



Making Social Care  
Better for People



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**1 December 2005**

Dear Colleagues

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

This letter summarises the findings of the meeting held on 21/6/05 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**

Performance in this area is generally satisfactory. The general health risk appraisal is better than the national average, a high percentage of Bromley schools are participating in the Healthy Schools programme and looked after children (LAC) have regular health checks. However teenage pregnancy has increased by 20.3% since 1998. There are mixed results in relation to diet and, despite a recent improvement, children are not yet undertaking sufficient exercise.

There is an extensive network of services providing mental health support for children and young people, their families and carers and a new psychiatrist and senior social worker have recently been appointed to the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service. A LAC team has also been established, which, with the corporate parenting team, ensures good targeted provision aimed at looked after children.

### **Staying safe**

Pupils' care welfare and safety are generally good. The Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) has developed comprehensive multi-agency training to help front line staff identify risks and how they should be managed. The Bromley Educational Business Partnership (EBP) has taken a strategic lead for the South London Consortium

in the implementation of 'Safeguarding Children' and the placement of young people in work related activities.

An improved social care referral and assessment process is consistently applied across the borough, which is now divided into two districts with strengthened senior management oversight. Although communication with the Local Education Authority is greatly improved, further improvements are planned and the Self Assessment Report identifies a need to strengthen relationships between children's social services and schools and also to further improve tracking the whereabouts of children and young people. The adoption service is of high quality, a quality assurance panel reviews care plans for all LAC and there is a comprehensive programme of training on issues of Special Educational Needs (SEN) & disability in the Early Years. However the stability of long term placements for looked after children is an area which requires further improvement.

Relationships with the police and other agencies are good with prompt and appropriate handling of cases, and a multi agency vulnerable children's panel has been established to improve the co-ordination of support for children and young people at risk. Bromley has not had any serious case reviews in the past year, although the ACPC has considered a number of management reviews of cases where there were concerns about the quality of practice; this has led to more effective consultation with and involvement of foster carers in case planning.

Equality of opportunity has been improved by the appointment of a black and minority ethnic officer, under the management of the Bromley Racial Equalities Council. Fostering capacity has been further improved by the creation of a fostering recruitment manager post to focus on the recruitment of carers from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and those who can take older children.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

Outcomes in this area are good overall. Most early years provision is satisfactory or better. There is some good practice in integrated support services in deprived areas and a good focus on SEN, disability and inclusion in the early years. There are weaknesses to address in the quality of a small minority of settings and in how well provision matches local needs.

End of Key Stage 1 test results are generally comparable to those of similar authorities and to national averages, while attainment in reading is above average. Standards in Key Stages 2 and 3 are consistently above national averages. At Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils achieving 5+A\*-C at GCSE is above average and has been in the top 30% of authorities nationally for the last 5 years. Progress between Key Stages 1 and 2, and 2 to 3, is in line with expectations. However, that between Key Stages 2 and 3 and Key Stage 4 is below what might be expected from prior attainment. The achievements at GCSE of looked after children have fallen and are below the council's comparators and national average. The authority has started to improve its focus on ways of supporting the achievement of looked after children. It has also identified some underachievement amongst pupils of Black African and Caribbean heritage and is developing a strategy for addressing this problem, having secured national funding.

Concerted efforts to tackle problems relating to attendance and exclusion, particularly in primary schools, have begun to take effect, and rates of both have declined in 2004/05. The number of looked after children absent from school has, however significantly increased and is above the council's comparators and national average. A systematic review of SEN provision is underway, to improve in-borough provision so that it can meet diverse needs locally in a cost effective way. Advisory expertise for special schools has been improved. In three schools causing concern, progress in improving provision has been limited, and in one case, unsatisfactory.

There are good opportunities for enrichment both within and outside of schools. There is a strong programme of voluntary learning opportunities available to children and young people, including activity-based 'day camps', drama and music, and a scheme to improve access to leisure facilities and sport. Other schemes to enhance opportunities include extended school arrangements with linked childcare. The authority and primary care trust are collaborating to provide school holiday and Saturday schemes for children with disabilities. Weaknesses in the management of the youth service, which is provided by a contractor, are being tackled urgently.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Outcomes in this area are good overall. In early years provision, more support is needed by a minority of providers with regard to children's behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. The proportion of looked after children in education, employment or training has improved. The authority has taken steps to improve this further, for example through use of an environmental studies field centre to prepare young people for entry to employment. The rate of reoffending by young people has fallen, but young offenders' participation in education, employment and training is below average, and the status of too many in this regard is unknown. The youth offending team works effectively with young people who are at risk of offending to provide them with preventative and diversionary programmes. There is close liaison between the YOT, schools, and Connexions to address the needs of individual young people and to encourage their participation. However, the number of looked after children receiving a final warning / reprimand or conviction has increased and is above the council's comparators and national average.

The views of children and young people are collected in a range of ways. When decisions are made about their future, individual looked after children and young people are consulted, and there are arrangements to ensure that their views are listened to. Further work is in hand to encourage greater involvement of looked after children and young people in the reviewing process, and to help them participate more effectively. The recording of young people's views is embedded in the practice of statutory agencies. Connexions specialist personal advisers support young people with SEN in expressing their views, and there is a multi-agency forum which ensures that vulnerable young people's views are taken into account when decisions are made about their future. On a broader front, children and young people are consulted by the authority about developments in its services, for example, during the reviews of SEN provision and the respite service. However, the authority has identified the need to look at the overall scope, coherence and impact of its engagement with young people. The collection of children's views on the curriculum is not strongly developed.

Activities to help young people make a positive contribution include schools councils which have been established in all schools, some relatively recently. An active education business partnership supports young people's transition to adult life through programmes which develop citizenship, employability, environmental awareness and enterprising behaviour among young people.

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

Outcomes in this area are good overall. There are good participation rates by young people at age 16 and a relatively small proportion are not in education, employment or training, although take-up of work-based training is low. There has been good collaboration between the authority, schools and other local partners, such as the two colleges of further education, in the development of 14-19 opportunities. A directory of local provision across all providers, including work-based training, is now in place to inform young people and their parents. There has been good progress in developing vocational opportunities at Key Stage 4, which are attracting good participation by pupils. There is good liaison with Connexions, which ensures a coordinated response to the needs of all groups, particularly the most vulnerable. A programme of work experience and employability skills by the education business partnership, and a mentoring initiative, help to support all pupils and particularly the potentially disaffected.

Attainment by pupils on GCE/VCE courses is broadly in line with that achieved nationally, but below that in similar authorities. There are disparities in standards between schools. The pass rates on advanced courses other than GCE, and on the intermediate level vocational qualifications taken post-16 in about half of secondary schools, are above average. The authority is working with schools and the Learning and Skills Council to develop collaboration between schools on sixth form provision. The aim is to improve quality and value for money, and to increase the proportion of lower level provision available in schools post-16. These developments include a focus on pathways for young people with SEN. There are improved arrangements to provide housing and lodgings for children in need, to support their economic well-being. Pathway planning for looked after children is being reviewed in consultation with young people to ensure that it fully meets their needs. Transition planning for young people with SEN begins at 14 and is supported by specialist Connexions advisers.

### **SUMMARY:**

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• better than average health risk appraisal</li> <li>• health of LAC</li> <li>• range of health related support activity focused on schools</li> </ul>	<p><i>Being healthy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve the diet of young people</li> <li>• reduce teenage pregnancies</li> <li>• strengthen joint working between CAMHS and education services</li> </ul>

<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACPC developed multi-agency training programme</li> <li>• front line child care practice improved and consistent</li> <li>• good recruitment of foster carers</li> </ul>	<p><i>Staying safe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthen relationships between children's social services and schools</li> <li>• further improve tracking the identity and whereabouts of children and young people</li> <li>• improve long term stability of placements</li> </ul>
<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sustained above average GCSE attainment</li> <li>• improved focus on achievements of LAC</li> <li>• improved rates of attendance &amp; exclusions</li> <li>• collaboration with PCT to provide holiday / Saturday schemes for children with disabilities</li> </ul>	<p><i>Enjoying and achieving:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve progress between Key Stages 2 and 3 and at KS4</li> <li>• urgently address management weaknesses in the Youth Service</li> <li>• increase numbers of looked after children achieving at least 1 GCSE A*-G or GNVQ</li> <li>• reduce looked after children absent from school</li> </ul>
<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved pathways for care leavers to enter education, employment or training</li> <li>• good liaison between YOT, schools and Connexions on offending prevention</li> <li>• good range of forums for consultation with C&amp;YP</li> </ul>	<p><i>Making a positive contribution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase support for early years providers</li> <li>• develop overall strategy for engagement with C&amp;YP including scope, coherence and impact</li> <li>• secure a reduction in final warnings/reprimands and convictions of looked after children</li> </ul>
<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good collaboration with schools and other partners in development of 14-19 opportunities</li> <li>• promising developments in the future provision of lower level provision</li> </ul>	<p><i>Achieving economic well-being:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve GCE / VCE attainment levels in some schools</li> </ul>

## **Service management**

The authority has worked closely with relevant partners in analysing needs and setting appropriate, challenging targets for improvement. However, although individual agencies hold robust data, this is not yet fully shared and improving management information systems has been identified as a key objective. The involvement of LAC is given high priority and is being improved, but further progress is needed in developing channels for consultation with the wider community.

Social Services, Education, Health and other public and voluntary organisations are members of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, which has produced a draft single CYP Plan (2005). Priorities identified reflect shared ambitions and include an increased emphasis on preventative activity and safeguarding children, improved care for LAC, improving choice for children with disabilities and raising attainment for all. Actions in the plan relating to underachievement by identified minority ethnic groups are underdeveloped. There is no information on how actions to improve the achievements of these groups will be built into the curriculum, or related to performance indicators for improvement.

There is in place a borough wide strategy to develop greater in-house placement capacity for looked after children and thereby reduce the number of out of borough placements and improve value for money. There are also comprehensive arrangements for active performance monitoring of placement activity and care planning. This should result in more suitable placements for LAC and, in the longer term, a reduction in the number of children in care. The Council has had recent success in recruiting carers from ethnic minority communities. Progress has also been made in the steps taken to combat racism in schools; in the provision of training in child protection for teachers and governors; and in the improvement of access to the mainstream school curriculum for individual disabled children, although lack of funding has made it impossible to ensure access for the disabled to all schools.

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

#### **Being healthy**

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

- strengthening of joint working between CAMHS and education services.

#### **Staying safe**

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

- strengthening of relations between children's social services and schools.

## **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 SEN strategy re: challenge to schools
- rate of improvement in closing achievement gap for minority groups and vulnerable pupils.

## **Making a positive contribution**

*Children and young people are encouraged to participate in decision making and in supporting the community:*

*Children and young people who are looked after are helped to make a positive contribution:*

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

- coherence of opportunities for children and YP, especially LAC and those with SEN and disabilities, to give their views on provision
- consistency of opportunities for CYP to participate in reviews of progress.

*Action is taken to prevent offending and to reduce re-offending by children and young people:*

- progress in increasing the engagement of YO in ETE, and in reducing the % whose ETE status is not known.

*Children and young people, particularly those from vulnerable groups, are supported in managing changes and responding to challenges in their lives:*

- actions to improve aspects of early years provision.

## **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:*

- effectiveness of action to improve achievements at GCSE
- effectiveness of action to improve post-16 provision including:
  - access to provision below level 3
  - collaboration between sixth form providers to improve value for money
  - achievements post-16, including literacy and numeracy

- participation at age 17
- take-up of work-based learning at 16.

*Children and young people who are looked after are helped to achieve economic well-being:*

- progression of LAC and young people with LDD at 16.

### **Final judgements**

Please see your final annual performance assessment judgements attached at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely



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Office for Standards in Education



**JONATHAN PHILLIPS**  
Director – Quality, Performance and Methods  
Commission for Social Care Inspection

## APA final judgements 2005: London Borough of Bromley 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 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