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Making Social Care  
Better for People



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London Borough of Ealing Council  
Ealing  
London

**1 December 2005**

Dear Colleagues

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LONDON BOROUGH OF EALING’S  
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 6 July 2005 to assess the performance of the education and social care services within your authority. We are grateful for the information which you provided to support this process and for the time made available by yourself and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

**Being healthy**

Services for the health of children and young people consistently deliver above minimum requirements. The strategy to reduce teenage pregnancy is well managed and has led to decreased rates which are below those found nationally. The strategy includes an annual consultation exercise that ensures that the voices of young people are heard. There is also a clear focus of specialist health staff to support looked after children and care leavers. The strength of the work is enhanced by a dedicated drop in centre and a nurse for looked after children who visits children’s homes and provides support for both looked after children and their carers. In addition, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team Service (CAMHS) is being subjected to a root and branch review with the clear intention that it should reach those children who are in particular need of the service. There has also been full compliance at the time of school inspections for the standard for education in sexual and social relationships and a high proportion of schools were good or very good in judgements on participation in sport.

Despite these good aspects, there are areas where more improvement is needed. Performance for the speed of completion of health assessments of looked after children is adequate but has slipped from its previous high level and is now below that of the average for outer London boroughs. There has been targeted work to increase

participation in sport, on groups such as Asian girls, but there is a lack of an overarching plan to support and sustain this work.

## **Staying safe**

Child Protection and the work of the Area Child Protection Committee continue to be a strength in Ealing and services are consistently delivering above minimum requirements. This is highlighted by the child protection indicators and all cases are assigned to a key worker. Additionally, looked after children are safeguarded through robust management of case file audits.

The number of looked after children adopted from care is good, although the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) target has not fully been achieved in the current year. Performance is above average with respect to looked after children being placed for adoption following the Best Interest Decision.

A number of initiatives to improve the placements of looked after children are bearing fruit. There are fewer children placed outside the area, foster care has been developed and residential care usage decreased. There have also been more kinship placements. Placement stability for looked after children however remains an area for concern. A number of steps have been taken to address this including a thorough analysis of the issues, the implementation of a Placement Stability Action Plan and the adoption of a new LPSA target.

The council continues to perform poorly on initial and core assessments completed within required timescales. The Assessment Action Plan is being implemented and early evidence suggests this is already bringing about an improvement.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

Services that support children and young people to enjoy and achieve consistently deliver above minimum requirements. Early years' education is good, with a bigger than national expansion of out of school day care providers and places. There is good support for early years' providers, leading to lower than national numbers of actions in childcare following inspections.

As children progress through to Key Stage 1, outcomes show that pupils continue to do as well as those of similar authorities but remain weaker than those nationally. Progression between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 overall is close to that found nationally, but there are weaknesses in some of the outcomes at end of Key Stage 2 for English and maths, where floor targets have not been met. Performance at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with that found both nationally and with similar authorities.

Value added progression from Key Stage 2 onwards is good, especially between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. GCSE results are in line with similar authorities and nationally for 5+A\*-C grades and even exceed them for 1+ A\*-G grades, which is a good position that has been maintained since 2000. The percentage of care leavers with 5+ A\*-C grades is well above similar authorities and national performance and is on course to meet the target for 2005/06. Performance is also better than similar authorities or national data for care leavers with grade A\*-G. For all care leavers, though, performance falls well short of that found for the overall school population in Ealing. There are some areas of weak performance such as for Black African/Somali pupils, and appropriate actions, such as conferences to promote achievement for ethnic minority groups, are being taken to address these weaker areas.

Support for learning is a strong feature of the local authority both in school time and also outside it. This was noted in school inspection reports and in reviewing provision for looked after children. Unauthorised absence has been successfully managed, leading to overall rates at primary and secondary schools that are lower than similar authorities. More progress is needed, nevertheless, on improving attendance of looked after children.

Whilst permanent exclusions are in line with similar authorities, the number of pupils who are still receiving alternative educational provision for over a year is unsatisfactory since it is significantly higher than for similar authorities. This is recognised by officers and work is underway to build capacity in schools so that respite rather than exclusion can be enhanced. The work is strengthened by the fact that there are fewer schools in a formal category of weakness than in similar authorities.

Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. There is a clear strategy to support as many pupils as possible close to home. This has led to clear improvements. Partnership with the voluntary sector helps to strengthen the quality of support, especially in the early years.

There are a range of good opportunities for children and young people to contribute their views on the quality of education that they receive and for specific vulnerable groups to express their views.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Services that support children and young people in their involvement consistently deliver above minimum requirements. There is a good rate of involvement of children and young people in statutory reviews and in them taking an active part in planning their futures. Also, at a wider authority level, young people contribute to the planning and direction of future services. This is evident in such actions as the involvement of looked after children in the corporate parenting committee and in their engagement in the consultation for the pathfinder children with disability trust. It is also evident in

very specific activities such as the work on improving achievement for African Caribbean young people. There are also extensive opportunities for enrichment beyond the school day for the broad range of children and also for specific vulnerable groups such as looked after children.

As well as contributing to the future direction of services, children and young people are encouraged to celebrate past success. Examples include the rising stars under 11's day, the children's fund celebration event, and the education awards ceremony.

A weakness in this outcome is the lack of sufficient involvement of young people in the youth forum. This is being addressed through the appointment of a dedicated participation worker.

Whilst a new Head of the Youth Offending Service has been recently appointed, additional investment has been made, and there are some early signs of improvement, it is too early to assess whether or not the poor performance of the youth offending service has been successfully addressed.

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

Services that develop the economic well-being of young people consistently deliver above minimum requirements. Sixth form provision is a strength and has good outcomes. The achievement of students at A level or its equivalent is in line with similar authorities and national performance. Links between education and employment are also being strengthened, with new collaborative links to cover vocational education for all students and a specific work experience scheme under development for looked after children and care leavers.

As corporate parents for looked after children, the authority has taken action to promote engagement through initiatives such as the "one stop shop" and the outreach team targeted on those not in education, training and employment. The support to those in further education including those in university has had some very positive results including 11% of care leavers being in higher education. There is, however, still room for improvement in the overall numbers of looked after young people aged 16 and over in education, training, or employment.

Weaknesses exist in the planning and monitoring of outcomes of vulnerable groups of students. For example, the proportion of care leavers with learning disabilities who have personal plans is well below that of similar authorities. Whilst the local authority is aware of this and has prioritised an improved focus for Connexions personal advisors, there is insufficient monitoring of outcomes for vulnerable groups. The Pathfinder Trust is expected to bring a new focus on this area for children and young people with disabilities.

## SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• successful reduction in teenage pregnancies</li> <li>• good levels of participation in sport in schools</li> <li>• specialist health input to vulnerable groups e.g. looked after children</li> <li>• engagement of minority ethnic groups in sport.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduced speed in completing health assessments for looked after children.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good overall indicators for child protection</li> <li>• decrease in residential care placements and out of London placements for looked after children</li> <li>• efficiency of adoption processes</li> <li>• good auditing of open case files in last 12 months.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speed of completion of initial and core assessments</li> <li>• placement stability for looked after children.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• value added scores for KS2 onwards and KS3 to GCSE</li> <li>• good performance on GCSE 1+ A*-G grades</li> <li>• low rates of unauthorised absence</li> <li>• academic achievement of those leaving care</li> <li>• support for learning outside the school day</li> <li>• percentage of schools in a formal category of weakness better than similar authorities.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• black African, especially Somali, pupil achievement</li> <li>• number of permanently excluded pupils in alternative tuition for more than a year</li> <li>• school attendance for looked after children.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low offending rate for looked after children</li> <li>• recognition of race and culture issues for fostering</li> <li>• children and young people participation in celebrating success.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recent rise in first time offenders</li> <li>• inadequate youth participation through the youth forum.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good outcomes from sixth form education</li> <li>• school and college links for all students and also specifically for care leavers</li> <li>• prioritisation of care leavers for work experience.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the number of care leavers in education employment or training at age 19 and the meeting of targets</li> <li>• poor proportion of care leavers with learning disabilities who have personal plans.</li> </ul>
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## **Service management**

The authority has clearly set out its priorities, with improved outcomes for children as a central part, and is shaping its structures and its officer appointments well to deliver better outcomes. Performance in this area is good.

This follows a period of instability in senior officer posts. Where weaknesses have been highlighted from previous inspections and reviews, action has been taken to address them. The establishment of a lead member across children’s services, combined with strong member commitment to improve children’s services and good member officer relationships, gives promising capacity for delivering better outcomes.

There is sound practice in partnership working, with the pathfinder Children with Disability Trust as one example, and the new Vulnerable Children’s Service another. The Early Years Strategy, working ambitiously across agency boundaries, further demonstrates the drive for integrated service delivery.

There is sound budget management and good asset management planning, with increasing budgetary commitment to preventative work. There are a low number of surplus places in schools, demonstrating effective management of resources. Also, the number of teachers leaving their posts is low compared to similar authorities.

Performance management, an essential component in improving outcomes, has been identified as a weakness and action has been taken to secure new robust procedures.

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

### **Being healthy**

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

- timing and quality of health assessments for looked after children.

### **Staying safe**

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

- placement stability of looked after children.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

*Educational provision is made for children who do not attend school:*

- number of permanently excluded pupils in alternative provision for more than a year and the quality of provision that they receive.

### **Making a positive contribution**

*Children and young people are encouraged to participate in decision making and in supporting the community:*

- extent of young people's involvement with the Youth Forum
- impact of improvements to the Youth Service.

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

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

- follow up on developments of Pathway Children with Disabilities Trust.

## 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 Ealing 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