

Brighton & Hove City Council

For general release

Meeting: Children, Families and Schools Sub Committee
Education Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Date: Monday 1 December 2003
Tuesday 2 December 2003

Report of: Director of Children, Families and Schools

Subject: Report on preparations for the Ofsted/SSI Inspections and the required self-evaluation

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report outlines the preparations that have been made for the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) Inspections in Spring 2004. The report focuses on the self-evaluation of Services which has been carried out as part of this process.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

3. Information/Background

3.1 In July 2003 the Director was notified that Children, Families and Schools Services would be subject to Ofsted and SSI Inspections in Spring 2004. It should be noted that although these are the biggest inspections, they are two of the five inspections due to be carried out in spring 2004. The other three are: Area Inspection of 14-19 provision and National Care Standards Inspections of the Adoption and Fostering Services. This report is focused on the Ofsted/SSI Inspections.

3.2 Ofsted have introduced a new inspection framework from January 2004 against which the Services will be inspected. Although Ofsted and SSI operate under two separate legislative frameworks this will be a joint inspection. This means that there will be a joint judgement on common areas across CFS, including corporate planning, leadership by elected members and senior officers, funding arrangements and separate judgements on other areas such as for Ofsted the strategy for school improvement; and for SSI referral and

initial response systems. A series of briefing notes have been prepared for all stakeholders that detail the inspection process these have been circulated to Councillors. It is not intended to repeat the briefing information in this report but to focus on the outcome of the self-evaluation against the Ofsted/SSI inspection criteria and judgements. A copy of the full analysis and self evaluation is in the Members Library and relevant sections are attached as appendices.

4. Performance

- 4.1 The inspections will result in two separate reports but the joint aspects of the inspections will have exactly the same text in both of the reports. See appendix 1 (part B Corporate Strategy) which is our self-evaluation of this area.
- 4.2 An important aspect of the new Ofsted framework (as for schools) is self-evaluation. CFS managers have undertaken a detailed analysis of performance in each service area and prepared an evidence base against the criteria. The inspections are being viewed in a positive way and are seen as being a helpful opportunity to review and evaluate our work and improve outcomes for children and young people. The structure of the self-evaluation is outlined below in paragraph 5.

5. Ofsted Self Evaluation

- 5.1 The Ofsted self evaluation is carried out in five blocks against key criteria. The five blocks are:
 - 1. Corporate Strategy and Leadership of Educational Support for Children and Young People
 - 2. Strategy for Education and Its Implementation
 - 3. Support to Improve Education in Schools
 - 4. Strategy for Special Educational Needs
 - 5. Strategy for Social Inclusion
- 5.2 The self-evaluation includes progress since the last Ofsted Inspection in 2000 and current performance against the criteria. In the evaluation a seven point Ofsted scoring system has been used by managers for each criteria where 1 is the highest score and 7 the lowest. These have been applied as follows:
 - 1. Very good
 - 2. Good
 - 3. Satisfactory, few areas of major weakness
 - 4. Satisfactory, strengths outweigh weaknesses
 - 5. Unsatisfactory, weaknesses outweigh strengths
 - 6. Poor, significant weaknesses
 - 7. Very poor, fails to provide effective support to schools

- 5.3 The seven point grading system is then used to give an overall grade. The self-evaluation has resulted in CFS being graded overall as 2 with the highest score of 1 noted in the work of the early years, Key Stage 3, as well as in training and development and the effectiveness of the LEA in combating racism. Scores of 4 have been recorded in special educational needs (value for money) and asset management planning. There are no areas scored as 5 or below.
- 5.4 A document search has been carried out which indicates that we comply with the requirements in all areas. A detailed evidence base has been collected to support the self-evaluation.
- 5.5 The Ofsted Inspection team leader is Rosemary Matthews, her deputy is Linda Kelsey and the team will include members from the Audit Commission. A detailed financial analysis has also been reported to Ofsted for the inspection.

6. SSI Inspection

- 6.1 Social care services will be inspected against six key standards the headlines are included below:
- 1. National priorities and Strategic Objectives:** The council is working corporately and with other agencies to ensure the delivery of national priorities for social care, the national Personal Social Services objectives and their own local strategic objectives.
 - 2. Effectiveness of Service Delivery and Outcomes:** Children and their families receive responsive services which promote children's life chances.
 - 3. Quality of Services for Users and Carers:** Children and their families benefit from appropriate referral and assessment processes, planning and review arrangements which focus on the full range of needs of the child.
 - 4. Fair access:** Social services provides a fair, consistent and inclusive service.
 - 5. Cost and Efficiency:** Social services commissions and delivers services to clear standards covering both quality and costs by the most effective, economic and efficient means available.
 - 6. Management and Resources:** Social services has management and accountability structures that commission and provide safe and effective services.
- 6.2 As social care services were inspected within the last year and the SSI was provided with a detailed self-audit following the Climbe Inquiry in May 2003, less information has been requested prior to the fieldwork period of the inspection. The inspection of child protection services judged 'some children to be well served, with uncertain prospects' while the Climbe self-audit outcome was that 'some children were being well served, with promising prospects'. The SSI inspectors will also be provided with the full Ofsted self-evaluation as much of the information that relates to the work of the Directorate is equally relevant to social care functions.
- 6.3 The major focus of the SSI inspection is on the operational casework and they have already selected 100 service-users who will receive a questionnaire and will be asked to comment fully on the services that they have received from the

Directorate. From this 100, 10 families have been chosen for more detailed examination which will involve a full review of the case file, interviews with the child, key family members and their current carers. They will also interview the social workers and managers for these families.

- 6.4 The SSI inspection will be led by Steve Hart who was involved in the child protection SSI inspection in November 2002, he will be accompanied by two other inspectors who have not yet been identified.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The self-assessment contains an LEA statement (Section C) (Appendix 2) which answers four key questions:
1. What contribution is education expected to make to the achievement of Corporate Priorities?
 2. What progress has been made since the last inspection?
 3. How effective is the LEA?
 4. What still needs to be done and does the LEA have the capacity to improve these?
- 7.2 The statement summarises the self-assessment, sets out the Directorate's overall strategy for improvement and progress since the last inspection. It provides a summary grade of 2 for the overall effectiveness of the LEA. The Directorate has concluded from the self evaluation and scrutiny of evidence that against the three core judgements it has made very good progress since the last inspection and has substantial capacity for further improvement and is therefore a very effective LEA overall. This is our self-evaluation.