



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET 14 JUNE 2005

Report of the Director of Education

Inspection of the Youth Service

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To note the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection of the Youth Service.
- 1.2 To approve the post-inspection action plan.
- 1.3 To refer the report and the action plan to the Education Commission, prior to submission to Full Council.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Youth Service was inspected by Ofsted in the week beginning 24 January 2005. This report summarises the outcomes of that inspection and sets out actions for improvements.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) conducts inspections of local authority youth services for young people aged up to 16 under section 38 of the Education Act 1997. For young people aged 16-19 the inspection remit is provided by section 61(2) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.
- 3.2 During the inspection week five inspectors carried out direct observation of a sample of youth work in a range of settings. Young people accompanied inspectors on five occasions. Discussions were held with senior officers, managers, partners of the service and documentation was scrutinised. Inspectors also observed youth work identified by the service as representing good practice.

3.3 Under the inspection framework inspectors make judgements against three key aspects:

Key aspect 1: standards of young people's achievements, and quality of youth work practice

Key aspect 2: quality of curriculum and resources

Key aspect 3: strategic and operational leadership and management.

3.4 The inspectors' judgements are based on the following scale:

Very good – 1 Good – 2 Adequate – 3 Inadequate – 4

3.5 Ofsted makes an overall judgement for effectiveness and value for money and found that:

"Derby City Council provides a **good** Youth Service, where the strengths of the Service clearly outweigh the weaknesses. The effective use and management of resources combined with high levels of achievement by young people, and the good quality of youth work practice represents **good** value for money."

3.6 They highlighted the following strengths:

- Young people's achievements are high and the quality of youth work practice is good
- Many vulnerable young people are acquiring crucial skills for independent living and lifelong learning
- Workers have a good understanding of the needs of young people
- Senior managers set a clear strategic direction for the Service
- The Council's strong commitment to equality and social inclusion is fully reflected in the priority the Service gives to supporting vulnerable young people
- Strong and well established partnership working helps the Service to meet the needs of a very wide range of young people.

3.7 The key aspect inspection grades were:

Key aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	2
	Quality of youth work practice	2
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	3
3	Strategic and operational leadership and management	2

3.8 To put this in context, over the past 12 months Ofsted has inspected 40 Youth Services. Derby is one of only eight services that has received a good or very good grade for effectiveness, and one of only six which has received a good or very good grade for value for money.

3.9 Inevitably, there were some weaknesses which they summarised as:

“Young people’s involvement in democratic processes and in planning and reviewing their learning are underdeveloped. Aspects of the curriculum are uncoordinated and there is generally poor curriculum management in open access provision. Some management roles and responsibilities lack clarity and contribute to a lack of co-ordination and consistency in service delivery. Quality assurance arrangements are not used sufficiently to inform and develop practice.”

3.10 Ofsted recommended that the Council should:

- Enable young people to play a more active part in democratic and decision-making procedures and to plan and review their learning
- Improve the co-ordination and overall management of the curriculum
- Strengthen and clarify the management structure to ensure greater consistency of provision
- Make more effective use of quality assurance procedures.

3.11 The Youth Service has prepared the attached action plan which must be submitted to the Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) by 16 August 2005. The full inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/servicereports/687.htm>

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4. The Youth Service is required to submit a post-inspection action plan.

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Background papers:	Inspection Report – Derby City Youth Service
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Draft YS Action Plan

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. The creation of an additional 2.5 FTE posts to address capacity issues would require identification of sources of funding. This will be considered in this year's budget planning exercise. There may be some scope for re-designating existing budgets.

Legal

2. Section 38 of the Education Act 1997 requires that local authority Youth Service provision for under-16s is inspected by Ofsted whilst section 61(2) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 provides for the inspection of services for young people aged 16 to 19.

Personnel

3. The inspection identified the need to create an additional 2.5 FTE posts to provide the capacity to address key issues relating to curriculum co-ordination, participation and the co-ordination and consistency of service delivery.

Equalities impact

4. The report highlights the priority the service gives to supporting vulnerable young people, reflecting the Council's commitment to equality and social inclusion.

Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change

5. The report links to the following of the Council's corporate objectives:
 - A stimulating and high quality learning environment
 - Healthy, safe and independent communities
 - A lively energetic cultural life
 - A shared commitment to regenerating our communities.

DERBY CITY COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICE

DRAFT OFSTED ACTION PLAN

KEY ASPECT 1 - STANDARDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACHIEVEMENT

The Inspection Report highlights the following strengths of the Youth Service, relating to young people's achievements.

- Standards of young people's achievements are high overall
- Many young people develop practical skills, and increase their understanding of a range of issues affecting their lives
- Most young people display tolerance and sensitivity towards others
- Many improve their self-esteem as a result of their involvement in youth provision

Weaknesses

The following two related areas of weakness were identified.

- Under-developed participation in decision making and democratic processes
- Insufficient involvement of young people in planning and reviewing their learning

In Key Aspect 3, Operational and Strategic Leadership and Management, a further related weakness was identified:

- Young people on the whole have very little involvement in aspects of the service management or quality assurance.

For the purposes of this action plan, it is appropriate to link all three areas of weaknesses.

Service Observations

The lack of structured involvement in the Service by young people is recognised as a key weakness. Whilst most projects regularly involve young people in programme planning, there is a distinct lack of evidence to back this up, indicating a gap in the Service's Quality Assurance (Q.A.) procedures. These two issues result in the following challenge for the Service.

How can the Service enable young people to play an active role in developing and evaluating the work of the Service?

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KEY ASPECT 1 – STANDARDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACHIEVEMENT

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	OUTCOMES
Young people's active involvement in the decision making processes of the Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a participation worker post to co-ordinate young people's involvement (key 2006/07 budget pressure) Establish a uniform structure of young people's forums in each project Hold an annual meeting of users of the Service to seek their views on service delivery and priorities 	<p>Sept 2006</p> <p>June 2006</p> <p>March 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective structure of participation established Young people actively involved in setting priorities Improved co-ordination of young people's involvement
Improve young people's involvement in the planning and reviewing of their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Q A forms to enable staff to gather information about young people's active involvement in planning and reviewing their learning 	June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate evidence collected More effective use made of the evidence to improve learning
Ensure young people's involvement in the Service's Quality Assurance procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train up to six young people to become members of the Service's Internal Inspecting Team 	March 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people play a key role in improving standards Young people acquire new skills

KEY ASPECT 1 – STANDARDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE’S ACHIEVEMENT

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	OUTCOMES
Improve young people’s leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish voluntary senior helper posts within Service projects• Develop Senior Helper’s Training Course	May 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young people develop leadership and youth work skills• Young people used as peer mentors• Young people access further training

Key Aspect 1 - Quality of Youth Work Practice

The following strengths were highlighted within the Report:

- The standard of youth work practice is good
- The best sessions are well planned and take account of individual needs and learning styles
- Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young people with whom they work
- In many cases staff use their sound knowledge of local agencies to enable young people to have access to additional opportunities or specialist sources of information and support

Weaknesses

The report identified the following area of weakness:

- Some sessions lacked focus and structure, and workers failed to generate the interest and engagement of young people

Service Observations

The Service's pre-inspection also highlighted issues of a lack of focus and structure to sessions in a small number of projects. However, for many open access projects, the poor behaviour of a small group of members has often forced staff to concentrate on 'policing' rather than programme development

It is acknowledged that staff at various levels of the Service need to understand their own specific role, in ensuring programmes are both stimulating and relevant to the needs of young people.

It should also be recognised that this issue will also be addressed through actions undertaken within the curriculum and provision section.

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KEY ASPECT 1 – QUALITY OF YOUTH WORK PRACTICE

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	OUTCOMES
Improve the quality of youth work practice, to generate the interest and engagement of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify projects displaying weak youth work practice 	Sept 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain a clear picture of projects requiring additional support
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement project improvement guidelines for targeted projects 	Oct 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active involvement of staff in identifying solutions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish project improvement worker posts to support open access provision 	Dec 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of high quality practitioner posts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement project improvement training across the Service 	April 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities Improvement in the quality of youth work practice Improved outcomes for young people

KEY ASPECT 2 - QUALITY OF CURRICULUM AND PROVISION

Strengths

The Inspection Report highlighted the following areas of strengths. The Service:

- Offers a broad curriculum in a wide range of settings, including detached work, mobile provision, schools, colleges and youth centres
- Has clearly stated objectives reflecting national and local priorities
- Is highly committed to promoting equal opportunities, valuing diversity and tackling social exclusion
- Benefits from a stable, enthusiastic and experienced work force

Weaknesses

The report highlighted the following areas of weakness:

- Some aspects of the curriculum are unco-ordinated
- Poor curriculum management in open access provision
- Many premises do not provide a sufficiently attractive or stimulating environment for youth work

Service Observations

It is fair to state that the co-ordination of curriculum across the Service was identified as the main weakness in the Service. This weakness was further exacerbated by the absence of a Curriculum Framework that could effectively monitor and evaluate the distance travelled by young people.

Shortcomings in the Q.A. systems identified in other areas of the report, also link to weaknesses in the curriculum.

There is a need to describe to Service users, their curriculum entitlement and ensure that at whatever point they access the Service, young people are aware of their entitlement and can, if they wish, take advantage of the opportunities that the Service provides

The weakness identified in open access provision is partly due to the dependency the Service places on part-time staff, and the lack of planning time staff are allocated to plan good quality programmes.

It should however be noted that in many open access settings behaviour management is the key concern of staff, and we feel that more recognition is due to staff for working hard to improve behaviour. The report highlights this issue in Key Aspect 1 “The behaviour of a small minority, principally in open access provision, is oppressive and threatening to others.”

The quality of some premises used by the Service is poor. The Authority has given the Service good support to improve free-standing centres. Only one centre would be deemed inadequate, primarily because of its basic construction and age.

Many of the problems experienced by the Service exists in rented premises, including schools and community centres. Decisions may need to be made about other existing venues based upon suitability, safety and cost.

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KEY ASPECT 2 – QUALITY OF CURRICULUM AND PROVISION

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	OUTCOMES
Improve the co-ordination of the curriculum across the Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Senior Curriculum Co-ordinator post – key budget pressure 2006/07 Produce curriculum framework document 	<p>April 2006</p> <p>Sept 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved co-ordination of the curriculum Improved quality of project programmes Better assessment of young people's outcomes
Improve curriculum management in open access provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link the curriculum framework to the establishment of the Project Improvement Officer posts Redesignate Senior Management post to co-ordinate detached youth work <p>Establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Newsletter A Young People's Entitlement statement Annual Calendar of Events High Quality Website Database of curriculum resources and training support 	<p>Sept 2006</p> <p>March 2006</p> <p>Sept 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More consistent and high quality programmes across the Service More effective deployment of detached staff Improved sharing of good practice across the Service Improved access to curriculum resources Better curriculum support to part-time staff Highlight staff and young people's achievements Young people understand their entitlement

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KEY ASPECT 2 – QUALITY OF CURRICULUM AND PROVISION

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	OUTCOMES
Improve the quality of premises to provide attractive and stimulating environments for youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual review of buildings in conjunction with the Asset Management Team• Develop building improvement plans for each freestanding Youth Service building• Seek a wide range of capital resources to finance building improvements	April 2006 - 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building refurbishment plan put in place• Improved learning environments• Additional funding brought into the Service• Improved sustainability of premises

KEY ASPECT 3 - OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Strengths

The Inspection Report highlighted the following strengths within Key Aspect 3:

- Strategic leadership and management of the Service are good
- The authority has a strong commitment to equality and inclusion
- Partnership working is strong, well established and particularly effective in meeting the needs of vulnerable, disadvantaged and hard to reach young people

Weaknesses

The weaknesses identified within Key Aspect 3 are:

- There is inadequate involvement of young people in management, delivery and evaluation
- Quality Assurance arrangements are not used sufficiently to inform and develop practice
- Some management roles and responsibilities lack clarity and contribute to a lack of co-ordination and consistency in service delivery.

Service Observations

The issue of young people's involvement and under developed quality assurance arrangement have been addressed in Key Aspect 1.

There is a need to develop systems for more effective use of information collected through Q.A. systems

The issue of insufficient, co-ordinated and consistent approach to service delivery has not been clearly explained within the report.

The Service's interpretation centres on the number of workers, other than Team Leaders, that the Head of Service and Deputy Head of Service line manage. Some workers are seen outside of Youth Teams which presents problems of communication and isolation.

This in part is due to a capacity issue at Team Leader level, where there is a need to expand the management structure to establish either an additional Team Leader post or Youth Officer post.

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KEY ASPECT 3 – OPERATIONAL AND STATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	OUTCOMES
Improve Quality Assurance arrangements to better inform and develop practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue specific targets to all projects relating to the Service's Best Value Indicators 	Sept 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects issued with achievable targets • Staff understand their individual contributions to Service targets • Service targets resources more effectively • Project Development Plans based on good data analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review participation data to ensure effective targeting of young people 	Oct 2005	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce six-monthly report for data analysis 	Oct 2005	

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KEY ASPECT 3 – OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	OUTCOMES
Clarify Senior Management roles within the Service to improve the co-ordination and consistency of Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing roles and responsibilities of Senior Management Team Establish new Team Leader post (Key budget pressure 2006/07) 	<p>Dec 2005</p> <p>April 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve strategic capacity of Head and Deputy Head of Service Reduce workload pressures within Senior Management Team Improved co-ordination of Service delivery Senior Workers' roles are less complicated

Financial Implications

The Ofsted Report has made some clear recommendations relating to curriculum co-ordination, participation and the co-ordination and consistency of service delivery.

All three are gaps in the Service's present capacity, and require either additional funding or a significant rationalisation of existing resources and provision.

The additional resource requirements are 1.5 JNC Level 3 workers and one JNC Level 2 worker.

Financially this equates to:

1.5 FTE JNC Level 3 (points 4 – 7)	56,879
1 FTE JNC Level 2 (points 3 – 11)	30,272
TOTAL	£87,151

CONCLUSIONS

The Service is extremely pleased with the judgements contained within the Ofsted Inspection Report. The strengths and weaknesses highlighted directly relate to the Service's own Self Assessment Report (SAR) produced prior to the Inspection taking place.

The Lead Inspector underlined at his formal feedback on 4 February, 'the Service knows itself very well'.

At a recent post inspection staff conference there was a strong commitment to address the weaknesses within the Service, to continue to raise the quality of youth work within the city.

The majority of actions identified in this plan are achievable within existing budget limits. The key weakness in curriculum co-ordination and young people's participation does however require additional investment, which has been identified as a future budget pressure.

The City Council, through its elected members and senior officers, have been rightly praised for ensuring the Youth Service has a strong strategic position within the Authority. We feel the actions identified above will reinforce that position.

David Finn
Head of Youth Services

24 May 2005