

9 December 2009

Mr Nick Whitfield
Director of Education and Children's Services
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Regal House
London Road
Twickenham
London
TW1 3QB

Dear Mr Whitfield

Children's services annual rating

Ofsted guidance published in May 2009 explained that the annual rating would derive from a new performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. This profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the council has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant *Every Child Matters* indicators in the new National Indicator Set (NIS).

In considering the evidence in the profile to determine the children's services rating for 2009 it has become clear that the continuing gaps in the data are significant, particularly those relating to aspects of social care and services for Looked After Children. Ofsted has decided therefore to use 2009 as a transitional year easing into the full application of the new system in 2010. As a consequence, although the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's rating, we have interpreted the performance bands with flexibility and exercised professional judgement with caution.

The annual rating 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, a rating of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, a rating of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects.

Children's services rating 2009

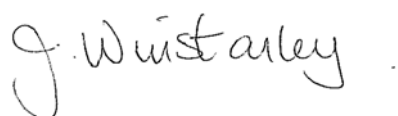
Children's services rating	Performs excellently (4)
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Children's services in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames perform excellently.

The overall effectiveness of a very large majority of inspected and regulated services and settings is good or better. The proportion of good or better provision in schools of different types and day care settings for very young children is consistently higher than seen nationally or in similar areas, with the exception of secondary schools which are satisfactory overall although none are inadequate. The joint area review in December 2007 found provision for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults to be outstanding and similarly so services for looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable, the fostering agency, adoption agency and private fostering arrangements are good or better. One special school is good and one is outstanding.

Performance against a very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is better than or in line with similar areas or the position nationally. Assessments of the needs of children and young people referred to social care services are completed in a timely fashion. Children do particularly well by the ages of five and 11, and young people's achievement at age 16 is above the national average although below that for similar areas. The gaps in achievement between those from low income families and others are at least the same as, and mostly narrower than, observed in similar areas. By age 16 the difference in achievement between those with special educational needs who are following the national curriculum and their peers is significantly less than in similar areas. Achievement of level 3 qualifications by age 19 is higher than seen nationally and the gap between those from low income families and their peers is narrower. More young people from low income families progress to higher education than in similar areas.

The children's services rating is provided for the purpose of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The rating of local authority children's services will contribute significantly to the managing performance theme of each local authority's Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) organisational assessment and therefore to the score for each local authority overall.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA