

9 December 2010

Mr David Archibald
Executive Director of Children and Adults
London Borough of Ealing
5/NE/2 Perceval House
14-16 Uxbridge Road
Ealing, London W5 2HL

Dear Mr Archibald

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.

London Borough of Ealing children's services assessment 2010

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Ealing continue to perform well.

The majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better and very few are inadequate. All do particularly well at supporting learning and achievement and a large majority do well at keeping children and young people safe.

The majority of provision for young children is good but too many childminders and too much childcare is only satisfactory. Nursery and primary schools are mostly good. None of the latter are now inadequate but over 40% are only satisfactory so they are not doing as well as elsewhere. Secondary schools are doing much better than in the rest of the country. After the age of 16, no school sixth forms are now inadequate but too many are only satisfactory. Further education is satisfactory, having improved from inadequate. Special schools are good or outstanding and the pupil referral unit is good. Services for children in care remain a strength. Children's homes run by the local authority are good. Of the two independent children's homes, one is good and the other satisfactory. Arrangements for adoption and fostering are good or outstanding.

An unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services found a number of key strengths and no areas in need of urgent action. Private fostering arrangements are good.

National measures of performance show almost all outcomes in line with or above those for similar areas or nationally. This is the case for all measures of educational attainment. Standards are average and rising for five-, 11-, 16- and 19-year-olds. Gaps in attainment for key vulnerable groups, that are mostly smaller than in similar areas and nationally, continue to close well, apart from 16 year-olds with special educational needs where the gap has got consistently bigger. Gaps for five- and 11-year-olds from low-income families or with special educational needs are closing faster than elsewhere in the country. Too few families with low income make use of the funding available for childcare.

Key areas for further development

- Improve childminders and childcare, primary schools and school sixth forms so that more are good or better.
- Reduce the gap in educational attainment for 16-year-olds with special educational needs.
- Improve the take up of funding for childcare by low-income families.

Outcomes for children and young people

Local arrangements to encourage children and young people to live healthy lives are improving outcomes successfully. Settings and services are mostly outstanding in this respect, although childminders and childcare are less so. Above average numbers of mothers breast-feed and parents of disabled children are satisfied with the services they receive. More children now take part in sport regularly, about the same number remain satisfied with parks and playgrounds and more primary-aged pupils are having school lunches. However, more five-year-olds and slightly more 11-year-olds are too overweight. Fewer children are now concerned about relationships with their friends and family, due in part to positive work in schools. Children in care are very satisfied with their placements. Fewer young women under 18 become pregnant and more are returning to education, training or work after having their baby.

Arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are mostly highly effective in settings and services, although childminders and childcare are weaker. Within the community, fewer children now are killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents and far fewer have been bullied. A few more are admitted to hospital because they are injured either accidentally or deliberately, although numbers remain below average. Front-line child protection services are run well and young people are mostly involved in decisions that affect them. Average numbers of referrals are assessed by social workers, although some could be prevented if partners worked more closely together. Average numbers of initial and full assessments continue to be carried out on time but these vary in quality. Fewer plans to protect children from harm are now lasting for longer than they should, but more children need another plan when the first one ends. All meetings to review these plans are still held on time. Children in care do not move places as often as those in other parts of the country and they stay where they are for longer. Almost all meetings to review their plans are also held on time.

All services and settings are highly successful in helping children and young people to do well in their learning and outcomes are improving well. Most assessments of special educational needs are completed on time. The local authority made sure that its one previously weak primary school made good progress. The achievement of the youngest children has got consistently better and the gap for those not doing as well in their learning is closing quickly. Pupils in primary schools make above average progress and those in care achieve as well as their peers nationally. All secondary schools continue to meet minimum standards and results continue to improve, but 16-year-olds with special educational needs are falling further behind. More young people take up learning diplomas than in similar local authorities but far fewer than nationally. Previously poor attendance in secondary schools has reduced well.

Services and settings are mostly very successful in helping children and young people make a positive contribution to their communities and there are many opportunities for them to express their views on how services can be improved. More young people now take part in organised activities outside of school and fewer report using drink and drugs. Fewer now break the law for the first time and fewer do so more than once, but more are sentenced to custody. Almost all young people who

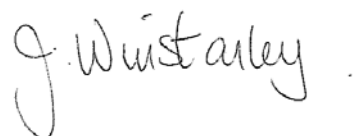
offend are now in education, work or training and have a suitable place to live. Permanent exclusions from school are lower than elsewhere, due to successful work with schools and families.

The large majority of services and settings support children and young people to achieve economic well-being well. More 17-year-olds now stay in education or training and by the age of 19, young people are becoming increasingly better qualified. The large majority of those leaving care still continue in education, training or work and all remain in suitable accommodation. Fewer families with low income make use of funding available for childcare than in the rest of the country.

Prospects for improvement

Outcomes for children and young people are improving well but too many settings are only satisfactory. The local authority's extremely thorough review of its Children and Young People's Plan shows strong and successful partnerships, clear priorities, well considered action and good outcomes. The needs of children, young people and families are known well. There is strong support for those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and disadvantaged and work is targeted in areas of the borough that need it most. Tackling educational under-achievement is a key priority and strong support to the local authority's one weak school has contributed to its good progress in no longer needing help to improve. Ofsted's monitoring visits to satisfactory schools show at least satisfactory progress. Data are used well to set targets for improvement, to track progress and to make sure services offer good value. The recent inspection of front-line child protection services reported strong management of performance that was improving services and prompt action to fill vacancies, but also variation across teams. The youth offending service works and performs well against national measures. It has good capacity and capability to sustain and improve its performance.

Yours sincerely

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

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment