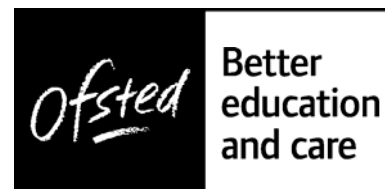


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Making Social Care  
Better for People



Mark Gilks  
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**1 December 2005**

Dear Mr Gilks

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LONDON BOROUGH OF  
HOUNSLOW COUNCIL'S 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 and your colleagues provided to support this process and for the time made available to discuss relevant issues.

**Being healthy**

Outcomes in this area are good. There are some particularly good aspects as a result of healthy lifestyles promoted through schools. Participation in the Healthy Schools programme is almost universal. All infant schools are committed to the fruit and vegetable scheme and 75% of primary schools deliver healthy menu options. Children and young people, including those with disabilities, are encouraged to participate in sport and leisure activities at school. Take-up is good. Guidance on substance misuse and smoking prevention is provided universally on-line through the project known as SAFE and reaches 94% of schools through theatre in education workshops. The third annual Healthy Living Day reached out to a wide range of young people, including looked after children. Young people have good support for sex and relationships education. The level of teenage pregnancy is below the national average and continues to fall.

Strong partnerships between health, social care and education at strategic board level result in some good outcomes. An efficient, coordinated approach to early assessment and co-located services for children with special educational needs is valued by users and carers. An interagency steering group ensures the health needs of looked after children are met. The indicator exceeds the national average and performance has improved each of the last three years. Joint work for this group of young people includes staff and carers who target education effectively on substance misuse.

There is considerable new investment in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Although low numbers and indistinct categorisation make it difficult to measure all outcomes, referrals of acute cases meet the expected timescales. A needs assessment has been completed and a comprehensive strategy, including extending the service to 18 years, is in preparation. New arrangements are not expected to be fully in place until April 2006. It is too early to see the outcomes.

## **Staying safe**

Outcomes for staying safe are good. Child protection registration procedures are well managed with re-entries to the register falling; all registered children having a qualified social worker. All schools comply with Area Child Protection Committee guidance and this has recently been revised in view of an historic incident coming to light. Children in early years settings and pupils in schools are cared for and learn in safe environments. A borough-wide anti-harassment strategy includes monitoring to tackle racist behaviour in schools and there are measures to respond to both bullying and domestic violence.

All looked after young children, under ten, are in family placements. A second residential home for young people aged 12 to 14 has been opened in the borough to reduce the numbers looked after outside the area. Kinship placements are below the council's targets but in line with other comparable authorities. There has been a significant increase in the number of looked after children adopted in the year to almost double the outer London average.

While the number of children with more than three placements within the year continues to be low, indicating success in maintaining placements, the long term stability of placements is still below the average for Outer London. An analysis of this has taken place, with revised strategies taking full account of the diversity of the area. The need to recruit more black and minority ethnic foster carers is identified.

In the performance assessment review for 2003/04 the number of both initial and core assessments carried out within the required timescale was highlighted as an area for improvement and recognised as such by the council. Staffing capacity has been increased and there has been substantial improvement in the figures for core assessments. However, the timeliness of initial assessments has not yet shown sustained improvement.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

Outcomes in this area are good. The quality of early years care provision is satisfactory overall although there is a greater proportion of unsatisfactory settings than the national average. Nursery education, provided in all the infant schools in the borough,

and funded settings, enable most children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Strategies for improving practice have brought success in most areas of Key Stage 1 and children make good progress. Results at the end of the key stage are improving, particularly for girls, and the rate of improvement is above that of statistical neighbours. The English Language Service has targeted effectively children needing most help.

Children's attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with national and statistical neighbours and the rate of improvement is slightly, though not significantly, below that of statistical neighbours and the national picture. Standards at Key Stage 3 are comparable with national and statistical neighbours in the core subjects, dropping back against statistical neighbours in English and improving slower than either statistical neighbours or nationally. In mathematics attainment is in line with national and statistical neighbours but improving slower than statistical neighbours. In science at this key stage children are doing as well as national and statistical neighbours and improving slightly faster than statistical neighbours. The percentage of pupils gaining 1 A\* to G grade at GCSE, including looked after children and children with special educational needs is above the national average. The percentage of all pupils entered for GCSE who gained five or more A\* to C grades is in line with the national average although this masks significantly lower attainment at these grades by looked after children and children with special educational needs. All black and minority ethnic groups achieve above the national average for their groups at GCSE but white British pupils achieve below the national average, particularly for five or more A\* to C grades.

Children make very good progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, in the top 10% of the country for value added, and Key Stage 4, where value added is in the top quartile nationally. Pupils make relatively slower progress from Key Stage 2 to 3. Consequently value added from Key Stage 2 to 4 overall is in line with the national picture. Improvement of value added from Key Stage 3 to 4 is at a higher rate than the national average.

No schools are in special measures and the proportion of schools in categories of concern is in line with the national picture. The education service uses data effectively to identify and target resources to low attainment and poor progress. The service has established strategies and innovative partnerships to disseminate good practice. Throughout Key Stages 1 to 3 the council is very aware of the relatively poorer outcomes for vulnerable and underachieving groups of pupils, such as black African pupils in some subjects, white boys in others and Traveller children. Effective improvement support is well-targeted to English and Maths in Key Stage 2. The results are yet to be seen in the closure of the attainment gaps. Children with special educational needs do better than the national average for their group at Key Stages 1 and 2. Highly mobile pupils and new arrivals with Level 1 language ability are identified and targeted for help at Key Stage 3. Learning mentoring is in place for Somali and Afghani pupils. Children's attainment in science is a concern recognised by

the council, as it is elsewhere nationally, and is being tackled through recruitment and retention of specialist teachers.

Encouraging attendance is a prominent issue for the council. Overall attendance is better than in comparable areas and a robust approach has been taken to reducing absence. Levels of authorised absence are falling faster than the national rate due to the high priority given by the council and schools to achieving good attendance, in addition to focusing attention on chronic non-attendeers. However, unauthorised absences in primary schools persistently exceed levels found nationally and in comparable areas. Unauthorised absence in secondary schools, although rising as it is nationally, is lower than in comparable areas. Tight monitoring through Welfare Call is resulting in increased attendance by looked after children. Attitudes to learning are good and, when surveyed, significant numbers of children expressed that they were 'very happy' in school. However, the rate of exclusions in secondary schools compared very poorly with the national picture at one point in the year. Managed moves and respite packages for pupils at risk of exclusion are beginning to bring some success in preventing permanent exclusion. The rates of reintegration are improving. Effectively targeted additional support ensures looked after children are rarely excluded from school.

All children and young people have access to a broad range of recreational activities and opportunities for learning outside the school day, particularly in the growing number of extended schools. Children with special educational needs and disabilities make a good start through the integrated approach to nursery and successful integration to mainstream schools. Partnerships between the council and carers encourage looked after children to take part in all that is on offer. Understanding of how to meet the diverse ethnic, cultural, social and religious needs in the area is the clear starting point for planning, resulting in good participation, for instance in creative youth arts and drama.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are good, presently developing through a comprehensive Children and Young People's Participation Strategy and the Change for Children Agenda. Young children, particularly with special educational needs, are well supported in early years settings and as they make the transition to school. Active citizenship is developing in all schools; citizenship is a theme within the youth curriculum, enabling children and young people to help set standards and make decisions. Mentoring is in place for vulnerable young people including asylum seekers as they approach the end of compulsory education. Good partnership work supports young people with special educational needs and disabilities as they make plans for adult life.

The understanding that the council has of the varied needs and aspirations of children and young people underpins the wealth of opportunities to contribute. Children's Participation Champions ensure the views of all groups of children and young people are incorporated in plans for services that affect them. Young people, including looked after children and children with disabilities, are involved in the recruitment and selection of staff and managers to key posts. The Youth Service involves young people in the management of 80% of settings. Debate is encouraged through a forum on the youth website and conferences that attract diverse attendance. The *Chill Out* magazine, produced by young people, deals with such issues as advocacy and health care and there is a postal club for looked after children under 12. The Total Respect programme has a high national profile in a range of initiatives promoting looked after young people's life chances.

A very good 93% of looked after children, including those with disabilities, contribute to their reviews. All children with special education needs are involved in assessment reports.

The Youth Offending Service target for reduction of re-offending has been met for two tracked cohorts of previous young offenders. Under 1% of looked after children received a final warning, conviction or reprimand. A borough-wide strategy is in place to reduce anti-social behaviour. Action to prevent offending has not yet resulted in a decrease in the first-time offender rate, though contemporary evidence also does not show an increase.

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

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. The growth in childcare places is much the same as the national rate of increase. The number of sessional day care providers has decreased, although childminding and full day care provision has increased faster than nationally to suit local demand. Three children's centres have been developed, closely linked with schools. New settings are well prepared to provide good quality care at the time of registration.

In line with the comparator group of council areas, some 76% of students go on to full-time post-16 studies. There are no inadequate sixth forms. However, vulnerable groups of students identified as underachieving in schools continue to underachieve post-16. The average point score of students taking GCSE AS and A Levels in sixth forms is in line with national and statistical neighbours. Effective collaboration with Hounslow Education Business Partnership has provided an increased range of vocational training opportunities and work placements available for targeted groups. A coordinated approach has successfully established the Feltham Skill Centre in an identified area of need with good take-up of places.

The figure for young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) exceeds the target set for the area, although the percentage of young people not known to services misses the target and is rising due to mobility of the population. Partnership with the Connexions service makes good provision for young people with disabilities. The percentage of care leavers engaged in employment, training or education at 19 compares favourably with the national average. The number of parents of children with disabilities in receipt of Direct Payments is low.

## 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 through schools</li> <li>low rates of teenage pregnancy</li> <li>meeting the health care needs of looked after children well.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>better use of evaluative data that is collected to demonstrate outcomes for CAMHS and ensure timeliness of referrals.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>well implemented anti-bullying and harassment policies</li> <li>good adoption and permanency rates for looked after children</li> <li>management and review of cases for children on the child protection register.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>long term stability of looked after children</li> <li>timeliness of initial assessments.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pupils' progress at some stages, particularly in Key Stage 4</li> <li>acknowledgement of diversity of needs and good knowledge of different pupil groups.</li> <li>management of exclusions.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the attainment gap between targeted groups and highest achieving groups throughout all key stages.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>broad range of opportunities for children and young people to be involved in decision making</li> <li>involvement of children and young people in reviews</li> <li>successful reduction of re-offending.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work to reduce the number of new offenders.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Achieving economic well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good collaboration with colleges in delivering vocational training</li> <li>• good support to looked after children, children with special educational needs and disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress of underachieving groups of students post-16</li> <li>• standards attained by students post-16.</li> </ul>
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## Service management

The council has a consistent vision for the future of children’s services set out in a clear framework of improvement teams with specific service targets. Children’s Partnership Board linking education and social care across the council is a rapidly growing area of achievement. The vision, founded on the *Every Child Matters* agenda, supports re-distribution of resources and commitment to recruitment and training. Partnership working is well established with other statutory agencies, with the independent sector and is beginning to be routine with children and young people themselves. The collaborative approach is exemplified in early years and vocational education and some good outcomes from strategic partnerships with health are already evident in the outcomes for looked after children and some success in reducing anti-social behaviour.

Priorities are clearly stated, underpinned by knowing and understanding the diverse needs of groups within the area very well. These priorities are wide ranging and include: raising attainment in education, the action plan following the 14-19 inspection, action on CAMHS following the review, the integration of services for special needs, implementing the extended schools strategy, performance on assessments of children in need, and measures to locate looked after children in the borough. Workforce retention is recognised by the council as an issue still to be tackled effectively with regard to social workers and some categories of teachers.

The council has identified and is monitoring social care priorities. There has been positive success in promoting the health of looked after children. Joint funding for education services for looked after children is now in place although it is too soon to see the full impact of this strategy. Long term stability of looked after children is rightly identified as an area in which the council seeks to improve. Timeliness of assessments was a cause for concern last year and remains so although there has been marked improvement in the percentage of core assessments. Evaluation of school effectiveness identifies schools that are underachieving and enables targeted intervention. The council is seeking more efficiency gains, for example through the amalgamation of some schools and the local management of schools formula has been simplified. Changes to the Connexions service have produced savings reinvested in posts to focus on disadvantaged children.

Performance information leads to action plans to improve the quality and accuracy of data. A new data system is being rolled out by social services which is beginning to be embedded although, again, it is too early for the impact to be seen. The current self-assessment is not as rigorously evaluative as it could be, with its focus more on process than achievements. Managers now regularly use traffic light data to analyse progress in all key areas of work. Performance management has improved. A new performance appraisal system has been implemented and there is corporate commitment to training. The council has supported 18 staff through professional qualifications to become social workers. Additionally, the strategy to recruitment and retention of children's social care staff has been highly successful. This has involved a North American recruitment campaign as well as domestic recruitment.

The council has good capacity to improve further.

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

### **Being healthy**

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

- outcomes for CAMHS and the timeliness of referrals.

### **Staying safe**

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

- timeliness of assessments
- long-term stability of looked after children.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

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

- the attainment gap between targeted groups and highest achieving groups.

### **Making a positive contribution**

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

- work to prevent new offenders entering the youth justice system.



## **Achieving economic well-being**

*Action is taken to ensure that 14-19 education and training is delivered in a coordinated way, and to ensure that education and training (16-19) is of good quality:*

- progress of underachieving groups and standards reached in academic attainment post-16.

## **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. Dr Robert Garnett, Director of Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services  
and Ms Susanna White, Director of Social Services and Health Partnerships**

## APA final judgements 2005: London Borough of Hounslow 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>3</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