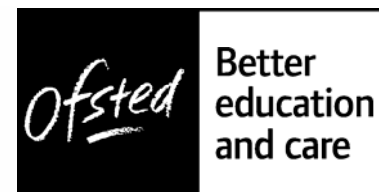


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Making Social Care  
Better for People



Ms Pauline Newman  
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**1 December 2005**

Dear Ms Newman

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL'S  
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 6 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**

Overall, services are making a satisfactory impact on outcomes for children's health in an area with high levels of deprivation. The council engages well with schools to promote healthy lifestyles for children and young people, including the well developed Healthy Schools Initiative, and satisfactory or better participation in sport in all schools inspected. A good partnership to reduce teenage pregnancies, implementing a wide range of measures, is having limited impact on pregnancies amongst under-16s. Overall, pregnancy rates remain above the average for comparator authorities, but the council anticipates making further progress in the next 12 months. While some aspects of health support for looked after children are sound, improvement is needed in the availability of key information and guidance to foster carers, in the proportion of medical assessments and dental checks completed, and in the completion of health records in looked after children's files. Investment in child and adolescent mental health services is rising as part of an agreed strategy. The adequacy of these services to meet the high levels of need within the city will be kept under review by the authority.

## Staying safe

Outcomes are satisfactory overall. Appropriate policies to combat bullying within the council's children's homes, and effective action to combat racism in schools, are indications that children are provided with a safe environment. There are some notable strengths in child protection, such as the completion of all child protection register reviews and the allocation of a social worker to every child on the register. The timeliness of initial and core assessments of children in need, however, requires further improvement.

The number of referrals of children in need dropped in 2004/05, and the level of core assessments completed is relatively low compared to statistical neighbour authorities. The reasons should be analysed to ensure that children and young people at risk are being properly identified. The authority, with its partners, is committed to increasing levels of integrated preventive and support services in order to lower the current threshold for intervention with children and their families. Within the agreed framework, the substantial level of current auditing measures is planned to increase further in 2005/06 to help ensure that no child is left at risk of significant harm.

The Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) has a robust framework for dealing with serious case reviews and inter-agency working over safeguarding has improved in the last year. Given the high levels of mobility within the city, measures for tracking children in education are robust, but further improvements are needed with regard to children not in school. Arrangements to establish a child index are well underway.

The city continues to have very high numbers of looked after children, including significant numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Following detailed analysis, a range of measures has been put in place to provide support at an earlier stage to children and young people at risk of coming into care, and early signs are that the situation is stabilising. The authority is unable to meet the needs of many looked after children for local non-residential care, although initiatives to increase local fostering and adoption placements are promoted. There is regulatory evidence that looked after children in some foster care placements may not be adequately safeguarded. Areas for further development include improvements in the oversight and quality assurance of arrangements for looked after children, the training and guidance for carers and in information sharing by fieldworkers.

The stability of short-term placements for looked after children has improved and the percentage of children adopted shows a notable increase. Timescales for adoption placements, however, require improvement. Less than half the children with disabilities have transition plans at an appropriately early stage although plans are in place to improve this figure in the coming year.

## Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory overall.

The quality of care in early years and nursery education is good. However, despite a pre-registration programme of information, advice and access to training for new providers of early years childcare, initial inspections are leading to an above average number of actions for improvement.

Levels of attainment are a cause for concern, although there are signs of a narrowing of the gap between outcomes for the area and national averages. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 are below those of statistical neighbours and national averages. At Key Stage 2, standards are below national averages, although they are generally in line with those of statistical neighbours and have improved in English. The value-added between Key Stages 1 and 2 is in line with the national median. At Key Stage 3 standards are generally below those of statistical neighbours and national averages, although there has been some improvement in mathematics and science in relation to national averages. The value-added between Key Stages 2 and 3 is just below average. Standards at Key Stage 4 are also below average, again with some slight improvement against national averages in 2004, with low value-added to prior attainment, especially between Key Stages 2 and 4. Minority ethnic groups generally achieve well in comparison with all pupils. Data is analysed very well to identify underachieving groups, followed by targeted action which has led to some improvements in attainment. Work continues to improve the achievements of Somali pupils, Afro-Caribbean boys and looked after children. Advisory support for schools has improved, with a particular focus on schools with low achievements and those in categories of concern, leading to improvements.

The authority has restructured its attendance service to tackle its above- average rates of absence. There is a particular problem with rates of unauthorised absence in secondary schools. Exclusion rates are broadly average. The authority has identified a declining trend since 1995. Permanent exclusions in primary schools were in line with those for similar authorities but above the national average in 2004. The behaviour improvement programme has since reduced exclusions in most targeted schools.

Progress is being made with regard to the needs of vulnerable young people. The Manchester Inclusion Standard is being implemented as one of the strategies to improve outcomes. The number of looked after children receiving schooling has risen and the authority has increased the focus on improving the low rate of general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) entry for these pupils. Young offenders' participation in education, employment and training has improved. The authority has successfully managed the placement of large numbers of unaccompanied refugees and asylum seekers, and other incoming young people, into school places or in some cases, alternative provision, although a minority remain unplaced. Provision for pupils with

special educational needs has recently been restructured, in order to increase inclusion in mainstream schools. These changes are supported by a carefully planned resourcing strategy. The authority reports that recent targeted support has raised standards of literacy amongst pupils with special educational needs.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. There are many opportunities for young people to contribute their views on services which affect them, for example through the Building Schools for the Future programme, Manchester Healthy Schools Initiative and the Manchester Inclusion Standard. There is also a Manchester Young People's Council. Despite improved mechanisms for consulting looked after children in children's homes, through the children's rights service, their contribution to reviews has declined. The development of more systematic ways of engaging children and young people in the planning and delivery of services is a priority of the Children's Board.

The rate of youth offending is a concern, both in terms of first-time offences and recidivism. A wide range of multi-agency strategies are employed to tackle offending and anti-social behaviour, including a responsible parenting strategy, the positive activities for the young people programme and strategies to combat the high levels of drug-related crime. The number of anti-social behaviour order warning interviews for young people aged 10 to 17 years dropped in 2004/05. The rate of offending by looked after children has been reduced.

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

Outcomes in this area are good overall. There has been good partnership working between the authority, schools and other organisations in the city, including the local Learning and Skills Council and the colleges of further education, to develop and implement an effective strategy for 14 to 19 education and training. The development of an alternative vocational curriculum has led to good participation at Key Stage 4. Participation in education and training by young people aged 16 to 18 has improved and is broadly in line with the national average overall, although it is slightly below average for 16 year olds. There has been some reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training, but these remain too high, especially for those aged 17 or over and in particular wards. There is a strong focus on activities to reduce these numbers, including work with employers and the Connexions service. The authority is reviewing the role of the youth service, with a view to improving its impact in raising young people's aspirations and expectations. Those leaving care participate well in education, employment and training, and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities who move on to positive destinations has improved. The Aimhigher initiative is beginning to improve the low rate of progression to higher education.

Standards on advanced level courses have improved. General and vocational certificate of education (GCE/VCE) point scores were above those of statistical neighbours in 2004 and in line with national averages. Pass rates for intermediate and other advanced vocational qualifications for 16 to 19 year olds in schools were good.

The proportion of children in need who are receiving social care services at home is low compared to that in similar authorities.

## SUMMARY

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for improvement</b>
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the promotion of healthy lifestyles for children and young people, including looked after children.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduction in teenage pregnancy</li> <li>• recording of health information on files of looked after children</li> <li>• health guidance for foster carers.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• most child protection procedures</li> <li>• activities to combat racism.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shift to preventive work with families and children</li> <li>• initial and core assessment timescales</li> <li>• improved local non-residential placement provision</li> <li>• improved information-sharing by fieldworkers</li> <li>• safeguards for children placed with foster carers</li> <li>• timescales for adoption placements.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attainment of most groups of black and minority ethnic learners in relation to those of all pupils</li> <li>• improvement in young offenders' participation in education, employment or training</li> <li>• quality of care in early years and nursery education</li> <li>• reduction in missed schooling for looked after children</li> <li>• support for schools leading to some improvement.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overall attainment at all key stages, including vulnerable groups</li> <li>• attendance, especially unauthorised absence</li> <li>• effectiveness of pre-registration programme of information, advice and access to training for new early years providers, particularly crèche, out of school and childminders.</li> </ul>

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for improvement</b>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduction in rate of offending of looked after children</li> <li>• consultation mechanisms for looked after children in children's homes</li> <li>• activities to promote the participation of young people.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rates of offending and re-offending</li> <li>• decreased proportion of looked after children contributing to statutory review</li> <li>• consistency of children and young people's participation in planning and delivery of services, and measurement of impact.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good partnership working to develop 14 to 19 provision</li> <li>• improved GCE/VCE point scores</li> <li>• good pass rates for intermediate and other advanced vocational qualifications for 16 to 19s</li> <li>• good participation in education, employment or training by care leavers in 2003/04</li> <li>• improved positive destinations for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities</li> <li>• improved participation in learning for 16 to 18s</li> <li>• good participation in 14 or over alternative vocational curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training especially at 17 or over</li> <li>• low percentage of 18 year olds in higher education</li> <li>• low proportion of children in need who are receiving social care services at home</li> <li>• impact of youth services on young people's aspirations and expectations.</li> </ul>

## **Service management**

Elected members and officers in both education and care provide strong leadership. Priorities are derived from a strong vision and some good needs analysis, leading to effective corporate and development planning.

A children's board which brings together the authority, the police and primary care trusts, has been in place since 2003, developing and implementing a children's trust approach. The board has led a continuing process of consultation and engagement about plans, priorities and objectives for the change to integrated services, including the involvement of children. This is indicative of good future capacity to bring together services for children and young people. The authority is preparing a children and young people's plan. New locality-based children's and young people's teams are being developed. The management arrangements for these teams will be key to future success, and must ensure proper governance and assurance of child protection, and a faster response to inspection findings. Needs analyses should be integrated to

consolidate and refine understanding about priorities. Planned efficiencies are being sought in both education and care services to off-set financial overspend. However, members and officers are confident that these will not damage the quality of service delivery or the move towards integrated delivery.

Progress has been made against some areas previously identified by Ofsted, for example in developing and implementing a special educational needs strategy supported by carefully planned changes to the way resources are used. There has been some progress in the areas for improvement identified in last year's performance review report on social care services, for example, timely reviews for all children on the child protection register and an increase in the percentage of looked after children adopted, but further improvements are still required on the majority. Whilst recruitment and retention of social workers is reported as improving, overall vacancy levels remain a risk factor in capacity to improve services. The council recognises that a particular focus is needed on improving the recruitment and retention of suitable local foster carers in order to improve outcomes for looked after children. Major challenges for the authority include the effectiveness of strategies to improve attainment, the need to make progress on preventive work and the shift towards effective locally-managed teams.

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

### **Being healthy**

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

- adequacy of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to meet need.

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

- action to address and monitor health needs of looked after children.

### **Staying safe**

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

- identification, assessment and provision of coordinated support for children in need.

*Services are effective in establishing the identity and whereabouts of all children and young people 0-16:*

- effectiveness of procedures for establishing the identity and whereabouts of children and young people 0 to 16 and sharing relevant information.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

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

- progress in improving attainment overall.

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

- progress in improving attendance.

*Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to enjoy and achieve:*

- impact of special educational needs strategy, including pupils' attainment, progress monitoring, funding and value for money.

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

- impact of action to improve attainment of vulnerable and underachieving groups.

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

- progress of monitoring of personal education plans for looked after children and their educational achievement.

## **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:*

- quality of support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

*Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to make a positive contribution:*

- whether the views of children with disabilities and special educational needs are being sought, recorded and used to affect decisions.



## **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 in improving participation at 16, 17 and 18
- take-up of work-based training
- progress in implementing 14-19 and over entitlement for learners
- progress in delivering improved curriculum opportunities through collaboration
- relationship between authority and academies, particularly in relation to city-wide plans for 14-19 learners.

## **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: Manchester 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.	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

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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