

Joint area review

**London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Children's
Services Authority Area**

Review of services for children and young people

Audit Commission
Healthcare Commission
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Probation
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Introduction

1. The 2006 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) for the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames judged the council's children's services as good and its capacity to improve as good.
2. This report assesses the contribution of local services in ensuring the following for children and young people:
 - effective care for those at risk or requiring safeguarding
 - the best possible outcomes for those who are looked after
 - the best possible outcomes for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
3. The following investigations were also carried out:
 - the effectiveness of school improvement strategies on raising achievement
 - the quality of service provided and outcomes achieved by users of post-16 provision
 - the quality of service provided and outcomes achieved by users of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Context

4. Richmond upon Thames is a generally affluent borough located in the south west of London. It has high employment rates, although there are pockets of relative deprivation. The total population is estimated to be 186,300, with 23% in the 0 to 19 age group. The overall population is rising, but the rate of growth is the second lowest in London over the last 10 years. The exception is the rate of growth in the 16-18 population, which is the highest in London. The Black and minority ethnic population is dispersed across all 18 wards of the borough and comprises 30.3% of the total, of whom 9.0% are non-white. However, five wards have significant populations of non-white, Black and minority ethnic children and young people, ranging between 15% and 22% of the population totals. Three of those wards have relatively high deprivation as shown by the 2004 Indices of Multiple Deprivation.
5. Children's social care services are provided through 54 foster carers who provide a total of 73 placements and nine respite placements. There are 43 in-house carers accounting for 58 placements and the respite care provision. The remaining 11 foster carers, providing 15 placements, are contracted through independent fostering agencies. There are no residential children's homes and, when needed, placements are made by contracting with external providers. There are two family Contact and Assessment Centres and eight field social

work teams. Other specialist social work posts and services are located in established multi-disciplinary and integrated teams, such as the Adolescent Resource Team and the Youth Offending Team. There are 53 children on the child protection register and 84 looked after children and young people.

6. Pre-16 education is provided by:

- 13 nursery classes and one nursery school providing 920 places. A further 103 settings (that is, playgroups, full day care and nursery units in independent schools) provide 2,750 nursery education places for three and four year olds
- one designated children's centre increasing to 12 by 2010
- 41 primary schools
- eight secondary schools
- two special schools and 12 designated special (school) units within mainstream provision and one pupil referral unit.

7. Post-16 education and training is provided by:

- one school for children with severe learning difficulties
- two colleges, although 58% of students access provision in a range of neighbouring areas
- six local work-based training providers in addition to national providers.

8. Entry to Employment provision is managed by Capital Workforce Development and NTS, which provide 72 and 36 places respectively.

9. Educational and recreational leisure time activities, including youth work, are provided by the council's education and children's services department in conjunction with a range of partners.

10. Adult and community learning are under the direction of the Local Learning Partnership. Richmond Adult Community College is the main provider, with family learning commissioned through a wide range of partnership organisations overseen by the Family Learning Forum.

11. Primary care is provided by the Richmond and Twickenham Primary Care Trust (PCT) and acute hospital services are provided by the Kingston Hospital NHS Trust and West Middlesex University Hospital. Mental health services are provided by the South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust (NHS).

12. There are no young offender institutions in the area.

Main Findings

13. The main findings of this joint area review are as follows:

- the arrangements for safeguarding children and young people are outstanding due to highly effective work and management by partners and the effective oversight of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- services for looked after children are also outstanding as a result of the high priority afforded to this group by members and officers of the council over recent years and the effectiveness of a range of targeted services to ensure that the life chances of all looked after children and young people are maximised
- services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are excellent. Children and young people benefit from packages of service designed to meet their specific needs and which enable them to contribute to their communities by promoting independence and achievement
- effective action has been taken to identify and tackle most areas of under-performance in the borough's schools. This, together with high aspirations for the success of students, has led to continuous improvement in standards across all key stages
- there has been similarly good progress in relation to the services and outcomes for young people in post-16 education and training. This progress is underpinned, and driven, by partners working well together to implement a well structured plan for 14–19 education and training
- CAMHS secure some good outcomes, particularly in relation to specialist, intensive and in-patient services, but the services' full effectiveness has been impeded by delays and disagreements between partners and the absence of an agreed and funded strategy
- while the youth service has benefited from significant investment over the last year, and performance has generally improved, significant challenges remain in securing sustained improvement in some aspects of operational management and the curriculum offer to young people.
- the Youth Offending Team has made considerable progress in meeting its performance targets.

Grades

4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate

	Local services overall
Safeguarding	4
Looked after children	4
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4
Service management	3
Capacity to improve	4

Recommendations

For immediate action

- The local partnership should ensure that an appropriate way is found to successfully disseminate the findings of this report to children and young people in the area.
- The Richmond and Twickenham PCT should complete the development of a comprehensive CAMHS strategy, which should include its commissioning priorities.

For action over the next six months

The local partnership should:

- improve outcomes further at Key Stage 4
- continue to broaden the range of options for those not wishing to stay in traditional education
- inform curriculum development for those in post-16 education through a coherent needs analysis
- continue the initial good work on mapping and promotion of 14–19 pathways
- put in place a senior management team for the youth service to address the curriculum and operational management issues raised in the Enhanced Youth Inspection report.

For action in the longer term

The local partnership should:

- improve the youth services' curriculum offer to young people.

Equality and diversity

14. Services are proactive in ensuring that all children and young people achieve their full potential. The partnership is targeting action towards five parts of the borough in a concerted effort to reduce the impact of comparative deprivation. There is a variety of outstanding opportunities for young people to participate and considerable progress has been made to ensure that traditionally hard-to-reach groups, such as Travellers, are engaged and supported. The gap in educational attainment between vulnerable groups and their peers has reduced significantly and the achievement of young people of Black and minority ethnic heritage and of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and improving. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls is reducing. Looked after children receive good support for their education and progress is monitored closely. Gifted and talented young people have good opportunities to extend their learning, for example through innovative mentoring programmes and challenging enrichment activities.

Safeguarding



15. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk or requiring safeguarding is outstanding.** Most children and young people in Richmond feel safe. Services are child-centred and driven strongly by their needs. Safeguarding is highly prioritised within all services to ensure that children are kept safe. The last APA reported that the council was making a good contribution towards ensuring that children were safe and that the LSCB had forged good links with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

16. In general, children and young people feel safe both living in and going to school in Richmond. There are a number of highly effective arrangements in place for consultation, and officers have a good level of understanding of the issues that concern children and young people and are appropriately responsive to them. In particular, the council's anti-bullying strategies are highly effective. The incidence of bullying is considered by young people to be low and prompt action is taken by teaching staff when this occurs, with support provided to victims. This includes pupils trained as peer mentors for those who have experienced bullying. Vulnerable children have enhanced their ability to

safeguard themselves through Keeping Safe training provided through schools, children's centres and other council settings. This topic is included in all parenting skills training, enabling parents to feel more confident in their ability to keep their children safe.

17. Safeguarding is well promoted by the LSCB and is integral to all areas of planning and strategic development. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has also established a number of sub-groups which lead on each of the key priorities identified in the Children and Young People's Plan. Partners are well represented on the LSCB and sub-groups and there is a strong sense of shared responsibility across all agencies and a 'safeguarding presence' in each. Arrangements for the LCSB have been further strengthened by the recent appointment of an independent Chair.

18. Children in need and their families have ready access to a wide range of high quality support services provided by partner agencies working in close collaboration. This extends to children who receive services from the Youth Offending Team where the use of the Common Assessment Framework is contributing to the close working relationships with specialist children's services. Partnership working is based on clear procedures and protocols and a common understanding of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. This contributes to lower numbers of both children on the child protection register and children looked after compared with similar authorities. There has been an increased awareness of the impact of domestic abuse on children. As a result, partners have taken effective and timely action to improve the services they provide to tackle domestic abuse, including the appointment of a specialist lead post in social care.

19. Children on the child protection register are safeguarded by highly effective inter-agency practice. All children on the register are allocated to a suitably qualified social worker. Written thresholds for intervention are clear and understood by partners and intervention is timely. The service is further strengthened by the establishment of specialist nursing and health visitor posts to provide specialist intervention and support in complex cases, and all schools have designated teachers for child protection. Children on the register receive regular social work visits in accordance with the requirements of their child protection plan. The quality of these plans is very good, with review case conferences and core group meetings always held within required timescales. These meetings are well attended by the professional staff involved and parents are always encouraged to attend and participate, and the opportunity is extended to older young people when this is appropriate.

20. An effective strategy has produced a stable and committed social care workforce, which is well supervised and supported, with a strong emphasis on staff development. This has enabled a good level of continuity to be provided to children and their families. These same attributes are also established within the Youth Offending Team. All appropriate staff from across the partnerships have a current Criminal Records Bureau check and a comprehensive child

protection training programme is well accessed by staff and volunteers across all of the partner agencies. The number of serious case reviews is low. The last review was undertaken in 2003, when the council responded appropriately and promptly to the recommendations.

21. The quality of assessments in Richmond is very high and performance in the completion of initial and core assessments has been improving consistently and is higher than in similar authorities. Assessments are thorough and timely and the quality has been further enhanced by additional and focused training. Robust managerial oversight and active performance management ensure that high quality is maintained. Managers are assisted in this task by the integrated children's system, which is now well established. The Common Assessment Framework is currently being piloted, with a project plan in place for implementation across the partnership. Children in Richmond benefit from competent assessment, which leads to effective planning and improved outcomes.

22. Complex family assessments are undertaken by family Contact and Assessment Centres. Assessments lead to a range of support services and parents speak highly of this support in promoting their parenting skills. These high quality assessments are also valued by the courts, which are thereby assisted in the difficult task of deciding whether or not some children can remain at home.

23. A good multi-agency focus ensures that children on the Traveller's site are safeguarded and this has improved both their engagement with education and their educational outcomes. An impressive level of trust has been achieved between residents of the site and professional staff working from the local primary school and also from the community centre which is based on the site. Education and other activities can be accessed at both of these venues, contributing to the social and emotional development of Traveller children. Finance has recently been identified for improvements to the site, which have been planned with the full involvement of residents.

24. Protocols are in place to safeguard missing children. A number of these specify inter-agency arrangements for dealing with missing children who are on the child protection register or looked after, and for those missing from their own homes. These work well.

25. The small numbers of Richmond children and young people who are sent to custody receive good levels of support that enable them to enter the community phase of their punishments with good arrangements with social care, health and Connexions services.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Highly effective partnership working across the agencies ensures children and young people are safeguarded</p> <p>Availability of a wide range of high quality support services for children in need and their families</p> <p>High quality of social care assessment.</p> <p>A competent, well-managed, enthusiastic and well-trained social care workforce.</p> <p>Social inclusion promoted through the service for the Traveller community.</p>	<p>There are no significant weaknesses.</p>

Looked after children and young people



26. **The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people is outstanding.** The 2006 APA reported on the good performance of services for looked after children. There is a continuing, very strong commitment across the partnership to looked after children, who are one of the key priority groups in the Children and Young People's Plan. Elected members take their corporate responsibility very seriously and are active supporters. Strong family support services have helped to reduce the number of looked after children to a level significantly lower than the national average and in similar authorities. This figure has reduced each year since 2000/01. All looked after children are allocated to a qualified social worker. Long-term placement stability is very good, and all those put forward for adoption are placed within the required timescales. Case files underline the rapid speed and the high quality of adoption arrangements. Fostering and adoption services are strong and adopters are very positive about the quality of support they receive after adoption, a service which is offered from the outset to all adopters within the borough, regardless of whether the children originate in Richmond.

27. Very good systems ensure that the health needs of looked after children are identified and can be met effectively. The multi-agency team, which includes a clinical psychologist, education staff and assigned specialist nurse, is

pro-active in following up any issues if necessary. Looked after young people and care leavers are very positive about the value and the ease of access to drop-in advice and support from the multi-agency team, in relation to their health and education needs.

28. The council has high aspirations for all young people and this can be seen, for example, in the high proportion of young people who attend university. In 2005/06, this figure was 11% of the looked after population, and this has now risen, with four young people in year 13 each predicted to go to university this year. School attendance is monitored daily and services intervene promptly if necessary. In 2005/06, 14.3% of looked after children and young people were absent for more than 25 days in the academic year. This figure reflects a year on year reduction since 2000/01 and further progress is confidently expected.

29. Wide-ranging and flexible education support is provided to young people, carers and professionals. All schools have designated teachers and the regular support forum organised by the team supporting looked after children is well attended and appreciated by teachers. A regular education surgery offers professionals a good forum to discuss concerns about individual cases and to identify appropriate action. All young people have Personal Education Plans, which include leisure activities and are actively used to drive progress; while the social worker remains responsible for completing and progressing the plan, the specialist support team offer any advice or support that is needed. Personal Education Plans are robustly monitored when care plans are reviewed. The number of looked after young people who achieve five or more GCSEs is steadily improving and is 5% above the national average. This improvement also demonstrates a closing of the attainment gap between looked after children and young people and their peers in the general population. In this year's GCSE cohort of 11, 10 have been receiving additional educational support. This support is effective. The number of looked after young people who enter the criminal justice system is low; any who do, receive effective and coordinated integrated services from the Youth Offending Team and other partnership services.

30. In response to feedback from young people, the council successfully applied two years ago to be a Cultural Pathfinder to develop leisure opportunities. Richmond was the only council to focus on looked after children and has established Culture 4 Keeps, an impressive range of access routes to leisure services. The Pathfinder attracted no central funding, but the council's strongly inclusive approach has ensured it is now embedded in the mainstream of services that are provided. Over 75% of looked after young people have been involved so far, an impressive achievement.

31. All young people have many opportunities to share their views and experiences in order to influence services. The approach fully includes looked after young people. Feedback from the young people has also led to a range of large and small developments, including the development of further accommodation for care leavers and the establishment of a teacher in the

multi-agency support team. A steering group of looked after young people is currently being supported to organise the annual achievement event. Young people have been trained to sit as members of interview panels and to deliver training sessions, which have been very well received by staff and headteachers. A very high proportion of young people offer their views in case reviews, often using Viewpoint (a computer-based system) in which they are supported by a dedicated participation officer. Arrangements to provide advocacy arrangements are in the process of being strengthened.

32. Care leavers receive very good support to move into adulthood, to access good quality accommodation, and to access and maintain education, employment and training. All care leavers are in suitable accommodation, which is being extended in response to feedback. The housing partnership offers permanent tenancies to all who need them after a phased process through semi-independence. The proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training at age 19 is 80%, significantly higher than the national average.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>A strong corporate parenting approach with high aspirations for young people.</p> <p>Very good multi-agency support to access health and education, both in and out of the borough.</p> <p>An exceptional and effective approach to enable young people to access mainstream leisure activities.</p> <p>Excellent range of opportunities for young people to express their views and to respond positively.</p> <p>Very good support for care leavers, which enables them to move into adulthood effectively.</p>	<p>There are no significant weaknesses.</p>

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Inadequate

Adequate

Good

Outstanding

33. The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent.

Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have a very high profile in each service provided, or commissioned, in the Richmond upon Thames area and there is a clear commitment to inclusion, social integration and equality. The strong, consistent work across the integrated service identified in the 2006 APA has continued and the results of the PCT survey have effectively been acted upon. Two specialist CAMHS staff have been appointed to support young people and their families, one being a clinical psychologist and the other a family therapist. In addition, there has been a significant increase in speech and language therapy and occupational therapy provision, with no waiting list for occupational therapy or equipment. These developments have been welcomed by parents and schools.

34. The Children and Young People's Plan places a high priority on advancing the needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Objectives are clear and excellent progress has been made in meeting those identified for 2006/07. The annual review has been robust and a clear service plan is in place to steer future development. The commitment to equality is also firmly expressed through Richmond Youth Forum, where participation and access opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities feature high on the agenda.

35. The development of the integrated service has resulted in a shared understanding of need, a strong commitment to inclusion, excellent practice and a universally enthusiastic workforce. A number of formal, multi-disciplinary work groups ensure continuing and consistent delivery of services. Good relationships have been forged with voluntary organisations, for example MENCAP, The Bridge, The Three Wings Trust and the local hospice. Partners comment on the good information which they receive from the local authority. Schools report that there is more joined-up thinking and practice across the authority and they value the very good response and support which they receive from the integrated service.

36. Very effective and comprehensive joint assessments are in place for young children with complex needs, which are underpinned by regular monitoring and multi-disciplinary meetings. Parents and carers nominate a lead professional as the key liaison worker and they find this approach helpful. In addition, well-organised, home-based individual and group support is provided to parents and carers through the Portage service.

37. There is a strong focus on early intervention and prevention. Parents benefit from the close working relationships and very good quality support from the range of professionals and services who work with them. This includes specialist medical and nursing staff, therapists, educational support staff and family learning providers. Parenting programmes and sessions on specific management of conditions, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism, are available to parents from Welcare and the range of integrated

service staff and their partners. Some parents are enabled to become family learning facilitators themselves. Parents value these opportunities and consider the quality of support to be good.

38. Good quality respite and short break care is available to families through befriending services, and overnight care is provided on a family link basis. A contract with Kingston upon Thames provides a small number of respite places for children and young people with complex difficulties. This contract has recently been renewed following a period of uncertainty, although there has been some expression of dissatisfaction with the sufficiency of respite care. Child protection and safeguarding training is provided to all carers and schools, and recipients speak highly of the quality. The use of direct payments is well promoted and take-up is good; most parents value the flexibility they provide.

39. High quality special needs support, advice and training is provided in nurseries and early years settings through the Early Years Partnership and area Special Educational Needs Coordinator Network. Funding is available to pre-empt the need for a statement. Parents have access to specially and additionally trained childminders through the Childminding Network. This results in very good and accessible early years provision.

40. Schools make good provision for pupils with special educational needs and there have been no permanent exclusions of pupils with a statement. The local authority monitors and discusses with schools those pupils not making the expected progress at the different key stages of education. The majority of schools regularly self-evaluate their provision through the use of the comprehensive Richmond Additional Educational Needs Audit and discussions with the link inspector and learning needs advisory staff. In addition, they benefit from the range of advice and support provided by the integrated service (for example by educational psychologists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists). Regular multi-disciplinary meetings are held in schools, which very effectively assist staff in their work, leading to more focused delivery of support. The outcome is that pupils with special educational needs make good progress at school. A very good range of high quality training is available to schools and special educational needs coordinators from the integrated service. These staff development opportunities are highly regarded and include awareness raising and a range of accredited courses. The sharing of good practice is promoted through regular meetings, some of which provide opportunities for attendance by professionals from other areas.

41. The statutory assessment process for a statement of special educational need is efficiently carried out within the appropriate timescale, and a set of colourful, user-friendly leaflets is available to guide parents and carers through the process. Although the numbers of pupils with statements has been lower than the national average for the past three years, there is an indication of an upward trend, particularly for those with autism and behaviour-related conditions. A number of these pupils have gone to out-of-borough independent schools following appeals to the special educational needs tribunal. However, a

recent increase in the extent and quality of in-borough provision for children with autism, and for those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, has been welcomed by parents and has, together with better communication with parents and improved casework, contributed to a reduction in the number going to out-of-borough placements and tribunal cases.

42. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy living in the area and have access to more than two hours of sport and cultural activities a week, which is above the national aspirational target for all children. They feel safe, and a wide and innovative range of cultural and sporting activities are available after school and during the holidays, including easy access to a hydrotherapy pool. The sports and fitness service works very closely with a range of partners to ensure choice and opportunity for purposeful activity and participation. The views of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are actively sought at borough level and they have contributed through Hear by Rights. They have influenced service design and have been involved in making a DVD on sexual health matters. Both special schools have active school councils and the young people have been instrumental in the development of their playgrounds and in the appointment of one headteacher. Their views on Richmond's recycling strategy have also been presented at borough level. The vast majority participate in the annual review of their statements or are very effectively assisted to do so.

43. An effective multi-disciplinary transition group is in place to address the key issues of transition. Young people are effectively supported into adult social care by a designated co-ordinator and into adult health services by a school nurse and transition plan. Transition pathways to further education provision in Richmond College are well supported by the special schools and mainstream schools through the 14–19 partnership.

44. Young people are prepared well for the world of work by good support from Connexions staff and all young people who attend out-of-borough special schools are linked to a Connexions adviser. There are very good opportunities for community work experience while at school, for example Strathmore runs a mini-enterprise scheme. On leaving school, most students go on to college courses, although some go onto apprenticeship programmes. However, although there is a sufficiency of good quality post-16 provision overall, many go out of the borough to access it.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>A comprehensive, integrated service for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</p> <p>Close, positive working relationships between staff and partner organisations.</p>	<p>There are no significant weaknesses.</p>

<p>An inclusive and supportive ethos across the authority and its partners.</p> <p>Schools offer good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress at school.</p> <p>Very good quality support and training opportunities for schools.</p> <p>Availability of a good range of quality recreation, leisure and cultural activities.</p>	
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Other issues identified for further investigation

The effectiveness of school improvement strategies on raising achievement

45. **The impact of school improvement services on raising achievement is good.** The council and its partners share high aspirations for improving educational outcomes for children and young people. Effective action has been taken to ensure continuous improvement in Richmond's schools. The 2006 APA identified the need to improve the rate of progress made by children and young people in secondary schools and, in particular, by those looked after and from Black and minority ethnic groups. Attendance and exclusions were also identified as areas for improvement. The partnership has made good progress in tackling most of these areas.

46. The local authority knows its schools well and has a very good understanding of the diverse communities they serve. A wide range of well-planned strategies has been put in place, particularly during the last two years, to raise achievement and to target areas of under-performance. Concerted efforts have maintained successfully and, in some cases, improved further the very high standards in many primary schools and continued to build on the excellent foundations secured by the early years and childcare service. Children are prepared very well for school and most attain well above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. However, in a small number of primary schools children do not achieve as well as they should.

47. Good progress has been made in improving standards and achievement at Key Stage 3, which are above the national average for achievement of Level 5 in English, mathematics and science by 8%, 2% and 3% respectively. At Level 6, they are slightly further above the national averages in these subjects by 8%, 4% and 4%. The local authority has focused its efforts effectively on improving transition arrangements and raising the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7, 8 and 9. Support for teaching and curriculum development, for example in mathematics with targeted groups identified as under-achieving,

or with 'borderline grades', has had a very positive impact. Across the borough, most children aged 11 to 14, including those from Black and minority ethnic groups, now make at least satisfactory progress, and many make good progress in relation to prior attainment.

48. Standards are above the national average and improving at Key Stage 4, but remain slightly below the average of statistical neighbours. The gap in attainment between vulnerable groups and their peers has reduced significantly as a result of well-conceived and targeted intervention strategies. For example, in 2006, 55% of Black and minority ethnic young people achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C compared with 50% nationally. The achievement of Black and minority ethnic young people and of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and improving. The gap between the attainment of boys and girls is reducing. Looked after children receive good support for their education and progress is monitored closely. Gifted and talented young people have good opportunities to extend their learning, for example through innovative mentoring programmes and challenging enrichment activities. However, taken together, school improvement strategies at Key Stage 4 have not yet had the notable impact they have had at Key Stage 3.

49. Challenge and support for schools are effective in building their capacity for robust self-evaluation and continuous improvement. Delegated funds are used flexibly to buy in specialist help at local level. Opportunities for professional development and to share good practice are also used well. The introduction of the School Improvement Partners programme has been well managed. Relationships between headteachers, governors, consultants and local authority officers are excellent. Schools value highly the support they receive, together with the encouragement to take careful risks and to be creative. Clear and well-understood policies and procedures are in place to monitor, challenge and support the performance of schools. Weaknesses are identified early and resources matched appropriately to need. No schools have been in Ofsted categories of concern since 2003.

50. Children and young people enjoy school very much. Effective action is taken to promote good behaviour and regular attendance. Attendance in primary schools is above the national average, and is improving in secondary schools. The education welfare service works closely with schools and families to promote the link between good attendance and high achievement. The Cool Cats programme has captured the imagination of younger children and improved attendance in targeted schools. The local authority is rightly taking a firm stance on term-time holidays.

51. Strategies to reduce permanent and fixed-term exclusions have been very successful. The number of exclusions has reduced dramatically. No children who are looked after, or have statements of special education need, have been permanently excluded for some years. Regular multi-agency meetings, effective arrangements for 'managed moves' and good collaboration between schools help to ensure that most young people excluded, or at risk of exclusion, receive

timely support and appropriate provision. A number of innovative and well-targeted projects, such as the Oldfield Skills Centre and the Self-Esteem through Sports programme, promote inclusion, provide excellent support and a stimulating curriculum for those young people aged 14 to 16 who experience serious difficulty in mainstream education. Young people appreciate the care and encouragement they receive and recognise the significant impact on their motivation and self-confidence. The pupil referral unit was judged as satisfactory at the time of its last Ofsted inspection, but has subsequently made inadequate progress in tackling the important weaknesses identified.

52. Learning that takes place in schools is complemented and enhanced by an excellent range of high quality opportunities in the creative arts, sports and leisure. This provision, which is expanding further through the extended schools programme, helps to promote high self-esteem and active participation in learning. The quality of youth work is adequate overall and contributes to the quality of opportunity available to young people. However, there are key weaknesses in curriculum and operational management within the youth service which have been identified and are being addressed. The council is rightly committed to further investment and improvement as part of the well-planned move towards an integrated youth support service.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Excellent foundations are secured for children by the early years and childcare service.</p> <p>Maintenance of very high standards in primary schools and improvement in progress and attainment at Key Stage 3.</p> <p>Narrowing gap between outcomes for vulnerable groups and their peers.</p> <p>Effective support and challenge to help schools improve.</p> <p>Significant reduction in exclusions of children and young people from school.</p> <p>Innovative projects promoting inclusion and achievement and an excellent range of high quality leisure and recreation provision.</p>	<p>Progress in improving outcomes at Key Stage 4.</p> <p>Progress in tackling weaknesses in the pupil referral unit.</p> <p>Curriculum and operational management in the youth service.</p>

Quality of service provided and outcomes achieved by users of post-16 provision

53. The overall service provided and the outcomes achieved by young people over the age of 16 are good. Some of the work being undertaken to engage vulnerable young people is very good. As

reported in the 2006 APA, there are very good arrangements in place for partners to work together, with a clear focus on identifying need and preventative work to reduce the risk of unemployment. Priority is given to vulnerable groups and services work successfully to provide individual support packages; for example, the proportion of looked after children engaged in employment, education or training and in suitable accommodation is high.

54. There is a clear and well-structured strategic plan for 14–19 education and training, with appropriate targets and milestones. The plan is closely aligned to other key strategies, monitoring activities are well planned with appropriate reporting mechanisms, and an effective self-assessment process is in place. The 14–19 strategy contains a good and accurate appraisal of strengths and areas for development. The council has worked well with its partners to establish a consensus and develop successful joint initiatives, including securing two diploma pathways for 2009. However, there is a realisation that, to drive the 14–19 agenda forward, stronger collective leadership, management and decision-making are required, for example to implement joint timetabling.

55. Overall, success rates in work-based learning are good and well above average. Entry to Employment progression has been very good, although in the current year has reduced to the national average. However mid-year data is normally lower and the area is on track to achieve its targets. While the average point scores at GCE/AVCE/AS and A level are slightly below the national averages, the added-value indicators in post-16 education are in the top quartile. Richmond has a very high migration of young people and an analysis of young people resident in Richmond indicates higher achievement. Attainment at 19 at both Levels 2 and 3 is improving, is high nationally and in the top half of statistical neighbours. The two local colleges were inspected by Ofsted recently, with one judged as good and the other outstanding. Progression to higher education is good at 43%, exceeding the national average by 4%.

56. The council and its partners have very good initiatives in place to reduce the numbers of young people not in employment, education or training. The proportion of those not in employment, education or training is low compared with the national average. However, the proportion of young people whose situation is unknown is slightly above that of neighbouring councils at 5.3%. Close partnership working is providing very good support for all vulnerable young people. This includes early identification and good transition planning linked to appropriate and motivating vocational opportunities. For example the Skills Centre offers highly valued vocational options for vulnerable young people and short preparation for work courses for those unable to access Entry to

Employment. These programmes achieve very good results. Particularly good arrangements are in place with the local high profile rugby club and the Rugby Football Union. Partners also encourage a high proportion of teenage mothers to engage in education, employment and training. Employment for young people amongst its own workforce is a priority for the council. Those who are looked after and those not in employment, education or training are provided with good opportunities to take up work-based placements with the prospect of full-time employment.

57. The Youth Offending Team is very effective in re-engaging young offenders in education and employment through its productive relationship with partners in education and leisure. The proportion of young offenders in education, employment or training has increased over the last three years to higher than the national average, although this figure reduced to average for the first half of the 2006/07 year.

58. Good provision is made for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Plans are in place to provide additional places within the borough for those with more complex learning needs. Provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good at the two local colleges. The proportion of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within education, employment and training is slightly above average and on track to achieve the area target of 80%.

59. Schools prepare students well for the world of work and further education and all are developing work-related learning programmes. All schools have either achieved or are close to achieving the Investors in Careers kite mark. The Education and Business Partnership provides effective support for schools through a range of work-related activities and projects. Increasing numbers of young people access vocational courses and flexible learning arrangements. As a result of improved tracking and collaboration with 14–19 partners, targets for young people engaged in education and training have been exceeded and are above average. A good local 14–19 prospectus has been produced and well received by young people within Richmond. An electronic pan-London prospectus is in development, which contains the full offering of provision in the area.

60. As recognised in the APA in 2006, the council works effectively with the Learning and Skills Council. The range of options post-16 is increasing, with some good initiatives in place; however, there is a recognised need to broaden options for those not wishing to stay in traditional education programmes. The strategy accurately identifies the need to improve access to provision and to map and promote pathways effectively. The predicted need to expand post-16 provision is being addressed well through additional Learning and Skills Council funding. However, current curriculum development is not based on a formal or coherent needs analysis across the area.

61. The council and partners are making good efforts in forging links with employers and have made good progress in some areas, notably ICT, engineering and sport. However, this is still an area for development. Current priorities include strategies developed with employers which aim to improve the range and quality of work-related learning opportunities. A forum for work-based learning providers coordinates apprenticeships effectively across the skills sectors.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Very good arrangements for partnership working.</p> <p>The work being undertaken to engage vulnerable young people</p> <p>A clear and well-structured strategic plan for 14–19 education and training</p> <p>Attainment at 19 at Levels 2 and 3 is improving and is high compared to the national average</p> <p>Particularly good arrangements in place with local sports clubs</p>	<p>Insufficient breadth of options for those not wishing to stay in traditional education</p> <p>The mapping and promotion of 14–19 pathways</p>

Quality of service provided and outcomes achieved by users of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

62. **The quality of service provided is adequate.** The outcomes achieved by children and young people using some of the current CAMHS are good. However, not all children and young people have access to the full range of CAMHS and waiting times for specialist treatment can be too long.

63. The 2006 APA reported that whilst there is continuing good progress towards coordinated services, the council acknowledges the need for further improvement to ensure that all services are fully integrated and working from the identified needs of individuals and groups. A comprehensive strategy for the development of CAMHS over the next three to five years is in development, but disputes over finance and confusion over commissioning have meant that insufficient progress has been made. Consequently, not all aspects of the service are available. For example, provision of Tier 1 services (those provided by non-specialist mental health workers for minor mental health problems) and some Tier 2 services (those provided by primary care workers under the support and supervision of mental health specialists for more specific problems such as behavioural difficulties and emerging mental health problems), primarily to non-vulnerable groups, are underdeveloped and the provider trust is not aware of the commissioning priorities of the PCT.

64. Good outcomes are achieved for those children and young people who access specialist services. For example, all young people associated with the Youth Offending Team who have an acute or non acute mental health problem are able to access services within appropriate timescales. Young offenders also benefit from effective residential and community-based services for substance misuse. In mainstream services in 2005, nearly half of Tier 2 and Tier 3 cases (that is, cases in which children and young people are referred to, or treated by, a mental health specialist for a diagnosed or suspected mental health condition) were assessed within four weeks and all were seen within 26 weeks. However, waiting times for treatment are still too long

65. CAMHS are commissioned by Richmond and Twickenham PCT and provided by South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust. The Mental Health Trust provides services across five London boroughs and in Richmond an adequate service is based at the child and family consultation centre, located at Richmond Royal Hospital. A number of different professionals, such as clinical psychologists, consultant psychiatrists, family therapists and a specialist nurse, provide an effective range of services. However, the number of staff has been declining over the last six years, with a consequent and understandable rationing of specialist services.

66. The provision of Tier 4 services (in-patient and intensive assertive outreach services) is good and a positive approach to care ensures that seamless services are provided. During 2006/07, almost all children (97%) were admitted to a specialist children and young person's ward and although the remainder were, for reasons of capacity, admitted to an adult ward, careful and effective management meant that this was limited to those aged 16 and 17 years. Young people referred to the service are offered intensive packages of care from the Adolescent Assertive Outreach Team and in-patient beds and day care facilities at the Aquarius unit are available if needed. Frequent and planned evaluation showed a pattern of good outcomes being achieved. These were regularly reported to a joint consortium and the Mental Health Trust's board.

67. The enthusiastic and committed specialist CAMHS professionals provide a good range of Tier 3 services to different groups of individuals and within the resources available. Of particular note is the responsive service provided by the specialist Eating Disorders Team. Outcomes are continuously measured and are good. Evaluation of the service is undertaken regularly and this has led to participation in a national research project. In universal services, however, outcomes are not routinely collected and there are limited mechanisms of evaluation.

68. Access to specialist CAMHS professionals for children admitted to accident and emergency units of general hospitals is insufficient. Twenty-four hour on-call CAMHS psychiatrists are available but children attending accident and emergency are first seen by the adult psychiatrist prior to referral to the CAMHS specialist. As this service is provided across five London boroughs, response

times vary and some children and young people wait too long to receive an assessment.

69. Transition arrangements to adult mental health services are unsatisfactory and there is a recognised gap in provision, with continuity of service provision being dependent upon the diagnosis. For example, if there is a known long-term and enduring mental health problem, there is a jointly agreed policy and protocol to facilitate smooth transition to adult mental health services. However, if there is no sustained mental illness and the diagnosis does not fit the adult learning difficulties and/or disabilities criteria, there is no provision.

70. There is limited provision of Tier 1 and 2 services by CAMHS. Inadequate prioritisation and commissioning at these tiers has contributed to the increasing number of referrals year on year to Tier 3 services. Where funding has been made available by the local authority, there is good support provided to the more vulnerable groups of children and young people. For example, specialist CAMHS professionals have been very effectively employed to work as part of the Youth Offending Team and the Looked After Children Team, and have recently joined the integrated children's service providing additional support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

71. Other Tier 2 services are provided by health visitors and school nurses, for example the behaviour advice surgeries and sleep clinics. The two behaviour surgeries, one at Hampton and the other at Teddington, are set up differently and consequently access to the service differs; at one clinic the waiting time for assessment and subsequent treatment is in excess of four months, an excessive delay exacerbated by the service only operating during term time. In response to the lack of a commissioning strategy, some good preventative strategies to promote self-esteem and emotional well-being have been developed. For example, Self-Esteem Through Sports provides a range of opportunities to participate in sporting activities. Of particular note are the good links established with the local Harlequins Rugby Football Club and the range of innovative activities that are available. Access to school counselling is variable and confidentiality has been highlighted as an issue for some young people accessing this service. A range of parenting programmes have been offered but uptake appears to be limited.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Good philosophy of care and seamless service provision at Tier 4</p> <p>The eating disorders service</p> <p>Good support provided to looked after children, young offenders and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities</p>	<p>No commissioning strategy</p> <p>Limited provision of services at Tiers 1 and 2 by CAMHS</p>

Enthusiastic and committed staff.	
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Service Management

Inadequate

Adequate

Good

Outstanding

Capacity to Improve

Inadequate

Adequate

Good

Outstanding

72. **The management of services for children and young people is good. Capacity to improve further is excellent.** The APA of 2006 judged capacity to improve as good. It recognised the clear strategy and ambitious targets set out in the Children and Young People's Plan and the good progress made in establishing a single directorate for children's services. However, progress in achieving the targets was mixed. In particular, actions to improve the educational progress of some groups of young people had yet to make an impact and strategies for commissioning and the development of the Children's Trust had not had sufficient time to develop fully. The council and its partners have made good progress over the last 12 months in securing improvements in most areas.

73. The capacity of the council and its partners to secure further improvement is excellent. The integration of children's services with cultural services has been very effective and has enhanced significantly the range and quality of services for children and young people. Leadership development and succession planning is outstanding. The council has a strategic approach to workforce planning, with high retention rates for social workers and effective development schemes for staff, including leadership development and secondments to the senior management team. Staff speak highly of their access to professional development and the support they receive to deliver the service. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is self-critical, is aware of most of its weaknesses and is taking effective action to tackle them. Opportunities for learning from other boroughs, best practice and benchmarking are good and used to improve services. The partnership has responded promptly and successfully to external evaluation and recommendations for improvement. There is highly effective inter-agency work in child protection, which has ensured very good outcomes for children and young people. The range of activities used to support school improvement is good. Good arrangements exist for ensuring that children receiving services from the Youth Offending Team can have timely access to other specialists.

74. The council and its partners have a sustained focus on value for money. Costs are low compared with nearest neighbours and the council continues to deliver good outcomes for children and young people. The council uses benchmarking information to regularly compare costs and seeks to maximise income and other corporate opportunities to increase its capacity. One example is in the provision of special school units in the borough. The council has made use of the new school builds to provide additional in-borough placements. The most recent will increase provision by up to 20 places. This will reduce the pressure on the relatively high transport costs due to the number of out-of-area placements. However, the council does not claw back higher school balances, although it has requested that all schools identify commitments against these balances in their budget plans for 2007/08, so it can identify surpluses. Demand for primary school places has risen above the projected figure for the 2007/08 school year. This is a result of increased parental confidence in the quality of the state schools and a consequent reduction in their use of the private sector. The council has identified spaces within existing capacity, but additional capacity will need to be found if the increased demand continues.

75. The ambition for children and young people is good. These ambitions are supported by the new Community Plan 2007–17 and the Corporate Plan. The council and its partners have clear and robust ambitions for children and young people in Richmond. These ambitions aim for excellence for all children and young people and are supported by a Children and Young People's Plan that sets out a clear strategy across the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The strategy is driven by effective political and excellent managerial leadership. The plan was developed following extensive consultation with children and key partners, as well as an assessment of need. Real imagination and commitment have been applied to developing the strength of the partnership. For example, managers from partner agencies sit as members of the Education and Children's Service Directorate, where they develop their understanding, provide challenge and inject different professional perspectives to debate and resolutions. Service plans are well supported by resources from partners and by additional council resources to support areas of weakness. There are very good arrangements for sharing information and as the Common Assessment Framework rolls out the area is moving closer to common recording practices. Plans reflect the diversity of children and young people in the borough and take good account of their needs. However, some areas of the needs analysis are less well developed, for example in CAMHS and the youth service.

76. Prioritisation is good. The council and its partners have identified 12 key priorities, which are well understood by managers and staff. The priorities are aligned clearly to resources and a robust delivery strategy that reflects local as well as national issues. The new council administration and its partners have identified two specific priorities for improvement following the development of the new Community Plan – the youth service and secondary school improvement. These priorities are both supported by significant council investment.

77. The council's priorities and service plans address a full range of equality and diversity issues. Examples include: good use of external organisations, like Black Boys Can, to help improve educational outcomes for boys from Black and minority ethnic groups; effective interventions with the local Traveller community in support of school attendance and other outcomes; very well-developed support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Partners are largely clear about respective roles and have a proven track record of delivering improvement together.

78. The voluntary and community sector is engaged fully but the capacity of the voluntary sector to become involved with all aspects of strategic planning as well as service delivery is very stretched. However, whilst some budgets are aligned, few budgets are pooled. One of the weaknesses in the Children and Young People's Plan is that there is one broad priority for health and no specific priority given to mental health services. There is no documented overarching strategy for preventative services but there is a clear and powerful commitment to the delivery of preventative and family support enshrined in all plans relating to children and young people.

79. The Children and Young Person's Strategic Partnership has excellent capacity to deliver its priorities. Budget setting and financial management are good. Service strategies are linked effectively to the council's Medium and Long Term Financial Plan. In areas of historical overspend, robust monitoring has been put in place, with some additional revenue where demand has outstripped previous budgets. There is a strong and effective strategic focus on securing value for money. In its most recent 'use of resources' judgement by the Audit Commission, the council was judged to be providing good value for money overall and was excellent in securing outcomes against costs. This finding resonates in children's services, where spending remains below average but outcomes are at least good and the service continues to improve. The council continues to seek external funding to support the achievement of children's services objectives. Recent examples include New Opportunities funding to extend and improve sports facilities in schools and Building Schools for the Future funding given to Teddington School.

80. Managerial leadership is excellent and political leadership is good, with robust challenge and scrutiny from both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and from partners. The council understands fully its corporate parenting role, which is discharged very effectively. This is true for both councillors and senior officers. However, commissioning is less well developed and the current youth service capacity is limited, although both areas have been rightly identified for improvement and are improving.

81. Performance management across the strategic partnership is good and improving. The partnership and its task groups receive regular performance reports that help to identify weaknesses and drive improvement. The area has been highly effective in quickly identifying and addressing poor performance. For example the youth service was identified as a weaker service, so the council

commissioned an external assessment and has begun to act on its findings, with some encouraging signs of improvement. Case files are generally well managed, with evidence of good supervision, transparent decision making and timely interventions. Performance and budget reporting are robust. Children and young people play a central role in improving the management and delivery of services. They are involved regularly in recruitment, training and quality assurance arrangements. There are good examples of performance management with partners and evidence of a willingness to take difficult decisions to improve services for children and young people.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses
<p>Outstanding managerial leadership and strong and effective political support</p> <p>Strong ambitions supported by clear priorities and service plans</p> <p>Highly effective partnership arrangements</p> <p>Good engagement of children and young people in development of services</p> <p>Excellent workforce and leadership development</p> <p>Good and improving performance management</p>	<p>Insufficient priority given to mental health services for children</p> <p>Needs analysis in CAMHS and the Youth Service</p> <p>Commissioning is underdeveloped</p> <p>Operational and curriculum management of the youth service</p>

Annex A

2006 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

Summary

Areas for judgement	Grade awarded
<i>The contribution of the local authority's children's services in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people</i>	3
<i>The council's overall capacity to improve its services for children and young people</i>	3

Richmond upon Thames continues to deliver a good service to children and young people. Improvements have been made in relation to all the Every Child Matters outcomes since last year's APA, particularly in areas of participation and economic well-being. Areas identified for development are being addressed well through effective planning and carefully targeted action. Key staff know the children who are looked after very well because they are small in number and their progress is monitored effectively through flexible partnership arrangements.

Leadership of the council is good. Key personnel have responsibility for each Every Child Matters outcome and they have a clear, shared vision for future improvement based on accurately identifying strengths and weaknesses of the council's work. The CYPP shows good strategic planning and a commitment to productive partnerships. Clear leadership and creative, rigorous approaches to financial planning ensure that the council has good capacity to improve further.

The full APA can be found at:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=268906&providerCategoryID=0&fileName=\\APA\\apa_2006_318.pdf

Annex B

CORPORATE ASSESSMENT ACHIEVEMENT – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Outcomes for children in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames are generally good or excellent. However, health outcomes for some children and young people are compromised by a delayed comprehensive CAMHS strategy. Children are very effectively safeguarded and looked after children achieve very well. There has been continuous improvement in school standards across all key stages. Young people achieve good outcomes in post-16 education and training. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well in education and make good transitions to work or further education.

2. The Children and Young People's Plan sets out a clear strategy and ambitious targets to improve services and outcomes for children. The Annual Performance Assessment 2006 (APA) drew attention to mixed progress in achieving the targets. However, over the last 12 months good progress has been made, underpinned by good support from elected members and improved management across partnerships, including outstanding contributions from the leadership team of the Education and Children's Services Department. Good value for money has been achieved. The effective use of data, strengthened performance management, wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders and service users, and the continuing development of integrated working arrangements has meant that service gaps and weakness, for example those in CAMHS commissioning arrangements and in the youth service, are identified and are being responded to.

3. The 2006 APA states that children and young people are generally healthy and describes the contribution of the council to outcomes in this area as good. The 2007 joint area review found that there are very good systems and practices in place that result in very good health outcomes for looked after children. A dedicated healthcare team ensures that all looked after children have health and dental assessments and timely access to specialist services, including mental health services, when required. In addition, there is good advice made available to ensure that children and young people are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent specialist health care, with an emphasis on early intervention and access to a range of specialist medical and nursing staff, and therapists. The increasing emphasis on integrated working is leading to very good outcomes.

4. Children and young people feel safe and safeguarding services are appropriately prioritised and promoted by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Vulnerable children and young people and those on the child protection register are safeguarded by very good inter-agency practice. Staff across the agencies have access to good training in safeguarding and child protection.

Referrals to the social care services are dealt with promptly and highly effectively, with timely and well-defined intervention, including high quality assessment and case planning when necessary. Case files are recorded very well and demonstrate the high quality work carried out and compliance with timescales for review of plans. There are comparatively low (and decreasing) numbers of children being looked after. This is as a result of effective early intervention and preventative services, many of which are provided by staff working in integrated teams. Services for children looked after by the council are outstanding. They receive excellent support from agencies and achieve well. Young people leaving care and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well through transition.

5. Effective action has been taken to ensure continuous improvement in Richmond's schools and progress has accelerated further since the 2006 APA was published. Children enjoy school very much. Excellent foundations are secured by the early years and childcare service, which provides the springboard for most children to achieve well at Key Stage 2. Good progress has been made in achievement and standards at Key Stages 3 and 4 and very effective work has been undertaken to significantly close the gap in attainment between vulnerable groups and their peers. Children and young people have outstanding access to high quality opportunities in the creative arts, sports and leisure. The youth service also provides an adequate and improving service overall and is benefiting from increased member and officer support and investment. Standards of young people's achievements are adequate and supported by a satisfactory standard of youth work practice. However, the operational management of the service and the curriculum offer to young people are underdeveloped.

6. The combined work of all services in helping children and young people to contribute to their communities is outstanding and is underpinned by the passionate belief of officers and members in the principle of consultation and involvement. The Youth Offending Team makes a good contribution to prevent offending by children and young people.

7. A clear and well-structured strategic plan for 14–19 education and training is the foundation upon which good services have been built and good outcomes achieved at post-16. Good partnership working has led to low proportions of young people not in education, employment or training, and vulnerable young people are supported well by a variety of opportunities according to their need. Schools and colleges prepare young people well for work and further education and good links exist with employers. Good work-based learning provision has resulted in Entry to Employment progression being very good.

8. The capacity of the council to improve is excellent. Effective political leadership and excellent managerial leadership and practice are driving the ambition to achieve excellence for all children and young people in Richmond. Strategic plans aligned with funding priorities set out in the medium-term financial plan, effective workforce planning and a comprehensive understanding

of development needs, including weakness, ensure that strategic plans will be delivered in the short and long-term.

Annex C

SUMMARY OF JOINT AREA REVIEW AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1. This joint area review was conducted using the arrangements required under Section 20 of the Children Act 2004. It was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of inspectors from Ofsted, the Healthcare Commission and the Audit Commission. The review was undertaken according to the requirements of the *Framework for the Inspection of Children's Services*.

2. The review was linked to the contemporaneous corporate assessment of the local council by the Audit Commission and these findings, plus aspects of the most recent APA, are represented in the relevant part of the corporate assessment report.

3. This review describes the outcomes achieved by children and young people growing up in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Together with the APA of children's services, joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and are well prepared to secure economic well-being. This review explores these issues by focusing on children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, children who are looked after, children at risk or requiring safeguarding, and a few additional investigations. It evaluates the collective contribution made by all relevant children's services to outcomes for these children and young people.

4. The review took place in two stages consisting of an analysis stage (where recorded evidence was scrutinised) and a two-week fieldwork stage (where inspectors met children and young people and those who deliver services for them).