

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045

email: edhelpline@ofsted.gov.uk



Making Social Care
Better for People



Mr Terry Redmayne
Director of Children Families and Learning
Middlesbrough Borough Authority
PO Box 69, Vancouver House
Gurney Street
Middlesbrough TS1 1EL

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Dear Mr Redmayne

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF MIDDLESBROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL'S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 2005

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 20 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.

The authority is very well engaged with partners in the development and implementation of the Middlesbrough Healthy Schools scheme and the scheme is well monitored by the School Improvement Service. The scheme is extensive and is succeeding in generating healthy outcomes for the whole of the school age population of the area. More than 85% of schools have achieved Gold Standard. However, the authority needs more effective mechanisms for monitoring the impact of the wide range of healthy schools themes, with clearly articulated outcome indicators to inform future self-assessment and future strategic and operational priorities.

There has been a reduction in the rate of teenage pregnancies of 13% since 1998 and the authority is considered by the Government Office North East to have promising prospects for further reductions. The authority is well engaged in initiatives to address teenage pregnancies and associated sexual health and relationship issues across a broad front.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) activity is extensive, well organised and well sourced, with a discreet service for looked after children. The health of looked after children is well monitored (PAF C19 at band 5), and promoted through the work of a dedicated nurse and a number of health programmes/initiatives. The

health of looked after children, and their views about it are reported to the Corporate Parenting Board for monitoring.

There is good evidence of targeted engagement of vulnerable young people and families in relation to substance misuse. The authority is in a designated high focus area for drug abuse and is responding actively to develop new strategies to protect vulnerable young people. A joint commissioning manager has been appointed to develop strategic planning, particularly in relation to workforce competencies and universal education for young people.

The authority has identified the need to improve the take up of preventative services by children from the black and minority ethnic community.

The authority has provided very little evidence of how its partnership with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) has contributed to the health and wellbeing of children in the area-

Staying safe

Overall, the outcomes in this area are good. However, there is very little analysis in the authority's self-assessment for this outcome and no significant identification of appropriate strategies to improve outcomes.

The authority is working very constructively with its partners to ensure children are protected and in the development of safeguarding processes for the future. Sure Start is extensively engaged with the authority and other agencies on a broad range of initiatives that promote the well-being of children both directly and indirectly.

The care, welfare and health and safety of pupils in all schools is judged to be good or very good. All schools are meeting statutory requirements in relation to child protection.

Referrals of children in need have significantly dropped this year below the levels of similar authorities and the number of re-referrals has risen significantly. This change in the pattern of referrals is a result of improved processes at the initial referral and assessment stages and all children who need a service from the authority do in fact receive one, or are appropriately signposted to other agencies. Core assessments of children in need have more than tripled, but the authority feels that despite the greater pressure on resources the assessments are appropriate and are being efficiently undertaken and completed.

There has been a rise in the level of child protection referrals and registrations over the past year. Child protection activity is needs led and the authority is carefully monitoring all aspects and is responding to, and managing cases appropriately. There is a high proportion of child protection registrations in which parental substance misuse and domestic violence are key issues.

There has been further improvement in the stability of placements for looked after children, both overall and in the longer term for those children who have been in foster care for over 2 years. A high proportion of looked after children are fostered or placed for adoption. However, there has been a substantial drop in the percentage of looked after children adopted within 12 months of the best interest decision, and it is now below the level in similar authorities.

Anti-bullying policies are in place in all settings for children and young people. Although there is a relatively low level of bullying in residential settings there have been incidences that have caused concern and these have required action from the authority and the homes concerned.

The authority has identified the need to develop culturally sensitive social care services to improve access for children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities. However, there is little evidence that the authority has focussed sufficient attention on ensuring the safety of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Enjoying and achieving

Overall outcomes in this area are satisfactory. There are some strengths, most notably in the rate of improvement in attainment in schools from a low baseline and in tackling long standing issues of attendance and exclusions. Nevertheless, there are weaknesses in support for looked after children.

There is a general pattern of improvement across all phases of education. Middlesbrough is one of only 11 authorities nationally to have improved year on year across all key stages 2002–2004. Nevertheless, attainment generally remains below the national averages and in similar authorities and, despite improvement, pupils do not make consistent progress as they move through their schooling. Value added measures for Key Stage 1 to 2 indicate that pupils are making better progress than the national average. However, between Key Stage 2 to 3, pupils make slightly less progress than the national average and the value added reduces over the longer term; pupils' progress between Key Stage 2 and GCSE is well below that nationally.

In 2004, attainment at Key Stage 1 was below similar authorities and nationally. At Key Stage 2, results in 2004 were below the national average but better than in similar authorities in science and mathematics and in line for English. At Key Stage 3 results were below average on all counts. There has been a steady improvement in the percentage of pupils gaining five GCSE passes at A* to C over the last five years, but the figures are still below those nationally and just below those in similar authorities. Limited progress has been made in improving the percentage of pupils obtaining one GCSE pass A* to C over the last five years; the figures are below those of similar

authorities and the national figures. There is a major gap between the attainment of boys in comparison to girls.

Improvement in the educational achievement of looked after children is a priority for the authority but systems for tracking their educational performance are not sufficiently robust. Only 46.2% of Year 11 pupils in care sat one or more GCSEs in 2004, much lower than the average for similar authorities. The proportion of young people leaving care with one GCSE or GNVQ has improved significantly and the percentage of care leavers who achieved five or more GCSEs A* to C is better than similar authorities, but at 4% is still lower than the national average. Only one-third of looked after children have an up to date personal education plan and one-third do not have one at all. There has, however, been a very positive reduction in the rate of schools absences of looked after children.

The attainments of minority ethnic young people in the 14 to 19 phase has recently been very good, outperforming all pupils in Middlesbrough. They slightly exceeded the 40% target set for the achievement of five A* to C GCSE passes in 2004. The proportion of children with statements of special educational need is high, but all are issued within the required timescales

The authority has successfully reduced the rates of unauthorised absence in both phases. In primary schools they are lower than similar authorities and in line with the national figure, and in secondary they are lower than both measures. However, rates of authorised absence remain above those in similar authorities and, despite reducing over the last four years, are still well above the national average in secondary schools. Exclusion rates in primary schools are below those of similar authorities and the number of permanent exclusions in secondary schools is low.

No school has been judged by Ofsted to be underachieving since 2000. The percentage of schools requiring special measures since 1993 is low and below similar authorities and nationally. Similarly, the percentage of schools identified as having serious weaknesses since 1994 is low. In 2003/04, ten primary schools were inspected and leadership and management was judged to be satisfactory or better in all cases. One secondary school and one pupil referral unit were inspected in the same period. Leadership and management were judged, in both cases, to be good.

Making a positive contribution

The outcomes in this area are good and there is a growing culture of consultation with children and young people in the local area. Young people are widely consulted and involved in contributing to decision-making, policy development and practice through a variety of different groups throughout the area.

In 90% of primary schools inspected, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good or very good. The Aimhigher initiative supports many young people successfully

to achieve their full potential. Connexions is working to respond to the needs of children and young people and plays a significant part in a range of activities targeted at vulnerable groups across the area. There is good evidence that this work has been valued by the majority of young people themselves. The review system for looked after children ensures that all children are able to communicate their views to reviews and a very high percentage of them have done so. However, there is little evidence of ways in which children with special educational needs and/or disabilities overall are helped to make a positive contribution.

There has been significant effort by the authority to target overall offending by young people. The South Tees Youth Offending Service is well engaged with Middlesbrough schools, Connexions, the Police and the Drug Action Team in working to reduce first time offending and re-offending. The most recent figures show a reduction in first time offending of 14.6% and a reduction of re-offending of 16.7%. The authority is rightly concerned that, despite these efforts, the rates of offending by looked after children has almost doubled from a low level last year and is in line with similar authorities and that nationally.

Achieving economic well-being

Outcomes in this area are good overall. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of young people in education, employment or training at 16. The 14 to 19 Strategic Steering Group is influential in coordinating, planning, monitoring and evaluating 14 to 19 provision in Middlesbrough and provides a good example of effective partnership working.

The Ofsted 14 to 19 area review of education and training in 2005 highlighted a number of strengths, including the effectiveness of the 14 to 19 Steering Group, the successful school improvement strategy and significant reduction in the population of young people not in education, employment and training at age 16. Nevertheless, the report identified that too many students at Key Stage 4 and post-16 were not making the progress expected of them. GCE A-level points scores are below the national average and those in similar authorities. The report also identified a number of weaknesses for the authority, local Learning and Skills Council and their partners to overcome. These included insufficient prominence given in 14 to raising achievement and increasing participation 14 to 19, and the ineffective analysis and use of data to inform decision-making. The authority is rightly concerned about the overall quality of post-16 provision and efforts are being made to address these with further education establishments and through the evolving partnership arrangements.

The authority provides an adequate Youth Service with a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The quality of the majority of youth work is good and young people in contact with the Youth Service make good progress in their personal and social development and attain high levels of achievement. The Youth Service makes a

valuable contribution to the authority's corporate priorities. Effective work is taking place with the local Connexions partnership and the majority of voluntary sector providers. High levels of additional income are acquired to supplement the services' budget.

The authority is working to improve the level of care leavers engaged in employment, education and training by increasingly initiating needs assessments and pathway planning at age 15, supported by personal advisors. The leaving care service has a range of initiatives to support young people to achieve economic well-being especially around housing, personal development, education, employment and training. All looked after children with disabilities have a transition plan. However, the proportion of care leavers in education, employment and training is below the national average. Transition planning for children with disabilities provides a comprehensive range of planning and services on an individual basis, starting in Year 9 and supported by personal advisors. The proportion of children in need with disabilities receiving social care services is good. The use of direct payments to support children with disabilities and/or their carers is very good and is well above both similar authorities and the national average. Nonetheless, there is insufficient high quality provision for young people with special educational needs and disabilities in post-16 education, outside of special schools.

SUMMARY

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Middlesbrough Healthy Schools Scheme • teenage pregnancies, sexual health and relationships • CAMHS services • the health of looked after children. 	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measuring outcomes and monitoring the impact of healthy schools themes • the take-up of preventative services by the black and minority ethnic community.
<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' care, welfare and health and safety in all school settings • all schools meeting child protection statutory requirements • stability of placements of looked after children • levels of fostering and adoption for children of all ages • procedures for referral and assessments of children in need. 	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of performance dataset to inform strategic planning and operational priorities • the percentage of looked after children placed for adoption within 12 months of best interest decisions • the development of culturally sensitive social care services in relation to black and minority ethnic communities.

<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steady improvements year on year of educational attainment across all key stages between 2002–2004 • value added scores Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 • steady improvement year on year in pupils gaining five GCSE passes at A* to C over the last 5 years • exclusion rates and unauthorised absence rates in schools • percentage of schools causing concern • absence rates of looked after children. 	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value added scores Key Stage 2 to end of Key Stage 4 • attainment of boys in comparison to girls • authorised absence rates in school • the number of looked after children with an up to date personal education plan • overall attainment of looked after children.
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in primary schools • children’s ability to communicate their views to reviews • the Aimhigher initiative • the work of Connexions • young people’s ability to contribute to decision-making and policy development • reductions in youth offending. 	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rates of offending by looked after children.
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Middlesbrough learning Partnership 14-19 strategy and partnership work • an extensive range of vocational options available to those at risk of exclusion and drop out in year 10 and 11 • the proportion of young people in education, employment or training at 16 • support for young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and those in complementary education, through transition reviews and the Connexions partnership • the proportion of children in need 	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-level points scores to national and similar authority levels • too many pupils at Key Stage 4 and post-16 are not making the progress expected of them • the percentage of care leavers in employment, education or training at age 19 • insufficient high quality provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in post-16 education, outside special schools.

<p>with disabilities receiving social care services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use of direct payments to support disabled children and/or their carers well above comparators • the quality of youth work and young people’s good progress and achievements. 	
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Service management

Middlesbrough is currently an excellent authority under the CPA framework. The most recent Audit Commission report identifies that, in conjunction with its partners, the authority has a strong and ambitious vision for the future, a clear set of priorities to achieve that vision, and effective mechanisms and a track record of focussing its resources and efforts on improving performance in these priority areas. There is evidence that this capacity has already had a positive impact on improving a number of outcomes for children and young people. The council has a clear vision and has established a strategic direction for this work. It is working hard to raise aspirations among the community and has established a process of consultation both with stakeholders and young people. The authority collaborates closely and works well with local partners. Links with the local Learning Skills Council, Connexions, the local strategic partnership and neighbouring authorities are good. Collaborative work with health partners has also been successful in improving outcomes across a range of different settings including the Middlesbrough Healthy Schools Scheme. The impact of targeted projects such as Sure Start, school improvement, and improving support for care leavers all confirm the authority’s ability to identify, prioritise and deliver.

There is a clear vision and strategic direction for the establishment of children’s services defined by elected members and senior officers. Satisfactory progress has been made in preparation for this and in developing a children, families and learning plan as a result of effective work by the senior management team and partner organisations. Arrangements are now in place for further development which need to be carefully monitored. The Children, Families and Learning Plan (2005/2006) is an impressive and well written document which identifies a number of priority areas with an explanation of the challenges and key targets relating to each priority. In contrast, however, there was a lack of consistency in presentation in the self-assessment and too much emphasis on description with insufficient attention to outcomes. The self-assessment also failed significantly to analyse and take full account of the information and outcome indicators in the dataset.

The authority has a very well developed scrutiny procedure. The Mayor holds key managers for Children, Families and Learning to account through reports and review sessions where individual responsibilities are reported to him. Financial planning and

resource management are well developed within the authority, ensuring that there is coherence and consistency at both directorate and corporate level. For example, good progress has been made in planning for and dealing with anticipated problems relating to surplus places both in primary and secondary schools. The number of unfilled teacher vacancies is significantly below similar authorities and the national figure. Service planning is good. However, there is more work to do to develop performance management consistently across the authority building on the performance management framework for the local strategic partnership, providing more specific reporting on outputs and clarity of partners' roles and responsibilities.

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 role and impact of the PCT in contributing to the health and well-being of children in the area.

Staying safe

Children and young people are provided with a safe environment:

- the authority's monitoring and analysis of its performance in terms of direct outcomes for children and how well this informs strategies
- support for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to stay safe.

Enjoying and achieving

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

- the effectiveness of approaches to improve the value added to pupils' learning and attainment at Key Stage 2, 3 and 4.

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:

- action has been taken and progress made in dealing with the findings of the 14-19 area report (published June 2005) relating to education and training.

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: Middlesbrough Council

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	3

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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