

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE: 24th JULY 2013

2012~13 Overview of Achievements, Challenges and Emerging issues.

Achievements

1. Good levels of improvement sustained in most areas of educational attainment – performing well compared to benchmark groups in the Early Years and Primary phases; closing the gap to the national average for Key Stage 4.
2. High proportion of primary schools judged good / outstanding by Ofsted.
3. Implemented new school funding formula.
4. Improved 'Safer Schools' processes across all schools.
5. Educational progress of looked after children – overall good levels of school attendance during the previous school year; and attainment at KS4 (end of secondary school) relatively good compared to national outcomes.
6. New model for Children's Centre provision now established.
7. Improving quality of childminders - high proportion judged good /outstanding by Ofsted over the past year.
8. Local Authority Fostering Agency inspection – judged 'good' for overall effectiveness by Ofsted, with outcomes for children and young people judged to be 'outstanding'.
9. Both new Children's homes open and operational (one of these judged as 'good' in its first full Ofsted inspection).
10. Continued good levels of performance regarding child protection plans – relatively few 'second or subsequent' plans and plans that last more than 2 years – indicators of effective support and outcomes for the children and families involved.
11. Placement stability for looked after children being maintained within target levels, despite increasing numbers.
12. Exit Surveys of Care Leavers reflected positive outcomes; particularly good feedback regarding the quality of foster care; support with education; and the value of having time with their social worker.

13. Improving trend in timeliness of adoption decisions.
14. Robust arrangements established for monitoring children who are vulnerable, exploited, missing or trafficked.
15. Maintaining a good level of NEET performance (Not in Education, Employment, Training) despite the challenging economic climate – rate of NEETs / Not Knowns continues to be better than the Tees Valley average.
16. Positive evaluation of the TAMHS (Targeted Mental Health in Schools) service in schools - 70% of all referrals resulted in a positive planned discharge with evidenced outcomes.
17. Improvement in the obesity rate for children in year 6 of primary school. Results of the last published national survey (for the 2011~12 school year) indicated an obesity rate of 14.9%; a significant reduction on the previous outturn of 20.4%.

Challenges

1. Changing pattern of school provision – Academies; Free School bid.
2. School capital strategy and pupil places.
3. Narrowing the gap in outcomes for vulnerable groups.
4. Raising attainment in Secondary Schools, including acceleration of pupils' progress in English & Maths.
5. Improving attendance in Secondary Schools.
6. Increasing the number of secondary schools good or outstanding
7. Implementing Special Educational Needs Reforms, including Education, Health and Care Plans for 0 - 25 year olds.
8. New Ofsted inspection frameworks (Safeguarding, LAC, and School Improvement).
9. Social care – high levels of need and demand on services.
10. Highest ever levels of children in care; associated resource pressures / cost of placements.

11. Adoption timescales.
12. Ensuring consistent quality of casework practice.
13. Number of children subject to child protection (CP) plans and issues in relation to management of CP conferences.
14. Recruiting experienced social work staff.
15. Family Justice Reform - new timescales for completion of case etc.
16. Early Help agenda / engagement of agencies in CAF.
17. Reducing the proportion of NEETs.
18. Healthy lifestyle issues – obesity; alcohol misuse; breast feeding; maternal smoking.
19. Impact of Welfare Reform.

Emerging issues

1. New national 'Working Together' guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
2. Care leavers – transition to adulthood.
3. The 'missing children' agenda, including those at risk of sexual exploitation.
4. Further reforms to school funding.
5. Post-16 offer.
6. Increasing childcare for vulnerable 2 year olds.
7. Sector Led Improvement arrangements – involvement in Peer Review and Regional activity.