

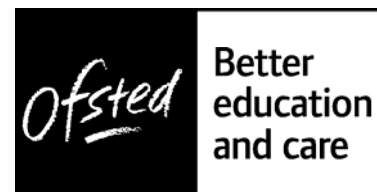
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Making Social Care  
Better for People



Ms S Manzie  
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**1 December 2005**

Dear Ms Manzie

## **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 5 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**

Outcomes in this area are good. Healthy lifestyles are being promoted by a range of multi-agency and partnership initiatives such as Shadow, One Stop Shop and Clinic in a Box. However, take-up of these initiatives by children and young people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities is variable for example in relation to sexual health. This has been recognised by the partner agencies who are investing in additional services in areas of the city with high BME populations. School participation in initiatives relating to sport, healthy eating and education about sex and relationships is high. The council is confident that the healthy schools target will be met by 31 March 2006. The Youth Service has a good healthy lifestyles programme. The "health of looked after children" indicator has improved significantly since 2003/04 and is now very good and well above the England average. Looked after children have health plans, which form part of their statutory reviews. No problems are currently being experienced in meeting identified health needs, including for children placed out of the city. The teenage pregnancy service is robust but is not yet impacting on conception rates, which remain above the England average. Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is variable. Further joint investment in CAMHS is planned for 2005/06 to bring the resourcing of the service nearer to the Institute of Public Finance (IPF) comparators and England averages.

## Staying safe

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. The Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) is well established and is working towards becoming a Safeguarding Board. A programme of practice audits has been established and work has been done on a multi-agency basis on assessment and child protection threshold. This is to ensure that children and families have access to appropriate services, and that only those children genuinely in need of protection are placed on the register. This is reflected in child protection activity, for example registrations and numbers of children on the child protection register which are reducing and moving back towards IPF and England averages. The council's performance on reviews and re-registrations of children on the child protection register is respectively good and very good. Responses to serious case reviews are satisfactory. A standing serious case review sub-committee has been established, to monitor action plans, ensure that the lessons from local and national cases are shared and acted upon, and to monitor agency actions following audits of child protection procedure and practice compliance. Performance information and management systems are well developed and are used effectively to manage and develop services.

The times taken to undertake initial and core assessments have improved and are moving closer to IPF and England averages. This is indicative of improved multi-agency working. Referrals leading to an initial assessment are relatively low and reflect the authority's policy of focusing assessment work on children and families for whom it is most relevant, and providing simple services and referring to other agencies as appropriate. Re-referral rates are high but are partially explained by Police referrals of all domestic violence incidents, including low level verbal abuse, to Social Services. This is an area that the Police and Social Services are working on jointly. The authority is keeping thresholds for service provision for children in need with lower levels of need under review, to ensure that they remain appropriate. Plans are in place to increase the number of initial assessments completed in 2005/06.

Looked after children have safe environments in which to live; this view is generally supported by evidence from regulatory inspections. Further work is needed to ensure that requirements from children's homes inspections are responded to speedily and effectively. Adoption and fostering indicators have reduced slightly but continue to be good. The short-term stability of looked after children continues to be very good while long-term stability needs to improve further. The authority is not currently allocating a qualified social worker to all looked after children, which is a current good practice expectation. It is contributing to a national project to look at this issue and is working on alternative options to ensure that looked after children in stable situations are able to form a long term relationship with an appropriately experienced and trained worker, which reflects both the feed-back of children and the available staff resource.

The authority's ability to meet the needs of children in need from the established BME communities in the city is good. Small numbers of children from asylum seeking families have recently moved into the city and the need for services to reach this group of children has been identified and is being worked on.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

Outcomes in this area are good with partnership working having a strong impact on improving them.

Childcare providers receive fewer actions than the national average except in multiple daycare settings, which require a higher level of support prior to registration.

Results for reading and writing at the end of Key Stage (KS) 1 are in line with national averages and better than statistical neighbours. Those for mathematics are above statistical neighbours and moving closer to, but are currently slightly below the national average. Standards at KS 2 are in line with statistical neighbours. Value added between key stages 1 and 2 has improved slightly and is in line with the national average. At Key Stage 3 results are above those of statistical neighbours and in line with national averages. Results at GCSE are below the national average and in line with statistical neighbours. The progress made by pupils between KS 2 and 3 and between KS 2 and 4 is in line with the national averages. The proportion of young people leaving care with at least one 1 A\*-G has improved slightly and the proportion with 5+A\*-C has risen significantly from 03/04 and is now above the IPF and England averages. Attainment for some minority ethnic groups remains too low. Narrowing the gap between underachieving groups and their peers continues to be a major priority for the authority.

Attendance in both primary and secondary schools is above that of statistical neighbours. The level of authorised absence is above that of statistical neighbours and the national average. However it is lower than statistical neighbours for unauthorised absence. There has been a significant increase in the level of absence of looked after children over the last two years at a time when that of statistical neighbours and the national average has fallen. Information provided by the authority indicates that this is now improving. The authority is making good use of data to target the performance of underachieving groups and to improve attendance.

There has been a large reduction in the figure for exclusions, which is lower than the national average for primary schools and lower for secondary schools.

The proportion of statements prepared within the 18 week time scale has improved considerably from the previous low figure. The proportion of Personal Education Plans (PEP's) completed has risen from its previous unsatisfactory level.

School improvement is supported well and no school is in special measures or has serious weaknesses. The federation of BESD schools working with BIP, KS 3 and support services has had an impact on the removal of one BESD school from special measures. Opening a new KS 3 PRU has also helped improve the rate of reintegration of excluded pupils. The partnership between secondary head teachers is helping to prioritise support for schools. Good partnerships with the Roman Catholic and Church of England dioceses helps planning for school places.

The council makes good arrangements to gather the views of children and young people and uses them to make improvements. It does not do this consistently across all services, but is aware that it needs to. Looked after children have direct access to councillors through the Corporate Parenting group. The council encourages this group to engage in a range of cultural and leisure pursuits. The authority has a strong focus on vulnerable groups over this academic year and consultation with schools and the public about the SEN and Inclusion Strategies have produced supportive responses.

The Youth Service received a good report at its last inspection.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are good. The Youth Offending Service (YOS) provides a strong example of good multi-agency working and this has been recognised in other external inspections. The council is making good progress in reducing the rate of re-offending. There is good partnership working to prevent crime, including the introduction of an information sharing management system. As a result of one initiative, youth crime in school holidays was reduced substantially. The service has gained funding from Sport England, which will be used to develop diversionary activities. Partnership working with the BEST team and the Youth Service is helping to reduce re-offending. Pooling of resources has increased cost effectiveness and reduced anti-social behaviour and youth crime, to the benefit of the community. The number of young offenders supervised by the YOS in FTE at the end of their orders remains static and below the national target. However, the YOS education team is being restructured and expanded to help address this. Multi-agency work helps creates a shared agenda, which has resulted in the targets for those with mental health needs being met. This was identified as an area of good practice in the YOS inspection. The indicator of final warnings and convictions of looked after children continues to show a year-on-year improvement and is better than IPF and England averages.

The majority of children and young people are given adequate support in managing changes in their lives. The number of looked-after children contributing their opinions at reviews is higher than IPF and England averages. There is a good range of support options for those leaving care.

A broad range of strategies and initiatives provides support at key transition points. Partnership working is a feature of many of these initiatives. Children and young people, including looked-after children and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are actively encouraged to be involved in decision-making. This includes both looked after children, and the views of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. It is not sufficiently clear how these consultations inform service planning and outcomes.

The authority has identified some of the individual young people who are subject to multiple risks, to assist with the targeting and design of services. This is an area that it may be beneficial to pursue further.

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

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory.

The 14-19 strategy is developing well and strong partnerships and federations are in place. The council is carrying out further partnership work with the Learning Skills Council to address the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

A survey of Year 12 and 13 students expressed a high rate of satisfaction with the courses offered.

The proportion of young people leaving care who entered education, employment or training dropped in 2004/05, from the very good performance level that had been established since 2001/02. The authority has done a case by case analysis of the reasons for this and has introduced tighter performance management and a new contract with its after-care service provider.

Most learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities progress to full-time education, training or employment. However the council acknowledges that the current provision for them in further education is inadequate. It is working with the Further Education (FE) sector to improve this.

The authority is in the process of establishing an integrated service for children with a disability; building on multi-agency working that already exists. The figure for children in need with disabilities receiving a service has increased from 2003/04 but is lower than the IPF and England averages (this is partly explained by recording issues). The authority plans to increase this figure in 2005/06. The authority is confident that it is reaching children in need with disabilities, not all of whom need Social Services input. The number of children and young people with disabilities or their carers receiving a direct payment is low but increasing slowly. The council is investing in transition planning for children with disabilities.

## SUMMARY

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for improvement</b>
<p><b><i>Being healthy:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• multi agency and partnership working</li> <li>• the promotion of healthy lifestyles for children and young people ensuring the health needs of looked after children are addressed.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Being healthy:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the impact of the work to reduce teenage pregnancy conception rates</li> <li>• staffing capacity to promote children and young people’s mental health</li> <li>• uptake of healthy lifestyles initiatives by children and young people from BME communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Staying safe:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong partnerships</li> <li>• ACPC and safeguarding developments</li> <li>• providing children and young people with a safe environment</li> <li>• use of performance information to improve services.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Staying safe:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allocation of qualified social workers to looked after children and/or clearly establishing an alternative model that meets the needs of looked after children</li> <li>• the long-term stability of looked after children</li> <li>• monitor assessment, service delivery and child protection thresholds to ensure that they are set at appropriate levels</li> <li>• effectiveness of responses to requirements following regulatory inspections.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partnership working</li> <li>• strong focus on raising attainment</li> <li>• good use of data to target performance of underachieving groups and improve attendance</li> <li>• the strategy to reduce exclusions and improve re-integration.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school attendance of looked after children</li> <li>• narrowing the gap between underachieving children and their peers</li> <li>• the preparation of child care providers for registration.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good multi-agency working</li> <li>• the support for care leavers</li> <li>• the good opportunities for looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make a positive contribution and to participate in decision making.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effectiveness of multi-agency working to improve outcomes for young people with multiple risk factors.</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the significant number of learners progressing onto other learning or employment</li> <li>• the range of support options and services for the 14-19 group</li> <li>• financial and other support to care leavers.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• range of opportunities in further education for learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities</li> <li>• the low level of direct payments for disabled children and/or their carers</li> <li>• the number of children and young people with transition plans and their impact on outcomes for young people as they transfer to universal or specialist adult services.</li> </ul>
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## **Service management**

The authority has drive, ambition and a clear direction of travel. It has a good understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses and this is reflected in the self-assessment. Partnership and multi-agency working are strong features and are reflected in good planning and joined up services. Plans for an integrated Children's Service are well in hand and reflect the views of children and parents/carers.

Performance management is well established. Achievements in NVQ qualifications for residential child care workers and post qualifying training for children's social workers since 2001/02 are impressive. Sickness levels for staff in children's services have improved and are now better than IPF and England averages. Recruitment and retention indicators however remain higher than average and do present a risk to capacity. A range of initiatives are in place or being developed, particularly to retain staff, and to promote employment-based routes to social work qualification. The authority has a good record on the recruitment and retention of teachers.

The relative expenditure on family support is increasing slightly. Plans are in place to commission a local specialist residential care service, which in the longer term has the potential to reduce some of the pressure on the residential placement budget. Unit costs for fostering placements have fallen as a consequence of a strengthened in-house service and a reduction in the use agency services. However, the authority faces a significant challenge, of which it is well aware, to move the balance of expenditure to support and prevention, while looked-after children costs remain high.

The authority has good capacity to improve further.

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

### **Being healthy**

*Healthy life-styles are promoted for children and young people:*

- the impact of the teenage pregnancy strategy on conception rates.

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

- the impact of planned additional investment in CAMHS.

### **Staying safe**

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

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

- the impact of multi-agency changes to assessment and child protection thresholds.

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

- the impact of the authority's social worker allocation strategy on looked after children.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

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

- outcomes of the authority's strategy to improve the quality of early years provision.

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

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

- action to reduce the attainment gap between some minority ethnic groups and looked after children and their peers.



## **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:*

*Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to make a positive contribution:*

- the arrangements to develop the provision of integrated services for children and young people with a disability
- the extent to which services are able to reach young people with multiple risk factors in their lives.

## **Economic well-being**

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

- the effectiveness of the transition of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to adult services/adult lives.

## **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: Coventry 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	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

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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