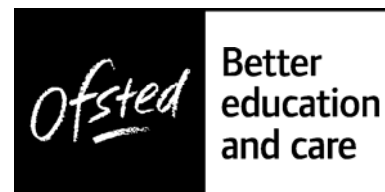


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

T 08456-404045
Email: edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr Paul Burnett - Director of Education
Mr John Nawrockyi – Director of Social Services
London Borough of Greenwich
Town Hall
Wellington Street
SE18 6HY

1 December 2005

Dear Colleagues

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LONDON BOROUGH OF GREENWICH'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 relevant issues.

Being healthy

Outcomes in this area, while satisfactory overall, are mixed. There are significant health inequalities and some children and young people, including looked after children, have poorer health outcomes. The proportion of looked-after children having dental and health checks is, however, below the national average. Efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people include the development, with health colleagues, of a comprehensive and integrated strategy consisting of targeted healthy living initiatives at a local level.

Rates of adult and childhood mental health are comparatively high, although the jointly commissioned Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has contributed to the increasing range of services available to children, including those with disabilities and black and minority ethnic groups.

There are other issues about health outcomes for looked after children that need to be addressed: the rate of teenage conceptions is high in some localities and the extent of drug and alcohol-related problems remain a concern.

Staying safe

Outcomes in this area are good overall. There are comparatively high levels of repeated crime against children, domestic violence and child protection concerns in Greenwich, although numbers on the child protection register have recently fallen in line with comparator authorities. The council now achieves consistently good ratings (Band 4 or 5) for numbers of children re-registered on the child protection register, for the numbers of looked-after children who were adopted during the year and for achieving their long-term stability. There have been no recent child protection concerns relating to the services provided.

There is good inter-agency collaboration through the Area Child Protection Committee and the council has developed a comprehensive training and development programme for staff to enable them to identify safeguarding risks and to manage them effectively. Support is provided to ensure that schools tackle problems of bullying, racial and other forms of discrimination.

The speed with which the authority undertakes initial and core assessments of children at risk has improved since the last child protection re-inspection, but is still below the national average. There is an intention to reduce growing dependence on high cost out-of-borough placements by investing in local provision, although it is recognised that demographic and housing factors will mean that this will not be a rapid process.

Efforts have been made to consult with, and elicit the views of, children, although there is a need to do so on a more strategic basis. Monitoring arrangements are in place to address harassment based on unfair discrimination against disabled children, those from specific ethnic or religious backgrounds and young gay and lesbians.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are good overall. The authority has identified clearly and accurately the issues regarding educational attainment, the progress that children and young people make, and the factors that inhibit the advancement of particular groups. Improvement planning is targeted effectively, and there is evidence that actions are having a positive impact on attainment levels as children and young people move through school. This is reinforced by previous inspections of the local education authority that commended its use of data for identifying where support and intervention were needed in schools, the clarity with which it identifies its priorities, its well-focused service planning, and its clearly targeted and differentiated support.

The attainment of children in nursery settings is generally below national averages, with a significant proportion of young children experiencing difficulty with language and literacy. As they move from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1, they continue to experience difficulties with reading and writing in particular, but attainment at Key Stage 2 shows improvement and performance becomes increasingly aligned with that

of statistical neighbours. Value-added scores demonstrate that pupils perform well in comparison with those in the schools of Greenwich's statistical neighbours, especially as they progress from Key Stage 1 to 2.

Attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4 demonstrates further improvement; performance becomes increasingly aligned with that of statistical neighbours although attainment remains below national averages. However, more pupils achieve one GCSE pass than in the case of statistical neighbours, and performance is improving steadily so that attainment overall in this regard is close to the national average. However, young people's attainment post-16 in relation to academic achievement is below that of statistical neighbours and national averages.

There is considerable evidence that the authority pays good attention to issues related to inclusion and diversity. For example, the authority is above national averages and better than its statistical neighbours in adopting an inclusive approach to those children and young people with special educational needs. In 2004, there was improvement in the performance of those children and young people in public care who attend schools in Greenwich, especially with regard to GCSE passes. However the number of looked after children aged 16 or over with at least 1 GCSE at grade A*-G or a GNVQ has fallen this year and is below the council's comparator group and national average. Around two-thirds of pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers of statutory school age were successfully reintegrated into education, with positive patterns of attainment on their return to the classroom. However, raising the performance of boys and specific minority ethnic groups remains a particular challenge although, in the main, the latter exceeded the local education authority's target in relation to gaining five or more passes at GCSE. The local education authority's plans for 2005/06 are appropriate and have significant potential to promote inclusion further as well as recognising and supporting diversity.

A number of intervention strategies have been implemented to raise standards in schools. These encourage teachers to share effective practice and to develop further their ability to plan schemes of work and lessons that challenge the most able as well as the lower-attaining pupils. Emphasis has been placed on enabling teachers to support children effectively as they move from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1, and to teach them to write fluently and accurately. Such professional development is of particular importance given that there is considerable turbulence in staffing; last year, for example, around a fifth of the authority's teachers left their existing posts. There is evidence that such strategies have been influential in enabling pupils' levels of attainment to rise as they move through the various phases of education. Fewer schools in Greenwich are designated as requiring improvement than is the case for its statistical neighbours or in relation to national averages.

There is a clear recognition in the authority's strategic plan for education that, in order to make good progress, pupils must attend school regularly and behave well in lessons. Appropriate strategies are in place to improve attendance and to reduce unauthorised absence.

Making a positive contribution

In many instances, initiatives to enable children and young people to make a positive contribution are in their early stages and there is limited evidence, so far, of extensive positive impact. Nonetheless, outcomes in this area are good overall. The authority has identified accurately the barriers that prevent children and young people making a positive contribution and is addressing them effectively in its strategic planning. For example, there is an appropriate focus on minimising exclusions and absences from school, and on reducing teenage pregnancy rates; this is intended to enable children and young people make the most of their potential. The number of looked after children receiving a final warning/reprimand or conviction has however increased and is above the council's comparator group.

The authority is targeting effectively the more vulnerable children and young people in order to support them and enable them to face the challenges in their lives. In this regard, there has been a good level of success, as shown by the additional support looked after children are receiving for preparing them for the process of leaving care and the operation of a joint protocol for working with families where there is a young carer. Equally, the youth service strategic plan highlights, appropriately, the need to match provision to a complex range of needs, as may be in evidence among young people from vulnerable groups, those from different cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds, and those from travellers' families.

Another area of improvement relates to the support provided for children and young people who offend. Around three-quarters of them are engaged in education, training or employment, and the rate of recidivism is reducing; it was below national average last year.

There is clear evidence that the views of children and young people have influenced decision making, but there is also a recognition that that this needs to be done in a co-ordinated and more systematic way so that the lessons learned are shared and built upon. Through the Children's Trust, a multi-agency project group has been established to set out and implement a plan for improving the way that children and young people are involved in decision making.

Joint working is being developed further to improve the support necessary to help children and young people make a positive contribution. Examples include: co-ordinated training to enable teachers and nurses to deliver sex and relationships education in schools; the training of CAMHS staff to enable them to deal with the sex and relationships issues that face looked after children; and ongoing programmes, such as parenting, that involve the voluntary sector.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory overall, but progress is slow, particularly in certain wards, because, traditionally, there have been variable rates of engagement with education, and a legacy of low aspirations in those families where there are two or three generations that have never been in employment or engaged in training. However, there is considerable potential for the initiatives that have been planned to make a significant difference to the ability of children and young people to achieve economic well-being.

A 14-19 Greenwich learner entitlement is being established, and developments in the curriculum have increased the range and scale of vocational pathways available to young people from 56 in 2004 to 86 in 2005. A construction sector pilot has been prioritised because of the increasing opportunities within the local labour market. A pathways to employment unit has been established to increase opportunities for work-based learning in the borough; the unit is currently supporting a range of projects that involve employers as well as young people. However, it is recognised that the quantity of local training provision is insufficient and that this is an obstacle to the expansion of work-based learning.

There is some evidence of success in expanding and tailoring provision to enable young people to achieve economic well being. In particular, significant progress has been made in the last two years in engaging and retaining 14-19 year-olds in education and training, including those from vulnerable groups such as looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective joint working of multi-agency groups, for example, in relation to the health of looked after children • strong strategic co-ordination and promotion of integrated working through the Children's Trust arrangements. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduction in the rates of teenage pregnancy, particularly in some wards • improvement in the health of looked-after children.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the consistently sound quality of children's social care • the general agreement about, and widespread support for, the vision of improvement that is being promoted through the Children's Trust. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the over-dependence on expensive out-of-borough placements and the consequent need to develop a suitable range of local provision, including foster placements.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective identification of the key challenges in raising the levels of educational attainment in Greenwich • appropriately focused strategies to raise attainment levels • recognition of the need to improve provision from early years onwards if overall attainment is to rise in line with expectations and potential • support for teachers to enable them to improve the quality of provision for all children and young people. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise overall levels of attainment • improve the ability of front-line staff to raise attainment levels consistently and in a sustained manner • ensure that provision for the more able enables them to reach their potential, both pre- and post-16 • continue to focus on improving attendance and behaviour • increase the number of looked after children achieving at least 1 GCSE A*-G or a GNVQ.

<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective support for vulnerable children and young people to enable them to face the challenges in their lives • recognition of the issues that prevent children and young people making a positive contribution and addressing them strategically • fostering of joint working • recognition of diversity and the promotion of inclusion. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise attainment levels and improve participation in schooling • match the support provided for children and young people, such as those of high academic ability, to their specific needs • continue to address ways in which children and young people can contribute to decision making • reduce the number of final warnings for looked after children.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant progress in engaging and retaining 14-19 year-olds in education and training, including those who are more vulnerable. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to address the low aspirations and levels of attainment in some wards.

Service management

The authority has worked well with relevant parties to analyse need and set appropriate priorities, although there is recognition of the need to integrate systems and extend the range of available information to better inform the analysis of need. There are sound arrangements for consulting with and involving the public, partners, community organisations, business and employees in the development of the service.

The Children's Trust Board is in place, with an agreed vision and set of principles. A corporate framework for performance management has been developed, which includes the fuller involvement of members, the routine use of performance indicators at team level and regular audit of performance.

The council states that the comprehensive performance assessment process recognised that £23.3M has been transferred to education and social services since 1999/2000 and that resources have been redirected away from spot purchasing of independent sector short breaks for disabled children towards a short-break service provided by the primary care trust and increased use of direct payments.

The Children's Trust has established a workforce development project to plan and develop the workforce that Greenwich will need to meet the requirements of the Every Child Matters agenda for change.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Staying safe

Looked after children live in safe environments and are protected from abuse and exploitation:

- the development of a suitable range of local provision and consequent reduction of dependence on expensive out-of-borough placements.

Enjoying and achieving

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

- attainment in the Foundation Stage.

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

- progress made from Key Stage 1 to post-16.

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

- educational attainment of looked after children.

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:

- the effectiveness of the youth service in enabling young people with diverse and complex needs to make a positive contribution.

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:

- the effectiveness of the planned initiatives in enabling 14-19 year-olds to achieve economic well being.

Final judgements

Please see your final annual performance assessment judgements attached at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely



FLO HADLEY
Divisional Manager
Office for Standards in Education



JONATHAN PHILLIPS
Director – Quality, Performance and Methods
Commission for Social Care Inspection

APA final judgements 2005: London Borough of Greenwich

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	2
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