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Making Social Care
Better for People



Pauline Maddison - Executive Director Children and
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London Borough of Newham
London

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Dear Ms Maddison

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 4 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

Effective action is being taken to improve some health outcomes.

A good level of partnership working is demonstrated, but there is room for improvement. The numbers of teenage pregnancies are beginning to reduce. There is an increase in the number of staff working in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service resulting in a more timely response to referrals. There has been one serious case review which highlights the need to strengthen the system for managing cases of children with mental health needs.

Good performance has been seen on the health of children looked after. All schools are involved in the healthy schools programme. However, obesity is a significant issue. Provision for sport in secondary schools is good. The provision of advocacy support is promoting the health of children with disabilities.

Staying safe

The outcomes for the safety and care of children and young people are good, but there are some weaknesses. There are clear strengths in multi-agency and partnership working, which has brought improvement in preventative work.

All child protection cases have an allocated worker, but not all cases have been reviewed in the required timescales. Overall, the performance on children in need of protection demonstrates a good system is in place. There is an effective referral process ensuring a timely response to children in need with more assessments being completed within the statutory timescale. Improving performance on the care and support provided to children looked after has resulted in more adoptions, greater stability of placements and reduction in the use of residential accommodation.

The authority continues its focus on the access to services of black and minority ethnic children and families, particularly the under-representation of Asian children. Further attention is needed to children with mental health needs and those vulnerable as a result of drug and alcohol misuse.

Enjoying and achieving

Early years education provision is very good overall, although standards within some private and voluntary sector provision need to be raised. The number of places has had to be increased very substantially in recent years to meet government targets and the immediate priority has had to be on delivering that increase. The authority is well aware that the next priority should be to bring the weaker provision, which has nonetheless always been of at least acceptable quality, closer to the standards of the best. It has already shown it has the ability to do this.

Pupil performance in schools improves in relation to other areas as children get older. However, for the younger age groups where performance compares least favourably, demographic factors such as high pupil mobility require considerable caution in using the figures as an indicator of the quality of provision. At Key Stage 4 performance is particularly strong in terms of the low proportion of pupils who leave school without any qualifications. Rates of improvement in recent years have been better than the national average in almost all respects in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. Some ethnic groups and boys in general underachieve, which is similar to the national picture. The authority is taking appropriate action to address these issues.

Monitoring, challenge and support for schools to raise standards is very good. Evidence for this can be seen in school inspection findings and the significant reduction in the numbers of schools in special measures and serious weaknesses. The proportion of schools in such categories is now well below the national average. A range of effective out of school hours study support is provided for pupils. The authority has been very effective in addressing the difficulties it once had in recruiting teachers and classroom support staff. Professional development opportunities are particularly good.

Support for school attendance is good. Pupil absence in both primary and secondary schools is well below that of similar authorities. The number of permanent exclusions has been broadly in line with elsewhere although it rose in 2003/4. Support for behaviour overall is good. The council recognises, however, that this support needs to continue to develop to keep pace with the more complex needs now being catered for in its mainstream schools. Fewer young people than the average elsewhere have to be educated otherwise than at school because of behaviour problems. They stay in such provision for shorter periods and more are successfully reintegrated into school. Those that don't are nonetheless well provided for.

A significantly higher proportion of looked after children achieve 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE than the average elsewhere. Support for their education is good, including those in care placements outside the borough. The council's special educational needs provision is very good, with the long standing commitment to inclusion being reflected in the high levels of placement within mainstream settings.

Making a positive contribution

Support for children's social and emotional development is satisfactory within early years provision and good in schools. Good support is also provided when children and young people have to manage major changes in their lives. The council is effective in seeking the views of children and young people and using those views to shape service development. This applies both at individual case level and to services more generally. A wide range of approaches are used and the council's efforts are well regarded by the young people themselves. Effective action is taken to reduce youth offending and the levels of repeat offending in particular are lower than the average elsewhere. Inter-agency collaboration is good in such respects. There is an extensive and effective programme of activity aimed at engaging young people at risk of offending in positive activities. Specialist support for young people within this group who have mental health problems is promptly provided.

Achieving economic well-being

Inter-agency collaboration to develop educational provision for 14-19 year olds is good, as is the standard of college and sixth form provision. A range of new courses has been developed to meet the needs of disaffected and vulnerable young people in particular. Collaborative working between schools and the local college is good and includes a number of improvements in work related learning provision. Young people receive good support in preparing for working life. Participation in employment, education and training post 16 has improved significantly in recent years. Careers advice and related personal support is good.

There has been a significant increase in the proportion of care leavers involved in education, employment and training at 19. The quality of pathway plans nonetheless needs to be improved and this is a rightly a priority for the local authority in the coming year. Housing provision for care leavers is satisfactory and appropriate steps are being taken to improve provision for the 16-18 year old group. The council is starting sensibly early on developing post 16 provision for the increasing numbers of children and young people with complex learning difficulties who are now in its mainstream schools.

As with early years education places, the provision of day care has had to be expanded very rapidly in recent years to meet government targets. The focus is rightly now shifting to helping providers to improve the quality of their provision. Some good support is being provided, for example through the provision of a helpful self evaluation toolkit.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health of children looked after • consultation of children and young people • partnership working • early years provision (beacon council) • positive targeting of vulnerable groups through work on SRE and improving contraception services. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tackling obesity • partnership working with the ELCMH Trust and PCT in need of further strengthening to enhance the system for managing cases of children with mental health needs • participation in sport in primary schools.

<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvement in preventative work • there is well established multi-agency working and strong long lasting partnerships • schools taking part in the healthy schools programme • initial and core assessments completed in timescale • effective child protection system. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbers of children participating in their reviews • the ethnicity of children in need • adoptions • children vulnerable as a result of drug and alcohol misuse.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early education provision • monitoring, challenge and support for schools • support for school attendance • education provision otherwise than at school • educational support for looked after children • special educational needs provision • recruitment of teaching and classroom support staff. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupil performance at Key Stage 1.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeking the views of children and young people and using those views to guide service planning and review • inter-agency collaboration to reduce the rate of youth offending. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inter-agency co-operation in developing education and training provision for 14-19 year olds • support for young people in preparing for working life. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of pathway plans for looked after children.

Service management

The capacity to improve is good. There is a clear strategic vision shared by members, senior officers and with partner agencies. Multi-agency and partnership working is at a good level producing better outcomes. A Director of Children's Services has been appointed and work is underway to have a Children and Young Persons Plan in place for 2006.

Planning and priority setting is informed by needs analysis and are ambitious and challenging. Investments in ICT is producing better quality data which is improving performance management across the service but further strengthening is needed. Good use is being made of LPSA processes to drive improvements.

The strengthening of financial planning and monitoring has been successful in managing expenditure within budget. However, the council must continue to develop the medium term financial strategy and joint commissioning.

The Human Resources strategy has resulted in lower levels of staff turnover and fewer vacancies in Social Services. Protocols and targets have been agreed between Education, Social Care and partners to produce better outcomes and further integrate services.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Being healthy

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

- participation in the healthy schools programme and the modules selected.

Staying safe

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

- interface between children and adults' services
- out-of-borough placements.

Enjoying and achieving

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

- support for achievement at Key Stage 1, including transition from early years provision
- the achievement of ethnic groups and of boys generally
- support for Key Stage 3.

Achieving economic well-being

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to achieve economic well-being:

- educational provision post 16 for children and young people with LDD.

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:

- the quality of provision in day care settings.

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 Newham 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	3
The contribution of <i>local authority's education services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	4
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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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