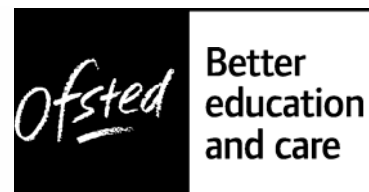


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Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr Paul Rogerson
Chief Executive
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1 December 2005

Dear Mr Rogerson

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

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 27 June 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 the relevant issues.

Being healthy

Outcomes in this area are good.

School inspection reports show that participation in sport is generally satisfactory or better. The authority's own analyses show that the percentage of pupils undertaking two or more hours per day of high quality sport and physical education has improved markedly and that schools are well on course to achieve the national target by 2006. The Sports Co-ordinator Partnerships are making a major positive contribution in this area. There is good collaboration between the authority and primary care trusts in supporting the local Healthy Schools initiative, which is an enhanced version of the national programme. A high proportion of the city's schools are taking part in this and support is targeted well on areas of greatest disadvantage.

All the schools inspected comply with requirements regarding sex and relationships education, although the authority has identified variability in the quality of provision between schools, especially at secondary level. The authority has made a strong contribution to reducing teenage pregnancy, which is now below the national average, having until recently been above average.

The authority has a strong commitment to child and adolescent mental health services. There has been a considerable growth in the number of full-time equivalent social workers operating in this area, so that it is now four times the national average. Even so, the timeliness of referrals for non-acute mental health needs is 3.7 percentage points below the area targets.

The establishment of the Looked After Children Health Team is an example of good practice. The indicators relating to the health of looked after children are good, although, in common with other authorities in the region, there has been a decline in the number of these young people receiving dental checks.

There is also a consistent focus on the needs of vulnerable children and young people. In each of these areas, there is evidence of improving outcomes for children and young people.

The authority's significant investment in the work of child and adolescent mental health has meant that referrals are responded to promptly, including those made by the youth offending service.

Staying safe

The outcomes in this area are good.

In March 2005 a CSCI report was published on the inspection of children's services in Leeds. This judged that the council overall served 'most children well' and that they had 'promising capacity for improvement'.

While Leeds continues to have comparatively high numbers of looked after children these numbers are reducing. Social services has introduced a file audit system that ensures that looked after children do not 'drift' in care without active planning and contact. Review systems for children at risk are in place and all child protection and looked after children cases are allocated to social work staff. However, the council faces difficulties in retaining staff.

The proportion of looked after children who are placed with parents is comparatively high. The council needs to assure itself that this is appropriate to the needs of the children.

There have also been improvements in placement stability indicators. However, in the case of children who have been looked after for more than four years only 59% of them have been in the same placement for two years or more.

Indicators on the timeliness of initial and core assessments of children and families compare poorly with other authorities. A case audit system has been recently introduced but the impact of this has yet to be seen.

The council is making good progress towards establishing a Safeguarding Board. Child protection protocols and procedures are well established between the relevant partner

organisations — particularly schools. This is reflected in the outcome indicators on bullying incidents, which have almost halved in the last year.

Enjoying and achieving

There is a lack of consistency in the outcomes in this area. Overall, they are satisfactory.

Early years provision is good. There has been a considerable growth recently in the number of full-time childcare places available within the authority, largely as a result of good collaboration between schools and the private and voluntary sectors. The quality of nursery education is good. All three and four year olds requiring an education place are funded and the use of Foundation Stage teacher support and profiling is well established. The early years service holds Beacon status for its innovative work.

Standards at primary level are satisfactory but they decline at secondary level. Over the last five years, results in Key Stages 1 and 2 have been in line with the averages nationally and for similar authorities. In Key Stage 3, mathematics and science results have also been generally in line with those averages. English results, however, have been more variable and fell below the national average last year. The recent rate of improvement at Key Stage 4 has been above the national average but there is still further improvement to be made. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or its equivalent has been below the national average for five years, although it has been in line with the average for similar authorities for the last two years. The proportion gaining one or more A* to G grades at this level is below both averages. The value added to pupils' performance as they move from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 is below average. Therefore pupils do not build on their early promise.

The authority takes its corporate parenting role seriously and has been particularly successful in helping looked after children gain access to further and higher education. Despite improvements, the absence rates for looked after children remain stubbornly high. There is also too high a representation of looked after children amongst those excluded from school. Although the authority is working to improve the situation, not all looked after children have the personal education plans to which they are entitled.

The 2004 Ofsted report on the local authority referred to too many schools being in serious weaknesses and special measures. Strong recent improvements have resulted in Leeds now being in line with the national average. Currently, there are three schools, including two pupil referral units, with serious weaknesses and a secondary school in need of special measures.

The authority has worked hard to improve attendance and has made progress in this area. Attendance at primary schools is satisfactory. In secondary schools, the rates of

authorised absences are average but unauthorised absences are above average. Exclusion rates at primary level are better than average. At secondary level they are average. The Ofsted report on the authority showed that provision for pupils educated other than at schools had deteriorated since the previous inspection and was unsatisfactory. Although the reintegration rates into mainstream schools are in line with the national average, the average time which excluded pupils spend in referral units is too long.

The 2004 Ofsted report indicated that support for special educational needs has improved and gives good value for money. The majority of pupils with special educational needs are educated in mainstream schools and the percentage of pupils with statements of educational needs is falling. The authority has considerably improved the speed of completion of new statements and this is now above average. The rate of permanent exclusion of pupils with such statements has also been reduced.

The authority recognises where its weaknesses lie and is working hard to tackle these through support focused on areas of greatest need. There is growing evidence of the impact of this work in improved attainment and attendance in schools targeted for additional support.

Making a positive contribution

The outcomes in this area are good.

The authority has been successful in implementing its policies on anti-racism and bullying. The council acknowledges that while progress has been made to divert looked after children away from the criminal justice system, they remain a vulnerable group who are more likely to offend. However, the council is making progress. Offending rates for young people in general have fallen and for looked after children offending rates have almost halved. There are also clear plans to support young people leaving secure care.

These achievements are the result of the good work of the restorative justice team, the effective partnership between the authority and the police and the significant investment in providing staff to the youth offending service to promote the education of young offenders.

Despite these efforts the youth offending service has fallen short of its target to have 90% of young offenders engaged in education, training or employment and achieved only 67% last year.

Only 74% of looked after children and young people contribute their views to their reviews. The council needs to improve on this.

The Signpost Project has been successful in helping young people who were subject to anti-social behaviour orders. The council is making increasingly successful use of panels, mediation and education to ensure the response to offences is tailored to the needs of the individuals.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are good, particularly in relation to the contribution of social services.

The good early years provision within the authority is making a major contribution to helping more parents gain access to employment and to reducing the number of children experiencing poverty. Since 2001, there has been a fourfold rise in the number of parents, who are engaged in training or employed, and who also make use of the early years service.

The recent Ofsted report on the local authority shows that support for 14 to 19 education is satisfactory. Provision is improving and partnership working is strong. Standards of attainment across the 14 to 19 age range vary. At Key Stage 4, they tend to be below average but at general/vocational certificate of education (GCE/VCE), Advanced (A) and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level they are in line with the averages nationally and for similar authorities. There is no school within the area with an inadequate sixth form. The authority has reviewed the learning opportunities for 14 to 19 year-olds and, in partnership with a range of providers, is now offering an increasing range of provision at several levels, leading to nationally recognised qualifications and providing clear progression routes to further learning. The impact of this work is reflected in a reduction in the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training. There have also been improvements in the number of young people completing foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. Nevertheless, the participation rate post-16 is still below the national average.

On the other hand, the proportion of care leavers engaged in education, training and employment has almost doubled over the last two years and now compares very well with the picture nationally. Children in children's homes have comprehensive plans for when they leave. This level of performance is supported through well-based strategies such as allocating a connexions personal adviser to work full-time with the most disengaged young people leaving care. There is also a high proportion of disabled young people involved in education or training at 18. The work of the transition teams for young people 14 to 18 with health and social care impairments is a strength of the authority. Although there have been some recent improvements with regard to supporting disabled young people through direct payments, the proportion receiving such payments remains comparatively low.

SUMMARY

| Strengths | Areas for improvement |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good collaboration between the authority and primary care trusts in supporting the healthy schools initiative • high participation rate of schools in the enhanced local version of the healthy schools initiative • strong contribution to reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy • high level of commitment to child and adolescent mental health services • improved outcomes for vulnerable children and young people • good practice of looked after children health team. | <p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve dental checks for looked after children • improve timeliness of referrals of non-acute mental health needs for children and adolescents. |
| <p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective case audit systems • good placement stability indicators • comprehensive guidance on health and safety, welfare and child protection for schools. | <p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve timeliness of completion of initial and core assessments. |
| <p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good provision for early years • special educational needs support that gives good value for money • corporate parenting role for looked after children. | <p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve value added measures in secondary schools • reduce absence rates further • reduce the average time that excluded pupils spend in pupil referral units • ensure that all looked after children have personal education plans. |
| <p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • success of policies on anti-racism, bullying and harassment • offending rates for looked after children have halved • high proportion of looked after children in family foster placements • effective work of the restorative justice team • reduction in the rates of re-offending. | <p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the rates of participation of looked after children and young people in their care planning and reviews. |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good early years provision • proportion of care leavers being engaged in education, training and employment has almost doubled and compares well with the national picture • children in children's homes have comprehensive plans and support for when they leave care • high proportion of disabled young people involved in education or training at 18 • Transition Teams for young people aged 14 to 18 with health and social care impairments. | <p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the rates of participation of young people in further education • raise the attainment of pupils aged 14 to 16 • improve the outcomes and integrated support for vulnerable groups of young people. |
|--|---|

Service management

The council has a clear strategic and business-planning framework that links both corporate and departmental plans. It has high ambitions and targets. These grow from rigorous systems for analysing and identifying needs and good use of external assessments of the council's work. These factors have led to measurable improvements in the five outcome areas. The development and implementation of these strategies are supported by good partnerships with health and other services.

Elected members and officers display strong leadership and a readiness to make difficult decisions to allocate of resources to priority areas.

The council has invested significantly in social care and education. Almost half of its social care expenditure is focused on prevention and family support. The council also invests heavily in staff training at all levels. Despite these efforts, the council still struggles to retain staff in social services. The proportion of social workers and residential care managers with the relevant post qualifying awards in child care remains low.

In both education and social services there have been clear improvements over the last five years. This is reflected in the relevant outcomes and also in the judgements of successive inspections in both areas. The council has established good strategies for further development and coherent mechanisms for their delivery. Therefore, it has promising capacity for further improvement.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Being healthy

Healthy lifestyles are promoted for children and young people:

- effectiveness and consistency of health promotion efforts including sexual health education across the city.

Staying safe

The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:

- timeliness and effectiveness of initial and core assessments.

Enjoying and achieving

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

- value added scores for Key Stage 2 to 3, Key Stage 2 to GCSE, Key Stage 3 to GCSE and attainment levels at GCSE.

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

- personal education plans for looked after children.

Making a positive contribution

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

- engagement of offenders in education, training and employment.

Children and young people who are looked after are helped to make a positive contribution:

- involvement of children and young people in their care planning and reviews.

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:

- strategy and outcomes for attainment for 14 to 19 years group.

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

Cc: Edwina Harrison – Director of Children’s Services

APA final judgements 2005: Leeds 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. | 2 |
| 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 |