

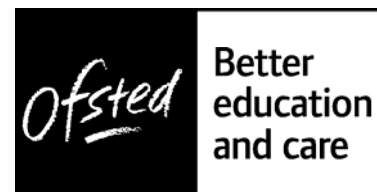
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045

email: [edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk)



Making Social Care  
Better for People



Mr Ray Cowlshaw  
Chief Executive  
Derby City Council  
Council House  
Corporation Street  
Derby  
DE12FS

**1 December 2005**

Dear Mr Cowlshaw

## **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF DERBY 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 relevant issues.

### **Being healthy**

Outcomes in this area are good. Strong partnership work, which includes the Primary Care Trust, is improving the health outcomes for children and young people. Health Promotion in schools is a strength, with a high proportion of schools participating in the National Healthy Schools Standard and over 70% achieving level three. A good range of youth service provision is in place to support young people's health needs including advice, information and counselling, outdoor education, sports and sexual health provision. The health needs of looked-after children are met effectively and indicators are consistently better than comparator authorities and exceed national averages. Good progress has been made in reducing teenage conception, although conception rates remain high. The proportion of young people referred to the children and adolescent mental health service from the Youth Offending Service is above the national average. The use of a new screening tool for substance misuse is increasing the identification of young people who have such problems and improving the targeting of resources

### **Staying safe**

Outcomes in this area are good. Policies and procedures are in place to support effective safeguarding and partnership work as evidenced by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is good.

Inspections of children's homes and residential special schools have identified weaknesses in outcomes for children, for example, the health, safety and security and vetting of staff and visitors. This is an area for improvement for the council.

Referrals of children in need are reducing gradually, as are re-referrals occurring within a twelve month period. The numbers of looked-after children and children on the child protection register have continued to reduce; however, re-registrations have increased and have been identified as a priority area for improvement in the local area agreement. The council has improved the efficiency with which it carries out many aspects of its child protection and assessment processes. The percentage of initial assessments carried out within 7 days is now above comparators. Core assessments completed within 35 days have risen so they are more in line with comparators, whereas core assessments of children in need have improved significantly and are above comparators. Reviews of children on the child protection register within the agreed timescale have also improved, as a result of action undertaken by the council to address this area of weakness, and are now at an acceptable level. A recent inspection found that disabled children were safeguarded and protected through appropriate initial response, assessment, care planning and review processes.

The Area Child Protection Committee supports a comprehensive training and development plan, which includes the independent and voluntary sector. Appropriate literature on protection for service users and the public is in place. All children on the child protection register have a qualified social worker but the percentage of looked-after children with a named qualified worker is below comparators and needs to improve. All schools have a named person for child protection.

Good performance has been maintained on the stability of placements and also for looked-after children in foster placements placed for adoption. The percentage of children placed for adoption has increased, as has the percentage of children adopted within twelve months of their best-interest decision, although this is still below comparators. The Fostering Strategy is beginning to have a positive impact and there are now more foster carers in place than a year ago. The council's proposed financial enhancements for in house foster carers should consolidate this improvement, and help to relieve financial pressures resulting from the cost of Independent Fostering Agencies.

Care planning capacity is linked to recruitment and retention of social workers and is described by the council as "feeling fragile", with vacancies rising to over 40% during the year although this high level has been subsequently reduced. This is an area which will require close monitoring over the next year.

## Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory overall. Areas of significant improvement are tempered by some weaknesses. The overall quality of early years' provision is good and supports children well by enabling them to meet the early learning goals. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national averages and statistical neighbours although, for mathematics, they fell below the national averages in 2002 and 2004. Rates of improvement are below statistical neighbours and national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, significantly so for reading and mathematics.

Results at the end of Key Stage 2 are below national averages but in line with statistical neighbours, although science dropped below statistical neighbours in 2004. Rates of improvement are variable being above national averages and statistical neighbours for English and science and in line for mathematics. Pupils' progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 is poor. The councils' strategic planning and funding arrangements are prioritising improvements in this key stage and initial monitoring information indicates significant increases will be achieved in some of the targeted schools.

Standards at Key Stages 3 and 4 have risen to be broadly in line with national averages and statistical neighbours. Rates of improvement in these key stages are good, being above national averages and statistical neighbours. The most rapid improvement has been in the number of young people obtaining 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE. The proportion of looked-after children gaining one or more GCSE is good, being above the national average and comparators. However, satisfaction surveys with children in need place the council at the lower end of the range of comparator groups.

Authorised absence in both primary and secondary schools has improved and is below national averages and statistical neighbours, but unauthorised absence has risen above the national average in both sectors. The council has increased the number education welfare staff, agreed an attendance strategy and implemented new approaches to improving attendance in schools. Provisional figures for the academic year 2004/05 indicate these actions are having a positive effect.

The rate of exclusion is high in both primary and secondary schools. In 2003/04, permanent exclusion figures placed Derby as the third highest excluding authority in the country. In addition, the Pupil Referral Unit was placed in special measures by Ofsted in 2004. The authority has taken determined strategic action and allocated significant resources to reduce exclusions and improve provision. Management capacity has been strengthened at both strategic and operational levels. Provisional figures for 2004/05 indicate both fixed-term and permanent exclusions are reducing significantly.

Support for schools placed in a category of concern by Ofsted is effective. The speed of removal from a specific category is above the national average. The authority carefully monitors the performance of its schools and takes a pro-active approach to intervention which has resulted in a reduction in the number of schools being identified as causing concern.

Participation by young people in activities provided by the council's youth service is good. The achievement of young people and the quality of youth work practice is also good particularly in project work with vulnerable young people, resulting in them acquiring the crucial skills of independent living and life-long learning.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are good. A number of vulnerable groups are well supported at key transition points and a range of programmes are in place to support young people, for example, for young tenants with children and for black and minority ethnic pupils in years 6 and 7 who are at risk of exclusion. There are a good range of strategies for consulting young people, including well-established processes in social care for securing their involvement in planning and developing services. Young people are involved in school councils, forums, cabinet meetings and local action groups but their involvement in democratic processes through the youth service is limited.

Looked-after children are effectively helped to make a positive contribution through taking part in staff training events and consultation groups, and producing their own newsletter. An increasing percentage of looked-after children contribute to statutory reviews; all those looked-after children who are disabled contribute to their reviews.

Targeted action to reduce the number of first time offenders entering the youth justice system, for example through Youth Inclusion Projects, has been very effective. Provisional data indicates a significant reduction in this area. There has been a good reduction in the number of young people who are re-offending.

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

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. The range of initiatives put in place by the authority to support and encourage care leavers to engage in education, employment and training are having a very positive impact. Consequently the number of care leavers in education, employment and training at 19 is well above the national average and similar authorities. The alignment of the pathway planning process with the statutory review process, together with the introduction of an integrated IT system enabling sharper monitoring, have resulted in a significant increase in the number of eligible looked-after children who have pathway plans.

Overall the quality of education provided for 14-19 year olds is satisfactory. The average point score of students entered for GCE/VCE/A/AS levels in schools' sixth forms has risen to be in line with the national average and statistical neighbours. Achievement by young people aged 14-19 in special schools is good. However the proportion of young people who are in learning aged 16-19 is low. The percentage of young people who are categorised as not being in education, employment and training has reduced but remains high compared to national and East Midland's averages.

The authority works in close partnership with the local Learning and Skills Council and Connexions service to provide the strategic direction for 14-19 education. The 2004 Ofsted 14-19 inspection judged the 14-19 curriculum and its configuration to be unsatisfactory and found insufficient progression pathways for young people who do not achieve 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE, about half the year 11 population in Derby. In addition, school improvement strategies are good at Key Stage 4 but inadequate for monitoring the quality of sixth form provision in schools. A range of actions are being undertaken to bring coherence to 14-19 strategic planning and to develop a more coherent curriculum and progression pathways, but the authority acknowledges it is too soon for the impact of these actions to be seen at student level.

## SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><b><i>Being healthy:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partnership work</li> <li>• health promotion in schools</li> <li>• a good range of youth service provision</li> <li>• good progress in reducing teenage conception</li> <li>• the health needs of looked- after children are met effectively.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Being healthy:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduction of teenage conception rates.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Staying safe:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved initial and core assessments and child protection reviews</li> <li>• stability of placements</li> <li>• looked-after children in foster placements or placed for adoption.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Staying safe:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• re-registrations of children who have been on the child protection register</li> <li>• percentage of looked-after children with a named qualified worker</li> <li>• processes and practices in children's homes and residential special schools which fail to meet national minimum standards</li> <li>• recruitment and retention of staff.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Enjoying and achieving:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good quality of early years' provision</li> <li>• rate of improvement at Key Stage 3</li> <li>• rapid and sustained improvement at Key Stage 4</li> <li>• achievement of looked-after children</li> <li>• good participation and achievement in youth service activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enjoying and achieving:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high levels of unauthorised absence</li> <li>• high levels of exclusions</li> <li>• inadequate provision and attainment for excluded children and young people</li> <li>• declining rates of improvement at Key Stage 1</li> <li>• inconsistent improvement and low attainment at Key Stage 2.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making a positive contribution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a number of vulnerable groups well supported at key transition points</li> <li>• a good range of activities for consulting young people are in place</li> <li>• looked- after children are effectively helped to make a positive contribution</li> <li>• good reductions in re-offending rates.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Making a positive contribution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• young people's involvement in democratic processes through the youth service.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achieving economic well-being:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved average point score per student in school sixth forms</li> <li>• high percentage of looked-after children in education, employment or training at aged 19</li> <li>• improvement in pathway planning</li> <li>• good achievement of 14-19 year-olds in special schools.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieving economic well-being:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• low participation in learning by 16-19 year olds</li> <li>• high numbers of young people not in education employment or training</li> <li>• lack of post-16 pathways for young people not achieving 5 A*-Cs</li> <li>• inadequate monitoring of school sixth form provision.</li> </ul>

## Service management

Strategic planning and management are good overall. A comprehensive needs analysis undertaken by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership underpins key preventative strategies, local strategic priorities and the priorities of partner organisations. Children, young people, parents and carers have had an opportunity to contribute to the development of plans through a variety of forums. Clear priorities and targets have been set for improving outcomes for children and young people that are well integrated into the council's corporate plan and local service plans. However, priorities for improving outcomes in education for 14-19 year olds concentrate more on Key Stage 4 than post-16.

The council is providing positive leadership towards the development of integrated services for children. Partnership work is strong and well established in Derby

involving statutory and voluntary organisations. The local area agreement pilot is aligning the improvement plans of key partners and has resulted in a pooling of budgets. The council reports that it is leading on collaborative commissioning for children needing placements away from home in the East Midlands area. Plans are developing to integrate more front line delivery services, supported by integrated processes.

Capacity at strategic level has been strengthened through recruitment and the restructuring of management teams within both education and children's social care in order to meet the demands of the integration agenda. Recruitment and retention difficulties at operational level have adversely impacted on outcomes in the recent past and, while there are strategies in place to address this, their impact will need to be carefully monitored.

The council uses national and local performance measures to monitor and evaluate its performance and develop strategic objectives and targets. There have been significant improvements in outcomes for children's social care and educational attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4. Strategies have been developed to address weakness identified in recent inspection reports, for example, the monitoring of provision for excluded children and young people. However, regulated services in social care require improvement.

The council has good capacity to improve further.

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

### **Staying safe**

*The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:*

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

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

- the impact of recruitment/retention strategies on delivery of social care
- the impact of fostering strategy on placements for looked-after children
- the quality of regulated services.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

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

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

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

- the impact of strategies aimed at supporting behaviour and reducing exclusions
- the quality of provision and attainment for children and young people excluded from school.

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

- the effectiveness of strategies to raise attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2.

## **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:*

- progress in developing coherent and co-ordinated 14-19 pathways for all young people and its impact on improving post-16 participation and attainment.



## 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: Derby City 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	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

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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