

Report for children and young people about the services they receive in the London Borough of Merton

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and doing well at school and as they grow up
- Making a positive contribution to society
- Being successful in whatever they choose to do when they are adults

Why should I read this?

The law says that inspectors must look at and then report on how well local services serve children and young people in an area. This is called a "review". Inspectors visited your area recently. You might like to read this, or the full report which you can find on Ofsted's website, to find out what they had to say.

What did the inspectors do?

Eight inspectors visited Merton in February and March 2007 so that they could get a feel of what life is like for children and young people in the area. They:

- ❖ listened to a number of children and young people in schools, youth clubs, projects and other settings
- ❖ talked with adults working with children and young people (such as social workers, teachers, youth workers, nurses, doctors, police officers and councillors)
- ❖ spoke to parents and other people caring for children
- ❖ met with school councils' representatives and members of the youth forum
- ❖ heard from the council and other agencies what it thinks about the services it provides for children
- ❖ read a lot of reports
- ❖ visited services and projects in Mitcham to see things for themselves.

The inspectors also looked at how well particular children are doing, like those children in council care or those who have a learning difficulty or disability.

How well are children and young people doing in Merton?

- ❖ Most children and young people are doing well; they are active, healthy and enjoy their education.
- ❖ There are differences between how well children and young people do in different parts of the borough.
- ❖ Most children and young people appear safe; those most at risk get good help and support.
- ❖ Children's and young people's educational attainment is satisfactory overall. At primary schools, children achieve standards that are broadly average, but, when young people leave secondary school, their GCSE results are below average. A level results are similar to those

found elsewhere in the country, though some young people in further education achieve less well than nationally.

- ❖ Children and young people who are looked after do well in comparison to those in similar circumstances elsewhere.
- ❖ The number of young people who offend is low, but there has been a slight rise in the numbers of those who re-offend.
- ❖ Children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities make adequate progress in their education but agencies do not work together as well as they could to support them.

What were the main things children and young people told inspectors about your area?

- ❖ They are active and get involved in the local community.
- ❖ Most feel safe in their local area but those who live in the east of the borough have greater concerns about crime and safety than those living in the west.
- ❖ In secondary schools where there is a police officer on site, children and young people find it re-assuring.
- ❖ They can influence how services are delivered and get good opportunities to 'have their say'.
- ❖ The extra curricular activities provided through schools are good
- ❖ They get good individual support when they need it from a range of agencies. Those taking part in youth service activities value highly the support they receive from youth workers.
- ❖ Some teenagers feel that there is a lack of recreation and leisure provision for their age group.

What things did the inspectors say are good for children and young people in my area?

- ❖ Healthy lifestyles are promoted well through initiatives in schools and in the community.
- ❖ When children and young people have health problems they get good help and support.
- ❖ Agencies work well together to promote the safety of children and young people.
- ❖ Effective action is being undertaken to improve educational standards
- ❖ Most children and young people have access to a good range of recreational facilities and activities.

- ❖ There is a wide range of forums and other ways through which children and young people can express their opinions and be involved in planning and evaluating services.
- ❖ A good range of activities is reducing anti social behaviour and low level crime.
- ❖ Support and help for looked after children are good.
- ❖ The management of services for children and young people is good.

What things are not so good for children and young people?

- ❖ Too many young people from black and ethnic minority groups get excluded from secondary school and there is a low take up of mental health services by this group.
- ❖ Different agencies and services do not work together effectively to support those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- ❖ Educational standards in secondary schools and achievement by age 19 are not high enough.
- ❖ Access to a broad range of educational opportunities, including vocational options, for all 14-19 year olds needs to be improved.