.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• freedom from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment in schools</li> <li>• involvement of young people in planning and decision-making</li> <li>• proportion of looked after children communicating their views to statutory reviews</li> <li>• strategies for inclusion of young people with special educational needs</li> <li>• looked after children receiving final warnings, reprimands and convictions.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rates of first offending.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision of education and training for 14 to 19 year olds</li> <li>• strategy for 14 to 19 provision and its leadership and management</li> <li>• promotion of educational inclusion and support for vulnerable young people</li> <li>• attainment and progression at age 16 to 18</li> <li>• proportion care leavers in employment, education or training at age 19.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gaps and duplication in curriculum provision for 14 to 19 year olds</li> <li>• access to appropriate careers advice for some young people.</li> </ul>

## **Service Management**

The recent inspection of the LEA judged the high performing education service to have further improved. There continues to be good strategic planning, effective delivery and good capacity in these services, with clear and challenging targets in the Education Development Plan.

The commitment of elected members and senior managers is substantial. There has been significant progress to improve the council's children's social care services since the children's safeguards inspection three years ago. However, there is much work to do to bring about effective integration of the council's children's services to achieve positive outcomes for all children, some of whom are difficult to reach.

Development of an integrated children's service and children and young people's plan has been relatively slow, due principally to a comparatively late start. The council have established a Children's Strategic Board, and an inter-agency decision was made in March to develop as a Children's Trust Approach. In the context of a complex, two-tier area, this provides a good foundation for the Children and Young People's Plan. The council appointed the designate Director of Children's Services in February 2005. A project manager has been appointed, a new shadow management structure is in place and the council is confident that good progress will be made before April 2006. However, joint working between education and social care remains at an early stage. Social care and education have a good track record of performance management, accountability and decision making, all areas for early joint attention by senior managers to achieve effective integration from 2006. The staffing capacity to drive forward change in this large county remains an issue.

The promotion of race equality has improved, and is subject to continuous attention. All staff have reached level 2 of the Race Equality Scheme and a few have reached level 3. A Corporate Equalities Officer has recently been appointed.

The council has a good capacity to improve.

## **Areas for exploration in the joint area review**

### **Being healthy**

*Looked after children's health needs are addressed:*

- improvements in performance of health for looked after children.

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

- CAMHS – YOT referrals and delayed responses.

## **Staying safe**

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

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

- thresholds of response to children in need referrals
- child protection re-registrations
- assessments within timescales.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

*Children and young people who are looked after are helped to enjoy and achieve:*

- focus on education for looked after children, their attendance, attainment and progress.

## **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 to 19) is of good quality:*

- progress in implementing the 14 to 19 area inspection action plan.

## **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: North Yorkshire County 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	<b>3</b>
The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	<b>4</b>
The contribution of <i>the local authority's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	<b>3</b>
The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people	<b>3</b>

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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