

9 December 2009

Mrs Judith Pettersen
Director of Children's Services and Lifelong Learning
London Borough of Hounslow
The Civic Centre
Lampton Road
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Middlesex
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Dear Mrs Pettersen

Children's services annual rating

Ofsted guidance published in May 2009 explained that the annual rating would derive from a new performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. This profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the council has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant *Every Child Matters* indicators in the new National Indicator Set (NIS).

In considering the evidence in the profile to determine the children's services rating for 2009 it has become clear that the continuing gaps in the data are significant, particularly those relating to aspects of social care and services for Looked After Children. Ofsted has decided therefore to use 2009 as a transitional year easing into the full application of the new system in 2010. As a consequence, although the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's rating, we have interpreted the performance bands with flexibility and exercised professional judgement with caution.

The annual rating 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, a rating of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, a rating of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects.

Children's services rating 2009

Children's services rating	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in the London Borough of Hounslow perform well.

The overall effectiveness of the majority of inspected services and settings is good or better. A higher than average proportion of primary and school sixth forms is judged to be good or outstanding. Although eight secondary schools inspected are good or outstanding, six are satisfactory and so performance overall is below similar areas and the national average. Achievement at Key Stages 2 and 4 is in line with comparators and the performance of minority ethnic groups shows good improvement overall. Almost all secondary schools have good or outstanding standards of behaviour and persistent absence is very low and reducing. However, although reducing, permanent exclusions from school are very high. The general further education and tertiary provider is good. Provision overall contributes to very high and increasing numbers in education or training after the age of 16 and improving achievement of level 2 and 3 qualifications by the age of 19. For children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable, the quality of provision is good or better overall. Three special schools are outstanding but one is satisfactory, showing performance below similar areas and the national picture. The two pupil referral units are both good, so performance is above comparators.

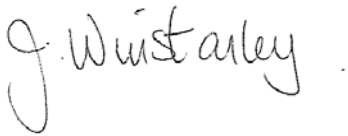
In the Early Years Foundation Stage, achievement is in line with similar areas and that found nationally and is improving, although provision for young children is mixed. The proportion of nurseries that are good or better is greater than comparator and national averages. Childminders also show performance above similar areas and that found nationally, even though one third are satisfactory. Childcare settings show performance below similar areas and the national picture as just under half are satisfactory. Both childcare and childminders show only adequate provision for staying safe. For looked after children, fostering and adoption agencies are good, as are private fostering arrangements. One of two children's homes is outstanding while the other is satisfactory. Here, performance is below similar areas and that seen nationally, again partly because of only adequate provision for staying safe. Looked after children achieve in line with their peers at Key Stage 2 and increasing numbers of care leavers are in education, training or employment; the length of placements for the former has improved significantly. An unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need found one area for priority action which has been addressed very rapidly. The recent inspection of safeguarding and looked after children found good services for both, with outstanding provision for equality and diversity.

Performance against the very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is at least in line with similar areas and broadly in line with or better than the national figure, although there are weaknesses in four of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The difference in the performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and others

of the same age is in line with or smaller than similar areas and the national figure. Gaps are closing most noticeably in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils eligible for free school meals at Key Stage 2.

The children's services rating is provided for the purpose of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The rating of local authority children's services will contribute significantly to the managing performance theme of each local authority's Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) organisational assessment and therefore to the score for each local authority overall.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA