

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
Textphone 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 020 7421 6666
Direct F 020 7421 5633
Juliet.Winstanley@ofsted.gov.uk



9 December 2010

Mr Paul Robinson
Director of Education
London Borough of Wandsworth
Third Floor, Town Hall Extension
Wandsworth High Street
London
SW18 2PU

Dear Mr Robinson

Annual children's services assessment

Ofsted guidance published in July 2010 explains that the annual assessment of children's services is derived from the performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. This performance profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the local authority has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant indicators in the National Indicator Set (NIS).

In reaching the assessment of children's services, Ofsted has taken account of all inspected and regulated services for children and young people, arrangements for making sure children are safe and stay safe and performance against national measures. More weight has been given to the outcomes of Ofsted's inspections and regulatory visits (Blocks A and B in the performance profile).

The annual assessment derives from a four point scale:

4	Performs excellently	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
3	Performs well	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements
2	Performs adequately	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements
1	Performs poorly	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements

Within each level there will be differing standards of provision. For example, an assessment of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, an assessment of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects. As in 2009, while the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's assessment, meeting or not meeting the minimum requirements alone does not define the grade. The assessment has involved the application of inspector judgement.

London Borough of Wandsworth children's services assessment 2010

Children's services assessment	Performs excellently (4)
---------------------------------------	---------------------------------

Children's services in the London Borough of Wandsworth perform excellently.

The large majority of nurseries and early years education in primary schools is good or better. The quality of childminder and childcare settings is improving rapidly and is now good. Primary schools are mostly good or better and none are inadequate. Schools and services for children and young people whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are at least good, none are inadequate and seven of the eight local authority special schools are outstanding. The effectiveness of local authority secondary schools is improving well and six out of 11 have now been judged to be good or better. The academy is outstanding for overall effectiveness. The large majority of provision after the age of 16 is good or better with a good general further education college and an outstanding sixth form college.

A recent unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services found strengths and areas for development but none requiring priority action.

Performance against the very large majority of national measures is similar to, or better than, averages for similar areas or England. Five- and 11-year-olds achieve much higher standards than elsewhere and young people do better at the age of 19. Standards achieved by 16-year-olds in 2009 were at the average for similar areas and provisional data for 2010 suggest significant improvement. Children and young people from families with low incomes do better than elsewhere at all ages and attainment gaps are narrowing. Children and young people with special educational needs also do better than in similar areas and much better than seen nationally. Attainment gaps are narrowing for 11-year-olds.

Key areas for further development

- Continue to improve the overall effectiveness of secondary schools.

Outcomes for children and young people

Promoting healthy lifestyles is a key priority for the local authority and inspections report settings, services and institutions are consistently good at doing so. Good progress has been made in encouraging schools to take part in the National Healthy Schools Programme. The number of mothers choosing to breast-feed their babies is high. Fewer young children are overweight than in similar parts of the country and rates are reducing. Four out of five children now take part in sport regularly and the number is improving. Children and young people express a high level of satisfaction with the parks and play areas provided for them. The number of young women under the age of 18 who become pregnant is reducing. Services are increasingly responsive to children and young people's emotional and mental health needs.

The recent unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services found effective partnership working and confirmed that social workers take effective action where there is concern about children's safety. Schools, colleges and inspected services are consistently very effective in putting in place arrangements to help children stay safe. Actions to keep children and people safe in their communities are having an impact. Recent data show numbers of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents have reduced considerably. Average numbers of children are admitted to hospital as a result of deliberate or accidental injuries but this number reduced a little in 2008/09. Slightly fewer children than average report being bullied.

With the exception of secondary schools, Ofsted inspections have found services and settings are at least good and mostly outstanding at helping children achieve and enjoy their learning. Child carers have improved in this respect since the 2009 assessment. Children do very well in their early years and standards achieved by five- and 11-year-olds are well above average. The local authority has been very successful in reducing the number of primary schools not achieving the minimum standards of pupil performance since 2007, although three remain. Despite fewer than average secondary schools being good or better, provisional data for 2010 indicate that there are no secondary schools failing to achieve the minimum standard for pupil performance. Most young people make good progress and test results for 16-year-olds are improving rapidly. Very good progress is being made in improving outcomes for children and young people from low-income families. The difference in levels of attainment between this group and others is much smaller than elsewhere for 11- and 16-year-olds and gaps are closing. Children and young people with special educational needs do well and 11-year-olds are beginning to catch up with their peers. Numbers of secondary school age pupils who are often absent from school are broadly average but reducing quickly. Behaviour in secondary schools reflects similar areas and has improved considerably in recent years.

The support provided by services to help children and young people make a contribution to their community is good or better across services, with the exception of the local authority adoption agency where it is satisfactory. Fewer young people are breaking the law and re-offending rates are the same as for similar areas. Support provided by the local authority has ensured that more young people who have offended than average are working or in education or training, and almost all now have suitable places to live. Numbers of children and young people permanently excluded from school are reducing well, although there is still more to be done.

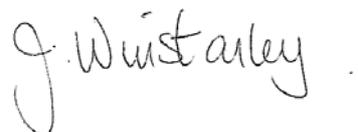
Young people receive good support to help them gain the skills they need for working life. The number achieving GCSE or equivalent qualifications or higher level qualifications by the time they are age 19 are good and improving, with significantly more young people in education, work or training as a result of local authority initiatives. Young people from families with low incomes do very well and the gaps between them and their peers in the borough are closing. Care leavers are well supported, have suitable places to live and high numbers are in education, training or work.

Prospects for improvement

Most outcomes are improving. Comprehensive plans for improving the quality of secondary schools and ensuring they work collaboratively are being implemented. Analyses of local needs and reviews of progress are detailed and comprehensive. Data are well used for planning purposes. Careful attention is paid to securing the views of service users and, in particular, vulnerable groups and parents who use children's centres. The Children and Young People's Plan is clear in its priorities for further improvement. There is a strong emphasis on promoting equality, on reducing the effects of child poverty and on closing the gaps between different groups of children and young people. Sound arrangements are in place for targeting resources to achieve set goals and ensure value for money. A recent unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services found effective partnership working, which ensures prompt action to protect children. A need at times for clearer recording of decisions was also identified. Support provided by the local authority is very effective in driving up standards in schools.

This children's services assessment is provided in accordance with section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment