



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED: All

DECISION TIMETABLE:

OSMB
Cabinet

Date of Meeting

12th February 2009
16th February 2009

OfSTED Annual Performance Assessment (APA) findings: 2008

Report of the Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform senior management of OfSTED's most recent judgements on the Council's services for children and young people.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Overall, the 2008 APA grades Leicester as an adequate performing Council with adequate capacity to improve. While the report acknowledges key strengths in Leicester's children's services, particularly in relation to safeguarding and provision for children in care, and praises the clear vision and prioritisation of partners, it concludes that the necessary impact on health and, particularly, education outcomes is not yet being achieved.
- 2.2 There are already in place a number of Council-led strands of activity to improve health and education outcomes and build the capacity necessary to sustain improvements. This includes strengthened partnership working at strategic, executive and operational levels. Furthermore, the authority's most recent education data, which was not considered by the APA as it occurred outside the permissible evidence time frame, indicates very good progress especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stages 2 and 4, with increases greater than the national.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- i. Note the content of the 2008 APA letter and the activity underway to improve outcomes and build the capacity necessary to sustain improvements;
 - ii. Agree that progress against inspection recommendations/areas for development be highlighted in routine performance reports (see para 4.20).

4. Report

4.1 Children's services inspection

4.2 OfSTED is the inspectorate for children and learners in England.

4.3 Currently services are monitored through two inspection processes. The first is an annual performance assessment (APA) of each council's children's services. The second is a programme of joint area reviews (JARs), which involve greater depth than the APA and also range beyond council services to include, for example, health and police services. Both processes look at how services are working together locally to improve the well-being of children and young people. Well-being is defined in terms of the five outcomes of: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic wellbeing.

4.4 The overall APA grade is also used as the rating for the children and young people's block in the Audit Commission's comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) of local authority services.

4.5 Leicester's joint area review (JAR)

4.6 The fieldwork and evidence collection phase of the joint area review took place during January and February of 2008 and the report was published in June 2008.

4.7 Leicester's JAR grades were as follows:

	Local services overall
Safeguarding	3
Looked after children	3
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2
Service management	2
Capacity to improve	2
4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate	

4.8 The JAR identified much good practice in the city, particularly in relation to safeguarding and provision for children in care. The JAR also concluded that improvements were most needed in the contribution that services make to educational achievement, and to supporting the well-being of children with particular vulnerabilities (e.g. teenage parents; young people who are not in education, employment or training; disabled children; children and adolescents with mental health difficulties). It was recommended that these improvements include the development of sufficient capacity to ensure a good rate of service improvement, and the development of robust systems to drive service improvement and deliver value for money.

4.9 Subsequent to the JAR, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families issued the Council with an improvement notice due to poor performance/decline in the school improvement service, school attainment and teenage pregnancy provision. The

statutory notice includes specific improvement targets in relation to both outcomes and the capacity and capability of services. It also identifies the 2008 APA and summer 2009 examination results as key points at which progress will be assessed.

4.10 Leicester’s JAR action plan, published in July 2008, sets out the response of the authority and its partners to the 16 recommendations for action. In addition to this, the authority has sponsored the creation of a Raising Achievement Board with responsibility for directing and managing a Raising Achievement Plan (as is required for schools that have been given a Notice to Improve).

4.11 2008 APA grades

4.12 APA inspectors scrutinised the authority’s performance data and other evidence during October 2008. The 2008 APA letter was published by OfSTED on 17th December 2008 and is available at Appendix 1.

4.13 Leicester’s APA grades were as follows:

	LCC performance
Overall effectiveness of children’s services	2
Being healthy	2
Staying safe	3
Enjoying and achieving	1
Making a positive contribution	4
Achieving economic well-being	3
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	2
4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate	

4.14 In the APA letter, inspectors praise the robust procedures in place to ensure that children and young people in Leicester are safe, and the report reflects the fact that Leicester is one of the top performing authorities in the country when it comes to outcomes and service quality for children in care. Other strengths recognised by OfSTED include the opportunities provided for Leicester’s young people to make a positive contribution, which remains outstanding, and good economic wellbeing outcomes, with increasing post-16 success rates and good achievement for work-based learners.

4.15 The 2008 letter indicates that further development is needed in a number of important areas. While the report acknowledges that Leicester has a clear vision and action plan in place which prioritises the work that needs to be done, the desired impact on health and, particularly, education outcomes has not yet been achieved. The APA process requires that an “adequate” judgement is given if certain aspects including “enjoying and achieving” are themselves graded as inadequate.

4.16 Improvement activity

- 4.17 A number of strands of authority-led activity are already underway to improve outcomes and build the capacity necessary to sustain improvements. These include:
- 4.17.1 The JAR action plan which sets out the action agreed by the authority and its partners in response to the 16 recommendations of the JAR.
 - 4.17.2 Creation of a Raising Achievement Board with responsibility for directing and managing a Raising Achievement Plan (as is required for schools that have been given a Notice to Improve).
 - 4.17.3 Strengthening of children's services partnership arrangements, in line with the Council's Delivering Excellence programme, including the apportionment of strategic, executive and operational roles and functions. As well as ensuring that priorities properly represent the interests of Leicester's children and young people, this will ensure that resources are used efficiently and that city-wide performance challenges, including the procurement of services and interventions for children and families, are addressed coherently and sustainably.
 - 4.17.4 The Council's Delivering Excellence programme which is driving the development of the performance management systems and culture required to support transformational change.
 - 4.17.5 More effective co-ordination of information, performance and local resources in the key areas of school improvement, pupil attainment and teenage pregnancy.
 - 4.17.6 Well received plans for Leicester's national challenge schools and a Cabinet decision to consult on the option to establish an Academy in three of these schools.
- 4.18 It should be further noted that, while the 2008 APA findings are not contested by the authority, they are slightly out of date. This is because they do not take account of the city's most recent data on pupil attainment and school improvement. This latest data, including the exam results from summer 2008, demonstrates that Leicester has made very good progress especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stages 2 and 4, with increases greater than the national. The latest data also demonstrates that Leicester's recent school improvement work has made a significant impact with the number of primary schools in categories of concern reducing from ten to down to three.

4.19 Tracking progress

- 4.20 An overview of the key targets and milestones for each of the areas for improvement identified by the APA is included at Appendix 2.
- 4.21 All improvement activity, including that relating to school improvement, pupil attainment and teenage pregnancy, is regularly tracked through quarterly performance reports to senior management. It is proposed that future routine performance reports include a specific section that summarises progress against recent audit and inspection recommendations/areas for development, including JAR and APA.

4.22 Future inspection arrangements for children's services

4.23 2008 is the last year of APA, JAR and CPA. From 2009, they will be replaced by the comprehensive area assessment (CAA). Under CAA, inspection will be minimal but there will be more integrated, challenging and transparent assessment of the quality and impact of public services, which will draw on the new national indicator set and the views of residents and service users.

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

None.

5.2 Legal Implications

None.

5.3 Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within Supporting information	References
Equal Opportunities	N		
Policy	N		
Sustainable and Environmental	N		
Crime and Disorder	N		
Human Rights Act	N		
Elderly Persons/People on Low Income	N		

6. Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/appropriate)
Failure to improve performance in the key areas of school improvement, pupil attainment and teenage pregnancy leading to a continuation of inadequate service and resulting in unacceptable outcomes for children and young people	M	H	Future investment and management action to be prioritised in line with key areas of poor performance
Failure to address the areas for development and targets identified by OfSTED and the Secretary of State leading to an assessment of inadequate progress and resulting in further action – up to and including the use of statutory powers of intervention	M	H	Routine monitoring and evaluation of the agreed actions in response to inspection recommendations/areas for development

7. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

One Leicester – sustainable community strategy

Deloitte (2008) Delivering Excellence. A transformation programme for Leicester City Council

Audit Commission (2008) Are We There Yet? Improving Governance and Resource Management in Children’s Trusts

DCSF (2008) Children’s Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families

8. Consultations

CYPS Directorate
CYPS Strategic Commissioning section

9. Report Author

Trevor Pringle
Service Director – Strategic Planning, Commissioning and Performance

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

