



# Joint area review

Report for children and young people

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

- 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 Islington in November and December 2006 so that they could get a feel of what life is like for children and young people in the area. They:

- ❖ talked/listened to a number of children and young people
- ❖ looked at answers to the 'Tellus' survey questionnaires
- ❖ talked with adults working with children and young people (like 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 some members of the youth forums
- ❖ heard what the council and other organisations think about the services they provide for children
- ❖ read other reports written recently about how things are in Islington and
- ❖ visited groups, schools and services in the EC1 neighbourhood 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 Islington?

- ❖ Most children and young people are healthy but there are big differences in how healthy some are compared with others.
- ❖ Compared with other areas of England, more children under five have tooth decay than is usual and more children and young people in some age groups are overweight for their height and age.
- ❖ Not all pupils and students do as well at school in Islington compared with other areas of the country but they are catching up.

- ❖ Attendance at school is getting better. Most secondary school students, children who are looked after by the council and those who have a learning difficulty or disability attend school regularly.
- ❖ Most children and young people take part to some extent in local activities and give their views on school and community issues.
- ❖ The majority behave well and act responsibly.
- ❖ The proportion of young people getting the expected level of qualifications for 19-year olds is lower than in similar areas.
- ❖ More than 4 out of 10 under 19 year olds live in overcrowded flats or houses.

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

- ❖ The great majority of children and young people who answered our survey told us that they feel healthy and are getting on well at school.
- ❖ Young people told us that they feel safe in most parts of Islington.
- ❖ Young people think that schools and Young People's Services - youth and play centres - provide safe places to go.
- ❖ However, although it is rare, bullying is a worry for a few young people in some schools. Some young people fear being mugged or attacked at night and on buses if they go out alone.
- ❖ Many children and young people like living near the centre of London and enjoy going to theatres and big national events with their schools or youth organisations. It is easy to find interesting things to do in the area.
- ❖ The IZZ card (discount scheme) helps more children and young people take up activities.
- ❖ Although many think it is fairly easy to have a say in the way things are run in schools and in the area, very few children and young people think that their views make a lot of difference. More young people would like to get involved and to be more influential.
- ❖ It is easy to get help with problems and get advice needed to make decisions.

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

- ❖ The council and other organisations want the best for all children and young people.

- ❖ The council and other organisations work very closely together to keep children and young people safe from abuse and accidents and to prevent them from coming into council care.
- ❖ Active lifestyles and healthy eating are encouraged.
- ❖ Children and young people who are ill, especially those children who are looked after by the council or who have learning difficulties or disabilities, can easily get treatment when they need it.
- ❖ A great deal of attention has been paid to improving education in Islington. Overall, more children are doing well and getting on better at school than 5 or 6 years ago. There are good schemes to help pupils. Mentors give a lot of help with settling in, reading and building self-confidence to help more pupils learn well.
- ❖ Organisations like the Youth Offending Team and police work very closely with the council to help keep anti-social behaviour and youth crime down in the area. Young people have come up with some very exciting schemes to fight bullying and crime.

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

There are some things that we mention in the report that cannot be put right quickly for children and young people, such as the number of families where adults do not have well paid work and not having enough of the bigger types of rented flats and houses for larger families.

There are other things that we mention in the report because the council and other organisations can take notice and do something quickly to make improvements.

- ❖ Some primary school pupils and students in the pupil referral units have too many days off school. This slows down their progress and makes work harder for others in their schools.
- ❖ There is not enough help for young people to learn in work-based settings, take up training and prepare for different types of work or carry on with education after they are 16.
- ❖ Opportunities for children and young people to share good ideas for participation and helping each other should be better coordinated.
- ❖ We found that some arrangements for the council and other organisations to work together are not as good as they could be. We have asked them to tighten up their procedures and asked them to make it clear how they work together in the *Children and Young People's Plan*.