



Bournemouth Youth Service Report

Bournemouth Children's Services Authority Area

Publication Type	Published	Reference no.
All	[Date]	[00000]

© Crown copyright 2005

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the local authority or at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction	2
Part A: Summary of the report	
Main findings	2
Part B: The youth service's contribution to <i>Every Child Matters</i> outcomes	4
Part C: Commentary on the key aspects	
Key aspect 1: Standards of young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice	4
Key aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources	5
Key aspect 3: Leadership and management	6

Introduction

1. Bournemouth youth service operates projects and provision across the borough including ten youth centres and clubs, two coffee bars, music venues, an advice and information centre, two detached youth work projects and an urban mobile team. The management team consists of the head of service, the development officer and six senior youth workers. In addition there are seven full-time and 97 part-time workers which equates to a full-time equivalent of 38.6 youth workers. The service is located within the inclusion and achievement business unit of children's services. The budget made available by the local authority in 2004-05 was £1,578,310, well above the national average. It is estimated that at least 25% of young people aged 13-19 are reached annually by the service.

2. The joint area review (JAR) was enhanced to enable coverage of the youth service. Inspectors considered the youth service's self-assessment and met with officers and a cross section of staff. They reviewed key service documentation and carried out direct observation of a sample of youth work sessions across the borough including four in Boscombe and Springbourne as part of the JAR neighbourhood study area.

Part A: Summary of the report

Main findings

Effectiveness and value for money

3. Bournemouth council delivers an adequate youth service for its users and provides satisfactory value for money. Young people's achievement is good as is the quality of youth work practice overall, although standards vary across the service. Staff are well qualified, committed and experienced. Leadership and management though adequate have significant weaknesses. Partnership work is good, effectively extending the reach of the service. Curriculum management needs improvement as many workers lack the skills to implement the new curriculum policy. Performance management is weak. A lack of robust management information prevents managers from having a thorough grasp of the service's strengths and weaknesses and determining how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to meet the needs of all young people.

Strengths

- Achievement is good, particularly in multi agency partnership work.
- The service provides a broad range of provision.
- Staff are well qualified.
- Partnership working is productive.
- Safe-guarding procedures are effective.

Areas for development

- Performance management is weak.
- Not all youth work is sufficiently well planned, educative or challenging.
- Recording and monitoring of young people's progress and achievement are inconsistent.
- The effectiveness with which managers discharge their responsibilities is variable.

Key aspect inspection grades

Key aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	3
	Quality of youth work practice	3
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	2
3	Strategic and operational leadership and management	2

The table above shows overall grades about provision. Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale:

Grade 4: A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users;

Grade 3: A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users;

Grade 2: A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users;

Grade 1: A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users.

Part B: The youth service's contribution to *Every Child Matters* outcomes

4. The service makes a good contribution to outcomes in a number of areas. The revised curriculum, based on the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters* is being implemented with partners in all centres and projects. Young people improve their knowledge and are encouraged to reflect on the consequences of risky behaviour and health matters. They are well informed about the range of additional support and help within the borough. A number of centres place a strong emphasis on healthy eating and involve young people in preparing healthy meals. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the safety of young people. Youth work is enabling young people to develop a range of skills and is enhancing their confidence and self esteem. There are good examples of how the service has supported young people to make their voice heard in the borough. Good partnership work with the Connexions service is improving the identification and support of more vulnerable young people.

Part C: Commentary on the key aspects

Key aspect 1: Standards of young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice

5. From the sample of work observed, the standard of young people's achievement was good overall. Achievement in multi-agency partnership work was particularly high. Where achievement was highest, young people demonstrated good listening and team-work skills and worked together effectively, often independently of youth workers. Their self-confidence had been enhanced particularly where they had been involved in consulting with other young people and developing and disseminating information. However, the level of achievement for a significant minority of young people is too low. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and are particularly enthusiastic about achievement through their involvement in the Special Olympics and sports teams.

6. Very good use is made of accreditation by some centres to motivate and challenge young people and to enhance their learning. In one centre young people were enthusiastically taking advantage of the wide range of learning opportunities available to them through the Youth Achievement Award which included making presentations to the Community Safety Partnership. However, young people do not have equality of access to accreditation across the borough. The inspection confirmed the self-assessment analysis that there is more to do in recording and monitoring the achievement and progress of young people other than through the use of formal accreditation systems.

7. Young people are keen to take on responsibility, act as advocates on behalf of their peers and take decisions that will affect the quality of provision in the service through the Youth Council, Youth Action House and project work. For example, young women from Glenmoor School participating in a volunteering project had raised money and provided a meal for homeless people in their area. Generally though, there are too few opportunities for young people to lead and organise within centre and project work.

8. The quality of youth work practice is good overall. Youth workers are committed, enthusiastic and form very good relationships with young people. In the better practice, youth workers demonstrate a good understanding of how to marry up learning outcomes with activities and resources resulting in young people developing self-confidence and showing good personal development. In the poorer practice, youth workers are unclear about devising learning outcomes and consequently young people are given insufficient opportunities and challenge to increase their knowledge and skills and take on responsibility.

Key aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources

9. The service has a broad range of provision, including targeted work with priority groups, centre based programmes, detached work, drop-in centres, support groups and residential activities. However, the extent to which provision is based on a coherent rationale and meets the needs of all young people at a local level varies. Good programmes are provided for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities although they tend to be male-focused. Other programmes targeting priority groups include work with young parents, gay, lesbian and bisexual young people, those at risk of exclusion from school or participating in anti-social behaviour and those at risk of self-harm.

10. A new curriculum policy based on the five outcomes of Every Child Matters-Change for Children is being implemented but is not yet embedded in practice. Youth workers are applying the curriculum themes, particularly being healthy and enjoying and achieving, to their programme and session planning. There are inconsistencies in the skill level of youth workers to plan, deliver and evaluate work which young people find enjoyable and educative and which is based on good local needs assessment. Job descriptions set out clear curriculum management responsibilities for all youth workers but staff are not consistently discharging these responsibilities.

11. There are sufficient staff to implement the curriculum although they are not always effectively deployed. This results in high levels of staffing in some sessions and insufficient staff in others. Staff are well qualified and the strong culture of training within the service is having a positive impact on practice. Appropriate policies relating to the safety of young people and workers are in place. Youth workers are aware of child protection procedures and have attended appropriate training. Accommodation is good overall. A Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (SENDA) 2001 audit of centres was carried out in 2002 and action

has been carried out to address some of the recommendations regarding access. The service has a limited range of specialist resources and currently there is no strategy for their development and deployment.

Key aspect 3: Leadership and management

12. Strategic and operational management are adequate. The local authority is working closely with partners to provide leadership to develop high quality services for children and young people. Partnership work is good at strategic and operational levels and involves shared use of buildings, funding arrangements and staff secondments. Voluntary organisations value the assistance given to building their capacity through the work of the part-time voluntary sector development worker and their access to training and curriculum resources. Relationships with the Connexions Service are very good. All centres have a Connexions Personal Adviser attached to them and joint work takes place through the detached team and projects targeted at more vulnerable young people.

13. There are a number of good examples of the way in which the youth service has supported youth representation within the local authority and involved young people in management decisions but it recognises the need to develop a more consistent strategic approach both within the service and across the borough. The head of service has taken the lead in developing the 'engaging young people's network'. Working together with the Connexions local manager and the head of the Children's Fund and supported by a multi-agency operational group, a strategy is being produced which will give clarity across the borough on the participation and engagement of young people in decisions that affect them.

14. The service has a wide range of provision for young people including the most vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). Although it has an equal opportunities policy, there is no specific policy concerning race. There was little evidence during the inspection of steps taken to promote positive race relations within the curriculum and in centres and there was limited engagement by young people from some minority ethnic groups.

15. The service has a good variety of mechanisms for communication and staff morale is good. Policies and processes for the curriculum, staff induction, supervision, line management and appraisals are in place but operational managers apply these policies inconsistently. For example, the supervision process lacks formality for some staff and the varied approaches to session planning and evaluation in centres does not provide an effective framework to support staff. A number of staff do not develop the leadership and management skills they need to improve their own practice and that of others.

16. Expenditure on youth work by the local authority is very high, being well within the top quartile nationally. The service attracts a reasonable amount of additional funding, adding 22% to its budget from external sources. However performance management of the service is inadequate. Difficulties experienced

with both a paper and IT based management information system have left the service without robust information until a new system becomes fully operational in the next financial year. Consequently the service cannot determine accurately the percentage of young people in the 13-19 age range it is reaching and whether it has effectively and efficiently deployed its resources to meet their needs. The allocation of resources to centres is historical and not related to local needs, and no work has been carried out on the cost effectiveness of provision. A well-established system of observing practice enables the service to identify reasonably effectively areas of strength and weakness but the lack of critical analysis by managers carrying out the observations has resulted in the service over-estimating the quality of young people's achievements and youth work practice.