

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

8 September 2011



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Adoption Inspection Report

Ofsted spent a week from the 6 June undertaking an inspection of the Plymouth Adoption Agency. The service was last inspected in December 2008 and was rated as Good.

Since 2008 there have been many changes in the service and the number of adoptions have increased substantially and in 2009/10 and 10/11 there were over 40 children adopted from care. In April 2011 there were new National Minimum Standards introduced and the government continues to promote adoption as a positive option for children and young people who are unable to remain in their birth family.

The recent Ofsted inspection rated the Adoption Agency as 'Outstanding' which is the highest rating achievable. This was the result of a great deal of work across all services but in particular the Adoption teams and the Children in care service.

The inspectors were particularly impressed by the work of the Adoption service to ensure that young people do not 'drift' in the care system. When adoption is identified as the plan a positive match with prospective adopters is made in a timely way and the service is in the top quartile in the country for meeting the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) allowing 12 months from the plan for adoption to adoption order.

The inspectors during the week spoke with a variety of people including several adopters, a birth parent, adult adoptees and many Plymouth city council social worker and employees. The work with adult adoptees who are wishing to trace their birth families was recognised as being of a high standard.

There was one recommendation for improvement in relation to the timescales under the new minimum standard where prospective adopters should be approved within eight months of their application. On average this was taking 10 months but since the inspection new processes have been introduced to seek to address the shortfall.

The adoption service continues to have a high volume of work and the expectation is that the numbers placed for adoption in the coming year will remain at a high level.

The service continues to recruit adopters especially of older children and sibling groups and the service remains committed to provide an 'outstanding service' to enable Plymouth children and young people in care to secure permanency

Anne Osborne

Service Manager

Permanency and Placements

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