

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

Ms Pat Reynolds  
Director of Children's Services  
London Borough of Redbridge  
Lynton House, 255–259 High Road  
Ilford, Essex  
IG1 1NN

Dear Ms Reynolds

## 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.

## The London Borough of Redbridge children's services assessment 2010

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
--------------------------------	-------------------

Children's services in the London Borough of Redbridge perform well.

The majority of types of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better. Almost all secondary schools and school sixth forms in the borough are good or better and nearly half are outstanding. The further education college is satisfactory. All special schools and pupils referral units are good or outstanding. High numbers of primary schools are good. However, one primary and one secondary school are providing an inadequate standard of education, whereas in the previous year no schools were in this category. Not enough childminders are good. While there has been a slight improvement in the last year, more than half are only satisfactory and there has been no reduction in the number that are inadequate. One of the residential family centres is outstanding; the other is satisfactory, as are the local fostering and adoption agencies. The local authority's children's home, which was previously good, was judged to be inadequate in July 2010 because there have been occasions when young people were not fully safeguarded.

An inspection of safeguarding arrangements and provision for looked after children in January 2010 reported that both were satisfactory. A more recent unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services in October 2010 found significant improvements had been made to safeguarding arrangements since the January inspection.

National performance measures show a very large majority of outcomes are in line with or above the averages for England or for similar areas. Educational achievement for 11-, 16- and 19-year-olds is very high. The achievement of very young children is getting better, but is not improving as quickly as in similar areas. Eleven-year-olds with special educational needs do well at school and their achievement is improving at a faster rate than their peers so the difference in their achievement is getting smaller. Sixteen-year-olds with special educational needs mostly achieve well compared to those in similar areas and the rest of England. However, the difference in their achievement and that of their peers continues to be much larger than elsewhere. Teenage pregnancies are reducing too slowly.

### Key areas for further development

- Ensure all sixteen-year-olds with special educational needs make good progress and attain the appropriate standards.
- Rapidly reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies.

## Outcomes for children and young people

Most local services and settings are good at encouraging children and young people to live healthy lives. Virtually all schools, the children's home and the fostering service are good, but not enough childminders are. The local authority is having some success in achieving its key health priorities of promoting healthy eating and reducing obesity. High numbers of schools have achieved the healthy schools award. The number of mothers who are still breast-feeding their babies when they are six to eight weeks old is well above that in the rest of England. More children and young people are regularly taking part in sporting activities. Obesity among five- and 11-year-olds has fallen and is more in line with similar areas. Further progress has been made in the development of effective services for children and young people with emotional or mental health difficulties; notably for those with special educational needs. A recent inspection found access to short-break provision for disabled children is variable and some parents do not understand the criteria for getting it. Nevertheless, the range and availability of short-break opportunities are starting to increase. However, there are lengthy waiting lists for services such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language services. Health provision for children and young people in the care of the local authority is satisfactory with some good features.

Arrangements in schools and colleges for keeping children and young people safe are almost always good, but not enough provision for children in care is good and the local authority's children's home is inadequate in this area. An inspection in January 2010 found the Redbridge Safeguarding Children Board actively promotes awareness of safeguarding in the area and provides positive leadership on safeguarding matters. The immediate child protection needs of individual children have been more recently addressed in a timely way. Improvements in the quality and content of case recording for those most in need of protection are evident. All looked after children are allocated to qualified social workers, but some do not have up to date care plans. A more recent inspection of front-line child protection services found that, because partner agencies are inconsistent in the way they apply the criteria for referring children in need to social care, staff have to deal with a high number of inappropriate referrals.

Rates of short- and long-term stability in placements are improving and are now similar to the rest of England. Arrangements for keeping children and young people safe in the community are generally strong. For example, partners continue to be more effective than in similar areas at reducing the number of children who are killed or seriously injured on the roads. Local services working with very young children are ensuring a strong consistent message is being given to parents about safety. This is in response to an increase in the number of children who are admitted to hospital because they have been injured, either accidentally or deliberately.

Most schools and the children's home are good at helping children and young people to do well and enjoy their learning. However, not enough childminders and other providers, such as the college and fostering agency, are good. The achievement of

very young children remains lower than in similar areas and the rest of England because it has not improved as rapidly in the last two years. Extra support is being given to young children who do not do so well, so the gap in their achievement and that of their peers in Redbridge is getting smaller. Test and examination results for 11- and 16-year-olds are very high. No school has failed to meet minimum expected standards for the last three years. Behaviour is good or better in all but one of the seventeen secondary schools in the borough. The number of secondary school aged pupils who are frequently absent from school is below average. Children and young people from lower-income families achieve well in both primary and secondary schools. Consequently, the difference in their achievement and that of their peers is smaller than in similar areas and the rest of England and continues to reduce. The achievement of children in care has been broadly in line with similar areas. Actions have been taken to improve their attainment in tests and examinations, which has resulted in five out of 18 children in care achieving five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and maths in 2010.

Most schools and other settings are good at involving children and young people in decision-making in their community, but not enough childminders are good and neither is the college. The number of young women under the age of 18 who become pregnant is relatively low, but Redbridge is one of only 21 local authorities which have not reduced conception levels since the baseline year. Current data show low numbers of young people being screened for chlamydia and other sexually transmitted diseases, reversing previous good performance in this area. Fewer young people report they have recently been drunk or taken drugs than in similar areas and England as a whole. Local services have been successful in their efforts to reduce young people's involvement in gangs and this has resulted in a reduction in the level of serious youth violence in the borough. The number of children and young people offending for the first time remains lower than average; however, rates of re-offending are increasing.

Local services are broadening the range of education and training opportunities available to young people in the borough. They are also undertaking a review of curriculum provision to inform priority areas for future commissioning. Nineteen-year-olds, including those from lower-income families, are much better at gaining qualifications in Redbridge than in similar areas. High numbers of young people continue with their education when they are aged 16 and 17 and the proportion that take no part in education and training is lower than average.

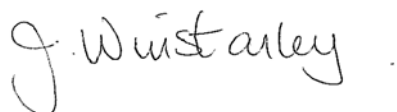
### **Prospects for improvement**

Most outcomes for children and young people in Redbridge are improving or high standards are being maintained. The January 2010 inspection reported that safeguarding services and those for looked after children have adequate capacity for improvement. Since this inspection, highly effective remedial action has been taken to review and restructure the child protection and assessment service. Capacity in front-line child protection services has been strengthened through the appointment of specialist senior practitioners in each of the duty teams. This has resulted in

significantly improved safeguarding arrangements through stronger management oversight of cases, effective supervision of staff and more timely decision-making. New systems have been established and existing ones strengthened to ensure resources in the child protection and assessment service are utilised to best effect. The admission of more challenging young people to the local authority's children's home has resulted in it being judged to be inadequate in its most recent inspection. Ofsted monitoring visits to weaker schools show the local authority is doing good work to help them improve. However, support and challenge provided to two schools was not enough to prevent them being judged to be inadequate in their most recent inspection.

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, flowing style.

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment