

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room No. 1)
on Thursday, 19th April, 2007 at 5.30 p.m.

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R.C. RAYNER,
City Solicitor.

Civic Centre,
SUNDERLAND.

11th April, 2007

At a meeting of the CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on THURSDAY, 15TH MARCH, 2007 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Stewart in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Gofton, R. Heron, Peter Maddison, Miller, L. Williams and T. Wright together with Mr. H. Brown, Mrs. P. Burn, Mrs. D. Butler, Mr. S. Laverick, Professor G. Holmes, Mrs. C. Hutchinson, Mr. G. Lloyd-Williams and Mrs. D. Snowdon

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Oliver and Stephenson and from Mr. M. Frank and Mrs. M. Harrop.

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed a new Member to the Review Committee, Mr. Stuart Laverick representing the City of Sunderland College in his role as Vice-Principal (Curriculum).

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee

1. RESOLVED that:-
 - (i) the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 14th February, 2007 be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and
 - (ii) subject to an addition to resolution 9, to read "(iii) the Committee receive advance notification where appropriate of information reports when the Chairman believes the item may give rise to a discussion", the minutes of the meeting held on 15th February, 2007 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Educational Psychology Services

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which described current service delivery within the Education Psychology Service and referenced changes in service delivery and potential future changes.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Sandra Mitchell, Partnership and Planning (SEN and Behaviour) Manager, took Members through the report advising of:-

- progress and developments within the service, against the background of the recommendations of the consultant's report;
- options for future service delivery; and
- the outcome of consultation with Headteachers and SENCOs

Councillor Gofton referred to paragraph 21.7 of the report and asked if there was an underlying reason for the need for greater focus on Early Years provision. Ms. Mitchell informed Members that the role of the Early Years Psychologist would be more focussed to the age range and would help in early intervention if any problems or issues were raised. With regard to linking younger children into mainstream provision, Ms. Mitchell advised that there was a capacity issue in being able to meet their individual needs and that this could have a huge impact on some of the more difficult cases.

In relation to a query from Councillor Williams with regard to funding of the service, Ms. Mitchell advised that it was an issue the service faced, particularly for nursery and younger children provision and that this was picked up on through the funding review.

Councillor Williams referred to the responses from the Educational Psychologist Questionnaire and asked if there were any specific issues being raised repeatedly. Ms. Mitchell advised that the responses varied from the SENCOs to the Headteachers and that they had tried to pick out the main issues from those that had been returned.

Councillor Heron commented that the average waiting list time reduction to six weeks was a great improvement but still felt it could be better. He noted the urgency of a child's case and asked whether Educational Psychologists responded to priority cases, as identified by the Headteacher, in the same way that social workers responded to priority cases.

Councillor Miller thanked the Officer for the report and appreciated the work undertaken to better services and hoped for further future improvements.

He went on to refer to question 6 of appendix 1 and asked if Headteachers' and SENCO's views were consistently different and was advised that there

was a difficulty in getting responses from SENCOs and Headteachers who had filled in the form together, with only 10 forms being completed that way, but that they were looking to promote and involve the use of the questionnaires to receive a more accurate response.

Councillor Wright asked for future plans to keep the Committee involved and giving an input to the delivery of the services, and the Chairman felt it may be beneficial for the Committee to receive a copy of the annual report on the service. Ms. Mitchell advised that they were hoping to include daily activities, projects undertaken and views of the schools within the annual report and that it would need to be produced in a short readable format. She informed Members it could be submitted to the Committee for comment prior to going to the Audit Commission.

In response to a query from Mrs. Hutchinson regarding recruitment of staff, Ms. Mitchell advised that they were experiencing difficulties appointing a Senior Educational Psychologist but that they were looking locally and were hopeful they could fill the post.

Mrs. Butler referred to paragraph 12 of the report and asked if the schools were informed of the plans to deliver the Certificate of Competency in Educational Assessment and was advised that they were aware of the plans and that training would be provided and supported through the Pyramid System.

The Chairman asked how long the 3 posts had been vacant in the section and was advised that it had been a significant period of time, more than 12 months.

In relation to a query regarding comparisons with other Local Authorities, Ms. Mitchell advised that Sunderland services were significantly more settled and in place within the authority, and Sunderland are spending less than other authorities but that any further detail would need to be researched and reported back.

The Chairman referred back to the suggestion of Headteacher involvement and asked if it would be followed up. Ms. Mitchell informed the Committee that Headteachers would be part of a group the service would consult with on any future issues or problems raised, to seek ways in which to improve the service.

The Chairman asked if follow up work would be carried out to discover why perceptions were different between individual schools and was advised that there was a problem in correlation between schools and that they would need to be careful in their approach to changing the schools views. She felt that the service's profile needed to be raised to improve perceptions of provision to the schools.

Having given consideration to the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the progress and developments against the background of the recommendations of the Consultant's report be noted;
- (ii) Members' comments and considerations be taken into account for future service delivery;
- (iii) the current position as to the outcome of the consultation with Headteachers and SENCOs be noted; and
- (iv) the Committee receive a further report on the annual report of services prior to it being submitted to the Audit Commission.

Review of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) (Update)

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which asked Members to consider and approve the proposals for current and future consultation with children and young people on the CYPP.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

John Markall, Senior Policy Planning and Development Manager, gave a presentation (copy circulated) to the Committee which gave an update on:-

- recently published Government guidance on reviewing CYPP;
- the CYPP Annual Report 2006-2007 and CYPP 2007-2009 documents which the review process would generate;
- the proposed timeline for delivery;
- priorities for 2007-2008; and
- consultation techniques for children and young people, parents and carers.

(For copy presentation – see original minutes)

Mr. Markall also provided Members of the Committee with a copy of the on-line questionnaire which young people had been asked to complete as part of the consultation process.

Councillor Wright welcomed the report and upcoming ideas for involvement by children and young people and advised he would have liked to attend the Stakeholder event on 7th March but that it had coincided with the Council meeting held at the same time.

Councillor Miller referred to the 44,000 booklets that had been distributed through schools and the 3,000 contributions received from children and young people and felt that although it was an increase in returns, it did not give a fair account. He suggested that the approach to gathering feedback needed to be addressed to ensure a greater response in future. Mr. Markall informed the Committee that in the short term they were pleased with the increase in participation but that in the longer term strategies were being put in place to raise interest and involvement with a wider range of people. He advised that schools played a big part in helping to gather feedback and informed Members that the schools were now being invited by Government to get more involved and that this year the service would be using the same process of consultation but with more purpose and drive for greater inclusion and response.

Mr. Laverick commented that it would be useful to have a breakdown of the sections and sub-sections of people who responded to see how representative the responses were.

Mr. Brown asked how feedback would be provided to and seen by those children and young people contributing to the consultation. Mr. Markall informed the Committee the revised CYPP would refer to and quote responses that had been received and that an action plan would be produced to show what had been suggested and what was then going to be done to address the issues.

Children's Services would also work with schools and youth projects in the City to raise the awareness and importance of their views in the consultation process.

Mr. Keith Moore, Deputy Director of Children's Services, advised that the work could link in with work already being carried out with school councils to raise its profile and also through engaging external organisations such as the Sunderland Echo to get a broader involvement of those who may not be reached by techniques already in place.

Mrs. Burn queried the involvement of voluntary organisations and felt the questionnaire did not allow for a very detailed response and was informed that the initial questionnaire sought general information and that more specific issues would be gathered through further interaction with the individual or organisation.

The Chairman suggested that schools could promote the surveys as part of the Citizenship programme, whilst Councillor Bell asked if an article could be included in the Council's 'Sunrise' magazine to raise parental involvement.

Having thanked Mr. Markall for his presentation and considered the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the content and proposals for current and future consultation with children and young people on the CYPP be approved.

School Attendance Figures in Sunderland for 2005/06

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated Members on the school attendance patterns in Sunderland schools and nationally during the 2005/06 school academic year.

(copy circulated – see original minutes)

The Chairman advised that, in order to manage the business of the meeting efficiently, Members had been notified in advance of the meeting of this item inviting questions to be submitted and any questions to the report could be referred to the relevant officer for response.

Councillor Miller asked if the attendance problems in primary schools were being addressed and was advised that the Every School Day Counts initiative had made an impact and that the new service would bring together the Inclusion and Every School Day Counts teams as one team to help further improvements.

In response to a query from Mr. Laverick regarding comparative data from other Local Authorities, Ms. Lynda Brown, Head of Standards, informed Members that statistics from neighbouring authorities were available and could be provided to Committee Members. She also advised that the team were working with a small number of schools who had shown persistent problems to help focus on improving attendance.

Mrs. Snowdon queried if the schools reported problems with children going on holiday during term time, especially if parents were separated and each took them on different occasions, meaning they were absent from school twice. Ms. Brown agreed that this was the biggest risk to improved attendance faced by all schools.

Councillor Miller requested further information on the 33 prosecutions carried out in 2005/06 and in particular, if following these, it had resulted in an improvement in the child's attendance.

Ms. Brown advised that there was a five stage procedure to deal with non-attenders and informed Members that Mr. Raj Singh, Extended Services and Attendance Group Manager, was currently working on an Attendance Strategy for the City which the Committee may be interested in discussing at a future meeting.

Councillor Gofton suggested that it would be useful to have included in a future report a summary of any existing research showing that improved attendance results increased attainment levels.

Having fully considered the report and answered Members' questions, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee with the additional details requested.

School and Local Authority Target Settings (SaLTS) for 2007/2008

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated Members on the SaLTS targets for the 2007/2008 submission.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

In response to a query from the Chairman with regard to using the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) estimate for data, Ms. Brown advised that the recommendation from the DfES had been for particular groups to be setting targets using type B of the FFT estimates and that the Council had decided to encourage schools to set targets closer to the type D estimates.

Having given full consideration to the report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Government Consultations

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with a summary of live Government consultations as follows:-

- EYFS Learning and Development Exemptions;
- Review of the Regulations Requiring Schools Maintained by Local Authorities to Set Attendance Targets of Pupils in Schools;
- Consultation on Revised Exclusions Guidance – September 2007;
- Guidance on the Use of Power to Search (Clause 45 in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill/Act);
- Skills Strategy Equality Impact Assessment; and
- Securing Sufficient Childcare.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Ofsted Inspection Reports

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) which invited Members to consider the following recently published Ofsted Inspection reports for educational establishments in Sunderland:-

- Burnside Primary;

- Pennywell;
- Bexhill Primary;
- Biddick Sports College;
- New Silksworth Infant;
- Hill View Junior; and
- Richard Avenue Primary.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

7. RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted.

Having thanked everybody for their attendance the Chairman closed the meeting.

(Signed) P. STEWART
Chairman.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

WORKFORCE STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

19th APRIL 2007

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Children's Services Review Committee of developments with regard to the Children's Workforce Strategy, including an evaluation of progress to date together with proposals and next steps.

2. Background

- 2.1 A key component of the Children's transformational change agenda is the need to bring together a co-ordinated approach to workforce strategy and workforce development across all partner agencies that work with children and young people.
- 2.2 The Children and Young People's Plan 2006 – 2009 includes as a key priority number 28 'Produce and implement a workforce development strategy for integrated children's services'.
- 2.3 The attached workforce strategy has been agreed by the Children's Trust (see appendix 1). It ensures that the Children's workforce is fit for purpose across a range of professional domains and that national and local priorities are linked to the CYPP.

3. Vision and Principles

- 3.1 To create a workforce that is capable and competent to deliver both collectively and individually; ensuring that employee resources are deployed appropriately and effectively.
- 3.2 To create a workforce that is proud to contribute to the agenda of the City Council and its partners in supporting our children and young people.
- 3.3 To create a supportive environment that attracts and retains relevant numbers and quality of staff.
- 3.4 To be an employer that builds on existing strengths to develop and support staff to individual improvement and increased contribution.
- 3.5 To have staff that are respected and trusted by our children, young people, parents, carers and the citizens of our City.

- 3.6 To promote closer working relationships across professional boundaries and to strengthen cross-agency working.
- 3.7 To create strong leadership, supervision and accountability with a high regard to effective training and development.
- 3.8 To follow rigorous evaluation principles to ensure that the Workforce Strategy is outcome focussed.
- 3.9 To ensure that demographic issues are key components of our workforce planning and deployment.
- 3.10 To promote diversity, respect, tolerance and the understanding of difference and distinction.

4. Progress

- 4.1 The Children's Services Workforce Strategy was drawn up in consultation with partner agencies and has been approved by the Children's Trust Strategic Partnership and the Children's Trust Board.
- 4.2 The Strategy contains four strategic objectives to support the Children's Services:

Strategic Objective 1: Training and Development

Priorities are:

- Develop a training and development plan to support the Workforce Development Strategy
- Identify and manage the budgets to support the training plan
- Review the Commissioning of training
- Audit workforce competencies and skills
- Working towards the development of a comprehensive training and development directory, inclusive and accessible to all, which begins with training around the common processes but includes wider training strategic such as safeguarding children and mental health issues
- Regularly reviewing services and delivery methods to meet the needs of our community and putting into place training and development where necessary.

Strategic Objective 2: Recruitment and Retention

Priorities are:

- Identify, analyse and develop a strategy to recruit to posts where recruitment is difficult.
- Research how Children's Services can become an employer of choice to prospective candidates.
- Develop a robust system of collection and analysis of recruitment and retention data.
- Develop a Children's Service PR and information pack.
- Identify ways to increase numbers of applicants applying for posts.

- Develop a strategy to ensure that our employees feel valued

Strategic Objective 3: Future Workforce

Priorities are:

- Map the major changes pending in each service area and establish timescales for change. Link to the Agenda for Change initiative
- Map areas of growth and change in statistical terms to assist in strategy development
- produce final report outlining scale of change, impact of change, potential strategies for addressing the change in order to inform future direction of the Children's Workforce Strategy
- Enhance leadership capacity

Strategic Objective 4: Integrated Qualifications Framework

Priorities are:

- Ensure the common skills and competencies for Children's Services are embedded within all induction and workforce development activities across Sunderland's Children's Services.
- Develop a training and development strategy to implement the common assessment framework, lead professional approach and improve information sharing practice between agencies
- Explore joint finance and resources to deliver the training and development strategy.
- Promoting a culture of working together towards a common goal.
- Ensure that mutual respect is shared amongst professional staff working across traditional boundaries
- Support new ways of working and challenge paternalistic approaches
- Develop a Children's Services Induction programme engaging the voluntary sector

4.3 An overarching Strategy group and three sub-groups have been set up and are working on the strategic objectives listed above.

4.4 Much good work continues to take place in schools and social care with no let-up in the schools workforce remodelling agenda. National feedback from a recent visit of the Training and Development Agency in relation to Sunderland's school workforce is very positive showing 25/26 green lights indicating that robust arrangements in place in the areas of extended schools; implementation of the National Agreement; performance management and training and development.

5 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

5.1 The Workforce Development Strategy Group and its sub groups (see appendix 2 of the Strategy) are developing detailed action plans to support each of the priorities identified in this strategy.

5.2 Action plans will incorporate specific actions, lead officer, timescale, milestones of progress, identify links to other plans and expected impact on the service.

5.3 Quarterly exception reports will be produced and considered by the Children's Trust Board and the Children's Trust Strategic Partnership (CTSP). The CTSP is scheduled to receive regular reports on the progress of workforce development.

6 Recommendation

6.1 The Committee is requested to note the above report and to agree to receive quarterly exception reports.

Contact Officer : Peter Snowdon 0191 553 1448
peter.snowdon@sunderland.gov.uk

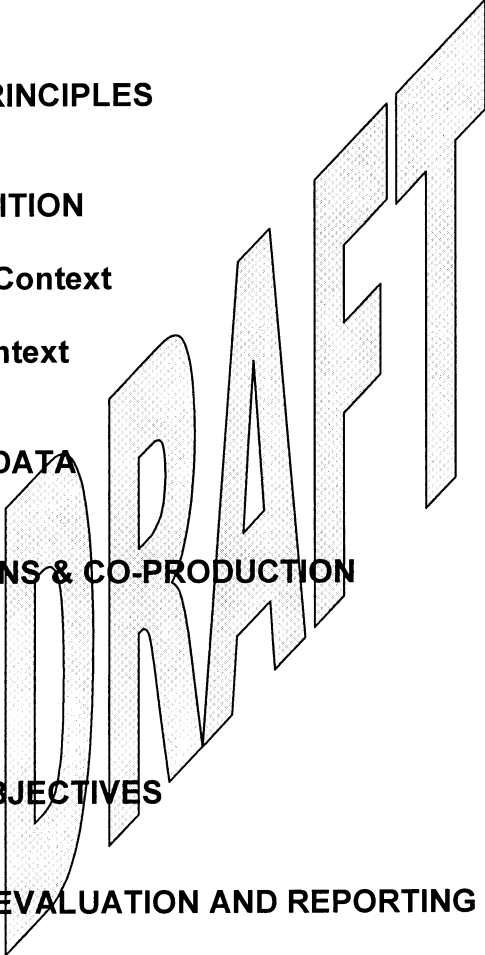
Sunderland Children & Young People's Trust

Children's Services Workforce Strategy

2006 - 2009

| Version | Comments | Author | Date Issued | Status |
|----------------|---|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 0.7 | Approved by CTSP and the Children's Trust Board | Peter Snowdon | 24 January 2007 | Draft |

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Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Recruitment and retention of Social Care Staff**
- Appendix 2 - Workforce Development Framework for Delivery**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To have a workforce strategy that is fit for purpose across a range of professional domains. The strategy supports local and national priorities linking to the Children and Young Peoples Plan. The aim for the service is to move more towards preventative services and service delivery through locality bases
- 1.2 To ensure the involvement of Children and Young People in the design, delivery and evaluation of the services we provide.
- 1.3 To ensure accountability to the Children's Trust governance arrangements with development working groups reflecting the full range of partners and stakeholders.

2. Vision and Principles

- 2.1 To create a workforce that is capable and competent to deliver both collectively and individually; ensuring that employee resources are deployed appropriately and effectively.
- 2.2 To create a workforce that is proud to contribute to the agenda of the City Council and its partners in supporting our children and young people.
- 2.3 To create a supportive environment that attracts and retains relevant numbers and quality of staff.
- 2.4 To be an employer that builds on existing strengths to develop and support staff to individual improvement and increased contribution.
- 2.5 To have staff that are respected and trusted by our children, young people, parents, carers and the citizens of our City.
- 2.6 To promote closer working relationships across professional boundaries and to strengthen cross-agency working.
- 2.7 To create strong leadership, supervision and accountability with a high regard to effective training and development.
- 2.8 To follow rigorous evaluation principles to ensure that the Workforce Strategy is outcome focussed.
- 2.9 To ensure that demographic issues are key components of our workforce planning and deployment.
- 2.10 To promote diversity, respect, tolerance and the understanding of difference and distinction.

3. Current Position

3.1 National Context:

- 3.1.1 Through the Every Child Matters (ECM) change for children agenda, there is a requirement for each local area to produce a multi-agency Workforce Development Strategy to support the management of change towards a more effective multi-agency working to improve outcomes for children and young people.

3.1.2 A **Common Core of Skills and Knowledge** has been introduced by the DfES which includes:

- Establishing expected levels of skills, knowledge and competence required in different jobs in different services;
- Establishing the necessary balance required in different jobs in different services between common (across the children's workforce) and job specific (ie, the particular, sometimes specialised, understanding needed in different roles, like teaching, therapies, youth work, social work, etc.) skills, knowledge and competence; and
- Focusing work with all those who are responsible for professional and support staff qualifications to develop qualifications built around a combination of common and job specific modules.

3.1.3 The **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)** is a key part of delivering frontline services that are integrated and focused around the needs of children and young people. The CAF is a standardised approach to conducting an assessment of a child's additional needs and deciding how those needs should be met. It can be used by practitioners across children's services in England.

3.1.4 The CAF will promote more effective, earlier identification of additional needs, particularly in universal services. It is intended to provide a simple process for a holistic assessment of a child's needs and strengths, taking account of the role of parents, carers and environmental factors on their development. Practitioners will then be better placed to agree, with the child and family, about what support is appropriate. The CAF will also help to improve integrated working by promoting co-ordinated service provision.

3.1.5 The **Children's Workforce Development Council** is working with its partners in the Children's Workforce Network to develop an Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF). The aim is to establish more comparative qualifications and to enable practitioners to move more freely between roles within the sector. This is closely linked to the Early Years and Social Care reform that is currently ongoing in light of the new National Occupational Standards and Induction Standards.

3.1.6 The role of **Lead Professional (LP)** is a key element of integrated support. The LP takes the lead to co-ordinate provision and act as a single point of contact for a child and their family when a range of services are involved and an integrated response is required.

3.1.7 Appointing a LP is central to the effective frontline delivery of services for children with a range of additional needs. When the role is delivered in the context of multi-agency assessment and planning, underpinned by the CAF or relevant specialist assessments, it ensures that professional involvement is rationalised, co-ordinated and achieves the intended outcomes.

3.1.8 In the Health Service the introduction of the **Agenda for Change (AFC)** has had a major influence on workforce strategy. It provides:

- Better services for patients
- A highly motivated workforce with the skills and competences to deliver high quality care
- Greater flexibility in development of new roles for all practice staff

- Improved training, appraisal and personal development leading to improved patient experiences.
- Improved staff development
- Annual appraisal linked to the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF)
KSF will identify skills and competences required within roles thereby fostering more effective training and development
- Greater flexibility in development of new roles for all practice staff
- Improved employment practice
- Fairer, more transparent pay and terms – consistency across the patch
- Improved recruitment and retention
- Pay rates in practices will be the same for equivalent jobs in the community and acute settings
- Staff who move to AfC will be able to transfer to and from community and acute settings, keeping their skills up to date

3.1.9 In the **Police Service training** resources are now readily available for officers to support the ECM outcomes. The training aims to:

- Develop the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills of police officers
- Give police a better understanding of national and international laws that relate to children and how they should be applied
- Bridge the gap between theory and practice relevant to policing and child rights/child protection so that police are able to act in the best interests of children
- Enable police to distinguish between a child in need of care and protection and a child who is in conflict with the law
- Motivate the police to take an active part in bringing about positive changes in the lives of children in difficult circumstances.
- The resources also aim to gather and disseminate lessons learned in relation to police training on child rights and child protection from around the world; promote policy recommendations for governments and police; and compile a list of resources and contacts working internationally in the field of police training on child rights and child protection.

3.1.10 **Connexions Tyne and Wear** aim to deliver a high-quality and impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) service to all young people aged between 13 and 19 years (up to age 25 with Special Educational Needs) and their parents/carers. The Youth Matters Green Paper issued in July 2005 has started a debate about how IAG should be delivered in line with the Every Child Matters framework. The current role of the Connexions Tyne and Wear is set to continue in its existing form until April 2008 but is subject to change thereafter as Local Authorities become responsible for decisions about priorities.

3.1.11 Government policy and legislation is in place that will increase the need for **family friendly employment practices**, which may lead to changes such as more flexible employment arrangements and home working.

3.1.12 Workforce issues relating to the safeguarding agenda of the **Local Safeguarding Children Board** established in Sunderland in Nov 2004.

3.1.13 An increased emphasis on addressing equalities issues, required by **Race Relations Amendment Act**, the Human Rights Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the

McPherson report of potential legislation around age discrimination will be incorporated in the strategy.

3.1.14 Working with the **voluntary and community sector** providers of services is essential to the strategy.

3.2 Local Context:

3.2.1 The Workforce re-alignment in Children's Services has created additional capacity at a senior strategic level within HR and Workforce Development. The increased capacity will allow co-ordinated leadership across the Children's Trust.

3.2.2 Much good work is underway across the Children's Trust in Sunderland. Examples of excellent practice already exist in Early Years and Childcare and the Youth Development Group; recruitment and retention of Social Care staff leading to lower turnover and the successful implementation of workforce reform in schools. In the management of Children's Services section of the Sunderland APA letter two of our strength areas were our robust performance management systems and commitment to staff development.

3.2.3 A co-ordinated approach to the implementation of Single Status Phase 1 in Children's Services, and in particular in schools, has resulted in 7 grades of support staff replacing the traditional roles of Nursery Nurse and Teaching Assistant. At present there are over 160 schools support staff engaged on NVQ and VQ work, around 30 staff doing foundation degrees and 141 staff who have gained HLTA status. Two further cohorts of HLTA assessment will complete this term with another group set to start at the end of December 2006 .

3.2.4 Robust data collection on workforce statistics has been difficult due to the operation of a payroll-led management information system. The Council will introduce a SAP based HR/Payroll system in December 2006 and design has included input from Children's Services staff to ensure the future provision of accurate and relevant workforce data. The new system is not simply a new electronic solution but a completely new way of working including manager and employee self-service. This will clearly benefit the organisation in terms of workforce data becoming readily available to those who need it.

3.2.5 All Sunderland schools have met the statutory requirements of workforce remodelling. Sunderland is recognised by DfES as being in top 5% of Authorities for Teaching Assistant training.

3.2.6 There are workforce development strategies in place in some areas whilst others are developing. Service integration is generating a range of developments to skill our workforce including remodelling strategies in extended schools, Children's Centres and locally based teams e.g. CAMHS. There are also excellent examples of Authority/School partnership working in areas such as ASD, SEN, Behaviour and the Pupil Referral Unit.

3.2.7 Sunderland has experienced great difficulty in recruiting and retaining Education Psychologists despite numerous attempts to address the situation. The lack of capacity in this area is causing a problem and Psychology Support to our schools is consistently in the bottom quartile in the Audit Commission School Survey. We have now moved to address the problem by partnership working between the Psychology Service and our CAMHS service (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service). More specifically, extending the work from a single referral system into a more co-

ordinated CAMHS approach to schools. We will monitor the situation closely in relation to the impact of this initiative.

- 3.2. 8 Two pilot programmes in North Washington and New Silksworth Children's Centre are in place to develop the Common Assessment Framework and the Lead Professional role. There are 164 CAF Assessors in place and approx 1,800 staff have had CAF awareness training.
- 3.2.9 Sunderland City Council has IIP accreditation as one Council. We are currently undergoing an annual internal review before external reassessment in Autumn 2007. Children's Services has contributed on a large scale to this process as it employs over 50% of Council staff.
- 3.2.10 In line with the national picture Sunderland has struggled to recruit and retain Children's Social Workers. Workforce Change Management strategies have been used successfully for this area and notes are attached at Appendix 1 to provide more detail.
- 3.2.11 There are many examples of how contributions from young people and their parents and carers are contributing to the workforce strategy. Work with the Youth Parliament and the annual Young Peoples Conference is informing the work of Children's Services Professionals. Young people are now involved in our staff conferences which supports our employees to make the link between what we all do in our individual roles and how that supports children and young people. There is also now more involvement of children and young people in the appointments of key staff e.g. appointments of the Director and Deputy Director of Children's Services and new Head Teachers in a number of the City's schools. Children, in the form of school councils, and parents and carers were actively involved in the consultation process for Sunderland's Academy programme.
- 3.2.12 HR professionals will play key roles in the success of any Workforce Strategy. Co-ordination of strategic and operational activity including links to the Council's Corporate Human Resource Strategy and the work of the TPCT Workforce Development Group which will be fully embedded.
- 3.2.13 The Strategy links and supports the Councils Corporate Improvement Objectives namely:
- Delivering customer focused services
 - People development and being One Council
 - Efficient and effective Council
 - Improving Partnership working to deliver One City

More specifically the Children's Services Workforce Strategy is a key enabler for the delivery of the Council's workforce development plan and the table below demonstrates the alignment with the 6 key strands of the plan:

| Council's Workforce Development Plan | Children's Services Workforce Strategy |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Organisation development | Future Workforce (Strategic Objective 3) Integrated Qualifications (Strategic Objective 4) |
| Enhancing leadership capacity | Enhance Leadership Capacity (Strategic Objective 3) |
| Developing skills and capacity | Training & Development (Strategic Objective 1) |
| Resourcing | Resourcing (Strategic Objective 2) |
| Pay and reward | Future Workforce (Strategic Objective 3) |
| Review and Monitoring | Section 8 of strategy |

4. Workforce Data

- 4.1 The DfES report entitled *The Children's Workforce in England: A review of the Evidence* published in April 2005 provides data based on national and academic research. The analysis provides a broad context and scale to many of the changes envisaged in this strategy. It provides evidence on some of the challenges and opportunities facing the workforce.
- 4.2 The report presents evidence on the size and composition of the entire children's workforce, which gives an indication of the demand for workers to provide children's services. Evidence is presented on the supply of labour for the children's workforce and also on the level of demand for these services, and the implications this has for the future supply and demand of workers. The report will be used by stakeholders within Sunderland as a structure for gathering and presenting the local situation of need for informing debate on strategy.
- 4.3 A survey carried out in 2003 by Government Office Regions forecast that a 0-19 population change in the North East of -9% in the period 2005 – 2012. This will have a strong impact on the demand for our services. For Sunderland we see that the population, 282,700, is continuing to fall. The number on the pupil roll in Sunderland schools has declined from 47,028 in 2004 to 45,974 in 2005. However, the Workforce review has indicated that future demands for services will be influenced by a range of issues including the promotion of broader inclusion strategies for children with disabilities, meeting the needs of a growing BME community, responding to the needs of travelling families etc.
- 4.4 Whilst the child population projections suggest that the 0-19 population is predicted to fall to 2012, this overall trend masks a national increase in older-teenagers. In recent years, despite this fall in child population, the numbers of children receiving social care has *increased*¹.
- 4.5 The Audit Commission School Survey in 2006 shows the following:
- Indicator 6.15 - The Effectiveness of your Council's strategy for the recruitment and retention of the school workforce - *Between satisfactory and good – 1% better than 2005*

¹ See: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000418/index.shtml> Statistical First Release on Children in Need. Between 2001 and 2003, the number of children in need increased by about 2%.

- Indicator 6.16 – The effectiveness of your Council’s support for the professional development of the school workforce - *Between satisfactory and good – 4% better than 2005*
- Indicator 6.15 - The Effectiveness of your Council's strategy for the recruitment and retention of staff other than the school workforce; who work with children and young people - *Between satisfactory and good – new indicator – 2nd quartile*
- Indicator 6.15 – Your Council’s support for the professional development of staff other than the school workforce; who work with children and young people - *Between satisfactory and good – new indicator – 2nd quartile*

- 4.6 Currently there are 66 learners working towards a Youth Service qualification.
- 4.7 Suitably qualified staff working with children in need is at 100% (above statistical neighbours – 94.8% and National – 94.3%)
- 4.8 Currently Sunderland has 30 Teaching Assistants on year 1 of a Foundation Degree and a further 10 staff on year 2.
- 4.9 The number of assessed social work practice learning days per WTE social worker is rated as good. 15.9 days per year in Sunderland against statistical neighbours (14.9) and national (14.4).
- 4.10 The numbers of child care workers in Sunderland who have achieved NVQ level3 in ‘Caring for Children and Young People’ is improving. Currently 56% of child care staff have the qualification as against statistical neighbours – 58% and national – 50%.
- 4.11 In the group of Social Workers and Residential Managers there has been a marked increase in the numbers of staff achieving the PQ1 award. Sunderland 46%, statistical neighbours 34% and national 37%.
- 4.12 The ratio of social care operational staff per 10,000 population aged 0-17 is above comparators. Sunderland 36.1, statistical neighbours 34.6 and national 27.2.
- 4.13 The numbers of Social Workers and Care Managers per 10,000 population 0-17 in Sunderland is 20.4 compared with 19.6 statistical neighbours and 17.7 national.

5. Consultations and Co-Production

- 5.1 Contributions to the overall Workforce strategy are coming in from many of the partner agencies and interested stakeholder groups. Sub Group members include (amongst others) representation from Early Years and Childcare, Social Care, Education, School Improvement, Training and Primary Care Trust, Human Resources, Head Teachers, Teacher Associations and Support Staff Trade Unions.
- 5.2 The Workforce Development Strategy Group will need to consider how it will consult with Young People and their parents and carers

6. Resources

- 6.1 It is imperative that resources are made available to ensure the successful design and implementation of an effective Human Resources Strategy. However, we must

not overlook resources that are available to us now but are not being utilised to their optimum effect. Right across Children's Services staff are working hard on workforce strategy and planning. We must take the opportunity to bring together those professionals, not necessarily as an organisational unit but as a function to deliver our goals.

- 6.2 In Sunderland Children's Services we are ambitious and we are not fazed by the challenges that lie ahead. An effective workforce strategy that will deliver outcomes will not happen overnight. We are safe in the knowledge, however, that Sunderland is moving forward and there is great enthusiasm from the City Council and all its partners who come into contact with children and a will to make a difference to our children and young people.

7. Strategic Objectives

- 7.1 The CTSP has commissioned work via Sunderland Children's Trust Workforce Strategy Group with the following terms of reference:

- To provide a forum to exchange information and share experiences across the Sunderland Children's Trust Area on the development and improvement of the children services workforce.
- To deliver and maintain the Children's Workforce Strategy.
- To develop our managers to lead and inspire others

- 7.2 Specific objectives for the group are:

- To identify the key overall priorities for developing and improving the children services workforce across Sunderland. This will be underpinned by the Children's Workforce Strategy and contribute to the delivery of the responsibilities within the Children Act 2004 and the 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' programme.
- To consider the links and the workforce issues generated by the Children and Young People's Plan.
- To invite speakers to inform on strategic issues relating to the children services workforce.
- To provide the opportunity for Trust Partners to present experiences and learn from each other.
- To provide feedback and ideas on the development and implementation of workforce strategies to City Council Corporate Groups, Monitoring and Review Groups in the Health Community, central government, Children's Workforce Development Council and any other relevant body.
- To initiate joint projects and joint working activities aimed at improving the children services workforce.
- To contribute to the collection of comparative data for developing strategies / solutions.
- To identify leads to co-ordinate sub-group activity.

- 7.3 The Sunderland Children's Workforce Development Group has identified 4 strategic objectives that will help the organisation deliver its strategy shown diagrammatically at Appendix 2

Strategic Objective 1: Training and Development.

Priorities are:

- Develop a training and development plan to support the Workforce Development Strategy
- Identify and manage the budgets to support the training plan

- Review the Commissioning of training
- Audit workforce competencies and skills
- Working towards the development of a comprehensive training and development directory, inclusive and accessible to all, which begins with training around the common processes but includes wider training strategic such as safeguarding children and mental health issues
- Regularly reviewing services and delivery methods to meet the needs of our community and putting into place training and development where necessary.

Strategic Objective 2: Recruitment and Retention

Priorities are:

- Identify, analyse and develop a strategy to recruit to posts where recruitment is difficult.
- Research how Children's Services can become an employer of choice to prospective candidates.
- Develop a robust system of collection and analysis of recruitment and retention data.
- Develop a Children's Service PR and information pack.
- Identify ways to increase numbers of applicants applying for posts.
- Develop a strategy to ensure that our employees feel valued

Strategic Objective 3: Future Workforce

Priorities are:

- Map the major changes pending in each service area and establish timescales for change. Link to the Agenda for Change initiative
- Map areas of growth and change in statistical terms to assist in strategy development
- Produce final report outlining scale of change, impact of change, potential strategies for addressing the change in order to inform future direction of the Children's Workforce Strategy
- Enhance leadership capacity

Strategic Objective 4: Integrated Qualifications Framework

Priorities are:

- Ensure the common skills and competencies for Children's Services are embedded within all induction and workforce development activities across Sunderland's Children's Services.
- Develop a training and development strategy to implement the common assessment framework, lead professional approach and improve information sharing practice between agencies
- Explore joint finance and resources to deliver the training and development strategy.
- Promoting a culture of working together towards a common goal.
- Ensure that mutual respect is shared amongst professional staff working across traditional boundaries
- Support new ways of working and challenge paternalistic approaches
- Develop a Children's Services Induction programme engaging the voluntary sector

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

- 8.1 The delivery of this strategy will be managed through Prince 2 Project Management methodology.
- 8.2 The Workforce Development Strategy Group and its sub groups (shown at Appendix 2) are developing detailed action plans to support each of the priorities identified in this strategy.
- 8.3 Action plans will incorporate specific actions, lead officer, timescale, milestones of progress, identify links to other plans and expected impact on the service.
- 8.4 Quarterly exception reports will be produced and considered by the Children's Trust Board and the Children's Trust Strategic Partnership (CTSP). The CTSP is scheduled to receive monthly reports on the progress of workforce development. The Children's Trust will receive quarterly reports.

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Recruitment and Retention of Social Care Staff

Issues

Shortage of qualified (new and experienced) Social Workers and high vacancy rates both in the city and nationally. If not contained this will effect the quality of services offered and our achievements of objectives as outlined in CYPP.

Relatively inexperienced workforce.

The creation of the three year degree in social work meant that very few qualified SWs came out of universities in summer 2006.

First line management posts are often difficult to fill with people who are immediately competent so we will develop a programme to prepare staff for management posts in 2007.

Initiatives

We have supported staff in Assistant Child Care Worker posts who have undertaken the DipSW and now the degree on a part time basis through paid placements, flexible working and jobs at the end of the course. Since 2003 we have supported 11 staff and 9 are still employed by us as SWs. A further 5 will qualify in 2007 and 4 in 2008.

A secondment scheme for five Assistant Child Care Workers should result in 5 newly qualified SWs coming back into the department in June 2007. This scheme has involved 5 staff being seconded part-time initially and full time for the last two years, to obtain their degree. This has required significant investment as it has involved staff replacement and has been a very lengthy process.

In 2006 we decided to consider another alternative and went directly to SW programmes to recruit from their final year.

We have advertised specifically for students in their final year of their social work degree. Twelve were offered posts as ACCWs for the final semester, started work as ACCWs after completing their course and moved to SW posts on receipt of qualification and registration.

In future years we will need to assess the need for this type of scheme – our view is that we will need to continue to recruit in this way because

- It appears to be successful
- Based on past experience, we will always have SW vacancies
- The national shortage is not going to go away overnight but courses report an increase in students applying and a new national recruitment campaign is underway.
- We will need to assess in the early autumn every year, how many staff we need to recruit.

Adverts, Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Relevant Information Packs that are sent to applicants are clear about the vision for the city and the positives in working here.

Retention

We now have a group of 15 newly qualified SWs in post and to retain them we have in place

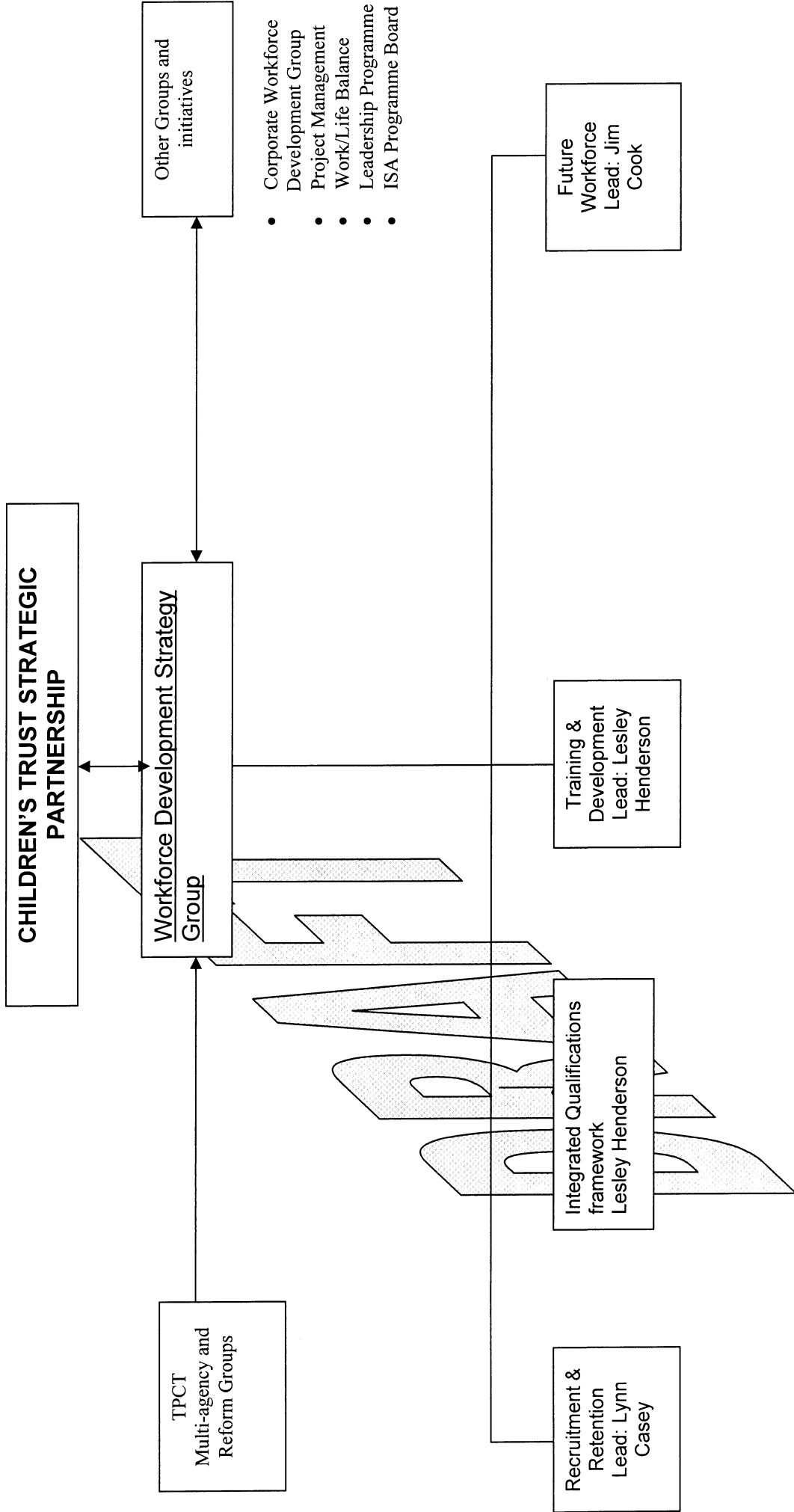
- An accredited PQ1 scheme which is linked to a mandatory Induction and training programme
- Achievement of PQ1 linked to accelerated progression and the Appraisal system
- A supervision and support system that is well established
- Develop additional support via a mentor scheme using the Practice Learning Co-ordinator
- Flexible working with a corporate commitment to work-life balance
- Having access to good quality training and development is an aid to retaining good quality staff.

Future Plans

As part of the Local Authority Children's Workforce Development Strategy a single group has been created to consider recruitment and retention issues across Children's Services. This group will build upon existing strategies in priority areas including Social Workers, Head Teachers and Teachers in specific subject areas. The terms of reference and where this fits with the Workforce Development Strategic Group is attached.

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERY



CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

REVIEW OF SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

19th APRIL 2007

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report describes the current position with regard to primary school places and current levels of surplus places. It also presents the proposed process and timescales the authority will need to carry out a city-wide review of primary surplus places.
- 1.2 The report was considered by Cabinet on 14 March to give approval to carry out consultation and review on an area basis city-wide and to develop proposals to reduce surplus places.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Authority (LA) has a duty to review surplus places within its schools and has carried out reviews annually in order to manage this in line with falling pupil numbers.
- 2.2 The LA has a good record of tackling surplus places and has removed over 6000 places from the primary sector since 2001. The last major review was held in 2003 in which three primary schools were proposed for closure and four were proposed for amalgamation. The last re-organisation resulting from the 2003 review – the amalgamation of Havelock and Pallion Primary Schools to form Highfield Primary School – took effect from September 2006. The new primary school will move into purpose built extended school facilities in February 2007. In more recent years reviews have focused upon the reduction of Published Admission Numbers (PANS) where possible rather than proposals to close or amalgamate schools.
- 2.3 Reductions in PAN are a key method for schools to reduce surplus (involving a reduction in the admission 'intake' number and a corresponding reduction in the schools physical capacity) but beyond a certain point this incremental method to reduce is not sustainable for individual schools. In particular, where schools are already at one form entry, it is difficult to see how PAN reductions can be effective.
- 2.4 The proposed review will focus on primary places, given that secondary places are subject to separate review and reduction as an outcome of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Academies Programme. The planning in relation to reducing surplus places in the secondary sector is now complete. The BSF Wave 1 proposals for surplus place reduction include the closure of Usworth School from August 2007 (as part of the re-organisation of places in Washington) and capacity reductions for three schools in the programme. In total, Wave 1 of BSF will remove 2842 places

from the secondary sector. Current proposals for Wave 2 are that a further 1948 secondary places will be removed.

- 2.5 Reducing surplus places and reconfiguring school provision has clear educational benefits: having the appropriate size and location of schools has a beneficial impact upon schools' delivery of teaching and learning. An excess of places ties up resources that could otherwise be invested in teaching and learning. There are other benefits:
- (i) Schools with high numbers of surplus places can often become very small and struggle to organise classes efficiently;
 - (ii) Smaller numbers of pupils will reduce the amount of money coming into the Council as part of the annual funding settlement. The annual schools budget must still fund the fixed cost element of all existing schools from this reducing sum;
 - (iii) If surplus places and therefore the fixed cost elements are reduced, more funding is available for all pupils;
 - (iv) In capital terms there is a significant cost burden in maintaining surplus buildings and capacity.
- 2.6 The need to address surplus places at this particular time provides an opportunity to link, demographic planning with policy aims such as Every Child Matters and in particular the proposed primary capital programme associated with this. From 2009/10 all Local Authorities will share in an annual £500 million in primary capital investment; the aim nationally is to rebuild, remodel or refurbish at least half of all primary schools in England over a 10-15 year period. Similar to BSF secondary funding, the investment will provide primary schools fully equipped for 21st century learning, at the heart of the community, with Children's Services in reach of every family.
- 2.7 National Bodies such as the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Audit Commission continue to scrutinise the effectiveness of Local Authorities in removing surplus places. The recent Annual Performance Assessment (APA) sought clarification on Sunderland's approach to surplus place removal and this has also been a feature of the Joint Area Review process (JAR).
- 2.8 There are two key calculations that are taken into account in measuring LA performance in relation to surplus places – the overall number of surplus places calculated as a percentage of total places and the number of individual schools with 25+% surplus places.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 An initial analysis of 'current' levels of surplus places in primary schools has been undertaken. While the overall number of surplus places has been reduced as a result of year on year review to 14.2% this is forecast to rise to 17% by 2011/12. The figure recommended by the Audit Commission as a reasonable target is 10%. In terms of the second key indicator – the number of individual schools with 25+% surplus places - there are 15 primary

schools that have 25% surplus places at the current time. Surplus places are not concentrated in any one area of Sunderland – although it is evident some areas have higher levels than others.

- 3.2 Previous city-wide reviews of surplus places have been conducted on an area by area basis, based upon Sunderland’s six regeneration areas, North, South, East, West, Coalfield’s and Washington. This has proved to be effective, particularly because in the main, these areas reflect primary and secondary schools clusters and admissions and transfer patterns. It is therefore proposed that the current review and consultation is undertaken on an area by area basis and any proposals for re-organisation arising out of this to be developed also on an area basis.
- 3.3 Sunderland has an excellent track record in consulting on school re-organisation, exceeding by some way the minimum level of involvement and engagement set out in DfES guidance. Two stage consultation – in which consultees are able to shape and change proposals as the process develops – is a key feature of this. Cabinet has approved the recommendation to proceed with the review and it is proposed that this two stage consultation method is followed. The likely process and timescales would be therefore as follows:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Detailed analysis of the current surplus place levels (by regeneration area) together with the projected surplus for 2012/13. | May 2007 |
| Initial discussions with schools and development of options | June/July 2007 |
| Cabinet approval of options for consultation | September 2007 |
| Consultation with members and the wider school community on options. | October 2007 |
| Cabinet consider response to options and to agree proposals for re-organisation. | December 2007 |
| Second consultation exercise on proposals for re-organisation. | January 2008 |
| Cabinet to agree publication of statutory proposals. | March 2008 |
| Publication of statutory proposals. | March 2008 |
| Decision on proposals ¹ to be determined | June/July 2008 |
| Proposals implemented. | from September 2009 |

4. LEGAL ISSUES

- 4.1 Any proposals for school re-organisation (including reduction in Published Admission Numbers) require the publication of statutory proposals. The legal authority for decisions on school organisation matters currently sits with School Organisation Committees (established as an outcome of the Schools Standard and Framework Act 1998). The Education Bill 2006 proposes the disestablishment of School Organisation Committees from

¹ See Paragraph 4.1

May 2007. Although the Bill indicates that the decision making will from that point rest with the Local Authority, no interpretation is provided and it is not yet clear what the mechanism for this will be i.e. where this new duty will fit within the Council's constitution and at what level of delegated authority; how partner/stakeholder interests will be represented. The City Solicitor is currently seeking advice and clarity from the DfES School Organisation Unit on the meaning of this legislation for Sunderland. The indicative timescale shown in paragraph 3.3 suggests that decisions will be required in June/July 2008.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The current level of surplus places within the primary sector is 14.2%. Whilst this has reduced over the last five years as a result of the review programme, analysis of the projected pupil numbers shows this is to increase to over 17% surplus in six years time. The Council faces significant challenge if surplus places continue to increase. Paragraph 2.5 sets out the educational reasons for reducing surplus places.
- 5.2 The Committee is invited to consider the proposals for the authority to consult further on how to achieve a reduction in surplus places and the scope and timetable for consultation on this issue.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet Report 15th January 2003
Cabinet Report 11th June 2003
Cabinet Report 12th May 2004
Cabinet Report 8th June 2005
Cabinet Report 12th July 2006

Contact Officer: Beverley Scanlon 0191 553 1965
beverley.scanlon@sunderland.gov.uk

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

POLICY REVIEW : SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE DRAFT FINAL REPORT

REPORT OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

19th APRIL 2007

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Committee is invited to endorse the attached draft final report following evaluation of services for children in care.

2. Background

- 2.1 A key function of the Review Committee is to evaluate and review policy and make proposals to Cabinet for policy development.

3. Review Recommendations

- 3.1 The Committee has identified recommendations relating to how the Council acts as a corporate parent, promotes achievement, how children are listened to and represented and how disruption can be minimised for children and young people.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

- 4.1 The draft final report is for discussion and endorsement by the Review Committee prior to submission to Cabinet as the Committee's proposals for review of policy.

5. Background Papers

Review Committee Policy Review reports 2006/07

Contact Officer : Karen Brown 0191 553 1004
karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

FINAL REPORT

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Foreword

To be completed

Terms of Reference

The review looked at whether the Council's strategic approach is making a real difference to the life chances of children and young people living in care. This will be a key test of the impact of the *'Every Child Matters'* programme.

The review considered three key questions:

1. How do Children's Services within the Council support the achievement by looked after children of the five outcomes¹?
2. What partnership arrangements are in place to support the achievement by looked after children of the five outcomes?
3. What specific priorities, objectives and targets does the Council have in its role as corporate parent?

Background to Review

Members of overview and scrutiny in Sunderland have undertaken work in the past to investigate the Council's role as corporate parent. In 2002-03, a scrutiny review was undertaken by the Social Service and Health Review Committee. We have taken account of the conclusions of that review but also of the significant programme of change since then set out by *'Every Child Matters'* (2003), and the subsequent Children Act 2004.

The programme of change will require working closely with partners so that the needs of looked-after children are clearly identified and met at every level.

It was felt timely to review this service area again considering the ongoing integration of Children's Services in Sunderland and the extent to which seamless services were being developed for the planning and joint commissioning of services for children in care.

It is fundamental to the review that it is not the end of a process but a commitment to take on a role of measuring service effectiveness and quality.

¹ Staying Safe, Being Healthy, Enjoying & Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution, Achieving Economic Well-Being

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Committee was pleased to see the many good examples of services in action and the interest and ambition to develop these further. We would like to thank everyone who was involved in contributing to the review.

We have undertaken this review at a time of significant change in the structure of the service. A modernisation programme is underway to prevent children becoming looked after and to ensure that those who are looked after have the most appropriate placement providing a balance of family support, family placement, residential placement and supported accommodation. This aims to create financial efficiencies which can be used to provide community based service.

The review is at a time when the government is making this a high priority through the Green Paper '*Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People*'. If the Green Paper proposals are implemented these will dictate the direction of service delivery for some time.

Within this context we have drawn a number of conclusions from our observations and made recommendations intended to improve some areas. The first question we asked ourselves was how high a priority is corporate parenting and how rigorous are the structures and information sharing practices. Overall, we are pleased with the current arrangements and structures although there is improvement to be made in awareness raising for all councilors and improvements can be made in developing expert knowledge for those most involved (Recs 1, 2 and 3).

The role of corporate parent fundamentally rests with the social care workers who are meeting children on a day-to-day basis. There is no doubt their role is a priority for the children and we have reflected this in our report (Rec 4).

We felt that the Council was listening to and involving children much more but there remain some aspects of life in care that can separate children from their other friends and this should be addressed (Rec 5).

The Council has a duty to promote the educational achievement of children in care. We note that there have been improvements and continuous improvement will take time to show in the results. Our recommendations (6 – 9) are suggestions for further improvement. We can see much good work has already been done and we acknowledge the success of the children in their achievements.

A broader issue that perhaps is one for all children, not just those in care, is to have someone who represents them when they need it and there is such potential benefit for all aspects of a child's life that we have recommended the provision of an advocacy service (Rec 10).

There can be a number of points of disruption to the life of a child in care – this could be a change of placement, a change of school, a change of social worker and, of most concern to the young people, the point at which they leave the care system to live independently.

All of these transition points create risk of set back, isolation, and a feeling of neglect for the child. We would like to see the integration of services ease the possible disruption at these transition points (Recs 11 and 12).

Summary of Recommendations

The Council should:

1. Put in place a process whereby each Area Committee is required annually to seek a nomination from its membership to sit on the Corporate Parenting Board.
2. Provide mandatory training for all new Members upon election to the Council to introduce them to their corporate parenting role.
3. Provide an annual report to the Children's Services Review Committee on performance and achievement outcomes for children in care.
4. In acknowledging the key role social work plays in the lives of children and young people, the highest priority should be given to the recruitment and retention of social workers.
5. Make further efforts to remove barriers to the active involvement by children and young people in hobbies, activities and trips.
6. Take further steps to ensure children in care are not missing education by
 - Continuing to secure the agreement of schools to exceed their roll where necessary to accommodate children in care and;
 - Alerting senior management when attendance drops to less than 50%.
7. Clearly define the role of the designated teacher and provide this role descriptor to the children and young people.
8. Further improve Personal Education Plans by:
 - Research with other authorities on the structuring of PEPs including the extent of independent review of the Plans, and
 - PEPs continuing into further education e.g. up to 19.
9. Anticipate greater numbers of young people aspiring to remain in education post 18 and consider the comprehensive package of financial support needed.
10. Provide an advocacy service for children and young people in care.
11. Minimise wherever possible the disruption at all transition points, particularly those of significant change by:
 - Early planning with the young person prior to leaving care and living independently and;
 - Interagency planning prior to moving from children's to adult services
12. Further explore measures to avoid the use of bed and breakfast accommodation altogether.

The Council as Corporate Parent

- 1.1 We have considered the extent to which the Council does at least what any good parent would do to promote the achievement of good outcomes by children in care. The integration of Children's Services brings an opportunity for agencies to work more cohesively and we welcome this. However, with the size of the integrated agenda we are mindful that the needs of the more vulnerable are not marginalised or 'fall off the agenda'.
- 1.2 It is clear that a rigorous performance management system is in place and from this, we can see that children in care are safe and secure and there is much positive work taking place. There are still some areas of concern however, particularly in respect of educational attainment and employment, education and training opportunities for young people leaving care.
- 1.3 Monitoring the performance and quality of care is through a Corporate Parenting Board. This Board oversees the Council's responsibility as corporate parent and ensures their interests are reflected in policies. The Board receives regular reports on performance and achievement outcomes for children in care, statistics for fostering and adoption and illustrative case studies and inspections from children's homes.
- 1.4 At the time of our review the Board had met only three times and while the structural arrangements are new we can see that these arrangements provide for strong corporate parenting governance providing that when reports are presented they are sufficiently detailed to enable the membership to respond appropriately.
- 1.5 The safeguarding and promotion of the life chances of children in care is the collective responsibility of all councillors and we considered the role and involvement of all elected members.
- 1.6 The Lead Member for Children's Services is expected to have a lead role in the work of the Board in promoting outcomes for children in care. The Board includes in its membership other key portfolio holders and a member from each Area Committee, plus 2 members of the majority party in opposition. Elected members are invited to participate in regulatory visits to children's homes and are represented on Fostering and Adoption Panels.
- 1.7 The elected member appointments to the Corporate Parenting Board were drawn from each Area Committee. In practice, this invitation was issued to the Chairman of Area Committees who either attend or have nominated a member of the committee. **We would recommend that this nomination process be formalised.** To ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board is as robust as it can be, effective and appropriate Elected Member representation is essential. We recommend that the Council puts in place a process whereby each

Area Committee is required annually to seek an appropriate nomination from its membership to sit on the Board.

- 1.8 We felt that the current level of voluntary involvement by most elected members was appropriate, however, there is a risk that a significant proportion of councillors may be largely unaware of their responsibilities and this should be addressed through training and guidance. Members have received written guidance on their role as a corporate parent and we felt this needed to be strengthened **with the provision of mandatory training for all new Members upon election to the Council** to introduce them to their corporate parenting role. This would be in addition to receiving written guidance on their corporate parenting role including where to get information from.
- 1.9 A greater understanding of this important role among all councillors will assist more engagement in activities and events such as IGNITE NE 2006 which included exhibitions, live performances, film festival and conference celebrating the achievements of children in care and young people across the north east and will encourage more councillors to seek out factual information about services for looked after children.
- 1.10 The Council's scrutiny members also have a role in exploring and assessing evidence and satisfy themselves that services being provided are of the required quality.

Case Study - Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Monitoring Group

The group is a sub-group of Telford & Wrekin Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission and takes the key role in monitoring the Council's performance in relation to Corporate Parenting.

The sub group sets its own work programme. The main task of the sub group is to monitor performance by developing the expertise of the members, so they become expert members in this field. Performance monitoring for each of the Every Child Matters five outcomes takes place. However, members can look at any other issues within the service area. The work programme covers:

- areas of poor performance;
- areas of financial overspend;
- areas receiving a high level of budgetary commitment;
- areas where significant change is proposed or has been implemented;
- areas where there is a high level of user dissatisfaction with the service;
- reports and action plans produced/agreed with external inspectors;
- areas that are key issues for the public or have become a public interest issue covered in the media.

- 1.11 To ensure that issues for children in care have the full attention they deserve on the scrutiny agenda arrangements should be further developed in respect of the Review Committees oversight of the Council's corporate parenting role. **We recommend that the Board provides an annual report to the Children's Services Review Committee** on performance and achievement outcomes for children in care.

- 1.12 An important element of our evidence-gathering process was to hear the views of children and young people. A summary of our discussion is at Appendix 2 and their comments are reflected throughout the report.
- 1.13 We have taken into consideration throughout our report that the children and young people did not wish to be 'singled out' or known as a child looked after by the local Council but preferred to be treated just like their friends.
- 1.14 We have also taken into account that not all children are the same or want the same intervention. A child who is in a permanent, stable and secure foster home and is doing well in school, may need little additional support.

Staying Safe

- 2.1 One of the areas of focus for Children's Services in Sunderland is the high levels of children in care compared to other local authorities who have similar demographic and social profiles.
- 2.2 The Council has had success in targeted areas including preventing the need for some older children to become looked after.
- 2.3 However, the numbers of children in the local authority care is still slightly higher than other authorities (418 children at 31.3.07). Sunderland has a relatively high number of young people looked after in children's homes (14.4% or 58 children compared to the Metropolitan LA average of 13.6%). Within these numbers there has also been an increase in the number of babies becoming looked after (see Table 3 Appendix 3).
- 2.4 The Council recently reduced children's home provision with two homes closed in 2005/06 and two more closed in November 2006. Resources have been reinvested in family support, specialist foster placements and supported accommodation for care leavers. A Support to Independence Team was created to support young people.
- 2.5 Further work is planned to reduce the numbers, particularly by investment in prevention and family support.
- 2.6 The creation of a Community Support Team (CST) in June 2005 prevents young people becoming looked after and supports young people to return home earlier from residential care. There is evidence of the teams success. CST gave intensive support to 52 young people who were at high risk of coming into care. Of them only 4 became looked after and of them 3 were supported to return home.
- 2.7 Most children in care in Sunderland are in foster placements. At September 2006 the fostering service was providing placements for around 300 fostered children in 230 foster homes. On a day-to-day basis it is the foster carers who are likely to make the most difference to the lives of children in care.
- 2.8 The Fostering Services was inspected in September 2006. Most people said very good things about the service and we were pleased that the children said they were happy in their foster homes.
- 2.9 We were also impressed by the thoroughness of the adoption process and the measures taken to match children and adoptive families. The percentage of children adopted is relatively stable at 5.5% although this indicates a decrease on previous years. The target for 2006/07 is 11.6% (or approximately 44 adoptions). We recognise that much effort is invested in trying to find new foster and adopter families.

- 2.10 Good progress has been made in increasing the numbers of children in family placements. In terms of matching placements some children commented that their carers may not share the same interests as they did, for instance, in relation to pursuing hobbies and activities. All children know how to make a complaint and the steps to follow but some still did not know what to do if they weren't happy. A booklet is provided to all children including how to make complaints.
- 2.11 Increasing the number of children placed for adoption is a priority for Children's Services. Performance was lower in 2005-2006 than 2004-2006 dropping from 11.1% to 7.2%. One obstacle we had concerns about was the length of time the process can take, for instance, because of the legal steps needed before some children are placed for adoption. Detailed monitoring of permanency plans in 'permanency surgeries' is supporting practice improvement.
- 2.12 There are 8 children's homes in Sunderland accommodating 50 children, one home for disabled children with 4 places and one which provides short breaks. Other children are in the care of family members.
- 2.13 We are confident that children are safe and well looked after in the children's homes. Each home has a bullying policy. Good behaviour is encouraged through the use of incentives.
- 2.14 Children did report some inconsistencies, for example, in relation to taking part in activities where decisions were taken by individual home managers based on their perceptions of risk. The children felt that each home should have an activity plan put together in consultation with the children.
- 2.15 Where there are barriers relating to inconsistencies these need to be addressed. For example, the children also felt there were inconsistencies around allowances, pocket money and bed times. We were informed the issues of pocket money and Christmas and birthday allowances have recently been reviewed.
- 2.16 Where the children's perception is one of inequity we felt there was scope to consider further methods of ensuring clarity and transparency around the information and understanding by children of aspects of being in care.
- 2.17 Generally, young people in care may be faced with instability in their lives: a change in care placement can also mean a change of school, and this lack of stability can have a critical impact on educational attainment. We were pleased to hear that most children who are looked after in Sunderland have a stable placement.
- 2.18 When a change in placement is necessary, resulting in a change of school it is important that the Council manages those transition times

effectively including re-admission to the new school, transport to the new school, and induction. The strengthened role for the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and robust tracking of care plans should help to avoid drift but some of our evidence pointed to some disruption at transition points.

- 2.19 All children in the care of the local authority have a social worker allocated to them. We asked children about this relationship, and what makes the relationship better or worse, for example, if social workers have to change regularly or if children have difficulty contacting their social worker.
- 2.20 The children we spoke to placed a heavy reliance on the relationship with their social worker but felt that they were not always listened to and their social worker may not be around when they need to speak to someone. We are aware that social workers' have to contend with an extremely heavy workload and work in a pressured environment.
- 2.21 The level of dissatisfaction around access to social workers was understandable if the child's needs outweighed the capacity of the social workers to respond. At the time we spoke to them all social workers had been given mobile phones and the numbers had been given to the children to make sure they were able to make contact easily. This seems to be a straightforward solution to the children's concerns and it seemed to be welcomed.
- 2.22 Transfer points between social worker involvement caused a risk of increasing the possibility of issues being lost and children feeling unsupported. A handover period is necessary. We were told that a child should only experience one transfer (from the assessment social worker to the permanency social worker), although there would inevitably be circumstances where more changes were unavoidable.
- 2.23 The recruitment and retention of social workers was a key risk in maintaining the high level of services. High turnover can mean frequent changes and those changes could have a detrimental effect on the relationship and trust element.
- 2.24 The recruitment and retention of social workers is a national problem. Private agencies are offering higher salaries and added incentives and the local authority is competing in this climate. Every Child Matters recognises the recruitment and retention problems in child and family social work services and seeks to improve the attractiveness, image and status of the work.
- 2.25 In acknowledging the key role social work plays in the lives of children and young people, the highest priority should be given to the recruitment and retention of social workers.**

Being Healthy

- 3.1 Children and young people in the care system are some of the most vulnerable and they may require more, or different, health care.
- 3.2 As well as considering what is in place to ensure the health and fitness of children in care we also considered health and wellbeing in a wider context including access to social activities.
- 3.3 We were aware of other work ongoing that was relevant to the well-being of young people, for example, sexual health, CAMHS provision for young offenders, smoking cessation, nutritional school meals, and physical education at school. Cross-referencing to these initiatives is important in the holistic view of health and well-being.
- 3.4 Sunderland has a dedicated health team, OK2, for children in care. This centrally coordinated paediatric service provides and monitors the statutory health assessment and review of children in care. The team consists of a designated doctor, a nurse and two CAMHS psychologists who lead on assessing and reviewing all children's health needs.
- 3.5 This dedicated health team have been assessed as a strength and the health needs of children in care are "*met to a high standard*"² We were pleased to hear that there are effective systems in place to offer a healthy and active lifestyle to children in care.
- 3.6 Almost all children in care in Sunderland have an annual health assessment (bi-annual for children under five) and a designated nurse is working to achieve this for those children harder to reach (91.10% at June 2006). We are pleased to note this is above the national average (78.07%).
- 3.7 We appreciate that performance in achieving 100% health and dental assessments is challenging, particularly if there are higher numbers of adolescent referrals. We recognise that alternatives are being explored to work with teenagers.
- 3.8 There is also a high level of therapeutic support for children including CAMHS support and other psychology and psychiatric services for children requiring the most intensive support.
- 3.9 The Council has provided discounted access to its own leisure facilities, such as swimming, for children in care since November 2005. This is also available to their carers and to foster carer's own children and the families of disabled children who sign up to the disability forum. To date approximately 1,560 cards have been issued to Sunderland

² 2006 Annual Performance Assessment

users allowing discounted and some free entry into museums and leisure facilities.

- 3.10 We are pleased with the range of this service but noted when we met with young people a small number said they did not know about the cards.
- 3.11 Young people also expressed views about wanting to have more opportunities for varied leisure activities and to not be prevented from accessing activities because of travel issues or the length of time it takes to authorise and arrange activities.
- 3.12 We were told that 32% of young people in children's homes take part in school or community based activities. Some children did say they had concerns about whether they were limited in what activities they could pursue because of the choices made by their carers.
- 3.13 We found there are generally good arrangements in place to provide a home environment for children which actively encourages and supports a healthy lifestyle and ensures that the child or young person gains maximum benefit from the broader experiences offered by leisure activities, hobbies and sport.
- 3.14 Depending on the needs of the young people activities of choice were encouraged but the children felt there were limitations because of the time and availability of care home staff that would not necessarily be the case for other children.
- 3.15 We would welcome the encouragement of individual pursuits wherever possible. If we are to be truly aspirational for our children in care we should be nurturing the talent in each child and profiling the whole person as any good parent would.
- 3.16 Barriers to children in care participating in activities include risk assessments, payment for trips, authorising attendance on trips, providing transport, all of which are more problematic for children in care than for other children. **We would recommend some creative thinking around, where possible, removing barriers to the active involvement by children and young people in hobbies, activities and trips.** There may be scope for developing further links with the voluntary and community sector in this regard and we would welcome feedback.

Enjoy & Achieve

- 4.1 Young people in children's homes and foster care must have the same opportunities available to them as others and be encouraged and motivated to attend, enjoy and achieve at school.
- 4.2 As a corporate parent we have a duty to promote the education of looked after children. But there are a range of challenges for a corporate parent that are not faced by the average family.
- 4.3 Children in care in Sunderland achieve significantly poorer examination results than the average for all children in the City. However, we are pleased that the success rate at all key stages and GCSE/GNVQ equivalent has been steadily increasing. Of the children in care eligible to take GCSE in 2006 39% gained 5+A*-C and 11% achieved 5+A*-C including English and maths. The percentage who gained 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C more than doubled from the previous year from 12.5% 5+A*-C in 2005 to 38.9% in 2006.
- 4.4 We were concerned that a number of children in care are not achieving any test results. For just over one third of pupils there is no data available on their performance and achievements. This raises the question of attendance issues for those children.
- 4.5 We recognise that academic achievement is not always possible for some children and alternative training is more fitting. We are pleased to hear about the Achievement through Choice and Engagement Project (ACE) which began in August 2006. It aims to improve outcomes for 76 children (50 in residential homes and the remainder in foster care where attendance is less than 50%). The project aims to re-engage these young people with learning and re-integrate them into a learning environment by providing appropriate intervention and support.
- 4.6 Young people in care are at risk of spending too much time out of school either because they do not have a school place, they are excluded, or they do not attend.
- 4.7 As at December 2006 no looked after children were excluded from school. However, school attendance by looked after children is worse than average. The percentage of children in care who missed at least 25 days schooling was 14.3% in 2005-06.
- 4.8 We were pleased to note that through the ACE project a dedicated worker will work with children in care to promote, encourage and celebrate improved school attendance achievements. One of the major elements of the project is to establish a protocol of home to school first day contact for absence of LAC.

- 4.9 The Council's Admissions Policy cites looked after children as priority for school placement. This should be backed up by a mechanism to secure the agreement of a school to admit children in care. The Green Paper includes a proposal to providing local authorities with the power to direct schools to admit children in care, even where the school is fully subscribed.
- 4.10 The School Admissions Code (the Code) came into force on 28 February 2007, and applies to admissions to all maintained schools and Academies. Admission authorities must ensure that their determined admission arrangements for 2008 comply with the mandatory provisions of this Code.
- 4.11 The law and this Code also make special arrangements for the most vulnerable children. Children who are looked after must now be given top priority in the oversubscription criteria for all schools. And because these children often have to move school during the school year, the law gives their corporate parent the crucial right to direct any school to give them a place, even where the school is full.
- 4.12 We recommend the Council takes further steps to ensure children in care are not missing education by**
- Continuing to secure the agreement of schools to exceed their roll where necessary to accommodate children in care and
 - Alerting senior management when attendance drops to less than 50%.
- 4.13 Support at home for learning and development is important for all children. Children in care may need extra support in education, either because they have missed out on schooling, or because they have special educational needs. If children do not have sufficient help with their homework they can get behind.
- 4.14 All children's homes in Sunderland have Education Co-ordinators, who act as the principal links between the children in the home and their schools, and also act as general educational advocates for the children in their care. In addition, the LACE team have a small budget for individual pupil support with course work, particularly at years 10 and 11.

Case Study - Flying Tutors

The London Borough of Merton's contribution to the promotion and support of looked after children and care leavers is to offer additional tuition. The highest priority are those in school years 10 and 11, followed by children or care leavers needing additional support with degrees or GNVQ's at College or University, and those sitting their SATS: key stages 1-4.

Flying tutors are provided for children and young people. They provide tutoring, one hour per week per term for every GCSE/ National Curriculum subject assessed from Personal Education Plan and in consultation with child/ young person by social care workers (social workers), foster primary carer and Education Chances team member. The impact on the child or young person's learning is assessed at the end of each term.

- 4.15 Children told us that they would be helped in their homes if they asked for it but they wanted to have better access to computers where they lived. There are computers in each children's home but children reported it wasn't always easy to use them when they wanted to.
- 4.16 Some positive news is that the ACE project may be able to fund the upgrading of all computers in children's homes and possibly allow the funding of one laptop to be used in the child's own room. Additionally, through Sunderland's successful Digital Challenge bid, children in care will be helped to access technologies. Computers for Pupils Initiative can identify pupils who would benefit from having a computer at home.
- 4.17 There is a requirement for each school to have a designated teacher for looked after children and all schools in Sunderland have a teacher in this role. In primary schools this may be the Headteacher or the SENCo. In secondary schools it is typically the SENCo or a member of the pastoral team.
- 4.18 The designated teacher should be an advocate for young people in care, accessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations of them. The teacher also has an important role in joining up services to make sure the speedy transfer of education information between agencies and individuals and that each child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- 4.19 We had some concerns about whether those schools whose designated teacher has other significant responsibilities for teaching can provide significant and sufficient attention to the role.
- 4.20 A network of designated teachers should strengthen the overall role of the Council in acting as corporate parent, by sharing expertise about individual support, preventing unnecessary moves of school of exclusion and minimising delay, provide information on test results, attendance and academic progress for the education planning meeting.
- 4.21 In carrying out their role, schools have reported some concerns through the Audit Commission School Survey for 2005 in meeting the often complex needs of children in care specifically:
- The quality and timeliness of the information schools receive through the local authority about looked after children in their school
 - The timeliness of the notification of statutory reviews and planning meetings concerning looked after children in schools
 - The accessibility of the social worker of the looked after child in school
- 4.22 Through regular meetings and effective liaison we hope the Council will convince all schools of the importance and benefits of taking the role of designated teacher of looked after children very seriously. **We would recommend the Council clearly defines the role of the designated**

teacher and provide this role descriptor to the children and young people.

- The designated teacher would usually be someone with sufficient authority to influence school policy and practice and act as both a resource and advocate for a child looked after by the Authority.
- We feel it is very important that they have the necessary time off the timetable to deal with LAC issues.
- It is also important that young people know who the designated teacher is as opposed to the year tutor if this is different.
- That designated teachers should be able to attend in-house training as part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

4.23 The Council are responsible for ensuring that every young person in care has a PEP. At the time of our investigation just under 66% of children in the care of Sunderland Council held a PEP which was a statutory requirement, usually initiated by the child's social worker in partnership with the child, designated teacher, parent/relative, carer and other professionals.

4.24 This aspect of care had also been scrutinised in the Council's scrutiny review 2002/03 when the Review Committee set out targets for all children in care to have a PEP.

4.25 It is considered essential that all children in care hold a PEP. We recommend the Council further improve Personal Education Plans by:

- Research with other authorities on the structuring of PEPs including the extent of independent review of Plans, and
- PEPs continuing into further education e.g. up to 19 (We can see that planning will become stronger as transitional links improve).

4.26 Proportionately far fewer children in care in Sunderland go on to university than the average although the Committee is pleased to note that seven care leavers are currently in further or higher education compared to none 3 years ago.

4.27 Members were interested in the implication for general budgets of funding young people into university without additional funds and feared that this might impact on other children further down the line given limited monies available.

4.28 Looking to the future, government is proposing that by 2015, all young people in England would have to be in school or some form of training until their 18th birthday. As a corporate parent, if we truly aspire for the children in our care to have the opportunity to participate in further or higher education this will place a substantial financial burden the Council, as it can do for parents.

4.29 Young people in care must be able to make a genuine choice between going into employment and carrying on with their education at age 16.

The Council needs to be clear and consistent about what it really wants young people to achieve, and to provide resources as well as targets.

- 4.30 A comprehensive financial package is available to young people going into higher education and all young people have finance arrangements on an individual basis. The greater the number of young people in care making demands on this service the more vulnerable to weakness it will be. While the numbers currently are very small this may be sustainable but we **recommend in anticipation of greater numbers of young people aspiring to remain in education post 18 that long term financial plans are considered for supporting young care leavers.**

Making a Positive Contribution

- 5.1 Opportunities should be provided by the Council for the positive engagement of children in care. For example, all children in care should be helped to participate in their reviews. The number of LAC who made contributions to their reviews went down from last year to a level well below other comparative councils but the situation has been addressed. 14 social workers have been appointed and the operation of the independent reviewing system is also under review to ensure that more effective support is offered to children and young people to participate in reviews.
- 5.2 Procedures and practice for reviews were strengthened following work involving children. Because of their direct involvement there is a much greater emphasis on consultation and participation. There has been a reported 100% participation since April 2006.
- 5.3 The consultation forum 4UM is well established and facilitated, for example, concerns about overnight stays with friends have been addressed through the forum.
- 5.4 Since April 2006 93% of reviews had been held on time, overcoming a dip in performance with a high number of reviews not being held on time in the preceding year.
- 5.5 All children in care are allocated to an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) for consistency in reviewing plans and progress in tracking between reviews.
- 5.6 It is important that young people facing difficult situations are able to have independent, individual advocacy support and representation. The advocate should find out the wishes of the young person and represent those wishes, feelings, beliefs and values both verbally and in writing.
- 5.7 The Council's Young People's Officer has included the role of independent advocate for young people since this became a statutory requirement in 2004. Independence in the role is aided by the location of the post in the Safeguarding Unit alongside the Independent Reviewing Officers.
- 5.8 Some other local authorities commission the services of independent advocacy for young people who are vulnerable and need this type of support, particularly those who do not have relatives or friends to act on their behalf. Sunderland has used 'spot' purchasing of advocacy but has no contractual arrangement for this service.
- 5.9 We feel that the provision of independent advocacy should be strengthened so that the Young People's Officer role providing general advice can be separated from individual advocacy. **We recommend**

the Council investigates the provision of an advocacy service for children and young people in care. This is in line with the Green Paper proposals on the development of advocacy services.

- 5.10 Being in care can increase the risk to young people of being involved anti-social or offending behaviour. We know that children looked after by local authorities are three times as likely as others to commit offences (source: DH outcomes for LAC). There are many reasons for this. Sometimes, as young people reported to us, it is because when living in residential homes they were in contact with others who influenced their behaviour.
- 5.11 The Council works with other agencies to help young people stay out of trouble and to reduce the gap between the proportions of children in care and other children who are involved in this kind of behaviour which can lead to ASBOs, reprimands, final warnings or convictions.
- 5.12 Progress in Sunderland to close this gap has fluctuated. Quarterly monitoring shows that at June 2006 36 (16.22%) young people in care were convicted or subject to a final warning/reprimand, in September 2006 45 (20.4%), and December 2006 41 (18.8%). The numbers are high against the rate of all children which is 6.7% and also against surrounding authorities and the national average which is 9.16%. Offending rates amongst children looked after were 2.4 times higher in Sunderland than for all young people in the Northumbria police area.
- 5.13 We wanted to know what additional support exists to work with children in care to avoid this kind of behaviour and to not repeat the behaviour.
- 5.14 The Restorative Justice Panel (RJP) was established in 2004 to deal with low level offending and to avoid minor offences by children in care coming before the court. Since 2004 the RJP has diverted 86 cases that may otherwise have gone to court. Young people seemed happy that they could use this option as an alternative to the court system.
- 5.15 We also wanted to know the circumstances in which offending activity could be reported to the police. It is very rare that cases go to court as a result of a social care worker referral. In children's homes there is a clear policy in place with only severe situations requiring police intervention when there is considered to be no alternative.
- 5.16 As a further protection and safeguard every potential prosecution is notified to the Head of Service for confirmation to proceed. We were pleased that this additional safeguard was in place.
- 5.17 However, there is a remaining concern about the overall rate of offending behaviour by children in care and we were also concerned that within the figures there may be high levels of re-offending.

5.18 The youth courts representative confirmed that magistrates were aware of the system in place, so if a young person re-offended the magistrates would be asking what steps had been taken prior to the young person re-offending. We would welcome the exploration of more creative strategies to work with young people who are repeat offenders.

Achieving Economic Well-Being

- 6.1 We investigated the support available at key transitions, such as to independent living and post-16 education and training. It is vitally important that adult and children's services monitor transition points.
- 6.2 The transition from children's to adult services for disabled children in care can be particularly difficult. Young people should expect to maintain their quality of life as they move into adults' services.
- 6.3 A CSCI report said that families with teenagers with disabilities turning 18 can find it a 'nightmare' as they move from children's to adults' social services. They can experience problems because local councils fail to provide the same level of support for adults as they do for children. We wanted to know if there was a cut off point at 18 irrespective of need.
- 6.4 Adult and children's services need to co-operate on joint appraisals of teenagers' needs. Children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) are supported at key transition points by a multi-agency approach. A Transitions Action Group was established in 2006 to ensure that young people with LDD experience a positive transition from childhood to adulthood.
- 6.5 In collaboration with Connexions all young people with LDD receive advice and guidance on training and employment opportunities post 16. City Equals are a group of 10 young people who were formed to raise issues relevant to disabled young people. They have consulted with Health Professionals and taken a central role in producing a report for the Council for Disabled Children on how to improve transition services in Sunderland.
- 6.6 Young people going through transition are involved in person-centred planning, an approach aimed at putting young people at the centre of the planning process. The Council plan for all children in care aged 16 or over to have Person Centred Plans (PCPs).
- 6.7 PCPs can focus on the potential of a young person but this aspect needs to be stronger. An improvement would also be to monitor the impact of Person Centred Planning on outcomes for young people in transition.
- 6.8 We are pleased to note there has been an increase in the number of care leavers in education, employment and training (EET) - 59% in March 2006.
- 6.9 The 'Teenagers to Work' scheme has supported 24 children in care in 2005 and 38 in 2006. We would like to see more children in care involved in this scheme.
- 6.10 Some concerns were expressed that young people, often with a high level of support needs when entering further education were cut-off from

additional support or mentoring as the college would be unaware of their background.

6.11 We noted that some young people may wish not to be identified as previously being 'in care' but nevertheless felt that greater links between schools and colleges to provide a more co-ordinated move for the young person could only be beneficial.

6.12 Young people were concerned that when leaving care that this should not happen without appropriate planning and preparation. They also had some worries about what would happen if they were living independently and not coping.

6.13 Care Leavers generally do not have the support available to other young people who leave 'home' but legislation expects them to become independent of parents much sooner than other young people leaving home. In most cases it will be known a long time in advance the point at which transition to independence will be happening and when accommodation is going to be needed to allow a plan to be in place.

6.14 To ease the transition, young people leaving care have a pathway plan within three months of referral and all young people participate in drawing up their plans. A Pathway Plan meeting should take place before a young person takes on an independent tenancy to consider and address their support needs specific to living independently. This should involve all relevant agencies and the young person, and result in a plan of specific support, and the person or agency responsible for this. It should also state the responsibilities of the young person.

6.15 **The Council should aim to minimise wherever possible the disruption at all transition points, particularly those of significant change by :**

- Early planning with the young person prior to leaving care and living independently and
- Interagency planning prior to moving from children's to adult services

6.16 We are pleased that range of quality accommodation is getting better. Trainer flats and placements in supported lodgings are provided. We remain concerned that there were still a small number of young people in bed and breakfast accommodation. The Council's scrutiny review in 2002/03 identified the use of bed and breakfast accommodation as unacceptable and made recommendations around securing more suitable accommodation.

6.17 We take the view that bed and breakfast accommodation for vulnerable young people is unacceptable. We would urge the Council to **further explore measures to avoid the use of bed and breakfast accommodation altogether.** This could be by utilising further links with

the VCS, Social Registered Landlords, Housing Needs Officers and implementing fully our own housing strategy for young people.

Membership & Operation of Review

Elected Members:

Councillor Paul Stewart (Chairman)
 Councillor Tom Wright (Vice-Chairman)
 Councillor Richard Bell
 Councillor Cecilia Gofton
 Councillor Aileen Handy
 Councillor Robert Heron
 Councillor Peter Maddison
 Councillor Graeme Miller
 Councillor Anthony Morrissey
 Councillor Robert Oliver
 Councillor William Stephenson
 Councillor Linda Williams

Co-opted Members:

Malcolm Frank, Roman Catholic Diocese
 Christine Hutchinson, Free Churches' Council
 Dianne Snowdon, Secondary School Sector
 Marilyn Harrop, Primary Teacher representative
 Howard Brown, Secondary Teacher representative
 Colin Craig, City of Sunderland College (up to February 2007)
 Stuart Laverick, City of Sunderland College (from February 2007)
 Gary Holmes, University of Sunderland
 Dorothy Butler, Chairman of Governors of a school maintained by the LEA
 Pat Burn, Sunderland Community Matters

Operation of the Committee:

The topic for policy review was chosen by the Committee on 13 June 2006 and the terms of reference were agreed on 13 July 2006. Evidence was taken at 8 meetings as follows:

| Date of Meeting | Witness | Evidence |
|------------------------|--|---|
| 14 September | Barbara Williams, Head of Safeguarding | Baseline Service Data |
| 12 October | Councillor Ronnie Bainbridge, Chairman Health & Well-Being Review Committee, Jane Hedley, Senior Solicitor Social Services Paul Staines Review Coordinator | Corporate Parenting Policy Review 2002/03 |
| | Raj Singh, Asst Head of Service Partnership & Service Integration | ACE Project |
| 27 October | Children and young people with experience of the care system in Sunderland. Facilitated by: John Arthurs, Alyson Boucher, Dot McGough, John | Views of children in care |

| | | |
|-------------|--|--|
| | Hutchinson | |
| 9 November | Steve Woodward Barbara Williams | Educational Support to LAC Care Matters Green Paper |
| 17 November | Janette Sherratt, CAMHS Strategy Manager | CAMHS |
| | Judith Corrigan, Designated Nurse LAC Dr Jan Welbury, Consultant Community Paediatrician | Health Assessment and Services |
| | Nick Murphy, Residential Services Manager | Residential Services |
| | Jenny Parkin, Service Manager Adoption | Adoption |
| | Steve Towers, Service Manager Fostering | Fostering |
| 15 December | Janet Newton, Safeguarding Children Strategic Manager | Participation by Young People in LAC Reviews |
| | Martin Winship, Independent Reviewing Officer | Role of the IROs |
| | Phil Taylor, Children's Service Strategy Implementation Manager | Implementing the LAC Strategy and Reducing Numbers of LAC |
| | Judith Hay, Head of Positive Contribution Karen Embleton, Sunderland Youth Court | Offending & Anti-Social Behaviour involving LAC |
| | Simone Common, Young People's Services Strategic Manager | Children Leaving Care |
| 14 February | Steve Fletcher, Manager | Services for Disabled Children |
| | Helen Whewell, Maureen Barrow, Jo- Anne Davis, Specialist Teachers Keith Ratcliffe, Educational Psychologist | Educational Support & Educational Psychology Service for LAC |
| 15 February | Anna Wood, Social Worker, Hilary Bagley, Team Manager, Janet Meek, Children's Services Manager | Role of the Social Workers |

Views of Children in Care

These opinions and comments were provided by children and young people in Sunderland at a meeting with members of the committee on 27 October 2006

Education

Key Points

Computers

- Need access to for homework / leisure, need to be able to save work, fire walls too strict, need programmes for help with school work, access to MSN

Friends

- Contact with friends most important part of going to school – need to stay at the same school for stability and keeping the same friends

Carers

- Need more encouragement and support from staff to
- Go to school – be stricter about attendance. Should be more discipline about going to school and more sanctions e.g. take distractions away
- Do more reading – access to books, stories and reference in homes
- Pro-actively help with homework
- Attend parents evenings
- Have higher aspirations e.g. encouragement to go on to college or university
- Be pro-active in offering and providing positive support.

Equity

- Recognition of the importance of all children learning - ensure younger children in care get an education and extra help for children in care with disabilities
- Payment for school activities – can miss out because permission and payment can take too long

Transport

- Need dependable transport to get to school– sometimes cancelled without warning
- Prefer to get public transport with friends

General Points

Curriculum

- Personal, social, health education important for children in care
- Extra help for tests – e.g. learning mentor
- Vocational education important e.g. health and social
- Personal Education Plans

Resources

- Proper resources to help with school work

Behaviour

- School staff give children in care more leeway with behaviour which isn't helpful
- Only sanction available to carers for bad behaviour is to take away pocket money so they really can't do anything

School Staff

- Need one contact in school to talk to / mentor
- Steady environment
- Building relationships with young person (trust and respect)
- Teachers' understanding of issues / training

Leisure & Social

Key points

Holidays

- Going on proper holidays – don't get to have as many holidays as others and can't go abroad

Leisure Facilities

- Leisure facilities discount cards - too many problems and restrictions

Friends

- Sleepover issues – need permission for friends to stay in homes

Activities

- Encouragement to take up things young people enjoy and are good at e.g. hobbies like horse riding, TA/Cadets or going to the gym
- More varied activities e.g. organised girls activities and other sports than football
- More encouragement for community involvement

Restrictions

- Curfews / bedtimes restrictive
- Restrictions can be imposed based on carer attitudes
- Staff convenience v what young people want to do
- Pocket money depending on age in residential home
- Computers – can't get on when want to, restricted for MSN and firewalls too strict

General Points

Inconsistencies

- Different rules in different care homes
- Homes should have activity plans
- Inconsistency of staff support to take part in certain activities
- Inconsistency of risk assessment in different homes
- Mixed messages from staff e.g. smoking / sleepovers

Money

- Need opportunities to add to pocket money e.g. doing chores
- Could open account for young person to save up for clothes and other essentials

- Freedom should depend on behaviour of young person
- Take responsibility with money, staff don't give enough punishment for misuse of money e.g. using for alcohol and drugs

Bureaucracy

- Paying for trips problematic
- Can't do things at short notice – social workers take time to organise

Leaving Care

Key Points

Preparation for leaving care

- Leaving care is too early and too fast
- Leaving Care Workers getting involved too late
- Gradual, phased approach to leaving the system needed – contact from leaving care worker in good time before reach 16
- Need early understanding of what support will be provided in next few years
- Young people now going to FE / HE – aspirations need to change

Support

- Life skills – need more support setting up home and doing practical things like washing clothes, paying bills, budgeting
- 'Buddy' system
- Ongoing informal meetings to check young person is OK after 16.

Housing

- Young people should have choice of location and property – need to be near friends and family, not just where the accommodation happens to be
- Some locations of accommodation not suitable for vulnerable young people

General Points

Ongoing support

- Support continuing after leaving care – someone to rely on - follow up after 16, 18, 21 years
- Should have choice of care for longer if need to, beyond 16
- Links to care placement, being able to go back in an emergency
- If going to college or university need help with finances and resources
- Should be an organisation specifically for leaving care with mentor support, someone to talk to and to help in emergency, people who can be trusted
- If going back to family need continuing back up from social workers
- Help with getting a job – writing a CV

Housing

- Avoid putting young people into B&Bs
- Use of training flats

- More flexible routes to housing
- Shouldn't need to declare homeless to get house
- Stable environment to live in
- Should be more up to date organisations to help finding homes for young people

Life in Care

Key Points

Social workers

- Inconsistencies, not keeping appointments, only coming when there's a problem, false promises, not listening
- Should be able to have more say in choosing a link worker

Allowances / pocket money

- e.g. for clothes and personal requisitions not enough and
- Inconsistencies across homes - equity needed in applying rules across all homes instead of letting individual staff decide
- Bedtimes different in homes
- Less allowances in residential care

Treat as individuals

- Treatment not tailored to individual young person, blanket rules for certain age groups apply regardless of circumstances
- Promote the profile and issues so people understand the care system
- Show others that young people are not all bad just because in care

General Points

Restrictions

- Too many limits and restrictions, is it because of what's convenient for the staff?
- Sleepovers – friends can't stay

Type of care

- More foster carers – set targets
- Try and keep brothers and sisters together
- Foster care family homes feel more secure for the young person and made them feel they had more potential
- Parity in homes with foster care e.g. birthday allowances
- Mix of age groups in homes can cause problems
- No lie-ins in residential!
- Being with friends better when with foster family

Structure

- Feel safe and secure and have privacy of own room
- Need a firm and supportive environment, need firm decisions
- More discipline on bed times
- Family contact for those who want it – very important

Risks

- Feel excluded and isolated
- Vulnerability and bullying in homes
- May get into trouble in care because of contact and influence of other young people offending in some homes

Having a voice

- Young people need to be involved with decisions on life –young people have opinions

The Local Picture

Numbers and ages of children in care

The number of children and young people looked after by Sunderland Council on 1 January 2007 was 417 children (or 67 per 10,000 population). The number has remained stable against the 2007 target, levelling out at just under 420. Figures are still slightly above average for our peer group but compare favourably with neighbouring authorities.

Table 1. Number of LAC

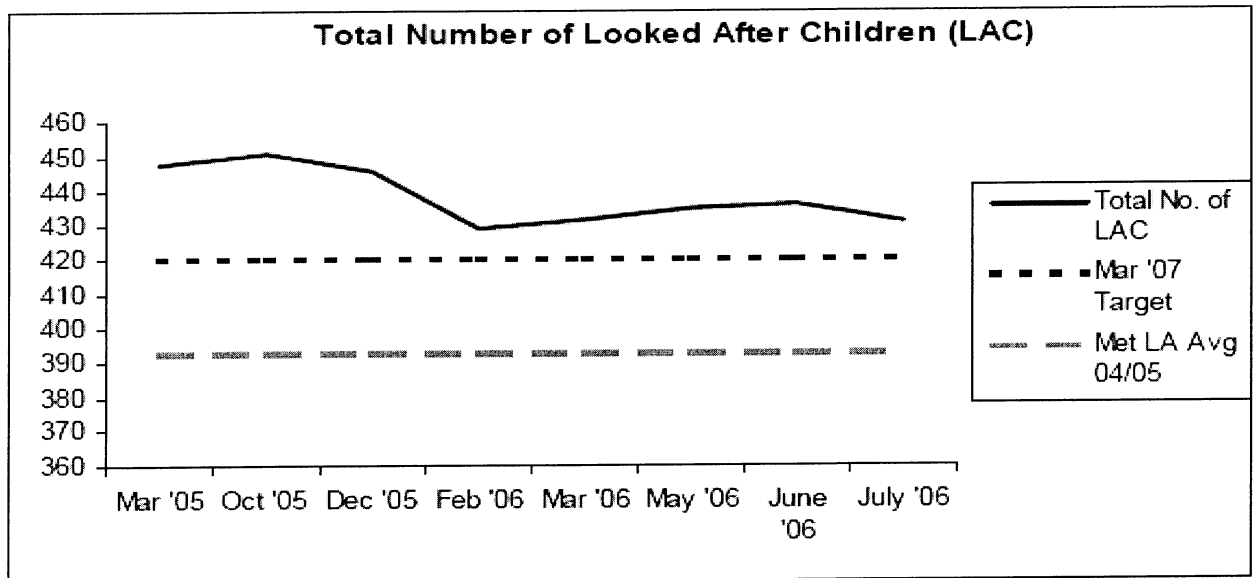


Table 2. Numbers of LAC and near neighbours

| Authority | Population | LAC Population | LAC per 10,000 |
|---------------------|------------|----------------|----------------|
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 54200 | 460 | 84.9 |
| Gateshead | 40023 | 292 | 73.0 |
| North Tyneside | 40342 | 223 | 55.3 |
| South Tyneside | 33080 | 249 | 75.3 |
| Sunderland | 62380 | 417 | 67.0 |

Table 3. Age range of LAC

| Age Range | 2000/01 | 2001/02 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | Total |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Under 1 | 31 | 34 | 39 | 25 | 35 | 29 | 45 | 238 |
| 1-4 | 51 | 41 | 34 | 41 | 46 | 38 | 27 | 278 |
| 5-9 | 28 | 38 | 32 | 29 | 38 | 29 | 30 | 224 |
| 10-12 | 31 | 24 | 19 | 24 | 23 | 23 | 27 | 171 |
| 13-15 | 56 | 65 | 50 | 50 | 35 | 43 | 48 | 347 |
| 16+ | 18 | 25 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 61 |
| Total | 215 | 227 | 184 | 173 | 160 | 163 | 177 | 1319 |

Where are children in care placed?

Most children in care in Sunderland are placed with foster families. Approximately 300 children are being fostered. All foster families are employed by the Council.

Table 4: Placement Type (September 2006)

| Placement Type | Description | Carers | Children |
|-----------------------------|---|---|----------|
| Foster Care | Mainstream carers who are paid an allowance for each young person. | 164 | 244 |
| Foster Care Workers + | Carers who are paid a fee as well as an allowance and are self employed as carers. These placements tend to be for those young people with high levels of need. | 44 | 57 |
| Immediate Placement Scheme | Similar to the foster care worker + scheme, but for immediate short term placements | 3 | 3 |
| Placed for adoption | For young people progressing toward adoption. | 27 | 36 |
| Children's Homes | For young people aged 12 and above, whose level of need is high where a family placement would be difficult to find and maintain. | 9 homes plus 2 homes for children with disabilities | 63 |
| Placed with parents | Children who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order, but who live with their parents. | n/a | 22 |
| Other | E.g. living independently, hospital placements etc. | n/a | 6 |
| Total looked after children | | n/a | 431 |

By January 2007 21 children (5.5%) had been adopted in this year. The target for 2006/07 is 11.6% or 44 adoptions. 64 staff provide the adoption service.

Table 5. Adoptions

| Adopters | |
|--|----|
| Number of approved adopter households awaiting a match | 9 |
| Number of potential placements provided by approved adopters | 11 |
| Number of adopter households under assessment | 10 |

Up to 60 young people (or 14% of the looked after population) are looked after in children's homes 365 days of the year. 92 staff are employed providing care and support for these children. Only 2 children were placed outside of Sunderland.

Of the two homes for children with disabilities, one offers long term care for four young people and has 20 staff. The second home provides short break accommodation for 50 children who are not looked after. The staffing complement for this resource is 22.

Placement stability is recognised as a factor which makes a significant contribution to the achievement of good outcomes for children. 65.3% of children in Sunderland have been in the same place for over 2 years.

Table 6. Numbers of disabled children looked after living away from home

| | |
|--|----|
| Residential placements within Sunderland | 5 |
| Meadow Rise | 3 |
| Mainstream home (Wendover Close) | 2 |
| With foster families (including 1 in an externally purchased specialist placement) | 12 |

Educational Achievement

The educational achievement of children in care was rated as 'good', a significant improvement on the corresponding level last year. The proportion of care leavers who attained 5 or more GCSEs A*-C increased significantly from 15.9% for 2005/06 against a target of 10.9%. 64.3% of children attained at least 1 GCSE/GNVQ A*-G in 2006.

Glossary of Terms

4UM Engagement Group for looked after children
ACE Achievement through Choice and Engagement Project (SCC project works to re-engage young people who are looked after, targeting attainment and attendance in education)
APA Annual Performance Assessment
ASBO Anti Social Behaviour Order
CAFCASS Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CDRP Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships
CIS Children's Information Service
CME Children Missing Education
CPA Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CPD Continuing Professional Development
CRB Criminal Records Bureau
CSA Children's Services Authority
CSCI Commission for Social Care Inspection
CST Community Support Team
CYPP Children and Young People's Plan
DfES – Department for Education and Skills
DCS Director of Children's Service
EET Education, Employment or Training
ECM Every Child Matters
HDU Health Development Unit
ICS Integrated Children's System
IROs Independent Reviewing Officers
JAR Joint Area Review
KS Key Stage [at school]
LAC Looked After Children
LACE Looked After Children Education
LAA Local Area Agreement
LDD learning difficulties and disabilities
LM Lead Member
LSC Learning & Skills Council
LSCB Local Safeguarding Children Board
MALAP Multi Agency Looked After Partnership
NEET Not in Education Employment or Training
PI Performance Indicator
PCP Person Centred Plans
PRU Pupil Referral Unit
PEP Personal Education Plan
RJP Restorative Justice Panel
SEN Special Educational Needs
SESCO Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SHA Strategic Health Authority
TPCT Teaching Primary Care Trust
UP Unlocking Potential
VCS Voluntary and Community Sector
YJB Youth Justice Board
YOS Youth Offending Service

Background Papers

| | |
|--|------------|
| Failed by the System: the views of young care leavers on their educational experiences (2006) | Barnardo's |
| About Social Workers: A Children's Views Report (2006) | CSCI |
| Fostering Service Inspection Report (2006) | CSCI |
| Growing Up Matters: Better transition planning for young people with complex needs (2007) | CSCI |
| Annual Performance Assessment (2006) | CSCI |
| If this were my child...A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent (2003) | DfES |
| Care Matters: Transforming the lives of children and young people in care Green Paper & Council's response to the Green Paper (2006) | DfES & SCC |
| Show Me How I Matter – A guide to the education of looked after children (2006) | I&DeA |
| Corporate Parenting Final Report (2002/03) | SCC |
| CLA and Placement Strategy 2004-09 | SCC |
| JAR Self-Assessment (2006) | SCC |
| Children's Services Performance & Management Monthly Update | SCC |
| Admissions Criteria for Community Secondary Schools (2007/08) | SCC |

For further information about this review please contact
 Karen Brown, Review Coordinator Tel: 0191 553 1004
 Scrutiny Team, Sunderland City Council

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE 2006/2007

REPORT OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

19th APRIL 2007

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present a summary of the work of the Review Committee during 2006-07. Once agreed the report will be submitted to Council in June 2007, in accordance with the Council's constitutional arrangements.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This is the fifth Annual Report of the Review Committee and the second in its new role as the Children's Services Review Committee.

3. Operation of the Committee

- 3.1 The Committee has had a busy year meeting 14 times, four more than scheduled. Because of pressure of business in the scheduled meetings it was necessary to conduct most of the evidence gathering for the major policy review of services for children in care in three additional meetings. A further extra meeting was held to consider youth services in the city.

- 3.2 A total of 95 reports and presentations were taken to Committee as follows:

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------|
| ◆ | Policy Review | (28) |
| ◆ | Review & Scrutiny | (37) |
| ◆ | Information/Awareness Raising | (30) |

- 3.3 This relatively high number of items (compared to 68 in 2005-06) reflects the new style of itemising business adopted by the Committee this year. This approach has allowed the Committee to prioritise agenda items between those reports which are for deliberation and review (limited in number to allow for detailed questioning) and those reports which can be taken without discussion (unless any Member requests discussion of the item). This has allowed the Committee to manage an increased workload without extending the length of the meetings unreasonably.

- 3.4 Of the 95 items, 7 were referred from Cabinet and 10 were new business added to the work programme. Only five items from the original work programme were not taken. These were School Improvement Partners, Presentation by Academy Sponsors, Pupilsfirst project, Annual Report in Figures and Extended Schools.

- 3.5 Items removed or deferred were either because the item was no longer relevant or further work needed to be carried out prior to review.
- 3.6 The Committee used its resources this year for members of the Committee to attend conferences where these were relevant to the ongoing work programme. Five members attended three separate conferences relating to young carers, school improvement and the annual North of England Education Conference.

4. Policy Review

- 4.1 The policy review this year was a detailed investigation into services for children in the care of the local authority. The Final Report is presented elsewhere on this agenda.
- 4.2 This is the second time in just a few years that overview and scrutiny has focused its efforts on services for children in care.
- 4.3 We would like to think that the children and young people who participated and assisted in this work by attending meetings and answering questions do not feel they have wasted their time. It is hoped that our commitment within overview and scrutiny to continue to measure service effectiveness and quality will be enhanced by taking the position of the child looking at the system.

5. Review and Scrutiny

5.1 Transformation of Children's Services

The Committee reviewed the progress towards the integration of key services for children in particular, education, social care, health, youth justice and Connexions.

The Director of Children's Services briefed the Committee on action taken including the setting up of a Children's Trust, the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and partnership working. The Committee assessed the core features of the model and how these were being translated into a local vision for Sunderland.

5.2 Youth Services

The Review Committee has maintained interest in the provision of activities and facilities for young people in Sunderland. The annual resident's survey invariably reports a perception from residents that there is not enough for teenagers to do.

The Review Committee held an additional meeting to evaluate the way the Council organises the delivery of youth work across the city.

Following detailed questioning of witnesses, including around youth work Key

Performance Indicators the Committee agreed to carry out further research with youth organisations in the city to assess their views of the model of commissioning services from the voluntary sector.

5.3 Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Academies

The BSF Programme is an important issue for the City and the Committee has been kept informed of progress. The programme will bring huge investment to Sunderland's secondary schools. The first stage of the programme required the delivery of a 'Sunderland Model' for secondary education and the Committee made a number of important contributions to the development of this vision.

The Committee has considered the work and decisions currently progressing at differing levels of complexity on all schools. The Committee has expressed particular interest in the role of the Lead Sponsors in the development of the three Academies.

5.4 Educational Psychology Service

In 2005 the Review Committee commissioned an independent Consultant to review the Educational Psychology Service. This was in response to concerns expressed and the consistently low rating for the service from schools in the Audit Commission Annual School Survey.

The 2006 School Survey again gave rise to concerns about the service and a further report was commissioned.

The Committee asked that headteachers and SENCOs be consulted on options for future service delivery prior to the item being considered by members. We were then able to discuss progress and developments within the service against the background of the recommendations of the consultant's report; options for future service delivery; and the outcome of consultation with schools.

The Committee expressed appreciation of the additional work undertaken to better services which indicated a strong likelihood that there would be improvements. The Committee undertook a commitment to have further input to the development of services and decided to take a report annually.

5.5 Participation of Children & Young People

Last year the Committee considered the extent to which the Children and Young People's Engagement Strategy 2005-2010 will enhance the involvement by young people in issues and decisions.

This year the Committee continued to monitor current practice, approach and future priorities and identified key challenges for the service.

The Committee, during an informal meeting with children and young people in October 2006, noted their confidence to engage in discussion and praised the willingness of young people to contribute useful suggestions which showed that policies in place were working.

5.6 Monitoring of Racist Incidents in Schools

The Committee takes regular reports on racist incident monitoring in schools.

The Committee will be interested to continue to monitor the situation following the introduction of a new city-wide electronic reporting system for racist incidents and to have the views of schools, as the vast majority of racist incidents currently being reported to the Council come from schools.

5.7 Youth Justice

The Committee reviewed the Council's strategy for working with young offenders and was particularly interested in work to monitor the fear of crime. We considered the Council's partnership with Northumbria Police to work on projects to try and reduce the fear of crime but noted that it would take time for any outcomes to be evident. The Committee took as a strong positive message the fact that only 1,500 young people offended in Sunderland (out of a youth population of 28,500).

5.8 Teenage Pregnancy

The Committee decided to look at this issue because there is good research that shows how unanticipated teenage pregnancies can reduce the wellbeing of parents and the health of their children.

While Sunderland does not have the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the region, it is above the national and regional rates and we wanted to investigate programmes in place to work with young people.

The Committee considered actions in place to meet targets to halve the under 18 conception rate by 2010 (with an interim target of 15% reduction by 2004) and establish a downward trend in the under 16's conception rate.

5.9 School Attendance Figures

The Committee considered school attendance performance patterns in Sunderland schools and nationally during the 2005/06 school academic year.

We explored issues around initiatives in place to improve attendance, particular areas of difficulty such as parents taking children on term time holidays and whether prosecution of parents had an impact.

5.10 14-19 Strategy

The Committee monitored progress following 'Building a Better Future' (14-19 Strategy and Action Plan) published in 2006. This was also the first opportunity for the Committee to be briefed about the new specialised diplomas.

The Committee intends to visit the three skill centres to see what is being undertaken at each venue.

5.11 Respect

The Prime Minister launched the National Respect Action Plan in January 2006 with the aim of tackling anti-social behaviour and its root causes together with the problems that exist within families and communities.

The Director of Children's Services briefed the Review Committee about the Sunderland Action Plan.

5.12 Safeguarding Children

The Committee received the draft policy and procedures for recruitment of ex-offenders and CRB disclosures. We were pleased to note that following a CRB surveillance visit in July the Council had received a good report with only one small area of default. The Committee had some concerns about delays in processing the checks but noted that currently the process should take only two to three weeks.

6. Policy Framework

6.1 The Committee receives plans and strategies contained in Article 4 of the Council's constitution. The Review Committee is required to be consulted by Cabinet for advice and consideration on these plans and strategies.

6.2 Children and Young People's Plan

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is a single, strategic, overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people. The first CYPP has been in place since 1 April 2006.

The Review Committee has the role of evaluating performance against the priorities of the Plan.

The Committee considered the review of the plan, including new duties and requirements of the Local Authority and schools.

One new aspect is around parenting with a Parenting Strategy being developed, and a role of Parenting Champion. The Committee will be interested in reviewing the Sunderland offer around parenting when it is developed.

The Committee questioned witnesses about consultation on the revised plan and expressed concern that a very small number of children and young people (out of the 44,000 booklets distributed) had responded and why schools had not been more involved in securing a higher response. Further work was carried out to involve significantly more children and young people.

7. Performance Improvement

7.1 The Review Committee is responsible for keeping track of how the Council is actually doing in delivery of services through performance monitoring.

7.2 Statutory and local performance indicators are received and assessed in addition to external inspection of schools and key stage attainment results.

7.3 Pupil Attainment

The Committee reviewed the attainment of pupils in the statutory key stage tests and assessments taken during summer 2006.

The Committee offered congratulations on the results and noted that while we had found it necessary to scrutinise some aspects of attainment in the past, in particular that of boys, it was important that credit was given where it was due.

7.4 Annual Performance Assessment

The Committee reviewed the process, outcomes and judgements of the 2006 Annual Performance Assessment (APA).

In overall terms, the judgement is favourable and the Council, with other partners, is well placed to move forward to work on transforming Children's Services in the city.

This process provided a baseline to prepare for the Joint Area Review (JAR) of Children's Services in January 2007. The self-assessment for the JAR comprising 40 key inspection judgements across the five ECM outcomes was received by Committee.

7.5 School Ofsted Inspection Reports

The Review Committee routinely receives all Ofsted school inspection reports.

During 2006-07 a total of 35 inspection reports were submitted to Committee.

The Committee also gave detailed consideration to work ongoing with three schools in challenging and supporting those schools placed in a category of concern by an Ofsted inspection.

7.6 Audit Commission Schools' Survey 2006

This is the fifth consecutive year that schools in Sunderland have had the opportunity to complete the survey. It is an important tool in assessing how well schools perceive the performance of Council services for children and young people. The Audit Commission has developed the survey considerably since 2002; it now includes 76 questions – 19 of which are new ones – that reflect all ECM areas, including Service Management.

The survey allows the Committee to judge views of schools in Sunderland and compare the responses to the previous year to measure improvement. This also allows the Committee to benchmark Sunderland's performance with other LEAs.

The Committee was concerned that the effectiveness of the Council's educational psychology service was rated between poor and satisfactory. Its rating has remained in the bottom quartile for a number of years and members again sought a detailed report to committee on action being taken to address this (see paragraph 5.4).

8. Consultation

8.1 The Council's Cabinet and Children's Services are able to consult with the Review Committee. Also, the Committee can choose to comment on external consultation documents e.g. from the DfES or DH.

8.2 Government Consultations

50 live Government consultations were brought to the Committee's attention during the year.

The Committee was particularly interested in proposals for sustainable schools, under-age sale of tobacco, and post-16 progression measures.

9. Scrutiny Practice

9.1 OSC Handbook 2006/07

To assist witnesses attending Review Committee, and to give 'a public face' to scrutiny - a Handbook was again delivered and widely circulated.

9.2 Call In

The Committee was consulted on a draft call-in form which would allow Members to set out all of the relevant information on any decision to be called-in.

9.3 New Developments in OSC

The Committee was briefed on the Home Office Community Call for Action (CCfA) and the role of overview and scrutiny committees. Guidance is awaited in the summer of 2007 and a further consultation will take place on how to implement the CCfA in Sunderland when the guidance has been considered.

9.4 Audit Commission Better Scrutiny

A workshop facilitated by the Audit Commission was held on 10 November 2006 for Members involved in Review Committees.

An Action Plan for Better Scrutiny Meetings to take forward the issues arising from the workshop was endorsed by all the Review Committees in December 2006.

This highlighted the need for clarity of reports and joint training with officers in order to develop a set of common expectations. Committee Room Number 1 had been adapted to provide an improved venue for Review Committee meetings, and it was preferred that this room be used although it may sometimes be more appropriate for meetings to be held outside the Civic Centre when a particular theme or issue was being considered.

10. Conclusion & Recommendation

- 10.1 Members are asked to consider the operation, achievements and impact of the Committee during 2006-07 and submit this report to Council.

11. Background Papers

Review Committee Reports 2006-2007

Contact Officer : Karen Brown 0191 553 1004
karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

ACTION PLAN: BETTER SCRUTINY MEETINGS

REPORT OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

19th APRIL 2007

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To recommend to the Committee a method of monitoring delivery of implementation of the Action Plan for Better Scrutiny Meetings.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the December 2006 meeting the Review Committee considered a report outlining actions for the development of the scrutiny function. The actions had been identified by Members following a workshop facilitated by the Audit Commission in November 2006, with Members identifying which actions were within their control, and where they would require support to effect change.
- 2.2 The resulting Action Plan was adopted for implementation with the agreement of each of the Review Committees.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Further consideration has been given, to practical methods of ensuring delivery of the Action Plan, and advice obtained from the Head of Performance Improvement. Based on this advice the format of the plan has been developed to improve clarity of responsibilities and timescales, which will allow delivery to be more clearly monitored by the Committee. A copy of the proposed format, illustrating how this would apply to the first of the actions is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 The revised format is designed to provide Members with a working tool to monitor actions planned and delivered, and clarify which actions Members have committed to taking, and which are to be delivered by officers on the Committees' behalf.
- 3.3 The Head of Performance Improvement advises that all the Review Committees monitor implementation of the Action Plan on a quarterly basis, as is usual for performance reports.
- 3.4 It is suggested that a copy of the Plan is provided to each Member of the Review Committees in advance of the first meeting of the new Council year. This would enable Members' suggested additions or variations to the plan to be reported to the Committee when the plan is presented for monitoring.

4. Recommendation and Conclusion

- 4.1 Members are recommended to consider the revised format of the Action Plan and adopt this, subject to any amendments agreed at this meeting, and
- 4.2 Members are recommended to agree to receive quarterly reports on implementation of the Action Plan, and contribute to development and delivery of the actions, as outlined at 3.4 above.

5. Background Papers

Audit Summary : Better Scrutiny Meetings

Contact Officer : Karen Brown 0191 553 1004
karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk

Appendix A

Sunderland City Council
Action Plan for Better Scrutiny Meetings 2007/2008

| Action 1. | Improvement activity needed | Current Activity | Target Date | Current Activity | Target Date | Is Current Activity meeting requirements of Action? Outline Future action required |
|---|---|---|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| | | | Officers | Members | | |
| To seek more public involvement and awareness of the work of the Review Committees. | All Review Committees to explore occasional meeting venues outside of the Civic Centre. | Incorporate in annual work planning | 31 May 2007 | Incorporate in annual work planning | 31 May 2007 | Review monthly – Chair and Review Coordinator |
| | Explore links between themes on agenda and associated venues e.g. meet in library when considering library service targets. | In place – to continue to identify opportunities to Members | | In place – continue to liaise on opportunities | | e.g. Bunny Hill Vibrant City Centre Libraries review Keep under review |

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

REPORT OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

19 APRIL 2007

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with information about government consultations within the scope of this Review Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Committees work programme provides flexibility to respond to new developments including government consultation documents, and these are reported to Committee as appropriate.
- 2.2 A synopsis of live consultations is provided at Appendix A.

3. Recommendation and Conclusion

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the consultations and either
- (a) Contribute a response by the closing date (via Children's Services)
 - (b) Seek guidance from Children's Services on current arrangements in Sunderland on the issues under consultation
 - (c) Have circulated the full consultation document for information
 - (d) Note the consultations and take no further action.

4. Background Papers

Full consultation documents

Contact Officer : Karen Brown
Children's Services Review Coordinator
0191 553 1004

Live Consultations

Childcare Registration Requirements

This consultation seeks views on the proposed regulations, due to be made under the Childcare Act 2006, to implement a new system of compulsory registration to replace the current registration requirements for childcare for children under the age of eight. The new system is due to come into effect from September 2008.

Launch Date: 04 Apr 2007

Closing Date: 04 Jul 2007

Education and Training for Young People in the Youth Justice System

Consultation on the issues for education for young people supervised by the youth justice system (age 10-17, across England only). This consultation follows a commitment in the publication 'Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment: Next Steps' (December 2006). The consultation seeks views on issues for young offenders access to and participation in education, training and employment; the curriculum offer; workforce development; and the accountability framework for young offenders' education.

Launch Date: 04 Apr 2007

Closing Date: 04 Jul 2007

Children's Workforce Strategy Update- Spring 2007

The Children's Workforce Strategy Update - Spring 2007, looks back on what has been achieved since the Government published its response to the CWS in February 2006 and links to the CWS Refresh document to be published in the autumn.

Launch Date: 29 Mar 2007

Closing Date: 30 Jun 2007

Consultation on New Charging Regulations for Music Tuition

Consultation on the changes to charging regulations which will permit charging for instrumental and vocal tuition during the school day for individuals or groups of two or more.

Launch Date: 28 Mar 2007

Closing Date: 20 Jun 2007

Raising Expectations: Staying in education and training post-16

This Green Paper sets out proposals to require all young people to remain in education or training until their 18th birthday, from 2013. There are significant benefits to be gained from young people staying in learning for longer – for individuals, the economy and society. Introducing compulsion could be the way to get beyond our existing stretching targets for increasing post-16 participation. The document sets out for consultation proposals for implementing such a requirement in a way that ensures everyone can benefit. The proposals apply to England only.

Launch Date: 22 Mar 2007

Closing Date: 14 Jun 2007

DfES Guidance to Schools on School Uniform Related Policies

This consultation document includes draft guidance on school uniform, dress codes and other rules on appearance. The guidance provides advice to schools and governing bodies on how to develop fair and reasonable uniform policies.

Launch Date: 20 Mar 2007

Closing Date: 12 Jun 2007

Consultation on school, early years and 14-16 funding 2008-11

Proposals for the school funding arrangements 2008-11, including the extension of the early years free entitlement and the new specialised diplomas for 14-16 year olds.

Launch Date: 07 Mar 2007

Closing Date: 01 Jun 2007

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

REPORT OF THE CITY SOLICITOR

19 APRIL 2007

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report invites Members to consider recently published Ofsted Inspection reports for schools in Sunderland.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Review Committee routinely receives all Ofsted inspection reports. This is in order to examine the quality and standards of education in individual establishments.

3. New Inspection Reports

- 3.1 Full Inspection Reports are attached as follows:

| | Educational Establishment | Date of inspection |
|------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Appendix 1 | Broadway Junior | 30-31 January 2007 |
| Appendix 2 | Sandhill View | 13-14 February 2007 |
| Appendix 3 | John F Kennedy Primary | 7-8 March 2007 |
| Appendix 4 | Ryhope Infant | 8-9 March 2007 |

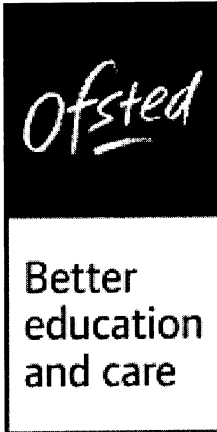
4. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to note the Ofsted school inspection reports.

5. Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer : Karen Brown 0191 553 1004
karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk



Broadway Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108757
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288180
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Denis Goodchild

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior | School address | Springwell Road |
| School category | Community | | Sunderland, Tyne and Wear |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 | | SR4 8NW |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0191 553 5980 |
| Number on roll (school) | 258 | Fax number | 0191 553 5982 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr H Hanson |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs M Acklam |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 September 2001 | | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Age group 7–11 | Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007 | Inspection number 288180 |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and has a two-form entry. School numbers are decreasing owing to declining population across the city. It is subject to reorganisation proposals, which have been deferred. The school serves an area that has high levels of social and economic disadvantage and an above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils' attainment when they join the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school receives additional funding from the Excellence in Cities (EIC) programme.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with many outstanding features. 'Mrs Acklam and her staff are fantastic and it will be a sad day when my last child leaves this school.' This quote accurately represents the views of the overwhelming majority of parents. The outstanding care provided to all pupils, as well as to parents and their carers, helps them to overcome barriers in their learning so that they can achieve well. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils understand the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle. By contributing to charities and in their relationships with others, they demonstrate caring and sensitive qualities; they willingly accept responsibility and contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their attendance at school has been below average but is showing signs of improvement. The school is continuing to work on this. An excellent curriculum opens up new opportunities, leads the pupils to enjoy learning and prepares them well for the future.

Pupils achieve well; although the girls are doing better than the boys. Pupils make good overall progress and reach average standards. The results of the national tests vary around the national average from one year to another. They were average overall in 2006 and exceeded the school's targets. The school is not complacent about its results and works hard to raise standards. It has been particularly successful in raising the standards achieved by the girls. The 2006 results showed that the Year 6 girls achieved very well and their results were higher than those of the boys.

Teaching and learning are good. During the inspection, it was clear that pupils make good progress in lessons because of good, and some outstanding teaching. Pupils enjoy their learning and receive the help they need to achieve their best.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides outstanding and inspirational leadership. She has assembled a team of dedicated professionals who accept nothing but the best for the pupils. Everyone is committed to improving provision and raising standards. All staff play an effective role in evaluating the schools' work and the governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school. The school has a good capacity for continual improvement. Parents appreciate the swift and sensitive response to their concerns and are also confident that their children are listened to. Because of its good provision and good achievement, the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards achieved by boys to equal those of the girls.
- Build on the recent improvements in attendance so that it is consistently at least in line with the national average.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities generally make good progress, throughout the school. However, girls achieve better than boys. Standards reached overall are therefore only average. Pupils join the school with broadly average attainment and standards are average in English, mathematics and science when they leave the school, as shown in the results of the national tests of the Year 6 pupils. The results vary around the national average from one year to another; they were average in 2006 and exceeded the targets set for the school. Although the results were above the target, the school is not complacent about them and is trying to raise standards further. It is already succeeding in this in English, and is now working to repeat this success in mathematics, in which standards are lower than they have been in the past. The school has been very successful in raising girls' achievement. The most recent national tests show that girls achieved very well and better than the boys in the national tests in 2006. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the effective support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-beingGrade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good and has some outstanding features. Attendance is improving. Previously it was below average, but the most recent figures show that it is currently in line with the national average. Pupils told the inspectors how much they enjoy lessons. They particularly enjoy the before and after school clubs, which have a high level of participation. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and expect much from them. Parents confirm this and say that staff could not do more for their children. Pupils like the teachers. For example, one pupil said, 'The best thing about this school is the teachers.' Consequently, pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are considerate and polite towards others. Bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively when it does occur. Pupils accept responsibility willingly and develop into confident, self-assured young people well prepared for the future. Pupils know how to stay safe and whom to ask for help. They have a first-rate understanding of how to stay healthy and can explain the benefits of healthy eating and exercise.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are committed to raising money for charities and demonstrate a high degree of respect and consideration for one another in lessons. Their work on the school council and the school newspaper illustrates clearly their ability to work together for the benefit of the community. Educational visits out of school give them a good appreciation of their own culture. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, personally and academically.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

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show that it is currently in line with the national average. Pupils told the inspectors how much they enjoy lessons. They particularly enjoy the before and after school clubs, which have a high level of participation. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and expect much from them. Parents confirm this and say that staff could not do more for their children. Pupils like the teachers. For example, one pupil said, 'The best thing about this school is the teachers.' Consequently, pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are considerate and polite towards others. Bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively when it does occur. Pupils accept responsibility willingly and develop into confident, self-assured young people well prepared for the future. Pupils know how to stay safe and whom to ask for help. They have a first-rate understanding of how to stay healthy and can explain the benefits of healthy eating and exercise.

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Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' expectations are high and they foster very good relationships with their pupils, which does much to assist pupils to make good progress and to create a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. Because of this, all pupils strive to please their teachers and work hard. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and prepare challenging, interesting and exciting lessons, which accurately match the pupils' abilities and needs, motivating them to learn. Teachers insist that pupils explain their answers to questions clearly. At times, however, the pace of lessons is not fast enough and lessons sometimes do not give pupils enough time for practical or independent work. The teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities effectively so that they grow in confidence and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent. Planning and guidance for teachers ensure that work is well matched to abilities and that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, have equal access to the curriculum. The school places a very strong emphasis on reading, writing, speaking and listening. The improvement of numerical skills and the development of competence with computers also have very high priority. The greatest attention given to pupils' personal development underpins the progress they make in their academic studies.

All subjects of the National Curriculum are covered well and pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Lessons are enhanced by a very impressive range

of visits and speakers from many walks of life. The pupils frequently enter competitions with other schools. These activities help to capture pupils' interest and greatly add enrichment and enjoyment to their learning. A very keen emphasis on healthy eating and exercise enables pupils to make very well-informed, personal lifestyle choices.

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Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Very high levels of commitment to all aspects of pupils' welfare ensure that they have all of the personal support that they need. Very effective procedures for child protection, health and safety and risk assessment are in place and reviewed regularly. Vetting procedures for staff working directly with pupils are fully in place. Teachers ensure that pupils feel perfectly safe in school.

The success of measures introduced to improve pupils' attendance is reflected in rising attendance rates. Effective monitoring of pupils' progress and personal development identifies where pupils need extra help and enables the school to set targets for Year 6. Excellent liaison with parents keeps them fully informed about their children's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has created a climate in which pupils and adults respect each other and have full confidence in what they do. The headteacher is well supported by an acting deputy head and a management team who share her passion for giving pupils the best. The school is constantly seeking to remove barriers to learning and to raise pupils'

aspirations and this is reflected in the innovative and exciting curriculum. The headteacher does much to ensure the effectiveness of teaching through training and support, and staff morale is consequently very high.

All issues arising from the last inspection have been resolved successfully. The management evaluates the school's effectiveness thoroughly and accurately identifies the most important areas for improvement. The school has taken effective action this year to improve teaching of English with a view to raising standards. Similarly, the school has now focused on the teaching of mathematics in order to raise standards in this subject. This effective evaluation of action taken and the identification of next-stage developments show clearly that the school has a good capacity to improve.

Parents and governors are full of praise for the hard work of the headteacher and staff. The governance of the school is good. The governors support the headteacher effectively and recognise the strengths of the school although their knowledge of pupils' work is not focused sharply enough on achievement. Prudent financial management has ensured that falling rolls have not resulted in staff redundancies.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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Inspection judgements

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
|--|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

off

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Broadway Junior School

Springwell Road

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR4 8NW

1 February 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for helping us when we came into your school. You really made our job easy. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. I remember asking some pupils on the first day what they liked best in school. One said, 'The teachers are the best thing about this school.' After looking around the school I think that is right. But there were many other good things that we also saw. We especially liked how well you all got along together and helped each other and that includes pupils and grown-ups. We were impressed that you work so hard in lessons. You listen, think and really enjoy your interesting lessons and make good progress. The adults take good care of you so that you feel safe and happy. You enjoy your after-school clubs and visits.

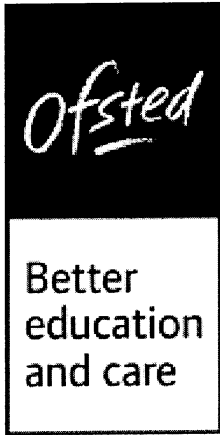
We usually leave schools with a few things to do to help them improve. Although your attendance is improving, we think that it could be even better. In order to achieve this you will have to do your part and aim for full attendance. Can you do it? Of course you can! We also think that boys could achieve higher results in the national tests and equal what the girls are doing. After seeing how hard you concentrate in lessons, we also think you can do this. We know that Mrs Acklam and all the adults who work in the school want the very best for you. We hope that you will help them to achieve that aim for you.

Good luck and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Denis Goodchild

Lead Inspector



Sandhill View School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108867
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288214
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Hancock HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Type of school | Secondary | School address | Grindon Lane |
| School category | Community | | Thorney Close, Sunderland |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 | | Tyne and Wear, SR3 4EN |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0191 5536060 |
| Number on roll (school) | 1009 | Fax number | 0191 5536063 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr Garry Urwin |
| | | Headteacher | Mr Richard Bain |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 January 2003 | | |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Age group 11–16 | Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007 | Inspection number 288214 |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sandhill View is a community school and a specialist arts college serving an area with high levels of social deprivation. It is situated in a community learning centre which was opened in 2002. The school shares the site with a youth centre, community library, sports and leisure centre and health facilities. There are far more students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than normally found, partly because the school is the local authority centre for hearing and visually impaired learners. Nearly all the students have English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sandhill View is a good school which is developing quickly as an arts college. Inspection evidence confirms the school's own evaluation that it is moving in the right direction and at a quick pace. The school is working very well to make further improvements.

All students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The achievement of students at Key Stage 4 is excellent. This is reflected in the above average GCSE results in 2006 which, for many students, was from a very low starting point. Behaviour is good and students enjoy learning. Personal development is good because the school has the well-being of students at the centre of its work.

The school has improved the curriculum, which is good and the provision of relevant vocational courses is a strong feature. The quality of teaching and learning has improved in the last two years and there are examples of outstanding practice. The school is aware that sharing this excellent practice is the key to further improvement. Assessment systems are working effectively and students make good progress.

It is too early to measure the impact of specialist college status on achievement because it only started five months ago. Nonetheless, the school has local scriptwriters working with Year 10 students and the curriculum enrichment activities are well attended. The specialist college plan is innovative and challenging. It aims to support the key subjects and provide high quality creative experiences.

The leadership of the headteacher and senior managers is highly effective and is steering the school well. The governing body closely monitors what is happening and they make sure the school continues to move forward. Resources are effectively deployed to achieve good value for money and the school is right to think capacity to improve is very good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise achievement and standards at Key Stage 3.
- Set homework consistently in all subjects and for every year group.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school rightly evaluates achievement and standards to be good. The attainment and skills of a high proportion of students are significantly below average when they start at the school. They make good progress as do all different groups of learners across the ability range. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality support and make exceptionally good progress, including those with visual and hearing difficulties. The achievement of students at Key Stage 4 is excellent. This is reflected in the above average GCSE results in 2006 which, for many students, was from a very low starting point when they joined the school.

The improvement in GCSE results is outstanding. The number of students gaining higher GCSE grades was 70% in 2006 compared with 30% three years ago. Inspection evidence confirms the rapidly improving trend in achievement and standards. Results in English, mathematics and science in national tests at Key Stage 3 fell significantly between 2003 and 2005. This was an issue identified by the school which is being addressed and the 2006 results have significantly improved. The school is not complacent and is taking the right action to improve standards even more, particularly in science, mathematics, and numerical skills. It is too early to see any significant impact of specialist college status on achievement and standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are good because the school is very effective at raising students' confidence and self-esteem. Students show an increasing awareness of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and the school has achieved Healthy School status. Citizenship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are developed well, often through drama activities and assemblies.

Attitudes and behaviour are good because teachers maintain a consistent approach and expect high standards. Students are nearly always well behaved and considerate in and around the building. The small minority who demonstrate inappropriate behaviour receive very good support. Most students say they feel safe at school and incidents of bullying in school are becoming rare. Students feel confident approaching staff when they have concerns. The school handles concerns well but there are a few examples where parents, carers and students are not informed quickly enough about how incidents are being dealt with. Many students say they enjoy school and comment on the good support they receive. Attendance has significantly improved and is now average but unauthorised absence is above the national average.

The school council helps students understand their growing responsibilities as young citizens and provides a good forum to play a positive and significant role in the school community. Students make a good contribution to the local and wider community. For example, a group of Year 7 students recently competed in a choir competition at The Sage concert hall in Gateshead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. The pace of lessons is usually brisk and teachers use challenging questions to extend learning. In many lessons, students show they can learn for themselves. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to model, clarify and demonstrate abstract concepts. For example, in an English lesson students were shown a series of emotive

pictures in order to decide which would be effective for an advertising campaign. In another lesson on poetry, the teacher was able to build up a picture of bereavement drawing from the students' own ideas.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully supported and they make very good progress. Parents and carers appreciate the way staff ensure they are successfully included in all aspects of the school's work. One parent captured the view of many when saying 'The staff have worked exceptionally hard to help my daughter integrate into the school and support her needs'.

The systems to monitor students' progress and identify specific areas for improvement are a particularly strong feature. Students are formally given this information and this is reported to parents once a term. As a result, nearly all students know their current level or grade and are clear about how to improve. The school knows there are a few learners who are uncertain about what they must do to reach the next stage in their learning.

Homework reinforces and develops the work done in class but it is not set consistently across all areas of the curriculum or year groups. This is a concern voiced by parents, carers and students. The school is aware of this and a new homework policy is being developed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum which is tailored to meet the needs of all students. It has made a positive impact on attendance, particularly at Key Stage 4. The curriculum is supported well by learning mentors and primary trained teachers who work with the more vulnerable students. A transition class in Year 7 and two inclusion units provide further support. The school acts as the local authority centre for students with sensory impairment. These students are fully included in the curriculum and the life of the school. The school has identified literacy and numeracy as a priority, particularly at Key Stage 3, and strategies are helping to improve provision.

There is a good balance of academic and vocational courses, and personalised learning programmes. This has helped to improve the school's performance. Vocational facilities are very good and are used to support other schools in the area. A new vocational centre is planned to open in September 2007 which should allow students to access a wider range of national vocational qualifications. A key strength is the variety of the extra activities which are available at lunchtimes and out-of-school hours. They include sporting activities and the performing arts as well as providing additional lessons to complement the academic curriculum.

The recent specialist college status is already making a positive contribution to the curriculum. A good example is a video produced by a Year 8 science class about flying a glider. It was used to demonstrate the forces involved in flight and students found it an extremely valuable learning experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment. Students are encouraged to work hard and try their best. Most parents and carers speak highly of the school and one, representing the views of many said, 'My children feel safe and secure in the school.' The inclusion of all students is a strong feature and students who require additional support are quickly identified. Some students have difficulty learning in the classroom environment. High priority is given to helping these students integrate more easily through close supervision and appropriate support. The good links with outside agencies safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable students. Provision for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good.

Academic guidance and support is good and parents are kept informed about students' progress. A few students and parents feel the support is not consistently high for students of all abilities. Health and safety procedures are effective, and risk assessments are secure. Child protection procedures for the safeguarding of children are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, confirming the school's own evaluation.

The headteacher, senior staff and governors have established a calm and productive climate for learning. The recently introduced mission statement has set high expectations for staff and students alike. The school has improved quickly over the past two years and continues to move forward at a rapid pace. The drive to take the school forward is fully supported by staff. This can be seen in standards which continue to rise and in developments such as the new vocational centre.

Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school are rigorous and accurate. As a result, the school knows itself well and identifies the right areas for improvement. All departments are involved in monitoring and evaluating their own provision.

Links with other schools, colleges, businesses and the community are good, and have been recently strengthened through the school's specialist performing arts college status. The school is inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity. There is a clear focus on raising students' self-esteem.

Accommodation and facilities are excellent. Financial management is sound and supports improvement priorities. Value for money is good. Governors provide good challenge and support to the school. They work effectively in monitoring the work of the school within various sub-committees and they are well supported in their work by senior staff.

Staffing has been strengthened through the recruitment of specialist staff. Systems for staff restructuring in relation to government initiatives are robust and help to ensure the quality of care, guidance and teaching. Management has been strengthened through the delegation of leadership at all levels in the school. Investors in People

status, conferred on the school in January 2007, confirms the high commitment made by the leadership of the school to the development of its entire staff.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in most of the areas identified for further development. Leadership and management have a very good capacity to make further improvement and take the school forward. This is largely due to the high quality of the delegated leadership and the rising trends in achievement and standards.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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Inspection judgements

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
|--|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Sandhill View School

Grindon Lane

Thorney Close

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR3 4EN

15 February 2007

Dear Students

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the school with my colleagues on 13 and 14 February. The team would also like to thank the students who prepared our lunch as part of their vocational training. It met the highest standards set in catering and would not have been out of place in one of the best hotels in the country!

Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- Sandhill View is a good school which is rapidly improving.
- The leadership of the headteacher and senior managers is highly effective.
- You achieve very well on GCSE courses and results last year were above average.
- The provision of relevant vocational courses is a particularly strong feature.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved a lot in the last two years.
- The care, guidance and support you receive are good and helps keep you safe.

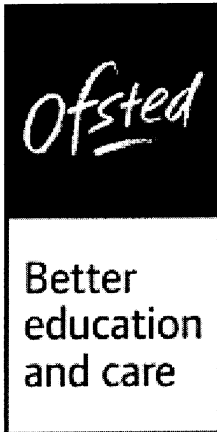
Your teachers and the staff work very hard and want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they could:

- continue to raise achievement and standards at Key Stage 3
- set homework more consistently.

I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector



John F Kennedy Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108825
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288198
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Moira Fitzpatrick

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Station Road |
| School category | Community | | Columbia, Washington |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 | | Tyne and Wear, NE38 7AR |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0191 2193745 |
| Number on roll (school) | 433 | Fax number | 0191 2193745 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr Frank Caroll |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Maggie Johnson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 May 2001 | | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Age group 3–11 | Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007 | Inspection number 288198 |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with less than 5% from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. There are fewer pupils than average who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; of these, four have a statement of special educational need. The school has been adversely affected by teacher turnover in the last two years but now has a settled staff.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory and there are strengths in pastoral care, pupils' personal development and provision in the Foundation Stage. Most parents are happy with what the school offers and say that teachers care well for their children. Inspectors agree that pupils are well cared for and supported in their personal development. Teachers' guidance for pupils' academic development is satisfactory, but their knowledge of National Curriculum levels is not detailed enough to allow them to spot quickly when pupils need more challenge in their work. Pupils enjoy school and are well prepared for their future well-being. They behave well because teachers expect them to care for and respect each other, and they do. They have a good understanding of personal safety and healthy lifestyles and are keen to take plenty of exercise. Pupils take on responsibility willingly; they are improving the school through enterprising projects such as the Friendship Garden and are good fundraisers for a number of charities. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving through well planned enrichment activities. For example, pupils' understanding of the wider world is developed well through links with schools in South Africa and America.

Teaching is satisfactory; it ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress to reach standards that are in line with the national average. Given their starting points, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Results in national tests in 2006 were average for pupils in Year 6 and Year 2, and all pupils made satisfactory progress. Fewer pupils than usual exceeded the expected level in Year 6 and this caused the school's overall performance to dip slightly. In Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was above the national average in reading.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has been affected by staff turnover in recent years which has slowed progress. Staffing is now settled so that senior staff are able to focus consistently on the development of the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The headteacher has given a clear lead to improving the way the school tracks pupils' progress and this is beginning to have an impact on standards. Improvements to the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) are having a good impact in raising standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teachers' knowledge of National Curriculum levels so that they provide a better match of work for learners and gain a more accurate picture of progress each term.
- Improve school evaluation by monitoring all aspects of standards and provision regularly so that senior managers have a fuller picture from which to set priorities for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. There are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls although, in some years, girls outperform boys in the national tests. Children start school with attainment that is broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and almost all meet the goals set for their learning by the end of Reception and some exceed them.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 2. In national assessments in 2006, Year 2 pupils reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils now in Year 2 are on course to reach similar standards.

The school did not meet its targets in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2006 in mathematics or English although pupils had made satisfactory progress overall from their attainment at the end of Year 2. The school realises it had set the targets too high and has based this year's targets on more regular assessments of pupils' learning. Pupils now in Year 6 are on course to meet their targets in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils in most lessons, but teachers do not have a clear responsibility for tracking their progress and sometimes under-achievement is not picked up quickly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy their education and this is demonstrated by their positive attitudes, good behaviour and the good attendance of most pupils. Pupils enjoy their learning but there are a number of higher ability pupils who would like to be given more challenge in some lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of how to have a healthy lifestyle, which is seen in the good levels of participation in physical activities after school as well as in their healthy eating, which the school works hard to encourage.

Pupils feel safe and happy in school because they are well supported by adults; this is reflected in the calm atmosphere around the school. Their good behaviour helps learning to progress steadily in all classes. They willingly seize opportunities to contribute to the smooth running of the school by acting as monitors and playground friends; and to the development of the school by the part they play in the decisions of the school council, which has done much to improve provision for playtimes. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through developing their Friendship Garden, fund raising and concerts. Their basic and personal skills prepare them well for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features seen in all lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, although their assessment of pupils' learning is not always accurate enough to ensure that their expectations are high enough. The result is that more able pupils do not always have work that challenges and motivates them to do their best. All pupils work hard to meet targets and nearly all make at least satisfactory progress. All teachers explain to pupils what they are expected to learn. This is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding of their progress during lessons. However, teachers' marking does not always support this process enough because they seldom refer to the learning targets in their marking or consistently give advice on how to improve.

In most lessons, teachers make good use of questions to check pupils' understanding and develop their thinking. In some classes, the use of an interactive whiteboard speeds up the pace of learning because pupils have good visual support for learning and are actively involved with the challenges shown on the board. In other classes, where there is no interactive whiteboard, pupils' learning is not as brisk because pupils are more passive and learn mainly through listening. In the Foundation Stage, learning is good because adults have high expectations and match work to children's needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. Some aspects are good, especially the enrichment of the curriculum through links to local and international schools, and in the provision of many after-school activities. The curriculum adequately matches the needs, interests and aspirations of most pupils and is organised in a way that allows them to build on earlier learning.

Planning for the development of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is adequate and recent improvements to planning in the infants are beginning to raise standards there. Thorough planning for personal, social and health education encourages pupils to stay healthy and teaches them about personal safety. Specialist provision for art and design, music and French is good, providing pupils with well planned opportunities to develop special interests and talents.

Planning in the Foundation Stage provides a good balance of activities that are led by adults and selected by children. This ensures that children learn to make choices and decisions about their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pastoral care and support for pupils' personal development are good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils, child protection and risk assessment are in place and used by staff.

Guidance for pupils' academic development is satisfactory. The development of assessment and recording procedures has progressed slowly in the last three years due to the turnover in staff. Currently, staff do not have a good enough knowledge of National Curriculum standards at each stage to plan precisely what pupils need to learn next. Because of this, pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not consistent or rigorous enough to ensure that these pupils always make good progress; although in last year's national tests some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities did well. Parents of children with identified emotional or behavioural difficulties appreciate the efforts made by teachers to include their children in the life of the school. The school has good links with external agencies to provide specialist support when pupils need it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including the school's self-evaluation procedures, are satisfactory. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory and improving. Since the last inspection there has been a significant turnover in staff, which has slowed the rate of improvement. The recently formed senior management team has worked hard to establish assessment and recording procedures so that pupils' progress can be tracked more effectively throughout the year and any underachievement spotted quickly. However, the considerable amount of information that the school has about pupils' learning is not collated into a format that is easily usable by teachers and senior staff. This reduces the effectiveness of what has been achieved and the new systems have not yet had a significant impact on standards across the school. Although subject leaders have regular opportunities to monitor teaching and learning, there is insufficient monitoring of standards of work in books. This limits subject leaders' knowledge of standards throughout the school and restricts the early identification of weaknesses and action to overcome them. The school recognises the need for more regular monitoring of pupils' work and has this as a priority for this year.

Governors are very supportive of the school although they do not have secure, first hand knowledge of standards and provision through direct monitoring. Parents, too, are highly supportive and appreciate the school seeking their views on developments. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the level of the school's communication with them on a range of matters. Inspectors found that the school sends a regular newsletter to parents and parents are welcome to contact the school about any concerns they have.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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Inspection judgements

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
|--|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

John F Kennedy Primary School

Station Road

Columbia

Washington

Tyne and Wear

NE38 7AR

9 March 2007

Dear Children,

Thank you for making us welcome in your school. We really enjoyed our visit.

It was very clear that you enjoy your school and get on well with each other and your teachers. You told us that teachers look after you well. We agree and it was good to hear that your parents think so too. We think your behaviour is good and that you work hard in lessons. Some of you told us you would like work that is a bit more difficult and we agree that many of you could tackle more challenges in your lessons. We have suggested that your teachers find out what challenges you need to progress at a quicker rate. We have also suggested that looking at your books regularly would help the teachers see where you need more support and encouragement. You could help by doing your best work every time and making sure it always looks as beautiful as it does in your blue writing books.

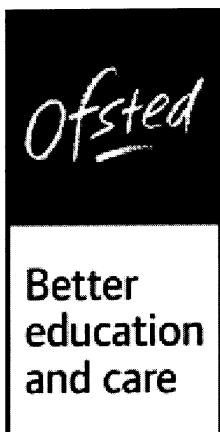
We were very impressed with the work you do to make your school run smoothly and to improve it. Your Friendship Garden is a lovely idea and is coming along really well. The best of luck in finishing it and we hope you enjoy using it. It was good to see so many of you making healthy choices for your school lunch and so many of you involved in after-school sport. Well done! Being fit and healthy is so important to your learning.

Finally, we would like to say thank you for being so well behaved and working hard in lessons. Such good attitudes help everyone to learn and to enjoy school as they should. Keep up the good work of improving your school and our best wishes to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Goodchild, Mr Steele, Mrs Fitzpatrick

Inspectors



Ryhope Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108788
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288189
Inspection dates 8–9 March 2007
Reporting inspector Keith Oglesby

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Type of school | Infant | School address | Shaftesbury Avenue Ryhope, Sunderland |
| School category | Community | | Tyne and Wear, SR2 0RT |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 | Telephone number | 0191 5536238 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Fax number | 0191 5536239 |
| Number on roll (school) | 174 | Chair | Cllr Ronald Bainbridge |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Headteacher | Ms Christine Ray |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2001 | | |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Age group 3–7 | Inspection dates 8–9 March 2007 | Inspection number 288189 |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school, sharing a site with a junior school and a new Children's Centre. Pupils come from a wide range of social circumstances and almost all are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. No pupils learn English as a second language. The proportion identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The building and grounds are modern, spacious and attractive.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school giving good value for money, confirming the school's own judgement. Pupils love their time in this calm, caring school and achieve well. Parents are extremely happy about their children's education. Many wrote very positive comments; for example, 'The staff are very helpful and understanding'. 'My child enjoys every day.'

The school has recently added a Children's Centre to meet a range of day care needs for families in the area. It is currently registered to accept children aged between birth and 8 years. It offers high quality facilities and is already popular with parents. School leaders and governors have created an outstanding resource for young children to learn and grow. There are excellent links with the school Nursery; for example, in the curriculum and assessment systems.

Pupils make good progress in all year groups. This is because teaching is good, pupils work hard and teachers keep a very close eye on how well each pupil is doing. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and almost all reach the expected levels before they move to Year 1. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Boys do not achieve as well as girls, especially in writing. The school is beginning to make changes to the curriculum and reading materials to appeal more to boys' interests. More-able pupils make good progress because teachers provide demanding work. Occasionally, teachers miss chances to give this group an extra challenge. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of good teaching, well matched to their needs, and high quality support.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour is always good and sometimes excellent. They thoroughly enjoy lessons and take pride in their achievements. They form good relationships with each other, adults and visitors. Pupils are gaining a good understanding of what will help them to live safe and healthy lives. Pupils leave Ryhope secure, confident and well prepared for the next stages of their lives.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are carefully planned, based on a clear understanding of what pupils need in order to move on. 'We learn something new every day', said one boy. Lessons are lively and little time is wasted, although in a few lessons learning occasionally slows. The good quality of care, guidance and support also helps pupils to achieve.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, governors and senior leaders have provided a firm educational direction for the school through a period of change. They have inspired and supported staff skilfully. The school has an accurate, though sometimes modest view of its own success. It constantly seeks ways to improve, and has made valuable links with individuals and organisations to help it do this. All the concerns from the last inspection have been put right. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards for boys, particularly in writing.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning even further, so that all lessons have the pace and challenge of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. They join the school with a very wide range of ability, but attainment on entry is broadly typical for their age, except for communication skills. These are below those usually seen. A strong emphasis on speaking and listening skills, good teaching and interesting activities results in children making good progress in the Foundation Stage. Most reach the learning goals expected by the end of the Reception year.

This good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2. Pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Boys do not do as well as girls, particularly in writing. Standards in the national tests have stayed above average in almost every year since the last inspection. Pupils in the current Year 2 reach above average standards in reading and mathematics and average standards in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They talk warmly about their teachers and the things they do at school. One boy commented that, 'You make lots of friends here and even the teachers are friendly.' Pupils are encouraged to support each other, celebrate everyone's achievements and lend a helping hand when they see the need. As a result, they gain in confidence and are willing to have a try when they find something difficult. They make a fine start in the Nursery and Reception classes, where they learn to work together well and concentrate on their task. Pupils try hard in lessons and behave well. The few who sometimes find cooperation difficult are well supported to improve their personal skills. Attendance is broadly average.

Pupils gain a good understanding of the importance of a healthy, safe lifestyle and diet. The school cook and her staff support this learning well. Pupils make good use of the range of opportunities for physical exercise. They respond well when asked to contribute to school life or take responsibility. This is evident in the efficient way they perform jobs around the school. The new school council is already taking its duties seriously; for example, in preparing to interview candidates for the new school caretaker. Good community links, visits and visitors help pupils to explore and enjoy the wider world. Their growing confidence, together with good basic skills, prepares them well for the next stage of their education and their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Consequently, pupils of all abilities enjoy learning and achieve well. Teachers motivate their classes through well-planned and purposeful activities. They are quick to celebrate successes or spot where some help and encouragement is needed. Pupils like and respect their teachers, working hard to please them. Nearly all lessons are lively and stimulating, so pupils find them fun and make good progress. Teachers introduce new ideas clearly, often using technology well to help pupils to understand. Teaching assistants are fully involved and make a significant contribution to learning. Activities are usually well graded, so that pupils of all abilities are challenged but are able to succeed. In a small number of lessons, the rate of progress for some pupils is not as fast as it could be when the pace or level of challenge drops.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, based on a clear understanding of how young children learn. The school prepares pupils well for the future by encouraging them, from the beginning, to become independent and confident learners. The close curriculum link between the Children's Centre and the school's Nursery class helps to achieve this.

The school is quick to make changes when progress is not as good as it could be. For example, it has recently introduced topics and resources designed to encourage boys to improve their reading and writing. There is a relevant and stimulating programme for personal and social education. This underpins pupils' growing understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and stay safe. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities meets their needs well. In particular, those who visit the 'nurture room' have a very special place to learn. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of popular clubs, events and visitors. Special weeks, such as the 'creative week', provide new ways to explore and learn. There are productive links with several local organisations; for example, with a garden centre and the local library.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents appreciate the quality of care and attention to detail. One wrote, 'The school does everything in its power to help.' Arrangements to keep pupils safe follow government guidelines. Pupils feel secure and valued; this helps them to make the most of all that the school offers. They know that any problems are dealt with quickly and that there is always someone to turn to for help. The school also has good relationships with parents and other professionals, ensuring a prompt response to individual needs.

The school has new and effective systems to monitor each pupil's academic and personal development progress. Teachers generally use this information well to sharpen their planning and identify who needs additional help or challenge. They also encourage pupils to think about their own progress; for example, asking questions like, 'How well have you learned in this lesson?' Despite their recent introduction, these progress monitoring systems are beginning to contribute significantly to pupils' confidence and good achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide clear direction and are well supported by staff and governors. There have been many changes in staffing and leadership in the last two years, but already there is a good team spirit and high morale. Consequently, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

The school is successful in meeting its aims to be an inclusive school where all pupils are welcomed and encouraged to do well. Leaders have successfully introduced changes in teaching methods and the curriculum in order to give all pupils more chances to succeed. In all parts of the school, everyone knows what is expected and daily routines run smoothly. This is largely because of the highly visible and cheerful presence of the senior team. Everyone is valued and any barriers to learning, however minor, are quickly removed. There are effective links with parents and other schools. Anyone who can add value to pupils' learning, for example sports coaches or visiting artists, are welcomed and used effectively.

Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are outstanding. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably assisted by Nursery and Children's Centre leaders, have created a wonderful place to learn. Spaces for the youngest children are inviting, colourful and well equipped. The grounds and play areas have been designed most imaginatively. Strong links and good planning between the new Children's Centre and the school are already bringing benefits for children, parents and staff.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Procedures to keep an eye on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are good. Self-evaluation is accurate, though sometimes modest, and leads to improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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Inspection judgements

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
|--|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Ryhope Infant School

Shaftesbury Avenue

Ryhope

Sunderland

SR2 0RT

12 March 2007

Dear Pupils

As you know, we visited your school recently. I am writing to thank you for being so helpful and willing to talk to us. We had an enjoyable two days and enjoyed seeing you and your teachers in action.

We think some of the best things about your school are.

- You have a wonderful building and grounds to learn in. Your teachers have made lots of improvements, and the new Children's Centre is one of the best we have seen.
- We liked the way you show respect to your teachers and each other.
- You work hard, behave well and enjoy your lessons.
- The way all the adults work so hard to make sure you are safe, happy and learning.
- We enjoyed lots of the lessons; your teachers work so hard to make them interesting and keep you thinking.

There were lots of other things of course, but there is not enough space for everything.

We think your school could be even better in two ways.

- Just now and then, in lessons, we thought some of you could try something a little bit harder or do a bit more. Usually, as some of you told us, your work is not too easy and not too hard but just right. Still, we think you would enjoy an extra challenge sometimes.
- Another thing to improve is some of the work that boys do, especially their writing. We know your teachers are working on this; come on boys, they need some help from you.

Yours sincerely

Keith Oglesby and Geoff Cooper

The Inspectors

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

JANUARY 2007 SCHOOL CENSUS

Report of the Director of Children's Services

19 April 2007

1 Purpose of the report

To provide members of the Children's Services Review Committee with a summary of some of the outcomes of the January 2007 school census.

2 Background and summary of outcomes

2.1 The School Census has **changed from an annual to termly return**. All schools submit a pupil level census in September, January and May. In addition, DfES policy is to reduce the number of separate statutory data collections for local authorities and schools, and incorporate more collections within the termly Census. New census items from January 2007 include:

- Pupil level attendance (except special school pupils) for the previous term, including reason for absence
- Pupil level exclusions
- Pupil mode of travel for those schools submitting approved travel plans
- Full pupil address
- Pupil Gifted and Talented flag
- Pupil SEN resource provision
- School level extended services provision

2.2 Analysis of the data for **January 2007 Census** shows:

- Pupil numbers continue to decrease by over a thousand a year
- Provisional Dedicated Schools Grant reconciliation suggests budget allocation will be slightly above guaranteed 4% floor increase
- School population is declining at a greater rate than Statistical Neighbours and neighbouring authorities
- Proportion of secondary pupils eligible for free school meals continues to decrease
- Steady increase in ethnic minority population
- Increase in SEN School Action and School Action Plus in primaries. Further decrease in statemented pupils
- 10% of school role registered as Gifted and Talented, as recommended by DfES, although still some schools not submitting a register
- Number of Children Looked After and attending Sunderland schools continues to decrease.

2.3 In **January 2008**, the following **additional pupil level** information will be collected:

- individual pupil level data for pupils in alternative provision and PRU
- summary level data for 3 and 4 year olds in private, voluntary and independent early years settings, previously collected through the Early Years Census

2.4 Wherever possible, **Statistical Neighbour data** has been presented using the new Children's Services DfES Statistical Neighbour group, representing an average of the closest ten authorities to Sunderland (Gateshead, Wakefield, Durham, Barnsley, Hartlepool, South Tyneside, St. Helens, Halton, North Tyneside, Tameside).

Comparative 2007 Census data is not yet available for Statistical Neighbours or national.

3 Number of Pupils on Roll and Dedicated Schools Grant Reconciliation

- 3.1 Each local authority's guaranteed per pupil level of funding is allocated through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Regardless of any potential drop in pupil numbers, the DfES has guaranteed a 4% increase in DSG compared to last year. The DfES has provided a toolkit for local authorities to provisionally calculate their DSG allocation and guaranteed funding per pupil for 2007/08 financial year.
- 3.2 The DfES will not confirm final DSG allocations until all appropriate validation checks have been completed, including resolving duplicate pupils claimed by two different authorities. We expect our final funding figures to be known around the 14th May. In the meantime, the information set out below shows the expected effect of the fall in pupil numbers.

DSG: last two year's provisional reconciliations

| Summary from DSG toolkit | | | | | 2006/07 financial yr | 2007/08 financial yr | change |
|--|-------|------|---|-----------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Sector | Age | NCY | Category | | Jan 06 Census | Jan 07 Census* | |
| Nursery | 2,3 | N | Maintained, Special, Early Years | PTE (0.5) | No. Pupils 3,466 | No. Pupils 3,656 | No. Pupils 190 |
| Reception | 4 | R | | FTE (1) | 3,014 | 2,781 | -233 |
| Primary | 5-10 | 1-6 | Maintained, Special, PRU, Alternative Provision (8b) | FTE (1) | 19,099 | 18,637 | -462 |
| Secondary | 11-15 | 7-11 | | FTE (1) | 18,724 | 18,229 | -495 |
| Total pupils for DSG | | | | | 42,570 | 41,475 | -1,095 |
| Guaranteed per pupil unit of funding for Sunderland LA | | | | | £3,576.33 | £3,823.09 | £246.76 |
| Estimated DSG allocation (£m) | | | | | £152.244m | £158.563m | |
| Final DSG allocation (£m) | | | | | £152.385m | Confirmed May 07 | £6.319m |

- 3.3 The final DSG in 2006/07 was £152.385m, which was based on the guaranteed 4% increase in funding floor as the total based on pupil numbers on roll was lower than the 4% floor. A similar 4% floor for 2007/2008 has been used for budget purposes. However, provisional DSG figures show that Sunderland pupil numbers are slightly above the 4% increase, so a higher DSG may be received:
- 2006/07 DSG settlement was £152.385m
 - guaranteed 4% floor increase for 2007/08 if we had a lower school pop would be £158.480m
 - provisional DSG for 2007/08 is £158.563m, £83,000 over floor accounting for 6 duplicate pupil adjustments at 16th March 2007.

4 January 2007 Pupil Numbers (mainstream and special schools)

- 4.1 The number of pupils in Reception is 1,171 smaller than Year 11, giving a rough indication of the year on year decrease in pupil population. Key Stage 4 cohort has actually increased this year, but this is due to a disproportionately greater Year 11

cohort moving through school. The current year 10 and 11 cohorts are approx 300 pupils larger than the current KS3 cohort size, so KS4 cohort will drop from next year.

| Year Group | 2007 Pop* |
|------------|-----------|
| Rec | 2,712 |
| 1 | 2,920 |
| 2 | 2,953 |
| 3 | 3,049 |
| 4 | 3,134 |
| 5 | 3,304 |
| 6 | 3,268 |
| 7 | 3,349 |
| 8 | 3,505 |
| 9 | 3,549 |
| 10 | 3,826 |
| 11 | 3,873 |

| Key Stage | Year Group | Census Year (Average Year Group size)* | | |
|-------------|-------------|---|-------|-------|
| | | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| FSP / KS1 | Rec – Yr2 | 3,070 | 2,983 | 2,862 |
| Key Stage 2 | Yr3 - Yr6 | 3,376 | 3,269 | 3,189 |
| Key Stage 3 | Yr7 – Yr9 | 3,797 | 3,642 | 3,468 |
| Key Stage 4 | Yr10 – Yr11 | 3,760 | 3,834 | 3,850 |

* excludes dual registrations, pupils receiving alternative tuition / PRU and funded pupils in PVI

- 4.2 School Population Change in Tyne and Wear/Durham 2005/06
School populations are dropping both in the region and nationally. The following tables from DfES provide pupils by age across all schools within an authority, and includes independent schools. No comparative data is yet available for 2007. Statutory school age population in Sunderland is decreasing faster than the national rate and statistical neighbours. Only South Tyneside decreased at a faster rate between 2005 – 06.

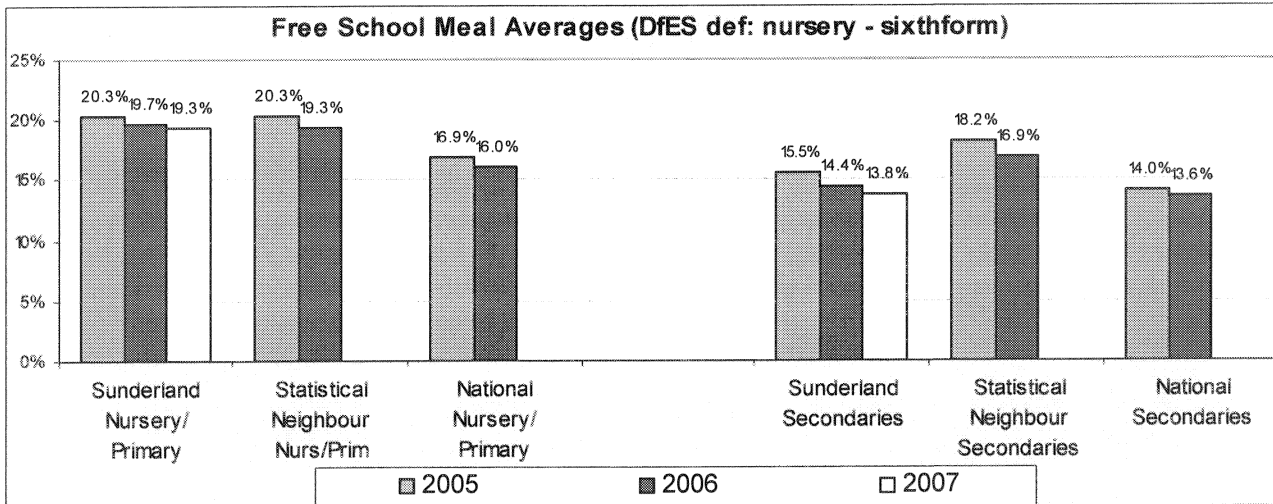
| | Pupils aged 4-10 (primary age)* | | | Pupils aged 11-15 (secondary age)* | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Census 2005 | Census 2006 | % Change 05-06 | Census 2005 | Census 2006 | % Change 05-06 |
| Sunderland | 23,142 | 22,394 | -3.2% | 19,544 | 19,179 | -1.9% |
| Gateshead | 15,497 | 15,268 | -1.5% | 11,918 | 11,733 | -1.6% |
| South Tyneside | 11,908 | 11,516 | -3.3% | 10,138 | 9,941 | -1.9% |
| Durham | 39,501 | 38,723 | -2.0% | 31,170 | 30,984 | -0.6% |
| Newcastle | 20,512 | 20,116 | -1.9% | 16,651 | 16,531 | -0.7% |
| North Tyneside | 15,671 | 15,441 | -1.5% | 12,244 | 12,099 | -1.2% |
| Statistical Neighbours | | | -2.1% | | | -0.9% |
| National | | | -1.4% | | | -0.3% |

- includes all pupils aged 4 – 15 attending provision in Sunderland (LA schools, independents, PRU).
Source: DfES

- 4.3 Latest Sunderland Live Births data
The latest available live birth data for Sunderland shows an increase from 2,971 in 2004 to 3,068 in 2005, representing the highest annual figure over the last four years. Fertility rate per 1,000 females aged 15-44 has also increased, from 50.1 to 51.7 2004 to 2005.
- 4.4 **Action by Children's Services**
The continuing issue of falling rolls across the city has resulted in a report to Cabinet in March and a paper elsewhere on this agenda sets out the detail of that report.
- 5 **Free School Meals**
- 5.1 The percentage of statutory school age pupils registered for free school meals continues to decrease at secondary.

| | % Free School Meals | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| All Pupils (Rec - Yr11) | 20.2% | 19.2% | 18.8% |
| Primary Schools (Rec - Yr6) | 22.9% | 22.2% | 22.1% |
| Secondary Schools (Yr7 - Yr11) | 16.3% | 15.1% | 14.5% |
| Special Schools (Rec - Yr11) | 42.0% | 38.9% | 35.5% |

5.2 The DfES publishes a broader pupil average for FSM, which incorporates all pupils, including part time nursery and sixth-form (this makes direct comparisons between schools less meaningful). Latest National and Statistical Neighbour data (2006) shows Sunderland below Statistical Neighbours at secondary.



Note Statistical Neighbours refers to Feb07 DfES Children's Services SN group (closest 10 local authorities ave)

5.3 The proportion of pupils not re-registering for FSM is increasing. As a rough guide, the proportion of statutory school age pupils at secondary school who were registered for FSM in 2006 and did not re-register in 2007 has more than doubled compared to 2005-06 (discounting pupils transferring in from another authority)

5.4 Action by Children's Services

A substantial piece of work was commissioned by the Schools Forum at the end of 2006 and the outcomes reported in the Spring. The aim of the piece of work was to establish reasons for the low uptake of free school meals in the City and seek good practice from other authorities in terms of increasing uptake. As a result of that more publicity work has been commissioned and the work remains a high priority.

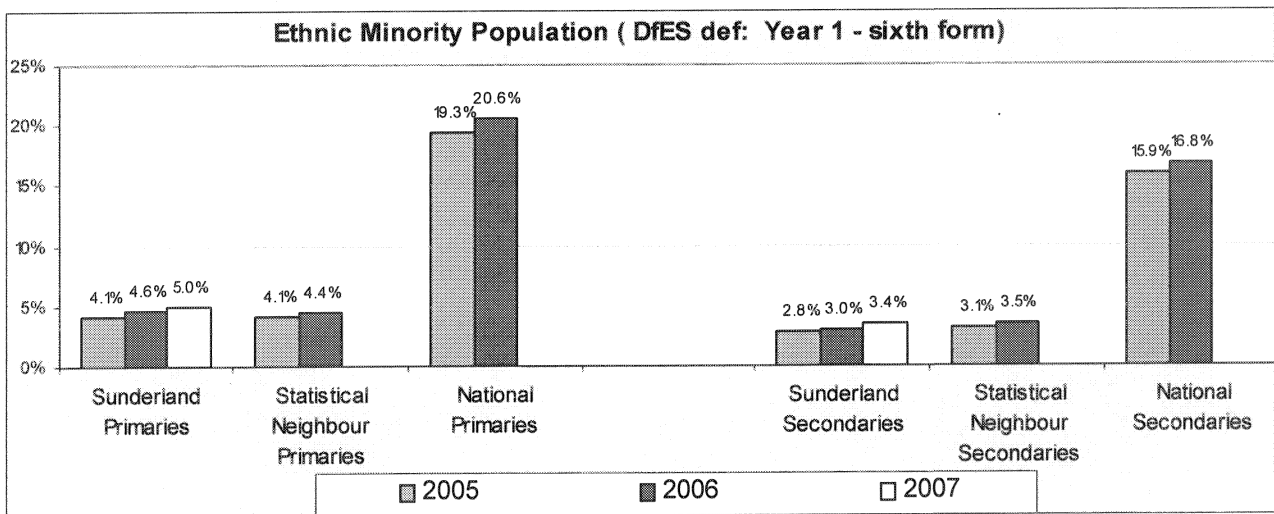
In addition extensive partnership working and additional funding has addressed the issue of healthy eating in schools, through the Food in Schools team. Promotion work continues through schools in partnership with Community and Cultural Services staff.

6 Ethnicity

6.1 The ethnic minority population continues to grow, but has not increased at the same rate as last year in primaries. The quality of the data continues to improve, with a further drop in pupils not providing ethnicity. Bangladeshi accounts for a third of ethnic pupils (approx 600 Bangladeshi pupils). Any Other White Background represents greatest ethnic group increase this year (approx 200 pupils in total). This data is used most effectively at a school level.

| Ethnic Population | White British | | | Refused / Not Obtained | | | Ethnic Minority | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-------|-------|------------------------|------|------|-----------------|------|------|
| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| All Pupils (all ages) | 93.6% | 94.2% | 94.6% | 2.8% | 1.8% | 1.1% | 3.6% | 4.0% | 4.3% |
| Primary Schools (Yr1 - Yr6)* | 94.2% | 94.4% | 94.5% | 1.7% | 0.9% | 0.5% | 4.1% | 4.6% | 5.0% |
| Secondary Schools (Yr7 - Yr13)* | 92.8% | 94.3% | 94.9% | 4.5% | 2.7% | 1.7% | 2.8% | 3.0% | 3.4% |

* DfES publish ethnicity averages based on Year 1 upwards



* No statistical neighbour or national data available yet for 2007

6.2 The proportion of ethnic minority pupils in Sunderland primaries was above the latest Statistical Neighbours in 2006 and increasing at a faster rate. Secondary school ethnic minority population in Sunderland is below Statistical Neighbours, suggesting growth due to pupils starting primary school more than transferring in during statutory school age. The younger the National Curriculum Year Group, the greater the proportion of ethnic minority pupils; proportion of ethnic minority pupils in Year 1 is more than twice the rate of Year 11.

6.3 Ethnicity Collection

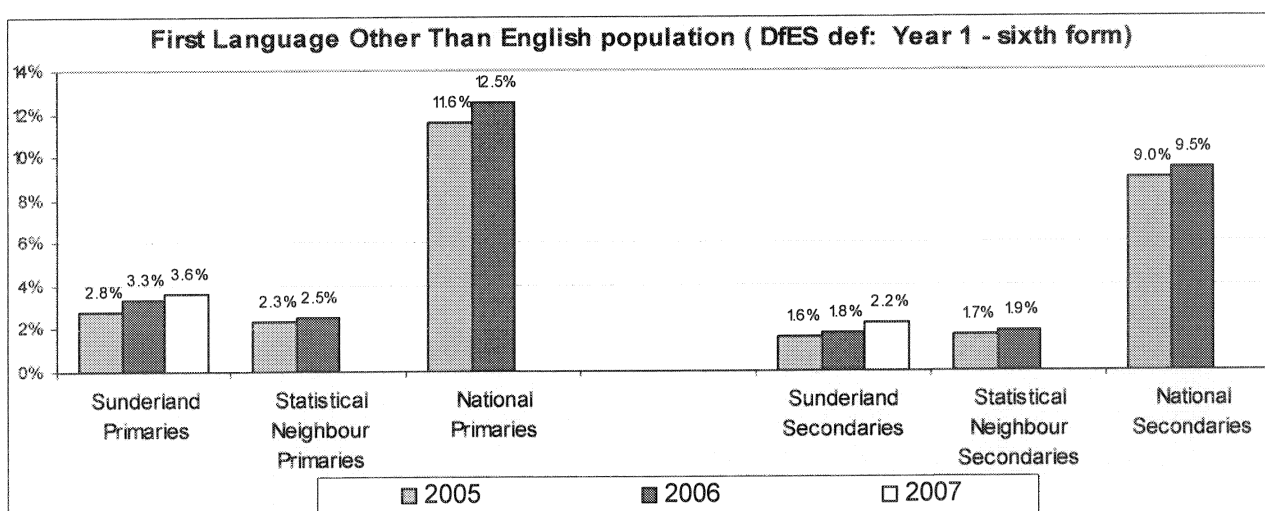
The ethnic code set reflects categories used in the 2001 National Population Census, with two additional categories for Travellers of Irish heritage and pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage. If the national population census categories do not meet the needs of local monitoring, local authorities may use the DfES approved list of extended categories, which covers about 85 codes including e.g. White Albanian. Sunderland LA uses the National Population Census categories.

6.4 First Language

The proportion of pupils whose First Language is Other Than English (EAL) is a more robust indicator than ethnicity. EAL is increasing in line with the ethnic minority pattern, but in Sunderland there is a greater proportion of ethnic minority pupils registered EAL than either Statistical Neighbours or National.

| First Language Population | English | | | Other | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|
| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| All Pupils (all ages) | 97.7% | 97.2% | 96.8% | 2.3% | 2.7% | 3.0% |
| Primary Schools (Yr1 - Yr6)* | 97.2% | 96.7% | 96.4% | 2.8% | 3.3% | 3.6% |
| Secondary Schools (Yr7 - Yr13)* | 98.4% | 98.1% | 97.7% | 1.6% | 1.8% | 2.2% |

* DfES publish first language averages based on Year 1 upwards



* No statistical neighbour or national data available yet for 2007

EAL as an indicator is also limited, as it does not identify fluency so there is no difference between a pupil who is fluent in English but speaks a different language at home and a pupil who has just arrived from overseas speaking little English. Some authorities assess and collect EAL data according to level of English, and London boroughs, for example, collect fluency levels from schools annually. Sunderland also contains specific ethnic minority groups that limited comparisons with national figures. For example, the Sunderland Bangladeshi population contains a high proportion from Sylett.

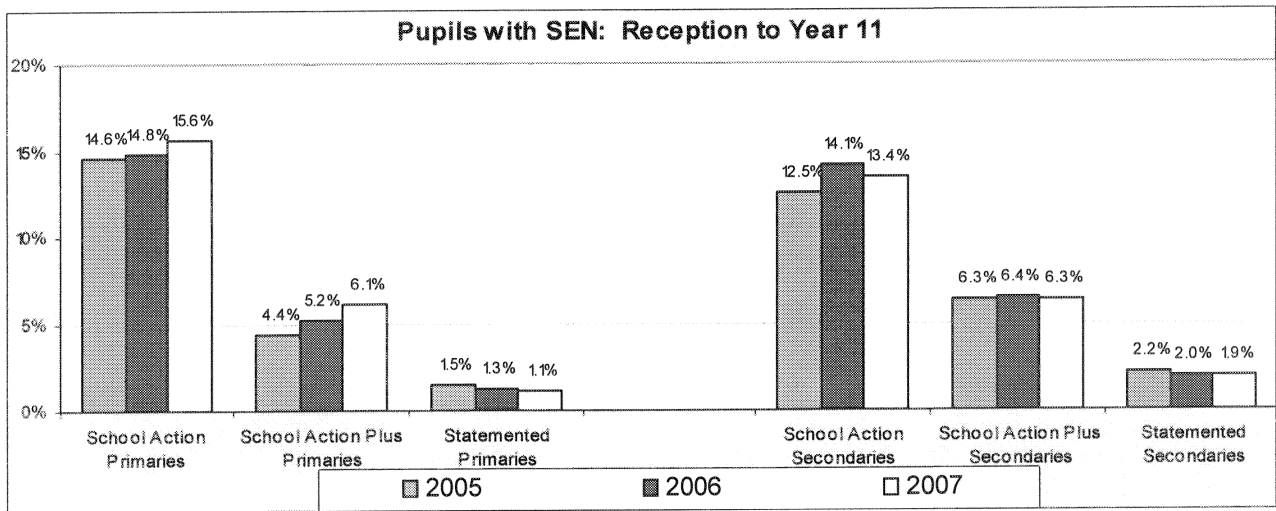
6.5 Action by Children's Services

There is a need to consider increasing the sophistication of the data collected to try to differentiate between those schools which may need a higher level of support on EAL depending upon the fluency of their English language skills.

7 Special Educational Needs

In 2007 there has been:

- an increase in School Action at primary school and a decrease at secondary
- an increase in School Action Plus and decrease in Statemented pupils at primary.
- reduction in all SEN categories at secondary schools



8 Gifted and talented

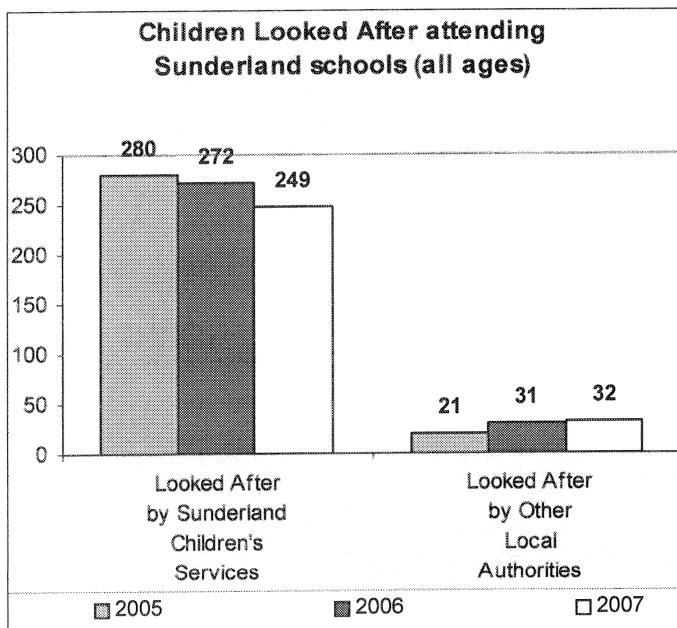
The DfES recommends that 10% of the school roll be registered as Gifted and Talented. We have the greatest proportion of G&T during Key Stage 2, although the proportion varies between schools, and ten primaries did not submit G&T cohort. All secondary schools have registered G&T cohorts

| Gifted & Talented 2007 | All Pupils (Rec - Yr11) | Primary Schools (Rec - Yr6) | Secondary Schools (Yr7 - 11) |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| % of school roll | 10% | 11% | 9% |

8.1 Action by Children's Services

The Director of Children's Services has asked for those schools who did not submit a Gifted and Talented cohort to be contacted and a return secured from them.

9 Pupils in Care



School Census records all Children Looked After that attend Sunderland schools and also which local authority looks after the child.

Over the last three years, the number of CLA recorded as attending Sunderland schools and looked after by Sunderland Children's Services has decreased, and the number looked after by other authorities has increased.

10 Recommendation

Members are asked to note the information contained within this report and the additional pieces of work which have been commissioned within Children's Services in response to the outcomes of the 2007 School Census.

Background Papers

2007 School Census

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE

REFERENCE FROM CABINET: ANNUAL RESIDENTS' SURVEY 2006 - FINDINGS

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

19 APRIL 2007

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an opportunity to consider the findings of the Sunderland Residents' Survey for 2006.

2. Background

Each year the Council commissions a research study of local resident's views. Findings from the 2006 report were provided to Cabinet on 14 March 2007 (a copy of which was circulated to all Members).

3. Reporting to Review Committees

The survey provides insight into key themes of interest to the Children's Services Review Committee.

Key messages emerging from the Sunderland Residents' Survey will no doubt assist the Committee as it establishes its priorities for the 2007-08 Council year.

To save printing and paper Members are asked to bring their copy of the report to the meeting. (For elected Members the report is included with the 14 March 2007 Cabinet Agenda. For co-opted Members the report is posted out separately). Additional copies will be available at the meeting.

4. Recommendation

That the Review Committee considers the feedback of residents in the 2006 MORI survey.

5. Background Papers

Cabinet Agenda 14 March 2007

Contact Officer : Karen Brown 0191 553 1004
karen.brown@sunderland.gov.uk