

JAR NEWS

Joint Area Review 2006

Issue 7

Congratulations!

Following months of scrutiny by a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors, who met many of you and spent three weeks in Gateshead, the final report of the Joint Area Review of children's services in Gateshead has been published.

It's official – Gateshead is a "good" place for children and young people. Services work well together, with a strong ethos of partnership, and the outcomes for children and young people are good. The inspectors found and reported on many areas of good or very good practice, and found very few areas where improvements were needed. This is a tremendous achievement, by our children and young people and by staff in many different services and agencies working in the Borough, and everyone is to be congratulated for all their hard work and commitment. Please share this news with as wide a group of people as possible.

The inspectors make their judgements across 12 different areas, and can award grades on a four point scale:

- 4 = excellent/outstanding
- 3 = good
- 2 = adequate
- 1 = inadequate

The 12 different judgement areas and the grades awarded are:

	Local services overall	Council services	Health services
Being Healthy	3		
Staying safe	3		
Enjoying and achieving	3		
Making a positive contribution	3		
Achieving economic wellbeing	3		
Service management	3		
Capacity to improve	3	3	
Children's services		3	
The education service		3	
The social care services for children		3	
The health service for children			3

Continued overleaf

The recommendations for action are as follows:

For immediate action

- None

For action over the next six months

- The council and partners should develop clear and robust procedures for measuring value for money in all activities related to improving provision for children and young people
- The council should ensure that personal educational plans for looked after children are a significant part of their educational planning and that rates of completed plans improve

For action in the longer term

- The council should ensure that all young people leaving care are provided with sufficient choice of accommodation
- The council and its partners should further develop the 14-19 vocational curriculum to ensure all young people have good access to a range of career options
- The council should ensure that:
 - all plans clearly specify targets, timescales, accountabilities and resource implications
 - all financial arrangements with external partners, whether through contracts or grant aid, specify clearly the requirements of the Council in such a way that their delivery is capable of being monitored

A copy of the full JAR report is attached for those receiving this report by e-mail. Pages 1-10 are a Summary version, for those wanting a quick overview. **The report can also be found at www.gatesheadgrid.org/jar using the username and password: gateshead jar**

Gateshead's Youth Service was also inspected by OFSTED at the same time as the JAR inspection, and is the subject of a separate report that has also been published. The grades awarded are:

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

Areas of particular strength are:

- Many young people particularly in targeted provision are making good progress
- There is good provision to meet the needs of some vulnerable, excluded and minority group
- Strong partnerships with the voluntary and community sector effectively extended and enhance provision
- The service has clear sense of purpose and direction

Areas for development are:

- A significant proportion of provision offers insufficient challenge
- Young people's involvement in the design, delivery and quality assurance of provision is underdeveloped
- The management and co-ordination of the curriculum is weak
- The collection, interpretation and analysis of the data needed to inform planning is insufficiently robust
- Young people's involvement in reviewing and recording their progress is inconsistent

The full report can also be found at the website opposite.

The Youth Offending Team was also inspected earlier this year – this report has not yet been published.

In conclusion, Gateshead's Director of Children's Services, Maggie Atkinson, has the following message for all those who work with our children and young people:

I want to thank everybody for all the hard work done not only for this JAR exercise but every day, in schools, early years settings, social care teams, youth and community services across a great range of users and clients, Health Service teams and the YOT.

We can be proud of these grades, because they reflect our standard of practice and partnership. We can be prouder still of all we do that contributes to our standing, and that rarely gets published or recorded. We are now on a really sound foundation, and can in the coming year or more look towards still stronger joint working, integration and partnership.

Many thanks to all concerned, and well done!

**Contact the JAR core team
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JAR Weblog

We have created a weblog for the JAR which contains useful documents and information.

You can access the weblog at: **www.gatesheadgrid.org/jar**

The username and password is: **gatesheadjar**