

9 December 2010

Mrs Libby Blake
Interim Executive Director of Family and Children's Services
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Room 229, Kensington Town Hall
Hornton Street, London
W8 7NX

Dear Mrs Blake

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.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea children's services assessment 2010

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

Children's services in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea continue to perform excellently.

The very large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or outstanding and most are better than in similar areas and nationally. Almost all do particularly well at supporting learning and achievement and in keeping children and young people safe. Provision for early years and childcare is mostly good and most nursery and primary schools are good or outstanding. All secondary and special schools are either good or outstanding, as is provision for learning after the age of 16, arrangements for adoption and fostering and children's homes. Only childminders and the pupil referral unit fall below this very high standard because over 40% of childminders remain only satisfactory, although showing significant recent improvement, as is the pupil referral unit.

A recent unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services found significant strengths and no areas in need of priority action.

National measures of performance show the very large majority of outcomes are in line with or above those for similar areas or nationally, including all outcomes for educational attainment and progress. Standards in primary and secondary schools, already well above similar areas, continue to rise. Children and young people, including those from low-income families and those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning. Gaps in educational attainment for key vulnerable groups that are almost all smaller than in similar authorities and nationally have closed well, although some got bigger in 2009. Despite consistent reduction in recent years, poor attendance in secondary schools rose in 2009 to match levels in similar authorities.

Key areas for further development

- Improve childminders further so that more are good or better and the pupil referral unit from satisfactory to at least good.
- Reduce numbers of pupils with poor attendance in secondary schools.

Outcomes for children and young people

Local arrangements to encourage children and young people to live healthy lifestyles are mostly very successful but weaker from childminders and in the pupil referral unit. Improvements include more mothers breast-feeding and far fewer five-year-olds who are too overweight. Despite many more young people taking part in sport regularly and many who are very satisfied with parks and playgrounds, more 11-

year-olds are seriously overweight. Fewer children and young people than nationally consider they get on well with their friends and family but children in care are positive about themselves and their friendships. Low and rapidly reducing numbers of young women under the age of 18 become pregnant and more young mothers are in education, training or work.

Arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are almost always good or outstanding but weaker for childminders. Within the community, fewer children are now killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents and fewer are admitted to hospital because they are accidentally or deliberately injured. Fewer children run away from home or care than nationally. In front-line child protection services, high numbers of referrals are assessed by a social worker and high numbers of initial and full assessments are completed on time. Inspection found prompt action, suitable decisions, timely and at least satisfactory assessments, good record keeping and regular supervision that minimised risk to children. Relative weaknesses were: not taking enough account of cultural issues and the views of children in their assessments. Successful action now results in far fewer children with plans in place to protect them from harm needing another plan after the first one has ended. Most meetings to review these plans are held on time. Children in care now have fewer placement moves and almost all meetings to review their plans are held on time.

Services and settings are very successful at helping children and young people to achieve highly, although the pupil referral unit is weaker. The achievement of five-year-olds has improved quickly, and significantly so in 2009, but the gap for those not doing as well has closed more slowly than expected locally. Pupils in primary schools make good progress and for 16-year-olds, higher grade examination results improved significantly in 2009. All secondary schools continue to meet minimum standards for pupil performance and average numbers continue to have good or outstanding standards of behaviour. Poor attendance in secondary schools has now increased although it is no worse than in similar areas. Permanent exclusions from school are above national figures.

Almost all services and settings give outstanding support to children and young people to contribute to their communities. Average numbers take part in organised activities and about the same number as in similar authorities say they have been drunk or taken drugs recently. Far fewer young people now break the law for the first time, re-offending is reducing, although remaining above similar areas, and numbers sentenced to custody remain average. Average numbers of young offenders are in education, training or work but fewer are now in suitable accommodation.

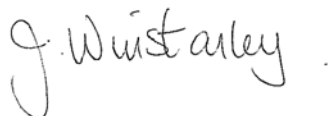
Services and settings give very strong support to achieving economic well-being, although less so in the pupil referral unit. Average numbers of young people remain in education, training or work. By the age of 19, those from low-income families are much better qualified than others in the country. The large majority of young people leaving care remain in education, training or employment and all have a suitable place to live. Average numbers of low-income families make use of the funding available for childcare.

Prospects for improvement

Outcomes continue to improve, as do educational standards that are already very high. Most services and settings contribute very strongly to the overall well-being of children and young people, and the local authority is absolutely determined that all will succeed. It sets challenging targets and involves young people in deciding on key areas of work very well. Data are used particularly well to target important areas, partners work very well together and all actions are reviewed thoroughly to make sure that they are making a difference. Resources are used creatively to set up highly successful and innovative projects and best practice is shared very well. The Children and Young People's Plan shows well chosen priorities to tackle weaknesses, good and well targeted actions, considerable success and a clear understanding of what still needs to be done to improve outcomes further. The unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services found clear leadership, strong commitment to improve an already highly performing service, competent staff and regular monitoring, including by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The youth offending service is performing well against national measures and has good capacity and capability to sustain and improve its performance further.

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 cursive script, reading "J. Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment