

9 December 2010

Mr Andrew Ireland  
Group Director, Social Care and Learning  
London Borough of Havering  
Town Hall, Main Road  
Romford, Essex  
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Dear Mr Ireland

## **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 Havering children's services assessment 2010

<b>Children's services assessment</b>	<b>Performs excellently (4)</b>
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Children's services in the London Borough of Havering perform excellently.

A very large majority of types of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better. High proportions of childcare provision, primary schools, nurseries within primary schools and pupil referral units are good. All of the colleges, school sixth forms, and special schools in the borough are good or better. Secondary schools are not as good, as inspections show just over half are good or better. Very little provision in the borough is inadequate. However, two primary schools are inadequate, whereas in the previous year no schools were in this category. The local fostering and adoption agencies are good.

An unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services identified some strengths, but more areas for development.

National performance measures show a very large majority of outcomes are in line with or above the averages for England or for similar areas; although outcomes for making a positive contribution are not as strong as other areas. Results in national tests and examinations for five-, 11- and 16-year-olds are very high. Nineteen-year-olds also obtain more qualifications than those in similar areas. Children and young people from lower-income families or with special educational needs achieve well and generally do better than those with similar backgrounds in other local authorities.

### Key areas for further development

- Improve secondary schools so more are good or better.

## Outcomes for children and young people

Most local services and settings are good at encouraging children and young people to live healthy lives. A high number of schools have achieved the healthy schools award. Further progress has been made in developing effective services for children and young people with emotional and mental health problems, notably for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities. In recent surveys, children and young people have consistently indicated their relationships with family and friends are better than in similar areas or the rest of England. However, parents with disabled children reported lower levels of satisfaction with local services than those in similar areas. The range of opportunities and levels of access to leisure and sports facilities have increased considerably. Consequently, the number of children and young people regularly taking part in sporting activities has risen rapidly in the last two years and is above average. Local partners know they need to increase the number of mothers who are still breast-feeding their babies when they are six to eight weeks old. Obesity among 11-year-olds is falling, so that it is now lower than in

similar areas. However, improvements in obesity levels among five-year-olds have not been maintained and are consistently higher than in similar areas.

Arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are almost always good. An unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services in August 2010 found staff morale is high and there is a strong commitment to improving services. Processes are in place to ensure decisions about taking no further action about a referral are consistent. However, further work is needed to ensure all cases of children in need are allocated to a social worker in a timely manner. Not all cases are closed as soon as they could be and this limits the capacity of social workers to take on new cases. The stability of short-term placements for children in care remain well below average. Arrangements for ensuring children and young people are safe in the community are 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. Relatively low numbers of children are admitted to hospital because they have been injured, either accidentally or deliberately. In recent surveys significantly fewer children report they have been bullied than in similar areas or the rest of England.

Most childcare, schools, colleges and other settings and services are good at helping children and young people to do well and enjoy their learning. The achievement of children and young people in Havering is very high throughout the time they are at nursery and at school. The rate of improvement has kept pace with similar areas and the rest of England for 16-year-olds, but has been slower for five- and 11-year-olds. Attendance in primary and secondary schools is improving. The number of secondary pupils who are frequently absent from school has fallen significantly in the last two years. Behaviour is not good in as many secondary schools as in other similar authorities. Children and young people from lower-income families and those with special educational needs generally achieve better than those in similar areas, both at primary and secondary school. However, the local authority would like to reduce the difference in their achievement and that of their peers. It has been successful in significantly improving the achievement of 11- and 16-year-olds in its care. The number of special needs assessments that are produced on time is much lower than the average for the rest of England.

Most schools and other settings are good at involving children and young people in decision making and their community, but the local adoption agency is adequate in this area. Relatively high numbers of young women under the age of 18 become pregnant. Local services have had variable success in reducing this number. The most recent information shows numbers have risen, in contrast to a continuing falling trend in the rest of England. A variety of activities have been undertaken to raise young people's awareness of the consequences of anti-social behaviour. Targeted activities organised for those most at risk of committing anti-social behaviour are proving successful. Fewer young people commit offences for the first time than in similar areas and the rest of England and the number is falling. However, re-offending by young people in Havering has increased and remains worse than similar areas. Young offenders' access to suitable accommodation has declined and now is much lower than in the rest of England.

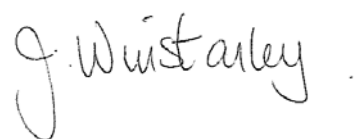
Colleges and schools are working together to provide 14- to 19-year-olds in the borough with suitable education and training opportunities. Eight secondary schools and both colleges in Havering are involved in the delivery of five diplomas. The young apprenticeship programme has been expanded to cover four sectors. More young people are continuing with their learning when they are aged 16 and 17. The proportion of young people who take no part in education, training or work continues to fall and is much lower than in similar areas. Nineteen-year-olds are very successful in obtaining qualifications which are the equivalent of five or more higher grade GCSEs. Their success in obtaining qualifications which are the equivalent of two or more A levels has been more variable in recent years. Standards fell in 2008 but largely recovered in 2009 when the improvement was larger than average. Young people from lower-income families achieve very well.

### **Prospects for improvement**

Most outcomes for children and young people in Havering are improving. A review of the Children and Young People's Plan by the local authority and its partners identifies very good progress in important areas. For example, the improved attendance at primary and secondary schools and an increase in the number of children and young people who continue with their education when they are aged 16. It is also clear about what still needs to be done. Good partnership working is demonstrated through the success in reducing obesity among 11-year-olds and the impact of activities to make young people aware of the consequences of anti-social behaviour. However, local services have not had the same level of success in consistently reducing the number of teenage pregnancies. The recent inspection of front-line child protection services found partners did not always understand the criteria for referring children to social services, which has resulted in an increased referral rate. Ofsted monitoring visits to the small number of weaker schools show the local authority's support has been purposeful and well received and is helping them to improve.

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, reading "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment