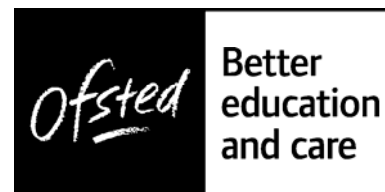


Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

T 08456-404045  
[edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk)



Making Social Care  
Better for People



Mr Roger Luxton - Director of Education,  
Arts and Libraries  
Mr Simon Hart - Interim Director of  
Social Services  
Ms Meena Kishinani - Head of  
Performance and Strategy, Social  
Services  
London Borough of Barking and  
Dagenham

**1 December 2005**

Dear Colleagues

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

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 4 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 satisfactory. Partnership work with health agencies is well established and there are substantial plans to consolidate health improvements for all children in the coming year. Performance to improve the health of looked after children has been effective, particularly the work of the multi-disciplinary Looked After Children's Health and Education Support (LACHES) team. Healthy lifestyles are actively promoted. Most schools are participating in the healthy schools programme with more than twenty per cent achieving the National Healthy Schools Standard. The children's centres target parents to promote healthy eating. School inspection reports show that pupils are participating in sporting activities on a regular basis and that sex and relationship education is taught well as part of the curriculum.

The limited capacity of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is being reviewed to promote better mental health services to children and young people. Similarly, a review of the services that provide support for children with disabilities is in place, as recommended by the Children's Service Inspection in January 2005. The robust action plan will be closely monitored.

The rate of teenage pregnancies remains high. There is a multi-agency team, including a teenage pregnancy co-ordinator, which is part of the strategic management of this issue. The authority has put in place plans that focus on improving the sexual health of young people as well as continuing to provide good support services for pregnant teenagers and teenage families.

## **Staying safe**

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. There is a robust action plan addressing the serious weaknesses identified in the Children's Services Inspection in January 2005. In particular, a restructuring of the referral and assessment team and substantial improvements to stabilise the staffing situation are evident.

A Serious Case Review has identified actions for improvement for all agencies concerned. Effective arrangements are in place to monitor these actions to improve the safety of children and young people.

More extensive use of Family Group Conferencing is taking place and as a result, there is more effective intervention at an earlier stage. A joint commissioning strategy, using a comprehensive analysis of children's needs, is being developed to ensure effective placements are made for all looked after young people. All of the out of borough placements are being reviewed in line with the specific needs of individual children.

Plans to review services for children with disabilities are in place and the the Council anticipate completion of the review by November 2005, as required by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), January 2005.

Improved performance in reviews of Child Protection cases, length of time on the register and timescales for assessments are evident and work continues to improve the quality of assessments. Stability of placements has improved, with effective performance in the use of fostering and adoption services. The authority is working corporately to further develop fostering services. This will include local expansion and a specialist service to meet complex needs.

There is a need to improve preventative services to reduce the high levels of Looked after children and children on the Child Protection Register. The development of 14 children's centres, targeted in specific areas, will deliver this improvement.

The authority has recently become a Local Agreement Area and, along with increased investment and strong political support, the authority anticipates rapid improvements. A Safeguarding Board is operational and the council has already brought forward the proposed appointment of a Director of Children's Services by twelve months.

There are substantial initiatives to address workforce planning issues in both the short and long term. A new remuneration package has been agreed and more vacancies are being permanently filled so showing a reduction in staff turnover.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

Outcomes in this area show an improving trend and are good overall. The number of additional day-care places has increased as part of the neighbourhood nurseries programme. Attainment on entry to nursery education is very low and the quality of early years provision overall does not support children well enough to enable them to meet the early learning goals. Results in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national averages and above those of statistical neighbours. The support provided by the education service is targeted on the lowest performing schools, which showed an increase in performance as a result.

Standards in Key Stage 2 have been maintained against a pattern of increasing pupil mobility. In English and mathematics results are below the national average but in line with averages for similar authorities. Rates of improvement match those nationally and for statistical neighbours. Results in science are above those for similar authorities and in line with the national average. Boys in particular have made significant gains in mathematics and English where their performance improved to above the national average. Fewer schools performed below the floor targets and schools receiving additional support by the education service had improved results compared with other schools.

Key Stage 3 standards are improving and are now in line with those of statistical neighbours. However they remain below the national average in English and well below in mathematics and science. Results at GCSE have shown steady improvement in recent years and are now above those for statistical neighbours with the good gains made in 2002/03 sustained. Progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 is better than average and between Key Stages 3 and 4 it is average. However progress between Key Stages 2 and 3 remains below average in spite of showing some improvement.

The proportion of looked after children gaining one or more GCSE is improving due to the increased support provided for this group. However, their performance overall remains below the national average. The LACHES Team works closely with schools, both within and outside the local authority, to monitor the attainment and attendance of looked after children closely. All schools in the authority now have a member of staff and a governor with specific responsibility for looked after children.

Attendance is improving year on year but is still below average. The attendance of looked after children also shows improvement and is now in line with the national average. The rate of permanent exclusions increased in 2004 but, due to action by the

local authority, the rate has subsequently been reduced. However the number of fixed term exclusions remains high.

Support for schools placed in formal categories of concern by Ofsted is satisfactory but some schools fail to make the necessary improvements in spite of substantial targeted support. Education services are now taking a more forceful stance with schools causing concern. Support is now co-ordinated through comprehensive action plans for each identified school and monitoring is more rigorous. Intervention has resulted in improved performance due to a greater level of challenge to senior managers in schools.

There is a high level of inclusion of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream schools. Children and young people are offered suitable placements as close to their homes as possible. Provision, support and advice are effective and the authority meets a wide spectrum of needs effectively.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. The Youth Offending Team (YOT) has been successful in reducing offending, which is now below average for young people under 16, although it remains above average for the over 16 group. The Youth Involvement Support Panel (YISP) scheme, aimed at 8-13 year olds at risk of offending, is the fifth highest performing in the country.

Children and young people are encouraged to give their views in a wide variety of ways and participate actively. These include a recently updated directory of children's services, forums, newsletters, access to a children's rights officer and a complaints leaflet designed with children and young people. Schools use pupils' views to inform their own self-assessments and school councils are beginning to exert their influence on school policy and decision making.

The number of looked after children who contribute to their reviews is below average. There has been a lot of work carried out to improve the quality of young people's involvement in their reviews with some chairing the meeting.

Children with disabilities and special educational needs contribute to their reviews with the support of a voluntary organisation for disabled children. As part of the review of these services for children with disabilities, respite care needs to improve. There is good support to school children who are carers in their families.

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

Outcomes in this area are satisfactory. The quality of education provided for 14 to 19 year olds is satisfactory and the proportion of young people progressing to higher

education or training is improving although it is still below national averages. The authority works well with the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and other partners to plan and deliver post 16 education. The percentage of looked after children entering education, employment or training when they leave school is high and well above the average for London. The authority works with faith groups, has effective language support services and continues to consider ways of effectively meeting the needs of a growing black and minority ethnic population. Improvements are needed to increase the take up of direct payments for Children with disabilities and their carers.

## SUMMARY

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for improvement</b>
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the promotion of healthy lifestyles for children and young people</li> <li>• improved health of looked after children.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce the rates of teenage pregnancy and improve sexual health services for children and young people</li> <li>• review capacity for CAMHS and services for children with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stability of placements</li> <li>• improved performance on reviews, timeliness of assessments and length of time on Child Protection Register.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implement robust Action Plan to improve safeguarding</li> <li>• develop joint commissioning strategy and review all out of borough placements</li> <li>• develop preventative services and reduce high levels of looked after children</li> <li>• implement action plans from Serious Case Review.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional curriculum expertise</li> <li>• high level of educational inclusion in mainstream schools</li> <li>• improved proportion of looked after children achieving 1A*-G and 5 A*-C.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of early years provision</li> <li>• support for science and mathematics at key stage 3</li> <li>• rates of unauthorised absence.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the reduction in offending by under 16s</li> <li>• good range of systems to encourage positive contribution.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proportion of looked after children who contribute to their reviews.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Achieving economic well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the number of looked after children in education, employment or training (EET)</li> <li>• the increasing proportion of young people progressing to higher education</li> <li>• good collaboration with LSC and partners in delivering post 16 education and training.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access to direct payments for children with disabilities and their carers.</li> </ul>
---	--

**Service management**

Effective working partnerships are evident. The authority has good strategies to promote collaborative working. For example the LACHES team has contributed very effectively to improving the health and education outcomes for looked after children. Integrated working is well established as shown by healthy lifestyle initiative.

There is a strong base for further development, especially of joint commissioning and joint budgets with health colleagues. The proposed analysis of needs and priorities will involve the views of carers, parents, children and young people to develop services.

The authority has a strong corporate performance management system and knows its own strengths and weaknesses. It has a realistic understanding of the areas for improvement. The new chief executive has established clear lines of accountability and comprehensive, ambitious strategic plans within the authority.

There is a well established corporate parenting group, strong political support and increased funding to develop services. The pace of change has accelerated towards the development of a Children’s Trust, embracing the cultural change necessary to secure improvement for all children.

There has been high staff turnover during the year and effective measures are now in place to stabilise and monitor staff turnover closely. There is a workforce strategy in place and a range of training and leadership development opportunities for staff.

There is a strong commitment across the authority and with partners to effectively meet the needs of an increasingly diverse local population and ensure equality issues are integrated into all aspects of service delivery.

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

### **Being healthy**

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

- reduction in rates of teenage pregnancies
- review of services for children with disabilities with partner agencies.

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

- improved capacity of 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:*

- developments in commissioning
- implementation of Serious Case Review action plans.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

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

- the quality of early years provision.

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

- the performance of identified targeted groups.

### **Making a positive contribution**

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

- improvement to respite care and services for children with disabilities.

## **Achieving economic well-being**

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

- promote the use of direct payments for children with disabilities and their carers.

## **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 Barking and Dagenham

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>2</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>2</b>
The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people	<b>2</b>

---

### 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