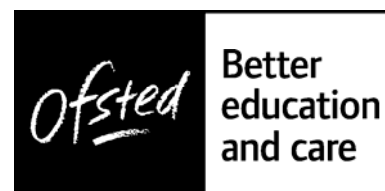


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Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr A Cozens, C.B.E.
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1 December 2005

Dear Mr Cozens

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

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on Monday 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 in this area are good and result from the strong contributions made by both social care and education services. The effective way in which services are co-ordinated ensures that they focus clearly on specific local priorities.

All schools are involved in the School Sport Coordinator Programme and during the past year inspection judgements have shown that participation in sport is satisfactory or better. Within the East Midlands region, one of the council's Sex and Relationship Education Projects was selected as an Outstanding Teenage Pregnancy initiative.

The authority is well on track to reach its healthy schools standards and targets with 69% of schools having signed up to the National Healthy Schools Standard. This is a significantly better performance than the national average.

During 2004/05 performance in relation to the health checks for looked after children has been disappointing, whilst there has been an increase in children and young people having health assessments fewer had regular dental checks. To improve this position the council has successfully negotiated with the Primary Care Trust for additional staff to be made available to carry out the required health checks. Arrangements will need to be monitored to ensure improved outcomes are achieved.

The youth service provides access to a wide range of information to promote healthy lifestyles amongst young people. Leicester City has been deemed a national priority area in relation to drugs with a knock-on effect for some children and young people living within the city. Positive action has been taken in relation to these children and young people with drug related difficulties. During 2004/05 there has been a significant increase of young people referred to the Drug and Alcohol service with a 92% increase of children and young people referred for open access, advice and information and 35 young people participating in a treatment plan. Substance misuse programmes are available within the city.

Whilst significantly improved, the reduction in teenage pregnancies still remains above the national average with high conception rates mainly located in the west of the city. The council has worked with partner agencies to target significant resources to this area of the city. A range of strategies and initiatives have been employed and recent information from Department for Education and Skills (DfES) confirms that these strategies and initiatives are starting to have an impact, are to be commended and that significant progress has been made.

All Leicester City schools fully comply with the statutory requirements for sex and relationship education. All schools have access to advice, training and resources for providing education on contraception and safer sex.

Access to services for children and young people with mental health needs is generally good and until 2003 was recognised nationally as a model of good practice. Since that time performance has declined and 2004/05 data on performance times for acute referrals made to the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has recently been significantly below that of similar councils. This has been as a result of local staffing difficulties and recruitment problems. Detailed discussions and negotiations have taken place with the Primary Care Trust and are now resolved via a new service specification. The Youth Offending Team (YOT) have recruited two Community Psychiatric Nurses who will target work with young offenders assessed as having acute mental health difficulties. The council, the Primary Care Trust and the YOT are confident that the new arrangements will restore and significantly improve access to the CAMHS service for children and young people in Leicester City.

Early intervention community based services are available through the Child Behaviour Intervention Initiative (CBII) programme for children aged 0–11, their families and carers. This service has been consistently well evaluated by external sources and has been cited as a model of good practice in a number of academic and professional publications. For looked after children in Leicester there is a fast track CAMHS Service provided by the Young Peoples Team.

There is effective partnership working in relation to meeting the health and care needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Staying safe

Outcomes in relation to staying safe are very good. Children and young people living in Leicester City are provided with the safe environment to which they are entitled. The authority's policies recognise what constitutes a safe environment and their implementation is monitored consistently and rigorously. There are very good arrangements in place between the authority and partner agencies to ensure that all issues relating to child protection are fully shared and acted upon.

The council has invested substantial resources in developing a range of good quality preventative services with the aim of reducing the numbers of children and young people coming into public care, supporting families within the community and keeping children and young people safe. The impact of this strategy is beginning to show effect with less children and young people being accommodated, timely de-registrations of children from the child-protection register and more families receiving preventative services. There are clear referral systems in place and families and children at risk are appropriately identified. Timescales for initial assessments have shown improvement and time taken to complete the assessment is better than in similar councils. The percentage of core assessments completed within 35 working days is very good and the council's performance is much better than that of its comparator councils.

All child protection reviews have been carried out within the required timescales and conducted by an independent chairperson. All children and young people who are on the child protection register are allocated to a qualified social worker.

Key performance indicators relating to looked after children are very good, particularly in relation to the stability of placement within foster care and placement for adoption within twelve months of the child's best interest decision having been made. The council has recently developed its practice to ensure that all children who become looked after have their needs considered by a Placement Panel at the time they first come into public care.

Ofsted inspections of those schools inspected during 2004 and 2005 found that arrangements to meet pupils' care, welfare, health and safety were satisfactory to very good with no schools judged as unsatisfactory. All schools inspected were judged to be compliant in having fully operational child protection procedures in place.

The Chief Executive and senior managers from both social care and education meet with other Chief Executives and senior managers from partner agencies to demonstrate their commitment at a strategic level to keeping Leicester City's children safe. One outcome is that an information sharing policy has been agreed across all partner agencies. Together with the same partner agencies the authority has piloted BRIDGES, an information-sharing database that aims for early identification of children in need. The authority has also signed up to a regional Special Educational Needs (SEN) Protocol aimed at ensuring children and young people do not become 'lost' to agencies

when moving into and out of the area so that their needs can continue to be tracked and maintained.

Children who are looked after by Leicester City have access to a Children's Rights Service. This service is available to all looked after children, both those living in foster care and those living in residential care. An independent chair conducts reviews of looked after children. For children who are subject to Court proceedings there is an independent guardian appointed by the Court to ensure that the child's welfare is being met and that the council has provided the child with a safe environment to live in.

Anti-bullying guidance and resources have been developed in partnership with Leicestershire Constabulary and have been recognised nationally by the DfES. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Community Cohesion Project is reported as having a very positive impact within schools and with male pupils in particular. The project involves young people learning to accept and respect the diversity of others thus reducing the potential for bullying and anti-social behaviours towards others.

A Black Cases Panel considers and reviews the needs of looked after children, child protection cases and children and families in need from black and ethnic minority communities. The purpose of the panel is to ensure the outcome of care and services provided by the council are appropriate to meet the child's or families need and where there is an identified need the Panel will offer advice, guidance and support. The YOT also operate a Black Cases Panel and have implemented a Race Action Plan aimed at promoting fair and equal treatment for all black and minority ethnic young offenders.

Because Leicester City is made up of widely diverse communities the council has worked hard to reach out to all communities and promote the need for all peoples to safeguard children. Social Care & Health's activities during 2004 /05 have included organising a conference 'Safeguarding Black and Minority Ethnic Children' with three further seminars planned for later in 2005. It has contributed to a national conference organised by Africans Unite against Child Abuse, assisted in the development of Child Protection Guidance for the Synagogue, organised an event for the black community voluntary sector on 'Child Protection is Everybody's Business', liaised with the Leicester Council of Faiths and worked with the extended schools co-ordinator on child protection training for interpreters and faith groups. Much of the council's work has received national acclaim and is cited as good practice to professional health and social care audiences.

In 2004 the council publicised to all households and agencies in Leicester City the changes to regulations that relate to private fostering and came into effect at the beginning of July 2005. Not all councils have been so proactive and this is a further demonstration of the councils expressed intent to take all the appropriate action it can to protect children.

Regulatory inspections of children's homes and special schools during 2004/05 found some shortfalls in general safety issues within the establishments inspected. Fire, Moving and Handling and individual risk assessments had not always been carried out but action was taken by the council to address these issues. The subsequent action plans have been monitored and early inspections during the 2005/06 report much improved outcomes for children and young people. However the council needs to ensure that the person responsible for monitoring the welfare of children living in the home carries out visits and makes a report in accordance with Regulations. The annual inspection of the council's fostering service produced very positive findings and reported on a service that is of good quality, meets or exceeds the National Minimum Standards for Fostering and provides safe outcomes for children and young people who use the service.

One weakness that the council needs to address as a priority is the effectiveness of its Early Years advice, guidance and support service. Inspections indicate that Early Years childcare providers have a far higher percentage of actions required at initial registration than is the case nationally. The council's service needs to increase its capacity to deliver pre-registration information, advice and guidance which will help prospective providers understand what they need to do to become registered.

Recently the council has taken steps to change the way the Early Years Service responds in giving out pre-registration information and guidance however it is too early to assess the impact of the change in practice.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are good, with significant improvement over recent years. Many challenges remain for the authority but both the council's self- assessment and strategic planning indicate that intervention is well targeted.

Early years provision for young children is of generally good quality with a higher proportion of settings judged to be good or very good in 2003/04 inspections than is the case nationally.

Standards of attainment in schools still need to rise, but there are indications that steady improvement are under way. The overall pattern of results reflects the very high proportion of pupils for who English is an additional language, generally rising closer to national averages as you move further up the age range. However, within this context, attainment in Key Stage 2 needs to rise significantly, as the authority acknowledges.

In primary schools achievement at Key Stage 1 shows an improving trend, in line with national improvements, for the proportions of pupils attaining both Level 2 and above and Level 3. The city is closing the gap that has existed with comparable authorities. However, results at Key Stage 2 remain too low, with the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 and above lagging behind similar authorities and national figures and no sign of

the gap closing. A group of low attaining schools in the most disadvantaged wards have benefited from an imaginative intervention programme involving 'personalising' learning. Promising improvements, particularly in mathematics are demonstrable. The challenge for the authority is to spread the lessons learned from this work more widely and to make the assessment and teaching approaches used part of the repertoire of all primary teachers.

The proportion of pupils attaining five or more Grades A*-C is rising faster than nationally, so the gap between Leicester and national figures is closing steadily year by year. The trend in value added from Key Stages 2 to 4 is also positive, though this measure is affected by past under-achievement at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 3 results are comparable with similar authorities and have risen significantly in English in recent years, again beginning to close the gap with national figures.

A major indication of the success of the school improvement service is the dramatic reduction over the last 4 years in the number of schools judged to require special measures or to have serious weaknesses. The reduction from a peak of 30 schools to 2 indicates very effective action to secure better education for the pupils of Leicester, concentrating on teaching and learning and the monitoring and review of performance. Of the primary schools inspected in 2003/04 leadership and management were satisfactory or better in all of them and very good in nearly half. However, the proportion of teaching judged good or very good in these schools was below that found in all schools nationally, indicating the continuing need for the improvement work now under way.

Turbulence in the pupil population, from both inward migration and movement across or out of the city remains a major feature of the city's schools and presents a severe challenge to education and care services, particularly in those schools where it is most extreme. Attendance has improved, with authorised absences in line with similar authorities in primary schools and below them in secondary schools. However unauthorised absences are too high, being above those in similar authorities in primary schools and well above in secondary schools.

Targets to reduce exclusions have been met in the primary phase but not in secondary, and some minority ethnic and vulnerable groups are over-represented in exclusions. Nevertheless, the authority is very active in promoting inclusion, has beacon status for its community cohesion work, and is very alert to the issue of minority ethnic achievement, monitoring its own performance closely.

Action to improve both attendance and behaviour in those schools where this is most needed is under way, and the Behaviour Improvement Programme is having an impact. However, the continued disengagement of a minority of pupils is indicated by the proportion of pupils gaining one or more GCSEs at any grade A*-G which is low by comparison with similar authorities and national figures. Disengagement, low standards and schools causing concern are particularly concentrated in some parts of West

Leicester where social disadvantage is significant and the council has ambitious, multi-agency strategies to tackle this.

The achievement of looked after children is rising, with more achieving 5 or more good GCSEs and good provision for them, including a Raising Achievement of Looked After Children (RALAC) team and a study centre specialising in short course GCSEs. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is being promoted through the strategy for meeting individual needs (MIN) but still falls below the expected level for this group of pupils.

The Youth Service offers provision for pupils across the city and was judged to be satisfactory in a recent inspection. However, in common with many services, the proportion of young people achieving externally accredited awards through the service's work is too low.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are good. The authority has been particularly active and successful in engaging the participation of vulnerable and hard to reach groups and listening to their views. The Disabled Children's Inclusion Service has engaged in consultation on the development of the service and is regarded as a national exemplar by the Department of Health. Participation groups have included those for looked after children and minority ethnic groups, while the review process for pupils with statements of special educational need routinely involve taking the views of these pupils as well as their parents and carers. The 'Youth at Risk' initiative has sought to engage the most socially excluded young people in activities and consultation.

All the secondary schools in the city have school councils, though this is not yet the case across all the primary schools. The authority has a development officer engaged in promoting such work as part of its extended services initiative. There are active area fora for youth services as part of a wider council-wide strategy of local area committees and community engagement. The new 'Strategy for Learning', which is now going out for consultation, includes advice and examples for schools as to how to promote a positive contribution from pupils. The group of young people (the 'Yofsted' group) undertook training to assist with Connexions and Youth Service quality assurance and to shadow the 2004 inspection. Overall the authority has been imaginative in seeking the views and participation of young people.

The proportion of young offenders supervised by the YOT who are involved in suitable full-time education, training or employment is well short of the Youth Justice Board target of 90%, with little likelihood of this target being approached. The service reports that problems include the approach taken by schools (under pressure to achieve examination results) to exclusions and the removal from roll of those given custodial sentences. Despite the good inter-agency working seen in the city, improvements are needed here. The YOT has established a strategic management group with the support

of the Chief Executive to improve performance in meeting the challenging target for engaging young offenders in full time education, training and employment. The YOT work collaboratively with the Connexions service who provide two dedicated personal advisors for young people.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are also good. There is an ambitious strategy for collaboration in developing provision for 14 to 19 year-olds in the city. This builds on the formation of four 'zonal collaboratives' based on the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) and Aim Higher arrangements and stimulated by the action plan following an area-wide inspection on 14 to 19 provision. The authority has established a strategic body, in collaboration with the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), involving the tertiary sector as well as the city's schools, to ensure that overall provision across the zones is coherently planned. This planning is well linked to the city's very extensive programme for future school buildings.

Inspection evidence indicates that schools and colleges are already responding well to the challenge of increasing the flexibility of the secondary school curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. Examination results for vocational qualifications, particularly at intermediate level, compare very well with those in similar authorities and those nationally. Thus, both planning and current indicators reflect the commitment of the council to provide relevant education and training for all learners as part of the economic regeneration of the city.

Increases in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C, referred to above, make a significant contribution to improved economic prospects for many young people. Academic results post-16 are mainly gained in the sixth form and further education colleges sector rather than in school sixth forms since most 16-19 year-olds leave to attend such colleges. However, indicators are positive, with the average points score for all post-16 learners exceeding that for all comparator authorities for the first time in 2004.

There has been extensive and effective support for looked after children in making the transition at 16, with a dedicated post-16 support worker on the RALAC team and a working group with representation from further education providers, the LSC and the Connexions service. There had, however, been criticisms in 2004/05 CSCI regulatory inspections of the transitional arrangements between children's and adult services in terms of the use of some residential accommodation, however, new protocols have now been produced. The achievements of care leavers are recognised and celebrated well, as are those of students from minority ethnic communities through the Aim Higher initiative, through events such as awards evenings.

Over time such initiatives have been successful in reducing the proportions of young people not in education, employment or training, but the figure rose significantly between November 2004 and March 2005 indicating the possible fragility of recent gains and the need for continued effort if targets are to be met.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the promotion of healthy lifestyles for children and young people • partnership working in relation to children with special educational needs, looked after children and children with disabilities • an increase in the availability of drug and alcohol information and treatment services. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure the resolution of local difficulties so that there is improved access to CAMHS for the children and young people requiring referral for assessment for acute services • to ensure all looked after children receive the opportunity and encouragement to take up annual health and dental checks • to continue initiatives to reduce teenage pregnancies further - particularly in the west of the city.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • robust child protection procedures • well established multi agency collaborative practice • commitment at a strategic level to provide safe outcomes for children and young people living within Leicester City • anti-bullying and anti-racist strategies, guidance and information for use in schools and other community settings that has received national recognition • child Protection training with black and ethnic minority communities and faith communities • use and role of the Black Cases Panel. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness of the Early Years advice, guidance & support service, given the high percentage of pre-registration actions imposed by Ofsted • the council needs to ensure that the person responsible for monitoring the welfare of children living in the council's children's homes carries out visits and makes a report in accordance with Regulation 33.

<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steady improvements in proportions achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C • large reduction in number of schools placed in categories following inspection • upward trend in Key Stage 1 results and generally positive value-added measures. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards of attainment, especially at Key Stage 2 in primary schools • the proportion of pupils achieving 1 or more GCSE at A*-G, through tackling disengagement • rates of exclusion and unauthorised absence, especially in secondary schools.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a range of successful initiatives to encourage participation of hard to reach groups • active promotion in 'Strategy for Learning' of approaches to achieving increased participation. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proportion of young offenders engaged in education and training • more primary school having school councils.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post- 16 attainment above similar authorities average in 2004 • successful Aim Higher and similar initiatives to promote achievement • good support for looked after children in securing success post-16. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET figures showed recent rise, despite long term downward trend.

Service management

The council has not yet appointed its Director of Children's Services but has plans to advertise and appoint by January 2006. The Director of Education has recently vacated his post and until the Director of Children's Services is appointed the Director of Social Care and Health will also act as the Interim Director of Education. In the short term he will take responsibility for overseeing the preparation work for the integration of children's services in accordance with the national agenda for the modernisation of children's services. However it will be the new appointee who will drive the main integration programme forward. It has been a conscious decision by the council to take this approach to implementing the changes and it wants to ensure it has firm foundations in place before progressing further. The council believes that there is the capacity to support these arrangements as a senior social care manager will also share the day to day business of the Social Care and Health Directorate.

Strategically and at an operational level both social care and education can demonstrate partnership arrangements with a range of stakeholders, a clear understanding of where they wish to go and what they want to achieve. In July 2003 Leicester City became a Pathfinder Children's Trust, which sought to improve outcomes for all children and young people especially those who are more vulnerable. By adopting a federal approach it became the Leicester Federation for Children's Services.

In 2004 it successfully applied for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for infrastructure to support the development of a programme of services for vulnerable children.

The Federation has been very successful in developing a range of partnerships at different levels with differing foci and membership. The partnership structure is evolving with imminent plans for a Joint Commissioning Board. Both Education and Lifelong Learning and Social Care & Health are active leaders and participants in all strategic partnerships and key priorities are currently co-ordinated through the Federation. The work of the Federation will be used to influence the direction of travel and planning as full integration of children's services develops. There are appropriate governance arrangements in place with active interest shown by elected members.

The key documents that currently demonstrate how the council determines its service planning and priorities are the Local Preventative Strategy, the Education Strategic Plan, the Social Care and Health Strategic Direction and Priorities, Children's Services Strategy and the corporate and departmental service plans. For the future and as children's services become integrated, changes will be made so that there will be a single Children & Young Persons' Partnership structure linked to the local Strategic Partnership with a single outcome led Children & Young Persons' Plan. This should lead to better strategic planning and improved outcomes for children and families.

In terms of capacity, the council is able to attract a range of initiatives and central government support into the authority. Partnership work with a range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations is well used to deliver services. As an identified council priority both education and social care have received real financial growth and support.

Performance management has become more strongly embedded within the culture of the authority and is now used by managers in social care and health and education to monitor and inform practice.

During 2004/05 the council (within the education directorate) undertook a review of lifelong learning. This review was carried out by officers under delegated powers – meaning that councillors did not have to be consulted with. Financially, the review ended up costing the council a significant amount of money not budgeted for in terms of termination of contract payments and other associated expenses. All payments made by the council have to be funded from the appropriate budget, in this case the education budget. The council has stated that in consequence no service cuts are planned.

The current level of service is good both within social care and education. Generally children and young people are well supported to be safe and healthy, to achieve well, to make a positive contribution and to make a successful transition into adulthood.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Staying safe

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

- Early Years pre-registration advice, guidance and support (linked to 'enjoying and achieving', below).

Enjoying and achieving

Early years provision promotes children's development and well-being and helps them meet early learning goals:

- planning and preparation for appropriate, high quality Early Years provision (linked to 'staying safe').

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

- strategies for improving engagement and achievement in West Leicester, through school and wider community intervention.

Making a positive contribution

Action is taken to prevent offending and to reduce re-offending by children and young people:

- progress towards meeting Youth Justice Board targets of 90% of young offenders supervised by the YOT being in suitable education or training.

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:

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

- progress of the zonal and city-wide collaboration towards providing coherent 14-19 provision which meets the needs of all young people (including those with disabilities and learning difficulties).

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: Leicester 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	3
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

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