

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Briefing for Children and Young People Portfolio Holder 29 November 2011

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES: ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RATING 2011

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1. Summary

- 1.1 Local Authorities Children Services are subject to a statutory Annual Performance Assessment and Inspection judgement by Ofsted. This assessment takes account of in-year Ofsted inspections of central services, schools, pre-school settings and children and family centres as well as performance against key service indicators.
- 1.2 On Tuesday 8 November 2011, Ofsted published the outcome of the 2011 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of Children's Services. Bromley's Children and Young People Services have been awarded a rating of 'Level 3 Good - Performs Well'; a level that has been sustained for the last four years since 2008. This is particularly encouraging given that the Inspection 'bar' has been raised significantly across all aspects of the inspection framework.

2. **THE BRIEFING**

2.1 **Background:**

- 2.1.1 Ofsted is required under Section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to undertake an Annual Assessment and Inspection judgement of each Local Authority's Children's Services and to award a performance rating. The performance is benchmarked within a published 'league table' to compare Local Authorities' Children's Services.
- 2.1.2 The Annual Performance Assessment (APA) and grading reflects the Council's strategic policy, planning and commissioning of children's services, together with the performance of support services and provision, and the outcomes achieved for children in the borough.

2.1.3 The inspection rating is derived from three major 'blocks' of evidence:

- **Block 1:**
 - Outcomes from Ofsted inspections and regulation of services, settings and institutions, including schools (maintained and Academies), pre-school settings and central children's services: Early Intervention Services including Children and Family Centres; Adoption and Fostering Service; Youth Service; Youth Offending Team and Pupil Referral and Behaviour services.
 - Data held by the DfE reflecting the profile of private and voluntary provision from which Bromley commissions children's services, including joint commissioning of children's health services, and the outcomes achieved.
- **Block 2:** outcomes from the three yearly Ofsted (40 day) Inspection of Local Authorities Safeguarding and Looked after Children Services; unannounced annual inspections of contact, referral and assessment arrangements; inspection of private fostering arrangements and the evaluation of serious case reviews.
- **Block 3:** performance against key national 'impact indicators' and other published data, including children's individual educational performance across all key stages (Foundation, Key Stages 1-4) including GCSE and A Level.

2.1.4 Bromley Council established Children and Young People (CYP) Services in May 2006, in accordance with the requirements of the Children Act (2004). This new department brought together the statutory functions across all aspects of children's education, social care and early intervention services. The CYP services were the subject of a full Ofsted inspection, the Joint Area Review, in late Autumn 2006 with the formal outcomes report published in 2007; with an outcomes rating of 'Level 2: Adequate'. In Autumn 2008, Bromley's CYP Services, were judged as 'Level 3: Good – Performs Well'; this rating has been sustained in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

2.1.5 This outcome is particularly encouraging given that the 'inspection bar' has been raised significantly across all aspects of the Ofsted Inspection Framework. In addition, a 'limiting judgement' threshold was introduced in 2009 to secure 'leverage' in the performance of children's social care and safeguarding practices.

2.2 The 2011 APA Inspection Framework and Outcome

2.2.1 The outcomes from the 2011 APA inspection process were communicated by Ofsted in a letter to the Director, Children and Young People Services, on 8 November 2011. This is attached as **Appendix 1**. This document sets out the inspector's judgements on the overall performance of children's services in the London Borough of Bromley, which have been rated at level 3, services that "perform well and exceed minimum requirements".

2.2.2 It is really pleasing to see that recognition has been given to the performance and good standards achieved across a wide spectrum of provision, with particular strengths highlighted including: the overall performance of our schools and early years settings, our provision for vulnerable children particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and the Pupil Referral Service. The steady improvement of our children's social care and safeguarding services is also acknowledged.

2.2.3 There are no areas requiring urgent action. Ofsted highlight the following areas as requiring further improvement:

- The seven areas for development within the children's social care contact, referral and assessment arrangements as identified by Ofsted following the Unannounced Inspection in April 2011 (reported to Members of CYP PDS Committee on 8 July 2011 DCYP11079). The APA letter acknowledges that the Local Authority has already put an Improvement Plan in place to address these issues. Progress against the Improvement Plan is being monitored by the Executive Working Party: Child Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting. The areas for development include:
 - The effectiveness of the use of the common assessment framework (CAF) as a referral form to the referral and assessment services.
 - The service provided by the out-of-hours service is not sufficiently robust.
 - The availability of specialist training for experienced social workers.
 - Lack of clear pathways to the early intervention services within the council, resulting in many children and young people being inappropriately referred to the referral and assessment team.
 - Strategy meetings are not routinely convened, preventing a wider range of partners engaging and contributing to the child protection process.
 - Some long-standing operational difficulties between the referral and assessment team and the police are not effectively escalated to senior managers or through the Local Safeguarding Children Board to improve safeguarding practice and joint-working arrangements.
 - Feedback from service users is not routinely collated to help to assess the impact of the work of the team or inform further developments.
- Performance and achievements of five year old children by the end of their Reception Year.
- Improving the achievement gap for children and young people from low income families, particularly in relation to GCSE results.

2.2.4 The areas requiring further improvement are already being addressed as priorities within the Council's Children and Young People Portfolio Plan 2011/12. The Director CYP will bring a further report to the CYP Portfolio Holder and the CYP Policy, Development and Scrutiny Committee in January 2012 detailing the improvement plans in relation to the areas highlighted for further improvement in the Ofsted Annual Inspection report.

2.3 **Future Ofsted Inspections of Children's Services:**

2.3.1 The Secretary of State for Education announced on 9 December 2010 his intention to cease the Ofsted Annual Performance Assessment process for Local Authority Children's Services. The Department of Education has been working with Ofsted to consider potential changes to the wider inspection framework for children's services. The new arrangements, which will take effect from May 2012, are scheduled for publication in December 2011 and will take account of the recommendations from Professor Eileen Munro's review of child protection published in May 2011.

2.3.2 Early indications from DfE/Ofsted indicate that the new arrangements are likely to include:

- a universal programme of unannounced inspections of child protection services, including early intervention and early support programmes provided by LAs, as well as referrals to children's social care. The inspections will give consideration to the effectiveness of the contributions of all local services including, Health, Education, Police, Probation and the Justice System to the protection of children;
- an inspection programme of services for children in care, their journey, their experience of the help provided and the quality of services they receive, and the outcomes they achieve. This is likely to be from an annual sample of local authorities;
- a programme of thematic or 'deep dive' inspections for the monitoring and re-inspection of underperforming, inadequate local authorities.

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8 November 2011

Mrs Gillian Pearson
Director of Children and Young People's Services
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Dear Mrs Pearson

Annual children's services assessment

Ofsted guidance published in April 2011 explains that the annual assessment of children's services is derived from the performance profile of the quality of services for children and young people in each local area. This performance profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the local authority has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with other published data.

In reaching the assessment of children's services, Ofsted has taken account of inspection outcomes including the arrangements for making sure children are safe and stay safe and performance against similar authorities and/or national measures. More weight has been given to the outcomes of Ofsted's inspections and regulatory visits (Blocks A and B in the performance profile).

The annual assessment derives from a four point scale:

4	Performs excellently	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
3	Performs well	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements
2	Performs adequately	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements
1	Performs poorly	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements

Within each level there will be differing standards of provision. For example, an assessment of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, an assessment of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects. As in 2010, while the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's assessment, meeting or not meeting the minimum requirements alone does not define the grade. The assessment has involved the application of inspector judgement.

London Borough of Bromley children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in the London Borough of Bromley perform well. This good performance has been maintained since 2010. The large majority of settings, services and institutions for children and young people are good or better and help them to stay safe. The very large majority ensure they enjoy learning and achieve well. Many secondary schools have converted to academy status. All of these schools were judged to be good or better at their last inspection and these judgements have been taken into account in this assessment. Over the last year there have been improvements in the overall effectiveness of registered early years provision, a reduction in the number of inadequate primary schools and no secondary schools or academies are now inadequate.

In April 2010 an inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children found both to be adequate. The latest unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within children's social care that took place in May 2011 identified one area of strength and areas of practice that met requirements, with seven areas for development. The relevant areas of development identified at the previous inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children in April 2010 had been addressed with the exception of the quality of service provided by the out-of-hours service. Despite clear strengths in the overall quality of provision in the borough and educational outcomes, the findings of both social care inspections have been pivotal to the overall grade for this assessment.

Strengths

- Over three quarters of registered early years provision is at least good. This is a higher proportion of good quality settings for the youngest children than is average for a local authority in England. There has been an increase in the proportion of good or better registered childminding and registered day-care provision since last year and very little is inadequate. The first three children's centres to be inspected in the borough are all good, with good leadership and management in strong partnership with the local authority.
- The large majority of primary schools are good or better and around twenty percent are outstanding. There has been a reduction in the number of schools that are inadequate since last year. Schools receive effective support to improve from the local authority, including accurate evaluations of performance and progress. Although there is wide variation across schools, 2011 provisional test results for 11-year-olds show further improvement and are above the national average.

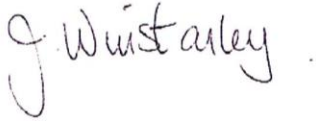
- A very large proportion of secondary schools, academies and sixth forms in the borough are good or better, as they were last year and just over half of all secondary schools are outstanding. The proportion of young people that achieve five good passes at GCSE including English and mathematics has risen consistently since 2007 and is well above national and similar area averages.
- Provision for vulnerable children and young people is of good quality overall. Three of the four local authority maintained special schools in the area are outstanding; the other continues to be satisfactory. The latest inspection of a school for children with physical disabilities and/or medical needs found their behaviour and safety outstanding. The local authority adoption agency and fostering agency are both good as they were last year. The Bromley Pupil Referral Service, catering for young people from within the local authority who have been excluded from their mainstream schools, has been recently inspected. The overall effectiveness of the provision is now good. An excellent feature of the service is the strong support provided during periods of transition.
- The proportion of young people from low-income families achieving good qualifications by the age of 19 is better than found nationally and the achievement gap between these young people and their peers has narrowed well since 2007.

Areas for further improvement

- As outlined in the May 2011 unannounced inspection, although there are no areas requiring urgent action, there are seven areas for development within children's social care contact, referral and assessment arrangements. The local authority has put an action plan in place to address these issues.
- While the number of five-year-olds that are achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year at school is broadly in line with the national average and there is a trend of improvement, the pace of improvement is not as fast as found elsewhere.
- Strategies to raise attainment and narrow the gap for children and young people from low-income families are not proving successful for all age groups. For example, the attainment of 16-year-olds from families with low incomes, although slightly above the national average, fell in 2010. Because GCSE results have not improved at the same pace for these young people as they have for their peers, the achievement gap between them has widened every year since 2007.

This children's services assessment is provided in accordance with section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a period at the end.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment