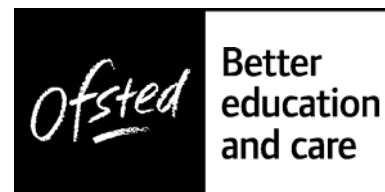


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Making Social Care
Better for People



Heather Schroeder
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1 December 2005

Dear Ms Schroeder

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN
COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005**

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on Monday July 4 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. Partnerships are strong, for example with the Primary Care Trust (PCT); there is a range of coordinated initiatives that are influenced by and accessible to children and young people and their families.

Levels of teenage pregnancies are high although numbers have reduced in the last year. Analysis has been undertaken to establish areas and groups where incidence is highest. However, the council acknowledges that the delay in an appointment to lead this work has hindered its ability to deliver targeted action. There is commitment to drive this at a strategic level and performance manage delivery and impact. Further work is planned in hotspot areas and targeting of resources to younger at risk groups. The sexual health strategy is linked with the schools improvement programme.

The Healthy Schools programme is good quality although only just over half the schools achieve the target of two hours of sport per week. Nevertheless, good use is made of all opportunities to promote PE through training for teachers and development of and access to a range of facilities across the borough. The strategy is also connected to a wider focus on promoting healthy lifestyles for families. Further support is provided through extended schools and extensive investment in activities during school holidays.

There is access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in a broad range of community settings including 'on site' at all secondary schools and special units, in special units and special schools that include children with disabilities. There is direct access to CAMHS for young children with disabilities through the Child Development Team.

Looked after children's health needs are addressed; performance in this area is very good.

All schools meet DfES minimum standard for delivering drug education in science lessons. Camden's local target is for all schools to meet the higher Healthy Schools standard for drug education – currently 66% of secondary schools are compliant. The council is developing the role of expert teachers within the borough and drug related exclusions have reduced.

Staying safe

Outcomes for this area are good and generally have either been sustained or improved. Most children and young people are provided with a safe environment, including looked after children.

There has been a year on year reduction in first time offenders and re-offenders. All referrals of young offenders to the CAMHS are assessed within set timescales. The Ofsted thematic inspection identified some good practice in combating racism (early years/youth centres). The summer university programme, located in an area with a high level of need, diverts young people at risk, for example, those who may become involved in gang fighting.

Although there is a high level of child protection activity, the incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised and agencies work well together. Child protection has a high profile in partner agencies and council departments. For example, child protection training is provided for housing staff. Housing staff are also aware of the need for sensitive handling of housing issues at key transition points for children and young people. The council provides funding to backfill teacher vacancies created by absence on child protection training and multi agency meetings. Thresholds and risk management arrangements, including assessments, reviews, and duration on the child protection register are improving and sound. Within and across agencies there is a robust approach to the implementation of multi-agency child protection arrangements and ongoing review to ensure their fitness for purpose.

The council is achieving a more efficient and effective balance between prevention and child protection in a family setting. The rate at which children come into the care system is beginning to fall. However, there is a need to further improve the effectiveness of support for children and young people and their families at secondary age to prevent family breakdown. The council has focused on early intervention strategies, encouraging schools to refer teenagers experiencing problems earlier. Improvement is also needed in the adoption of looked after children. Camden's own analysis shows there are few adoption breakdowns. A high percentage of looked after children contribute to their statutory reviews.

Monitoring of children missing from education is good and numbers have been reduced.

The council has raised concerns about children and young people educated at home and the capacity to ensure there are no safeguarding issues.

Enjoying and achieving

Outcomes in this area are good. Services work well together to support children and young people's education. The overall quality of early years provision is good and supports children well in meeting the early learning goals. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below the national average, but reading and writing are showing signs of improvement. However, results in mathematics have been static for the last five years. Subject leadership of mathematics has been identified as an issue at Key Stage 1 and consultancy work has been appropriately targeted at developing teacher skills, subject knowledge and teachers' assessment skills. The impact of this input has yet to be seen in national test results.

Standards at Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations and progress between Key Stage 1 and 2 is very good. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. Outcomes for the higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 and post 16 are good but too many pupils leave school with no accredited qualifications. Progress between Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory but is good between Key Stages 2 and 4. The council has identified specific groups of pupils who underachieve, and is working well with local communities to engage them in educational achievement. However, these strategies have not yet resulted in the expected improvement for some of the harder to reach groups. The proportion of looked after children gaining one or more GCSEs is below the national average. Camden has set challenging targets for improvement and has a good range of strategies in place to support young people and their carers in improving their educational achievements. Support for schools placed in formal categories of concern by Ofsted is effective.

Attendance has improved but is still below the national average. The attendance of looked after children and young people and attendance rates at primary schools remain areas of concern.

There are currently sufficient school places for Camden pupils but a shortfall is projected for 2014. The council is taking a steady and sensible approach to ensuring that sufficient places will be available when required and is liaising closely with neighbouring boroughs to ensure that this does not result in surplus places overall.

The council provides effective support for pupils with behavioural difficulties and has a very good re-integration rate for those who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion. There are good monitoring procedures in place for children missing from education and those educated at home by parents. Statutory obligations for pupils who have special educational needs are met well.

Making a positive contribution

Outcomes in this area are good. Council services and other agencies work well together to support children and young people at key points of transition. The Council acknowledges the difficulties of planning for primary to secondary transfer where a significant number of pupils enter Camden secondary schools from other boroughs. However, the council is working well with neighbouring authorities to develop a common transition strategy. Children and young people are given good opportunities to contribute to decision making and planning and there is evidence that they have influenced service provision. Procedures are not yet embedded across all agencies to ensure that consultation is co-ordinated. For example, opportunities for children and young people to contribute to wider community initiatives are not made explicit.

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) provides high quality support for young offenders and re-offending rates in 2003-2004 were the lowest nationally. The number of looked after children contributing to their reviews is very high (already mentioned under 'Staying Safe') and The Children and Families Liaison group provides opportunities for children in need, looked after children and their families to share their views with Councillors and officers. Whilst there is some good practice in seeking the views of children with disabilities, especially those with communication difficulties, their contribution to council planning and consultation procedures is not so clearly defined.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are good. Services work well together to help young people achieve economic well-being and a high percentage of young people, including looked after children, young offenders and those with disabilities, continue in education, training or employment after the age of 16.

Outcomes for pupils in sixth forms are good, but there is a lack of consistency between school and colleges in the post-16 curriculum offer for lower attaining pupils. As a consequence, too many pupils leave school with no qualifications. Data is used well to identify and target vulnerable groups but some of the harder to reach groups including Black and Minority Ethnic and white working class pupils are not fully engaged in the 14 –19 curriculum. Following their post-16 inspection, the council recognised that there was a need to develop a broader range of vocational courses and work with other agencies to identify appropriate vocational routes for pupils with special educational needs. The development of this strategy has been slow. The council acknowledges this and is developing a sharper focus for 2005/2006 on embedding a range of vocational courses in schools. The council has improved links with Westminster Kingsway College, which is re-focusing its vocational opportunities for pupils aged 14 – 19. Arrangements for ensuring that all young people with a Statement of Special Educational Needs have a transition plan and that this is updated and monitored are good.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support for children's mental and emotional health in schools including those with learning difficulties and disabilities partnership working e.g. with the local Primary Care Trust and mental health services promoting healthy lifestyles in schools improvement in the health of looked after children. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> further reduction in teenage pregnancy rates increase percentage of schools providing two hours per week of physical activity.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good quality Youth Offending Team partnerships information sharing assessments some improvement to more appropriate duration on the child protection register and placement stability for long term looked after children in response to priority noted last year. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> further improvements required in adoptions of looked after children and placement stability for long term looked after children strengthening of support to enable vulnerable teenagers to remain at home safely rather than enter the care system.
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good quality childcare provision effective support for schools causing concern; only one school placed in serious weaknesses category in 2003; came out of category March 2005 support for pupils with behaviour difficulties and very good reintegration rates for permanently excluded pupils multi-agency working to support children and young people's education consultation and involvement of children and young people in decision making and planning provision 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attainment at Key Stage 1, especially in maths support to raise achievement of targeted groups entries and outcomes for looked after children at GCSE attendance and particularly looked after children.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion of equality of opportunities and diversity within schools and settings • analysis of data to inform planning • statutory obligations for pupils with special educational needs are met well. 	
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • percentage of looked after children contributing to reviews • arrangements to involve young people in decision making and planning • good examples of partnership working • initiatives to support young carers. • care leavers in education, employment or training. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-ordinating consultation with children and young people across agencies and developing ways in which this can be an embedded process • extending opportunities for children and young people to contribute to wider community initiatives ('putting something back') • strengthen collation of views of children with disabilities and sharing across agencies.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-operative working across agencies and settings • use of data to identify issues and target support • 81% of children with disabilities are in education, employment or training • projected improvement in the number of care leavers in education, employment or training • Ofsted considered 6th form provision in 5 schools good to very good. 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact of 14 – 19 strategy on harder to reach groups (including black and minority ethnic groups) and number of pupils achieving more than 1 GCSE • staying on rates for pupils from black and minority ethnic groups including those with English as an additional language, and pupils entitled to free school meals • KS4 outcomes for white working class girls – impact on access to further education • developing vocational pathways for pupils with special educational needs including children with disabilities.

Service management

The council has a sound understanding of its own strengths and areas for development and invests in academic partnerships to provide independent evaluation of initiatives. Consequently, there are challenging but realistic targets based on robust analysis of local need. Quality assurance and performance management systems are in place resulting in effective and coordinated planning and delivery of good quality services with some innovative solutions. Systems improvements are implemented in the social

services to provide more coordinated and effective monitoring of activity and expenditure.

Partnerships are constantly under review to identify more effective ways of working; as partnerships progress, all partners recognise the increasing number of opportunities to improve effectiveness and outcomes.

There is evident and strong commitment from members and officers Council-wide to develop new ways of working to deliver the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. The council is to identify a Lead member for schools as well as one for children, education, and social services.

Recruitment and retention are kept under review to ensure the supply of good quality staff. A revised social care recruitment and retention package has recently been agreed to increase the proportion of permanent staff, particularly in the Children in Need teams. Recruitment of some specialist teaching staff has improved but turnover of head teachers, particularly in smaller voluntary aided schools remains high. Work is underway to bring together individual strands of workforce development strategy to develop a single strategic approach to achieving workforce reform.

The challenge of maintaining high quality services, particularly on transition to adulthood, while undergoing a major re-organisation is not underestimated.

Areas for exploration in the joint area review

Being healthy

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

- impact of strategy to reduce teenage pregnancies.

Staying safe

The incidence of child abuse and neglect is minimised:

- strategy to strengthen support for secondary age children and young people to prevent them coming into local authority care.

Enjoying and achieving

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

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to enjoy and achieve:

- effectiveness of Council's monitoring and evaluation of SEN funding strategy with specific reference to how this supports improved achievement
- strategy for managing projected shortfall in school places.

Making a positive contribution

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

- council's progress in embedding consultation with all CYP, including those with learning disabilities and difficulties, across all agencies, and to what extent their views result in a change to the shape or delivery of services.

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:

- to what extent the 14 – 19 strategy has been implemented, in particular in relation to extending the curriculum and vocational pathways for vulnerable groups including lower attaining pupils and young people who are disaffected or hard to engage.

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: Yvette Stanley – Assistant Director of Children, Schools & Families

APA final judgements 2005: London Borough of Camden

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	3
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	4

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