

# **Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**Date: June 15<sup>th</sup> 2011**

Agenda item: 7

Wards: All Wards

**Subject: Performance Monitoring: Overview of Children, Schools and Families Department**

Lead officer: Paul Ballatt (Children, Schools and Families), 020 8545 4066

Lead members: Councillor Maxi Martin, Councillor Peter Walker.

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

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Reason for urgency: The legal requirements for Access to Information have not been met. The Chair has approved the urgent submission of this item, following a request for the report made at late notice. It is essential for the Panel to consider this report at the initial meeting of the municipal year.

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## **Recommendations:**

A. That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel note and comment on the current levels of performance set out in the report.

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This report provides headline performance information to the panel with the aim of giving panel members an overview of strengths, areas for development and performance issues. Children, Schools and Families department (CSF) routinely reports on over 200 indicators – only selected key measures have been presented in this report in a narrative format.

## **2. OVERVIEW**

2.1 CSF department works closely with partner agencies to improve outcomes for Merton's children, young people and families. Partnership working is key from strategic decision making of such bodies as the Children's Trust and the Local Safeguarding Children Boards to the frontline service delivery of universal, targeted and specialist services. Key partners include NHS Sutton and Merton (health commissioning), The Royal Marsden Hospital (community health provision), the South West London Mental Health Trust,

the local community and voluntary sector, the Metropolitan Police, schools, settings, South West Thames College, Job Centre Plus and other council departments.

Partnership working is central in legislation such as the Children Act 2004, The Sustainable Communities Act 1998 and the recent Munro review of Safeguarding. Children's Services are primarily accountable to the Department for Education, but also have statutory duties relating to the Home Office and Department of Health amongst others.

As a result of this framework of multi-agency delivery, the inspection, regulation and accountability frameworks are multiple.

- 2.2 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 charges Ofsted with providing an annual rating of children's services. The rating has been provided through an evolving inspection framework. The first rating was received in March 2007 when Merton was inspected by Ofsted and partner inspectorates under the Joint Area Review framework (JAR). Ratings given were good including the rating for council children's services and the partnership's capacity to improve. One area was rated as satisfactory, this relating to services promoting economic well being of children and families.
- 2.3 In 2008 Merton council children's services were again rated as part of the corporate Annual Performance Assessment Framework. The ratings were broadly similar to those given in the JAR apart from in the enjoy and achieve outcome area which dropped to satisfactory, primarily due to relatively poor GCSE results the previous summer.
- 2.4 In 2009 Ofsted introduced a new rating system based on a quarterly performance profile, which includes the performance of all children's services in the borough. This profile utilises performance indicators and inspection judgements including on services not under the direct control of CSF department. In 2009 Merton was rated as good. In 2010 despite many improvements the rating dropped to satisfactory largely on the basis of secondary school inspection results. A number of other authorities' ratings also dropped, in part due to a rebalancing in the post pilot phase of the profile. The Ofsted performance profile on which the judgement is based is in appendix 1.
- 2.5 Children's Services made a considerable contribution to the achievement of Merton's Local Area Agreement (LAA) with government. The Children's Trust achieved reward targets for healthy schools accreditation, youth service accredited outcomes, GCSE performance, 16-18 Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) reduction and partial reward for reductions in secondary school persistent absence and Key Stage 2 performance. Targets were missed, however, for both fixed and permanent exclusions. In total the Children's Trust achieved 49.6% of the total LAA reward and 73.6% of the maximum. This compares with all the other LSP thematics combined which achieved 50.4% of reward and 53.3% of their maximum. Of the £1.7million of reward received by the council and LSP, CSF department 'earned' £845,000.

- 2.6 The findings of the young residents survey 2010 show that 68% of young people think the council provides services which young people need, this is 5% higher than the London average. However only 61% think the council does enough to protect young people, this is 2% lower than the London average. 58% of young people think the council listens to the concerns of young people, this is 12% higher than the London average, this difference is statistically significant. 51% of young people think that the council keeps young people informed about what it does, 9% higher than the London average. Also 37% of young people think the council involves young people when making decisions, again 9% higher than the London average.

### **3. EDUCATION**

- 3.1 The department's early years services hold responsibilities for child care and education for young children from pre to Key Stage 1, including the responsibility for developing Merton's Children's Centres. Ofsted inspects all early years provision in the borough. Inspection ratings (good or outstanding) for Merton's 260 childminders are 4% below the national average and for the 67 childcare providers, ratings are marginally below the national average. For nursery schools and the foundation stage in primary schools, 81% are rated good or outstanding which is in line with the national average. To date only one children's centre has been inspected, the rating given was good. Across all Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) indicators, Merton has exceeded national averages. The improvement in EYFSP has been nationally recognised especially regarding closing the gap between the lowest attaining and the average. Children's Centres were accessed by nearly 6,000 children last year and over 2,500 families from more deprived areas accessed the centres. The service has also met targets regarding place provision in this phase.
- 3.2 The child poverty agenda is currently co-ordinated by the early years service, though is an LSP wide issue. The early years services has received national acclaim and international interest for its employability programme which complements multi-agency children's centre work and childcare provision programmes. The government is currently devising a new performance framework for this work.
- 3.3 Officers in the School Standards and Quality service have responsibility for promoting school improvement and driving up standards of pupil attainment. At Key Stage 1 performance is below the national average although for most subject areas the differences are marginal. For writing, however, Merton is 4% below the national at level 2+, 5% below at level 2B+ and 1% below at level 3+, and is the area of most concern at this key stage. Over the past years Key Stage 2 results have risen from below the national average and are now above the national average on all key measures and continue to improve. Progress in English from Key Stage 1 to 2 was the second highest nationally last year. Progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 English and maths combined was 31<sup>st</sup> best in the country. GCSE (KS4) results have also seen a marked improvement, performance in this area having been one of the lowest in the country. After several years of marked improvements, achievements are near the national average for 5+A\*-C including English and

maths, and above for 5+A\*-C. Merton's GCSE contextual value added score is above the average and 77% of the schools are in line with national performance or significantly above. Merton's GCSE performance improvement in recent years is one of the best in the country. Key Stage 5 (A levels and equivalents) outcomes in Merton schools are above average, however most Merton young people are not educated in borough at the post 16 stage. Post 16 achievement for the Merton population is 4.9% below the national average. More detailed information is contained in the Standards report which was presented to the panel in March. The young residents surveys shows that young people's satisfaction with primary (71%) secondary (65%) and sixth form/college (49%) education is in line with the London average.

- 3.4 Another key measure for this service is the Ofsted inspection ratings of schools. For primary and special schools Ofsted rates two thirds as good or outstanding and the service has a good track record of working with schools which receive inadequate inspections. In the secondary phase only 3 of the 8 secondary schools are rated as good or outstanding, improvement in this area is a key challenge for the service.
- 3.5 The education welfare service has the responsibility for improving attendance rates overall and to target persistent absentees. Over the last three years attendance rates have been in line with the national average for primary, secondary and special schools. The reduction of persistent absence rates (defined as missing 20% or more of schooling) has been a key focus both locally and nationally. In primary schools Merton has reduced the rates from 2.1% to 1.2% over the last three years and has moved from being 0.4% worse than the national average to 0.2% better. In secondary schools rates have reduced from 5.9% to 4.6% over the last three years, this is a good achievement but rates are still below the national average. Special school rates were in line with the national average 3 years ago but are now 0.8% worse.
- 3.6 The Behaviour Support team works with schools to improve behaviour of pupils. The team has ensured that all primary schools engaged with the SEAL (social, emotional and attitudes to learning) programme. Exclusion rates in primary schools are low and performance is better than the national average. Secondary permanent exclusion rates are above the national average, although there has been an overall trajectory of improvement in recent years. Secondary fixed term exclusion rates remain well above the national average, rates are amongst the highest in London. Special school fixed term exclusion rates are well above national and regional rates.
- 3.7 As of January 2011 18.5% children and young people in Merton schools are on the SEN code of practice (school action, action plus and statements). 2.8% of CYP had statements, this is 0.1% above the 2010 national average. The Merton statement rate has been dropping since 2006 when the rate was 3.6%. Last year 116 new statements were issued, in total the borough has 941 current statements. The service processed most statements in a timely manner, performance is in line with national expectations for statement completion rates within 26 weeks without exceptions and 2% below for statements completion rates within 26 with and without exceptions.

#### 4. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

- 4.1. Merton had its second unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment services at the beginning of December 2010; this was just six months after the previous inspection in May. The inspection findings found demonstrable improvements had been made over the previous six months. The scope of the inspection is limited, lasts only two days and focuses on the work of children's social care frontline teams (Access and Assessment and Children In Need in particular). The inspection does however touch upon other teams and partners. In the May inspection Ofsted found two strengths, eight areas of satisfactory practice and nine areas for development; and no priority areas for action (about a quarter of Local Authorities have these). In December Ofsted found three strengths, ten areas of satisfactory practice and six areas for development and no priority areas.

The strengths were:

- Funding made available for increased staff and supervisory capacity leading to improved time scales
- The work of the integrated services with regard in particular to support for children with disabilities
- The range of preventative and targeted services for children and families in need requiring additional support

Areas for development included:

- Increased consistency of supervision
- Some recording improvements in case files
- Increased analysis in assessments
- Some clarification needed in information sharing protocols

- 4.2 At the end of November Merton underwent a peer review of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services conducted by the Local Government and Development agency. This review included nearly a week of field work including interviews with staff, managers, political and organisation leaders, also visits were made to key services including a number of preventative services.

The peer reviewers found strengths in areas such as:

- Strong political, managerial and cultural commitment and "buy in" to quality children's services
- Preventative services showed a golden thread of the Merton Well Being model being well embedded both within the local authority and partner agencies
- Good safeguarding training provided across the sector's workforce
- Good engagement with and between partners
- Good outcomes for looked after children

Areas suggested for development include:

- Closer working with health colleagues in regard to shared expectations and more effective communication

- An improvement in the evidencing of equalities activities
- Further developing the role and identity of the Merton Safeguarding Board
- Improved understanding and shared use of Merton Well Being model thresholds
- Improve the use of data to inform service development

4.3 Overall volumes of activity have reduced since a peak in 2008-2009 following the Baby Peter case which raised the overall level of concern relating to child protection nationally. However current levels of activity are still significantly higher than levels pre 2008-2009. Initial contacts have increased by over a 1,000 and the number of core assessments undertaken have doubled.

The common assessment framework (CAF) is an assessment framework utilised by all agencies working in the field designed to support the earlier identification of children with additional needs. Over 1,000 CAFs were completed last year, of which a third led to early intervention and two thirds resulted in referrals to children's social care.

The average number of open cases to children's social care over the year was 1285. This represents over 2% of the overall Merton 0-19 population.

4.4 Child protection assessment timescales have proved a challenge given the increase in activity levels and continued workforce pressures. However the Munro report published in May 2011 has recommended reducing the prescription around the timescales. A revised indicator is being considered for 2011-2012 subject to national developments. Performance relating to child protection visits, reviews and re-registration is at or better than the national averages. The average number of children and young people in 2010-2011 with a child protection plan was 122. Merton's rates of children with a child protection plan are marginally below the national average but is in the mid position when compared to statistical neighbours.

4.5 In March 2011 132 children and young people were in care, the average over the year was 139. Merton's rates are lower than most local authorities. The application of the Merton well-being model and the effectiveness of early intervention and prevention services are key activities which enable the care and child protection rates to be held at relatively low levels. Placement stability in terms of the number of moves in a year and placement length are both below the national average. Further work to improve placement matching should contribute to improving these measures. This year 12 children and young people achieved permanency through special guardianship or adoption, this is an improvement from last year, and also there have been improvements in the timeliness of adoption. Outcome measures for looked after children such as the employment, education and training rates post 16 will be available soon. The previous year's performance showed rates were improving and just under the national average.

4.6 Satisfaction rates as measured by the young residents survey show that 33% of young people are satisfied with children's social care, this is 3% higher than the London average.

- 4.7 The regulatory inspection (2008) of Merton fostering services resulted in a rating of good, recommendations from the previous inspection having been implemented. The report stated that “the fostering service ensures that children and young people are placed in safe, healthy and nurturing homes”. Observations from visits to foster homes indicated that overall, the service does well in retaining highly skilled and well-motivated foster carers.
- 4.8 Merton's Adoption Agency Inspection by Ofsted in July concluded in an overall grading of 'satisfactory'. Ofsted noted that actions and recommendations made in the last inspection in 2007 have been addressed "significantly improving the overall quality of service it [the adoption agency] affords to service users".
- 4.9 The regulatory inspection of private fostering (2009) in Merton resulted in a rating of good. The inspectors found that the service meets all 7 key national minimum standards.
- 4.10 A rating of good was awarded at the most recent regulatory inspection of Brightwell respite centre. At this unannounced inspection, all the key standards were inspected. This is a good home with some satisfactory and some outstanding features.

## **5. YOUTH INCLUSION**

- 5.1 Youth service performance has improved markedly since the Ofsted inspection of 2004, when the service received an unsatisfactory inspection score. The JAR in 2007 gave the youth service an improved rating. Subsequently in March 2011 Ofsted visited the youth service again to observe and commend the borough for good practice especially in regard to youth engagement in the distribution of the youth opportunities fund and in the wider commissioning of services for youth. The youth service and its commissioned partners have consistently met performance targets around participation and accreditations in recent years and have shown a good improvement trajectory. Participation rates have risen from 1458 in 2007-2008 to 2531 in 2010-2011. Accredited outcomes have risen from 193 in 2006-2007 to 656 in 2010-2011.
- 5.2 The Information Advice and Guidance service is currently subject to considerable change. There are a number of measures associated with this service, the most prominent being the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) rate of 16-18 year olds. Considerable improvements have been made with a reduction from 7.5% to 5.5% achieved in three years, however the rates remains above the average.
- 5.3 Since the JAR in 2007, the youth justice service (YJS) was inspected in 2009 by the Youth Justice Board. The Board commended the YJS prevention work in secondary schools including the accredited parenting programmes. Another strength was the YJS reparation programme, over 2,000 hours of unpaid community work was undertaken by young offenders over a year. The inspection noted that the quality assurance process and procedures for case management should be further improved. This service is due for its next

inspection in June 2011. This inspection is focused on individual case management and outcomes. This year the service met all its key performance targets, showing an ongoing reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system (FTE's) - indicative of the effectiveness of prevention processes such as the Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP). Reoffending rates were below targeted levels but show a small rise on the previous year. The ethnic composition of young offenders is disproportional, with Black ethnic groups being consistently over-represented; this remains a challenge for the YJS, the Metropolitan Police and the wider partnership. The service has been consistently successful in placing young offenders in education, employment and training, and in finding suitable accommodation for those in need.

- 5.4 The partnership has a responsibility to reduce teenage pregnancy rates. Since 1998 (the baseline year) Merton's rate has dropped by a faster rate than both nationally and in London.
- 5.5 The young residents survey showed that 43% of young people are satisfied with activities for young people, this is 7% higher than the London average.

## **6. HEALTH**

- 6.1 Although not specifically the responsibility of CSF department, the performance of health services, often delivered in partnership with other children's services, is an important contributor to overall outcomes for children and young people.

Immunisations rates for diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis and Haemophilus Influenza (Hib) has remained above 85%. However the WHO target for immunity is 95%. Potentially linked to the non-achievement of immunisation targets, there are higher than expected hospital inpatient stays for vaccine preventable conditions in children. In addition, the uptake of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine has fallen nationally and locally since inaccurate publicity suggesting a link with autism. Consequently, across London there have been an increasing number of measles and mumps outbreaks in recent years.: The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment identified that MMR take-up rates should be improved by offering vaccination at a range of sites including schools.

- 6.2 NHS Dental Health registration rates are low across Merton with much lower than expected rates seen in the east of the borough. The most recent data shows that, overall, Merton children have good dental health.
- 6.3 School sport uptake is high, analysis by gender and ethnicity is being used to ensure uptake is both comprehensive and equitable. 53% of children and young people participated in 3 hours of sport or more; this is higher than the national average.
- 6.4 Breastfeeding is increasing across the borough; breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks has increased from 49.5% in 2008/09 to 74% currently. The latest data shows Merton performance is above national levels.



- 6.5 Obesity rates by year 6 of the primary phase are 19.5%, which is a reduction from 21.35% in 2007/08. Merton obesity rates at year 6 and reception year are higher than the national average.
- 6.6 Young people's hospital admission rates for alcohol specific conditions, substance misuse and injury are all lower than the national average.
- 6.7 52% of young people in Merton are emotionally healthy compared to 56% nationally. Concerns for pupils are 'school work and exams', and 'what to do after year 11'. This is the same as pupils nationally. 19% of pupils are worried about being a victim of crime; this is 3% higher than the national average, but in line with statistical neighbours. (*TellUs 4*).

## **7 STRATEGIC SERVICES**

- 7.1 Within the overall school organisation service, the School Admissions team has processed 9338 applications this year. Nursery round applications have increased by more than double over since 2009 to 3409. Primary round applications have increased by 300 to 2587. Secondary round applications are relatively stable at 1706, with a small drop of 19 since 2009. In year applications have increased to 1636, this is a 195 increase since 2009. The service consistently meets Pan London admissions deadlines.
- 7.2 The school organisation service is also responsible for capital projects the majority of which has recently been the schools expansion programme which has required 18 schools in the last 3 years to be expanded at least in a temporary capacity (this has for example increased reception places to date by 540 places, major projects over the last 3 years have been:
- Children's centres completion (6 schemes) - Aragon, Garden, Haslemere, Malmesbury, Merton Abbey and St Thomas of Canterbury with St Marks (primary school).
  - Primary capital programme completion (4 schemes) - Bond, Poplar, Links and St Marks (primary school). 2 are in development SS Peter and Paul, Garden.
  - School expansion programmes completed (2) - Holy Trinity and Wimbledon Chase. 4 currently on site Benedict, Hollymount, Joseph Hood and St Mary's. 11 further expansions in development.
  - SEN schemes completed (2) - St Ann's SEN Centre of Excellence, West Wimbledon and on site at Cricket Green and St Ann's Primary
  - Other schemes completed - Intergenerational Centre/Adventure Playground and Sixth Form buildings at Bishopsford, Raynes Park, Ricards Lodge and Rutlish. Currently on site at the Raynes Park High School pavilion and playing field

7.3 The work of the Research and Information (R+I) team includes reporting and data collection. Reports are produced for schools, scrutiny panel, cabinet, the Children's Trust, Local Strategic Partnership, Safeguarding Board, CSF management teams and the corporate centre. Last year 92% (89/97) of pre scheduled R+I reports were on time. Over the year R+I completed 18 key data collections (approximately 7,800,000 data items), The vast majority of these collections are statutory, the remainder are business critical and feed processes such as the schools budgeting round. All data collections (which are subject to a range of audit and quality assurance processes) were delivered to timescale and to a high level of quality.

## **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

8.1 The Panel's scrutiny work programme is determined by the members of the Panel

## **9. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

9.1 The Panel may wish to revisited the performance monitoring index in light of this report.

## **10. TIMETABLE**

10.1 Non relating to this specific report

## **11. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Non relating to this specific report

## **12. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Non relating to this specific report

## **13.. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 Non relating to this specific report.

## **14.1 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 Non relating to this specific report.

## **15. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 Non relating to this specific report

## **16. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT •**

Appendix 1 Ofsted Performance Profile

## **17 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

17.1. None

# Local area children's services performance profile: summary profile

Local area: **Merton**  
Reporting Date: **Quarter 8 : 2 December 2010**



## Inspected Services, settings and institutions

% of providers judged outstanding, good, satisfactory, inadequate for Overall Effectiveness		% Good or Outstanding	
Number Inspected	% Outstanding/ Inadequate	% Outstanding/ Good/ Satisfactory/ Inadequate	% Good or Outstanding
Childminder	6 55	37 2	61%
Childcare - domestic			
Childcare - non-domestic	6 67	25 1	73%
Children's centre			
Nursery and EYFS primary	21 60	19	81%
Primary school	12 56	30 2	67%
LA maintained secondary	17 67		33%
Academy and CTC	50 50		50%
Secondary sixth form	50 25	25	75%
General FE and tertiary			
form college			
Ind. Specialist College			
LA maintained special	67 33		67%
Non-LA & ind. special	50 50		50%
Sec. special sixth form	100 100		100%
Pupil referral unit	100 100		100%
Residential spec. school			
LA adoption agency	100		0%
LA fostering agency	100		100%
P & V foster and adoption	33 67		33%
LA children's home	100		100%
P & V children's home	33 67		33%

[Click here for further detail and ECM judgements](#)

	Total Number Inspected	% Outstanding/ Good/ Satisfactory/ Inadequate	% Good or Outstanding
Early years and childcare	339	6 58	2 64%
Nursery & primary schools	86	16 58	1 74%
Secondary schools	8	25 13 63	38%
Post-16	4	50 25	75%
Special schools & PRUs	7	43 29	71%
Fostering & adoption	5	40 60	40%
Children's homes	4	50 50	50%

## Safeguarding and looked after children inspections, including unannounced inspections and serious case reviews

	Area for priority Action:	No
Annual unannounced referral and assessment (safeguarding) inspection	04/06/2010	No
Three-yearly inspection of safeguarding	n/a	n/a
Three-yearly inspection of services for looked after children	n/a	n/a
Serious Case Reviews conducted adequately or better	01/04/07 - 23/09/10	0 out of 0
Joint Area Review	n/a	Looked after Children n/a
Private Fostering Arrangements	n/a	Safeguarding n/a
	Sep '08	Good

## National Indicator Set

	Count of indicators with data		% of indicators in upper/upper middle/ lower middle/lower quartiles			Comparison with most appropriate average		
	Data Available	Total NIS	Above	In line	Below	Above	In line	Below
1. Being healthy	11	12	45	27	18	4	6	1
2. Staying safe	13	14	46	23	23	3	7	3
3. Enjoying and achieving	10	59	40	20	30	2	5	3
4. Making a positive contribution	10	15	40	10	30	1	7	2
5. Achieving economic well-being	8	11	25	38		0	6	2

## Children's Services Assessment

2009	Performs Well
2010	Performs Adequately

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