

Joint area review

London Borough of Ealing Children's Services Authority Area

Review of services for children and young people

Adult Learning Inspectorate
Audit Commission
Commission for Social Care Inspection
Healthcare Commission
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
HM Inspectorate of Court Administration
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
HM Inspectorate of Probation
Ofsted

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Introduction

1. This joint area review was conducted using the arrangements required under Section 20 of the Children Act 2004. It was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of eight inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), the Healthcare Commission (CHAI), the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and the Audit Commission. The review was undertaken according to the requirements of the *Framework for the inspection of children's services*.

2. The review was linked to the contemporaneous corporate assessment of the local council by the Audit Commission and its findings are represented in the relevant part of the corporate assessment report.

3. This review describes the outcomes achieved by children and young people growing up in the Ealing area and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and are well prepared to secure economic well-being.

4. The review evaluates the collective contribution made to each outcome for children and young people by relevant services in the area. It also judges the contributions made by the council's services overall and, specifically, its education and children's social care services. Particular attention is given to joint action by local services on behalf of those groups of children and young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes. Two such groups are covered in detail: children and young people who are looked after by the council, and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

5. The review took place in two stages consisting in total of three weeks over a six-week period. The first stage reviewed all existing evidence including:

- self-assessment undertaken by local public service providers
- a survey of children and young people
- performance data
- the findings of the contemporaneous inspection of the youth service
- planning documents
- information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day care provision
- evidence gathered during the earlier Youth Offending Team inspection
- briefings from staff within inspectorates, commissions and other public bodies in contact with local providers.

6. The second stage included inspection fieldwork. This included studies of how far local services have improved outcomes for a small sample of children and young people, some of whom have the most complex needs, and a study

of provision in one neighbourhood in South Acton. It also included gathering evidence on 10 key judgements, selected because of their critical importance to improving outcomes for children and young people in the local area. This included discussions with elected members of the council and their equivalents in other public agencies, officers from these agencies, service users, and community representatives. A review of case files for children and young people receiving support from a number of local agencies was also included.

Context

7. Ealing is the third largest borough in London, with a total population of over 303,000 people and approximately 75,000 children and young people aged 0–19. It is a highly diverse borough, with a young and fast-changing population. Over 40% of residents come from ethnic minorities, making Ealing the fourth most ethnically diverse borough in the country. This includes significant numbers of refugees and asylum seekers. There is a large Polish community, an increasing number of Somalian families and the largest Sikh population outside India. Its diversity is reflected in its maintained school population, where 72% were recently classified as being of minority ethnic origin compared with 17% nationally. Overall, the population of 0–19 year olds is expected to increase by 5% by 2011, a lower growth rate than between 1991 and 2001.

8. The area is a strong economic centre that boasts prosperous employment and above average income levels and life expectancy. The job growth rate is three times that of the rest of the UK. The borough is an area of contrasts and, despite areas of affluence, areas of high deprivation are reflected in low household incomes, high levels of benefit dependency and poorer health and education outcomes. The most deprived areas are concentrated in Northolt, Norwood Green, Dormer Wells, social housing estates in west and central Ealing and also South Acton, which was the focus of the neighbourhood study in this review.

9. The council maintains four infant schools, four junior schools, 54 primary schools, 12 high schools and six special schools. There is one City Academy in the borough. There is also a study centre (pupil referral unit) based on two sites. The council looks after 442 children and young people. At the time of the inspection, 305 children and young people were on the Child Protection Register. Ten children's centres have already been established, with plans for a further 12 to be developed by 2008. The Extended Schools strategy is on target.

10. London West Learning and Skills Council (LSC) works in partnership with the council, college, training providers and schools in addressing the 14–19 strategy. Post-16 education and training in the borough are provided by a college and eight work-based training providers. A number of young people are also engaged in work-based learning with providers in adjoining boroughs.

Adult and community learning, including family learning, are provided by the council in partnership with other providers, including the voluntary sector.

11. Primary care for children is provided by the Ealing Primary Care Trust (PCT), which is coterminous with the London Borough of Ealing. Ealing Hospital NHS Trust is the main provider of acute health services. Other children's hospital services and accident and emergency (A&E) services are provided by Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust, which also provides services to surrounding areas. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are provided by the West London Mental Health NHS Trust. The trusts providing health services for the children of Ealing, including the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust, fall within the London Strategic Health Authority (formerly North West London Strategic Health Authority) from July 2006.

12. The council has responded to the Every Child Matters agenda. In April 2006, there was a restructuring of the former children's social services and education departments. The new Children's Services Management Team comprises the Executive Director for Children and Adults (Statutory Director of Children's Services), a Director of Children and Families and a Director of Schools Services, together with six Assistant Directors. There is a strategic Children's Executive Group in place and the Ealing Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership oversees implementation of the Change for Children agenda on a multi-agency basis.

Summary Report

Outcomes for children and young people

13. **Outcomes for children and young people in Ealing are good.** Children and young people are generally healthy, appear to be safe, achieve well and enjoy school, make a good contribution to society and most are well prepared for achieving economic well-being as adults. Health outcomes are good, with primary immunisation rates better than in similar authorities. The proportion of expectant mothers smoking during pregnancy is low and the breastfeeding uptake rates at delivery and six to eight weeks later are good and better than in similar authorities. Teenage conception rates are low and better than national averages. While rates for sexually transmitted diseases are above the national average, especially Chlamydia infections, a range of initiatives is being used to improve outcomes. Access to non-specialist CAMHS is good.

14. All children on the Child Protection Register and looked after children have allocated social workers and their plans are regularly and effectively reviewed. Stability of placement for looked after children has significantly improved and is now at 92.3%. There is good multi-agency support and collaboration in safeguarding children with disabilities.

15. Education outcomes at the end of the Foundation Stage and at age seven are below the national averages. The standards achieved at ages 11 and 14 are similar to those nationally, but achievement and standards at Key Stage 4 are improving at a faster rate than those nationally and are now good. Achievement by looked after children is better than the national average and there is good progression to further and higher education. A higher than average number of young people go on to employment, education or training. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate levels of support to help them in moving from school to post-16 education and training.

16. The views of over 8,500 children and young people contributed to the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and most say that it is easy for them to have a say in how their schools are run. They also have an influence in their local area. Re-offending figures in Ealing are broadly in line with those in similar authorities and with national averages, although first-time offending figures are generally higher than in similar authorities.

The impact of local services

17. **The impact of local services in improving outcomes for children and young people is good.** The council and its partners have clear ambitions for improving outcomes for children and young people in Ealing. Their vision is set out well in the CYPP. Partnership working is well established and includes voluntary and private sector agencies. Strong leadership by senior officers and councillors is leading to improvements in services. Collaboration and understanding between the council and both the police and health services is particularly good at the strategic level. There is agreement about shared goals and priorities and evidence that resources are being directed to these areas to ensure sustained improvements. The council is increasingly pro-active in re-directing resources to needs. For example, additional funding has been made available to raise the attainment of black and minority ethnic groups and there is some evidence that gaps in attainment are beginning to close. Some well-targeted initiatives, for example, the development of an integrated service for children with disabilities, are beginning to make a notable difference. The partnership is reaching a shared understanding of how it can maximise the effective use of resources through joint commissioning. A comprehensive joint strategy has been agreed, but it is too soon for this to have had an impact. There is a strong emphasis on preventative work and the Family Solutions project is very well regarded by partners and users of the service. Children and young people are widely consulted and there has been good involvement of children and young people in the development of the CYPP. The capacity of the council and its partners to improve further is good.

Being healthy

18. **The impact of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good.** Partnership working between agencies and the interface between health services is good. Parents and carers access a good

range of universal and targeted support services to keep their children healthy. Multi-agency workers proactively target and support vulnerable parents and carers, resulting in positive outcomes for children and their families. There are generally good preventative services in place to improve the health and well-being of children and young people. CAMHS staff provide ongoing support to front-line colleagues in other agencies in identifying and supporting children and young people with mental health problems. There is a good range of CAMHS services. However, some stakeholders are dissatisfied with access to specialist services at tiers 3 and 4, primarily due to appropriately high thresholds and eligibility criteria, which are not understood well enough by those referring. The provision of immunisation is good, although the uptake is insufficient to fully protect children against preventable diseases. Currently, there is no baseline target for reducing obesity in children and young people, although the council and its partners are pro-active in promoting healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. The health care of looked after children has improved, with a good proportion now receiving health assessments, including those placed out of the borough. Children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from coordinated, multi-agency assessments and interventions.

Staying safe

19. **The impact of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** There is good information and advice for parents, carers, young people and professionals on safety issues and effective road safety initiatives. Multi-agency work to reduce bullying, discrimination, anti-social behaviour and domestic violence is good. Safe recruitment procedures and practices are used by all agencies. Effective systems are in place to identify and refer concerns, which are appropriately investigated. The high number of children in need referrals result in initial assessments being carried out that then require no further action. While this is safe, it takes up too much social work time and indicates that other agencies do not understand thresholds for children's social care services. Families are offered good support to prevent the need for children and young people to be looked after. Multi-agency training is good and well attended by all agencies. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is well structured, effective and well represented. Effective child protection procedures are in place and these are monitored well. All children on the Child Protection Register are allocated a qualified social worker and reviews are held regularly, with good representation from appropriate organisations, parents and young people.

20. Looked after children receive good multi-agency support. However, systems for keeping young people and carers informed of key staff changes are not good enough. Care leavers receive good support. There is good multi-agency networking and support, with effective safeguarding practice for children with physical disabilities, particularly respite care provision. However, there is insufficient respite provision to meet needs.

Enjoying and achieving

21. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is good.** The council works very effectively with its partners to ensure that children and young people enjoy life and achieve well. There are currently 10 children's centres across the borough providing a wide range of good quality childcare, education, family learning and parenting support services. The provision of early years child care and education is good and improving in the majority of settings, although the proportion of children reaching expected goals by the age of five is lower than the national average. An increasing number of children in early years settings are in the very early stages of learning English, and high mobility of families exists in parts of the borough. The standards achieved by children at the end of Key Stage 1 are below the national average.

22. However, the quality of secondary education in the borough is good; children and young people in secondary schools make good progress. Standards achieved at ages 11 and 14 are similar to those nationally and young people achieve above average standards at Key Stage 4. Improvements have been made in the attainment of groups of young people who had previously been identified as under-achieving. For example, funding mechanisms to meet the needs of pupils from different Black and minority ethnic groups has been revised and, as a result, some gaps in levels of attainment are closing. Standards achieved by looked after children are improving and a much higher than average proportion progress into further and higher education. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress at school.

23. The number of exclusions from school has fallen recently and provision is improving for children and young people educated in non-school settings. The authority has recognised that more work is needed to promote and support successful reintegration into mainstream schools. Children and young people have access to an adequate range of recreational and sporting activities.

Making a positive contribution

24. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** A strong commitment by the council and its partners has led to good participation of children and young people in decision making. Over 8,500 children and young people contributed their views to the CYPP. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities contribute well at their annual conference and those who are looked after engage very actively on a regular basis with the Corporate Parenting Committee. The Ealing Youth Action Forum is developing well. While consultation is very good and involvement is widening, some participation remains too recent to have had an impact on services and feedback mechanisms are not yet fully embedded. A good range of supportive

programmes enables children and young people to develop socially and emotionally, and to manage change and cope with difficult periods in their lives. The commitment to providing good mentoring is helping children and young people to manage particular challenges, such as when they transfer to other schools. While the quality of youth provision is good, the range of activities and facilities, and the extent of outreach work, is too limited to reach and engage all young people across the borough.

25. Increasingly cohesive multi-agency work identifies and supports children and young people at risk from anti-social behaviour. A wide range of preventative services is available. The selective use of dispersal and anti-social behaviour orders complements preventative work which matches the circumstances of individuals. Youth offending work has a good focus on supporting families. The youth offending service has significantly improved its performance over the past two years and effective action is taken to prevent and reduce offending, although overall re-offending figures remain adequate when compared to other authorities. First-time offending figures are generally higher than similar authorities. While coordinated multi-agency work is developing well and having a positive impact, partners remain well aware of the continuing need to work ever more closely with all members of local communities to reduce anti-social behaviour and youth offending.

Achieving economic well-being

26. **The impact of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good.** The support that families receive from the council and its partners to achieve economic well-being is good. There are a significant number of subsidised childcare places across the borough. Parents and carers have good access to information about childcare, employment and benefits through a wide network of well-used information points. Arrangements for vocational programmes for 14–16 year olds are excellent, with very effective collaboration between the college and the schools to ensure programmes meet the needs of young people. Planning and coordination of 14–19 education and training, led by the council, is very good and this has helped to increase the number of young people engaged in education, employment and training and to improved attainment at Key Stage 4, although involvement of work-based learning providers in 14–19 planning is limited. The number of apprenticeship opportunities in the borough is low. The council is aware of this and, in close collaboration with the LSC, is taking significant steps to improve the situation.

27. Regeneration work is well planned to target areas most in need and addresses the needs of children and young people. Effective action is taken to ensure that families have decent housing and the council is on target to achieve the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. Arrangements for homeless families are good, with many moving directly into permanent accommodation.

28. There is good support for care leavers. The drop-in centre is effective and the council ensures that there is good access to quality accommodation. All care leavers have a pathway plan which is regularly reviewed and updated, although some young people report that they are insufficiently involved. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have appropriate transition plans, drawn up in accordance with the council's procedures.

Service management

29. **The management of services for children and young people is good.** The capacity to improve further is good. The council and its partners have clear ambitions for improving outcomes for children and young people in Ealing and their vision is set out well in the CYPP. This reflects a comprehensive analysis of need across the borough and the contribution made by children and young people. Staff across the partnership, and at different levels in the various agencies, share a good understanding of what the CYPP is trying to achieve. The planning regime is organised well to take forward the CYPP's priorities, though outcomes and success criteria are not always specific enough. Budget setting and service planning are well integrated and resources are allocated effectively to priorities.

30. The capacity of the partnership to achieve its aims is good. Leadership is positive and partners are well engaged. The partnership itself has clear, well-organised governance arrangements. It is beginning to develop a joint commissioning approach as well as a joint strategy for workforce development. The council's financial management is good and there is a strong focus on improving value for money, which is good. Performance management is good and based on high quality information and monitoring systems. The partners know well how their performance compares with others and careful monitoring of performance has led to management action to improve outcomes. The capacity of the council and its partners to improve further is good. This is based on a good track record overall, good leadership and management and a sound knowledge of current strengths and areas for development.

Grades

Grades awarded:

4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate

	Local services overall	Council services	Health services
Being healthy	3		
Staying safe	3		
Enjoying and achieving	3		
Making a positive contribution	3		
Achieving economic well-being	3		
Service management	3		
Capacity to improve	3	3	
Children's services		3	
The education service		3	
The social care services for children		3	
The health service for children			3

Recommendations

For immediate action

The council and its partners should:

- ensure that thresholds for CAMHS specialist services are fully understood by all agencies

- ensure that looked after children and young people are fully involved in their pathway plans and kept up to date about changes in their care workers
- ensure that agencies have a clear understanding of the threshold criteria for making referrals to children's social care services.

For action over the next six months

The council and its partners should:

- work with early years settings and schools to target the needs of children for whom English is an additional language
- establish childhood obesity baselines to better inform targeted health promotion and aid future monitoring
- improve the range of youth provision to enable more children and young people to benefit from different activities, better facilities and more extensive outreach work across the borough
- involve work-based learning providers more closely in the planning and implementation of the 14–19 strategy.

For action in the longer term

The council and its partners should:

- work with employers and providers to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities.

Main Report

Outcomes for children and young people

31. Outcomes for children and young people in Ealing are good.

Children and young people are generally healthy, appear to be safe, achieve very well and enjoy school, make a good contribution to society and most are well prepared for achieving economic well-being as adults.

32. Children and young people are generally healthy: teenage conception rates are below the national average; the proportion of expectant mothers smoking during pregnancy is low; the breastfeeding uptake rates at delivery and at six to eight weeks are good; and primary immunisation rates are better than in similar authorities. While rates for sexually transmitted diseases are above the national average, especially Chlamydia infections, a range of initiatives is being used to improve outcomes. Schools are making good progress in implementing the healthy schools programme. Most outcomes for physical health are good and childhood mortality rates have improved and are better than national averages. The incidence of measles is broadly in line with

those in other authorities. Oral health for five year old children in Ealing has improved, although it remains below the England average. Access to non-specialist CAMHS is good. Some stakeholders are dissatisfied with access to specialist services, primarily due to high thresholds and eligibility criteria, which are not understood well enough by those referring. Children and young people who are looked after receive timely health assessments.

33. **Children and young people appear safe.** Good information and safety initiatives have resulted in a reduction in the number children killed or seriously injured in traffic accidents from 35 in 2004 to 19. Work to reduce domestic violence, bullying, discrimination and anti-social behaviour is effective which has helped to make children safer, and any concerns for their safety are promptly referred. Referral and assessment systems ensure that children most at risk are protected. The majority of referrals are for children in need, resulting in initial and core assessments, the timeliness of which have significantly improved and are now in line with national averages. There has been an increase in the number of children on the Child Protection Register from 240 in March 2006 to 278 in October 2006; too many children and young people are deregistered and subsequently placed back onto the register. This has been recognised as an issue and is being monitored to ensure that practice is of consistent quality and in line with agreed thresholds. There is a strong emphasis on preventative work, and families are offered good support to prevent the need for children and young people to be looked after. All children on the Child Protection Register and children looked after have allocated social workers and their plans are regularly and effectively reviewed. However, some children and carers experience several changes of worker and are not kept informed of changes.

34. The stability of placements for looked after children has significantly improved and is now good. A high number are in foster care and more local foster carers have been recruited, but out-of-authority placements remain high. There is good multi-agency support and collaboration in safeguarding children with disabilities, although respite provision is not sufficient to meet demand.

35. **Children and young people achieve well.** They enjoy school and particularly appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided in many settings. Many children enter Key Stage 1 with relatively low prior attainment at the Foundation Stage, and a significant number arrive in schools with little or no English. The standards achieved by children at the end of Key Stage 1 are below the national average. Standards at Key Stage 2 are broadly average, and progress made between Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Standards in secondary schools at Key Stage 3 are broadly average and have improved significantly in recent years. Similarly, there have been notable improvements at Key Stage 4 and the standards achieved are now above the national average. Children and young people make good progress at secondary schools. Improvements have been made in the attainment of groups of young people who had previously been identified as under-achieving. For example, funding to meet the needs of pupils from different Black and minority ethnic groups has been revised and, as a result, some gaps in levels of attainment are

closing. Achievements for looked after children are better than seen nationally and there is good progression to further and higher education. The number of exclusions from schools has fallen in 2006-07 and the rates of attendance are similar to national averages.

36. Children and young people have a good range of opportunities to make decisions and take personal responsibility and many make a good contribution to their communities. Over 8,500 children and young people contributed their views to the CYPP, and 7,000 participated in a health-related survey and were consulted on anti-bullying issues and youth matters. Conferences for children and young people are well attended. Most children and young people say that it is easy to have a say in how their schools are run and have an influence in their local area. Schools are generally good at seeking the involvement of pupils, mostly through school councils. Looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are closely involved in their statutory reviews and generally participate well in consultative activities. Youth service indicators for contact with, and participation by, children and young people in Ealing are improving in line with targets set. Nevertheless, while the quality of youth provision is good, the range of activities and facilities, and the extent of outreach work, remains too limited to reach and engage all young people across the borough. Re-offending figures in Ealing are broadly in line with similar authorities and with national averages, although first-time offending rates are generally higher than in similar authorities. However, the council has significantly improved its performance recently and has exceeded its target for reducing first-time offending at a faster rate than in similar authorities, and it is also performing better than other authorities to reduce re-offending. Over the past year, all young offenders with mental health-related issues have been referred to CAMHS very promptly, with greater efficiency than in similar authorities. The proportion of supervised juveniles in full-time education, training and employment is higher than in other authorities but well below the 90% target.

37. Children and young people are able to achieve economic well-being and are prepared well for working life. Higher than average numbers of young people are involved in employment, education or training. For those who are not, good programmes help them to raise their self-confidence and improve their job-search skills. All 14–16 year olds have the opportunity to take part in work experience and almost all have the opportunity to take programmes with a clear vocational emphasis, in subjects such as radio journalism, construction, hairdressing and computer network maintenance. Excellent collaboration between the schools and the college ensure that these programmes meet the needs of young people. Pass rates and retention at the college are mainly good, and, across the borough, A-level attainment is close to the national average. Success rates on apprenticeships are low and there are insufficient apprentice placements available. Planning and coordination of 14–19 education and training is very good and this has contributed to increased engagement in employment, education or training. However, the involvement of work-based training providers in the planning and implementation of the

strategy has been limited until very recently. Comparatively high and increasing numbers of care leavers are in higher education. They speak positively about the support they receive from the drop-in centre, which gives them a safe place to meet and access to advice about, for example, substance abuse and education and training. All care leavers have pathway plans, although some young people report that they are insufficiently involved in the development of their plans. Care leavers are well supported, with a higher than average number in good quality accommodation. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate levels of support to help them in moving from school to post-16 education and training. They all have transition plans, which are detailed and involve all relevant agencies.

The impact of local services

Being healthy

38. **The work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good.** Partnership working between agencies across the borough and the interface between health services is good. Parents and carers access a good range of universal and targeted support services to keep their children healthy. Multi-agency workers proactively seek out and support vulnerable parents and carers, resulting in positive outcomes for children and their families. For example, the proportion of expectant mothers smoking during pregnancy is low and the breastfeeding uptake rates at delivery and at six to eight weeks are higher than those of statistical neighbours and England averages. The redesign of maternity services has enabled midwives to work in both the community and hospital in a bid to improve the continuity of care. The health visiting liaison service has improved services through health visitors focusing on and following up contacts with parents and carers after A&E attendances. There is a proactive multi-agency approach to identifying and supporting victims of domestic violence, provided within two children's centres and through the Healthy Living initiatives, which are well received by service users.

39. Generally, there are good preventative services in place to improve the health and well-being of children and young people. However, there is a more varied picture on a range of healthy lifestyle and preventative care indicators, but good plans are in place to improve outcomes for children and young people. For example, primary immunisation rates are better than benchmark group averages, although immunisation rates for older children and young people are significantly lower than the England averages. Ongoing, targeted work, opportunistic immunisations and participation on the recent London-wide campaign continues to improve immunisation uptake rates. This recent participation has resulted in an additional 1,729 children vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) of which 744 had never had any MMR vaccination. Teenage conception rates are below London and national averages and Ealing has a good record on reducing teenage pregnancies compared to elsewhere. The comprehensive strategy targets areas with high teenage

conception rates, resulting in a continued downward trend. Sexually transmitted disease rates are above national averages, particularly rates of Chlamydia, but a range of initiatives is being used to improve outcomes. Schools' progress in meeting targets for implementing the healthy schools programme is good. Good partnership working between agencies and parents is raising awareness of healthy lifestyles.

40. The overall physical health of children and young people in Ealing is good, but a few indicators of physical health are below the national average although better than their statistical neighbours. Infant, perinatal and childhood mortality rates are better than in similar authorities and England averages. The incidence of measles for children and young people under 15 years old is broadly in line with benchmark and England averages. Multi-disciplinary working within early years settings is resulting in an increasing proportion of young children with satisfactory speech and language development at the age of two. Oral health for children at five years of age in Ealing is better than some of its statistical neighbours, but worse than the England average despite improvements. However, partnership oral health initiatives are having a good impact on general oral health awareness and access to dental health services. Obesity baselines have not yet been established to inform targeted health promotion work. The council and health partners have acknowledged the need to develop a comprehensive care pathway and specialist multi-disciplinary services for obesity that focus on prevention and treatment in adults and children.

41. The range of CAMHS services at all levels is good. The Willow Team midwifery service provides good support to teenagers who are pregnant and who have mental health problems. Children and young people receive individualised support from school nurses, mentors and other CAMHS staff working with other agencies when they feel troubled. CAMHS staff provide ongoing support to front line colleagues in other agencies in identifying and supporting children and young people with mental health problems. The CAMHS access eligibility criteria for specialist services have been redesigned to make best use of specialist staff and to ensure that services are closely targeted to the needs of children and young people. Access to non-specialist services is good. However, some stakeholders are dissatisfied with access to specialist services at tiers 3 and 4, primarily due to appropriately high thresholds and eligibility criteria, which are not understood well enough by those referring. Children and young people accessing specialist CAMHS receive well-coordinated assessment and treatment. CAMHS work well with colleagues from other agencies, including social services, the youth offending service, the Child Development Team and substance misuse services. Hospital admissions for mental illnesses related to substance misuse and behavioural disorders for young people under the age of 20 are significantly higher than London averages, although in line with similar authorities. Substance misuse services have recently been tendered to a new provider and service users and parents are pleased with the improved provision and interface with CAMHS.

42. The health of looked after children is generally good, and multi-agency collaboration and the proactive work of the looked after children's nurse has increased the number of health assessments undertaken in Ealing and for those living outside the borough. All looked after children under five years of age and 82% of young people have received their health assessments. Their health needs are identified and followed up through focused actions, with good links to other services such as CAMHS, adult mental health, dental health, sexual health and substance misuse services.

43. Effective multi-agency working for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is resulting in needs being identified early and appropriate action taken. Family and community services and child development professionals work very well with other agencies to look after children and young people with complex needs who require ongoing support. Health professionals effectively prepare and support young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for the move from paediatric care to adult health services.

Staying safe

44. **The work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** There is a wide range of user-friendly advice and information on safeguarding children. Good road safety initiatives and information have effectively contributed to low accident rates. Effective multi-agency work supports children involved in domestic violence. There is a good link between safeguarding and community safety initiatives to tackle bullying, discrimination and anti-social behaviour.

45. Multi-agency systems identify those at risk of harm and there are good arrangements for staff and the public to obtain advice and refer concerns. The recording and sharing of information amongst partner agencies is secure. Referral and assessment systems ensure that children most at risk are protected. The high number of children in need referrals results in initial assessments being carried out that then require no further action. While this is safe, it takes up too much social work time and indicates that other agencies do not understand thresholds for children's social care services. Steady progress is being made in implementing the Common Assessment Framework, with good multi-agency involvement that has resulted in the recent establishment of a pilot vulnerable children's service. There is a strong emphasis on preventative work, and families are offered good support to prevent the need for children and young people to be looked after. The Family Solutions project is very well regarded by partners and users of the service.

46. Safe recruitment procedures and practices are in place within the council and partner agencies, including commissioned and voluntary sector services. Complaints about staff are appropriately acted on and the council is implementing new protocols with partner agencies on managing allegations

against staff. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements are very good, with business plans, appropriate representation and detailed case management.

47. A well-constituted LSCB has good representation from different agencies, with good links to other strategic partnerships. It has structured business meetings and a clear business plan. All agencies, including the voluntary sector, actively engage in LSCB working groups. Serious case reviews are appropriately conducted and recommendations are followed through and monitored. The LSCB and its members regularly monitor safeguarding performance and the council has an effective range of audit and performance management systems.

48. Good inter-agency and individual organisation safeguarding procedures, including those of the voluntary sector, are regularly updated. Extensive individual and cross-agency training in child protection meet different levels of need and experience. Training is well attended by all agencies and highly regarded.

49. Social care case records are accurate and up to date following targeted improvements resulting from recent internal case file audits. Similarly, an internal audit on child protections reports found that they varied in quality, although they are now improving as a result of improved management support and training. The number of initial and core assessments completed within timescales has significantly improved and is now broadly similar to comparable authorities. There are good cross-agency protocols and practices to ensure that children missing from education and from care are monitored and supported.

50. Child protection reviews are regularly held, well structured and have good participation from carers and, where appropriate, young people. There has been an increase in numbers of children and young people on the CPR, from 240 in March 2006 to 278 in October 2006. After being removed from the CPR, too many children and young people are subsequently placed back onto the register. This has been recognised as an issue by the LSCB and is being closely monitored to ensure that practice is of consistent quality and in line with agreed thresholds. All children on the CPR are allocated qualified social workers, who visit regularly and coordinate multi-agency core group meetings.

51. Fostering services have good systems to provide safe and caring homes for children who are looked after. Too many looked after children are placed with families outside of Ealing, despite sustained efforts to recruit more local carers. Most out of area placements, however, are within 20 miles of Ealing. Most looked after children are placed appropriately in foster care and there is low usage of residential care. Fostering and Adoption Service Panels assess and review carers efficiently. The Looked After Children Education Team provides good support to young people, carers and staff. All looked after children are allocated qualified social workers and cases are regularly reviewed, with good participation by young people. However, some children experience several changes of worker and are not always kept informed of changes. Care leavers receive good multi-agency support.

52. Currently, there is a high turnover of social workers and extensive use of agency staff. The council is effectively managing the recruitment and retention of social care staff in an innovative way through overseas recruitment. The council provides a good package of support, advice and guidance to new workers and, overall, social workers receive good levels of managerial support and development opportunities and report that they feel valued.

53. There is good multi-agency networking and support for children with disabilities and good awareness of safeguarding supported by individual agency and LSCB training. The development of integrated services is having a positive impact in increased recognition of child protection concerns related to children with disabilities. The quality of respite care provision for children with physical disabilities is excellent. It is safe and supportive, with good partnerships with carers and other agencies. However, respite provision is insufficient to meet the demand. The analysis of the needs of this vulnerable group of children and young people is not comprehensive enough to inform service planning. Transitional support protocols and practices for the transfer of children with physical disabilities to adult services are adequate. Adult respite care is not as closely tailored to needs, making transition arrangements difficult for some young people.

Enjoying and achieving

54. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is good.** The council clearly recognises the strengths of its provision and the areas for improvement. The strategic priorities for the schools service are closely aligned to the key areas for improvement and resources are allocated appropriately to support these priorities. The development of children's centres and the Extended Schools strategy are contributing to improved partnership working throughout the borough and greater opportunities for children and young people.

55. There are clear and detailed strategies for developing provision in children's centres. The 10 children's centres across the borough provide a wide range of good quality childcare, education, family learning and parenting support services. The council is on target to establish a further 12 children's centres by 2008.

56. The provision of early years child care and education is good and improving in the majority of settings. The take-up of free nursery education in the borough is good, and good arrangements ensure effective joint working between the Foundation Stage and primary teams. An increasing number of children in early years settings are in the very early stages of learning English, and high mobility of families exists in parts of the borough. The proportion of children reaching expected goals by the age of five is lower than the national average. In response, the council is working closely with 14 schools that have been targeted for extra support to address low Foundation Stage attainment.

57. Inspection outcomes for primary schools indicate weaknesses in the quality of provision. So far, interventions to improve the leadership and management of some primary schools have had limited impact. Thus, developing leadership skills in primary schools is a key priority for the council, with an emphasis on better professional development and sharing good practice. Recent appointments have been made within the council to improve its capacity to support improvements in the primary sector. The council also has a clear strategy to address low attainment in primary schools and this is supported by a number of initiatives, primarily focused on improving literacy development. Conversely, the quality of secondary education in the borough is good and the implementation of the national secondary strategy is well managed. Data is very well used to inform school self-evaluation, monitor the progress of individuals and groups, and to target council support in underperforming schools. All schools have a strong focus on supporting children and ensuring the curriculum meets individual needs.

58. Good procedures have reduced the high number of exclusions from secondary schools, with fewer children and young people being excluded in the early part of 2006–07 compared to the equivalent period in 2005–06. Schools are developing increasingly flexible curriculum options, particularly at Key Stage 4, and a wide range of alternative education provision is now available in the borough. Alternative provision is organised quickly and a very high proportion of children and young people receive at least 20 hours tuition each week. However, reintegration into mainstream schools is not sufficiently promoted or supported.

59. Children and young people access an adequate range of recreational and sporting activities. Many schools provide a good range of after-school activities, which are being enhanced by the Extended Schools strategy. Further provision is available in other community venues. Some summer holiday activities are available across the borough, although the majority are targeted at younger children. An adequate range of parks and play areas are available, but access to good quality indoor and all-weather facilities is limited in some parts of the borough. Youth provision offers some good opportunities for young people aged 13–18 years, although access to this provision is also limited. One youth centre is targeted at children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and its services are promoted in special schools.

60. Personal education plans for looked after children are satisfactory and there is clear guidance from the council on the production of the plans. Reviews for these children are up to date and there is evidence of effective multi-agency working to support the most vulnerable. Children and young people receive very good guidance and support from the Looked After Children Education Team. Standards achieved by looked after children are improving and are above national averages. Progression into further and higher education is good. Children and young people who are looked after, or who have recently left care, benefit from access to a very effective drop-in centre that provides information, advice and guidance, study support and help to develop life skills.

61. Robust procedures help children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to enjoy and achieve. Statements of special educational need are detailed and reviewed annually. They contain a clear focus on early intervention. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress at school. A good range of projects supports children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with communication difficulties, with some projects targeted at specific communities. Much improved integrated services support children with disabilities. Some of the children's centres have good specialist provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Younger children receive good speech and language therapy, which has contributed to improvements in progress. Speech and language therapy for those of secondary school age is more limited and the council is working with schools on ways to improve this provision.

Making a positive contribution

62. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** A good range of supportive programmes enables children and young people to develop socially and emotionally. Much of the support for children and young people is focused on raising self-esteem and confidence as well as developing positive relationships from the early years through to secondary schooling. For example, Pyramid clubs provide a good after-school service at a growing number of primary schools to support the personal development of vulnerable children in years 3 and 6. Similarly, the inclusion and mediation services provide a supportive youth inclusion project that focuses on social skills and self-esteem development, mainly for children and young people who are at risk of exclusion, anti-social behaviour or crime. Mentoring is a good feature of provision and includes good support from the voluntary sector and the nationally recognised My Education programme, which not only helps looked after children, but also encourages young people to train as mentors. Youth and Connexions workers provide good support for young people with their relationships and behavioural issues. Nevertheless, while the quality of youth provision is good, the range of activities and facilities, and the extent of outreach work, is too limited to reach and engage all young people across the borough.

63. Local services provide good support for most children to manage change, respond to challenges and cope with difficult periods in their lives. Work in schools, aided by youth and Connexions workers, helps children and young people to manage particular challenges, for example when they transfer to other schools. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive help to travel independently, secure positive relationships in friendship groups and access youth provision, supported by workers in partnership with Mencap. The Pupil Parent Partnership provides an important service to help vulnerable young people who have not been successful in their schools. It provides mentoring, therapy, family support, accredited programmes and a good route to further

education and training. Young carers value greatly the Kids project, in its support for them through peer mentoring and a good range of holiday activities. Project workers continue to identify 'hidden carers' across the borough and the awareness of such children and young people is being increasingly emphasised in schools.

64. Elected members, council officers and other partners are strongly committed to the participation of all children and young people in decision making. For example, the very good involvement of looked after children with the Corporate Parenting Committee over the last year has significantly influenced the use of Children's Fund money and developments at the new drop-in centre, the design of which has taken good account of the views of young people. The well-established Outer Limits Day provides looked after children with the opportunity to participate and meet others who live out of the borough. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities appreciate opportunities to have a voice at the annual Powerful Voices conference. This is well illustrated by comments such as, "It made me feel heard." and, "It was very nice to be asked what I thought." A clear and comprehensive booklet captures the conference events well and discussion themes have subsequently been raised by children and young people in their schools.

65. Across the borough, children and young people are consulted widely through questionnaires and in committees and conferences. School councils for children and young people actively operate to influence day to day practice and facilities. The recently developed Youth Participation strategy identifies processes to monitor the impact of young people's influence on council services and includes good plans to secure greater borough-wide representation, with better links between school councils and the Ealing Youth Action forum. Since its launch in July 2006, Ealing Youth Action has made good progress. It is well supported by the council's officers who share an awareness of the local democratic process with forum members. The forum has good ambitions for training, executive structures, website development and active UK Youth Parliament involvement for representatives. Its first youth Speak Out conference in January 2007 was successful in attracting a large audience and enabling young people to engage in debate with local councillors and officers. Overall, while consultation is generally very good and young people's involvement is widening, some of the participation remains at too early a stage to impact on provision and for feedback mechanisms to be fully embedded.

66. The Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group reports to the Safer Ealing Partnership and forms a key part of good structural arrangements to reduce anti-social behaviour. It shares, analyses and acts upon local intelligence and information from community safety, police, health, youth offending, youth and Connexions representatives. Good measures are in place to identify children and young people at risk from anti-social behaviour and a wide range of preventative services is available, with a strong focus on early intervention and consideration of family and housing needs. Assessment of diversity-related

concerns is generally well targeted and good attention is given to specific support to reduce any inequalities. The selective use of dispersal and anti-social behaviour orders complements the range of preventative strategies which target support for individuals, families and communities, according to need. As a result of targeted work, the youth and Connexions service, in partnership with Ealing Homes, report a reduction in levels of anti-social behaviour in local hotspots. However, while children and young people talk about racial harmony and the benefits of a diverse population, they also report continuing local problems connected with bullying, drugs and crime.

67. The youth offending service has significantly improved its performance over the past two years, although overall, re-offending figures remain only adequate when compared to other authorities. First-time offending figures are generally higher than similar authorities. Nevertheless, recent reductions in first-time offending and re-offending rates indicate that the stronger focus on preventative work is beginning to have an impact. Evidence suggests that young offenders with mental health-related issues are referred promptly for specialist support and that proportions of those in full-time education, training and employment are generally higher than in other authorities. For a targeted group of children and young people at risk of offending, programmes of support and intervention are closely matched to individual needs, for example access to a personal mentor, holiday programmes and activity clubs. The strong and increasingly cohesive Youth Inclusion Support Panel is well represented by relevant services and it has a good focus on supporting families. For example, the Strengthening Families programme is a recent success, with good plans to celebrate the achievement of families successfully taking part. Despite improvements in the youth offending service overall, the quality of its support for victims and the extent of restorative work by offenders in the community are underdeveloped.

Achieving economic well-being

68. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good.** Families are well supported in maximising their economic well-being. The children's information service provides a good range of information for parents and carers through a wide network of well-used information points across the borough. Information includes details of childcare places as well as employment information from Job Centre Plus. Five free internet kiosks are in children's centres and two free phones give direct access to Job Centre Plus for employment advice. The council has supported 28 childcare providers in successful bids for grants to provide 300 affordable child care places across the borough. The council has retained the uniform grant for those receiving free school meals and has a policy of fully remitting the cost of school trips for these families.

69. The help that young people in Ealing receive to prepare for a working life is good. The number of young people involved in employment, education or training is significantly higher than the national average. For those who are not,

Connexions run programmes to raise self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation, in addition to programmes to help with CV writing, interview skills and job-search skills. Young people value these programmes. Some programmes target young people with more significant barriers to employment, such as those who have offended.

70. The arrangements to offer vocational programmes to 14–16 year olds are excellent. The college offers a wide range of programmes which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. These have been developed in close partnership with schools. Close cooperation in timetabling ensures that young people who choose vocational programmes are not disadvantaged. Clear quality assurance arrangements have been agreed between the schools and the college. This work was considered to be a key strength at the college's recent inspection. It is generally recognised that better partnership working has improved motivation, team working skills and the behaviour of those involved. Schools offer a range of programmes that include enterprise and financial management. The Ealing City Learning Centre offers a number of vocational courses, such as computer networking and radio journalism, for young people aged 16–19. All young people in Ealing are able to choose to have a period of work experience.

71. The only college for further education in Ealing received high grades in its recent inspection. Pass rates and retention rates are high for most 16–18 year olds at the college and inspectors judged the extent to which the college meets the needs and interests of learners to be outstanding. A-level attainment across the borough is close to the national average, although success rates on both apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are below the national average. There are currently limited opportunities for apprenticeships in the borough and the council is aware of the need to increase the numbers. All young people receive appropriate advice and guidance regarding their choices after leaving school, mostly from Connexions. However, some teachers have limited understanding of apprenticeships and are unable to give young people good enough advice about this option.

72. Education and training for 14–19 year olds is very well planned and coordinated by the council. This has contributed to increased engagement of young people in education, employment and training and improving attainment at Key Stage 4. The council's 14–19 strategy is excellent. It is clear and detailed and has been developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders such as schools, the LSC, employers and the college. The involvement of work-based training providers has, however, been limited until very recently. The 14–19 strategic plan has been central in the development of a range of effective partnerships between schools and the college, for example, a vocational centre in Northolt, due to open in September 2007. This aims to provide vocational courses for young people and, through two sponsoring employers, guaranteed employment in two sectors. Under-represented groups, such as the travelling community, have been specifically targeted in some parts of the borough. The council's regeneration work and its work with the 14–19 group identify the need

for more apprenticeship opportunities in the borough. Working closely with the LSC, it intends to expand apprenticeships within Ealing. The council aims to create 20 apprenticeships and broker a further 80 across the borough. It has started to publicise the scheme through its magazine, which is circulated to every home in the borough.

73. Community regeneration within Ealing is well planned with a good emphasis on social cohesion. It focuses closely on the needs of children and young people. The council's neighbourhood renewal strategy is clear, detailed and founded on research commissioned by the council to identify the areas most in need. Consultation with local groups is good. It works through community groups and residents' associations to encourage local families to become involved to ensure that their needs are met, such as provision of green space, childcare and employment. The new vocational centre in Northolt was planned as a result of this type of consultation.

74. The council is taking effective action to ensure that families and young people have decent housing. The council's housing priorities are clear, with good links to the 10-year goals in its community strategy. The council is on target to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. Arrangements for homeless families are good. They are given a range of choices and many families move directly into permanent accommodation, keeping the number in bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation to a minimum. Teenage parents are given an appropriately high priority to housing, either supported or independent depending on the young person's needs.

75. Care leavers are well supported. They speak very positively about the support they receive at the Dawley House centre. It provides a safe place for care leavers to meet. It also offers support on a range of issues, for example substance abuse, and encourages participation in education and training. The percentage of care leavers in higher education, at 13%, is 2% more than the previous year and significantly higher than the national average of 6%. Housing for care leavers is very good, with higher than average numbers in suitable accommodation. Accommodation outreach workers visit care leavers to give help and advice to meet individual needs. Care leavers receive appropriate financial support from the council and have good access to services to support, for example, their mental health. All care leavers have appropriate pathway plans. They are regularly reviewed and updated, although some young people report that they were insufficiently involved in their plans' development.

76. Support to help young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve economic well-being is adequate. Young people have relevant transition plans, developed in line with the council's procedures and are directly involved along with their parents or carers. Most young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress onto further education. Other agencies such as health care or housing are suitably involved where appropriate. Connexions provide a good range of advice for young people and a high percentage are either in employment, on a work placement or a college course.

Connexions have been effective in keeping in touch with young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Where appropriate, these young people receive good advice and guidance on how to apply for benefits.

Service management

77. The management of services for children and young people is good. The capacity to improve further is good. The ambition of the council and its partners to improve outcomes for children and young people is strong. The new administration, elected in 2006, has continued the council's commitment to the children's agenda in the new community strategy and corporate plan. The partners' vision is well set out in the CYPP. It is based on a thorough audit of need, which continues to be revised and updated. Children and young people made a good contribution and they are beginning to take part more regularly in service development. Ambitions for children and young people are communicated well through both stimulating written material and various meetings and conferences. Staff across the partnership, and at different levels in the various agencies, share a good understanding of what the CYPP is trying to achieve.

78. Prioritisation to improve the outcomes for children and young people is good. The planning regime is coherent. Relevant business plans and well-organised 'work streams' take forward the themes and priorities set out in the CYPP. Responsibilities and timescales are generally clear, though outcomes and success criteria are not always specific enough. A strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention runs through the partnership strategy and its management and resourcing decisions. Budget setting and service planning are well integrated through the council's corporate Star Chamber process. There is a good track record of successfully reallocating resources to priorities. For example, funding to meet the needs of pupils from different Black and minority ethnic groups has been revised and, as a result, some gaps in levels of attainment are closing.

79. The capacity to achieve the major programme of change is good. Key building blocks are in place and beginning to make a difference. The leadership of senior officers and councillors is positive. Collaboration and understanding between the council and both the police and health services is particularly strong at the strategic level. The voluntary sector is well engaged. Clear, well-organised governance arrangements have been set up for the partnership, with a range of multi-agency working groups reporting through a Children's Executive Group to the overarching Change for Children Board.

80. The partnership is reaching a shared understanding of how it can maximise the effective use of resources through joint commissioning. A comprehensive joint strategy has been agreed but it is too soon to have had an impact. For its part, the council has deliberately and successfully reduced its reliance on expensive residential social care placements within the independent sector. Financial management is good and the council has a good record of

managing its children's services within budget. Overall value for money is good. In broad terms, good outcomes and good service contributions are secured for average or a little above average costs. Under the new administration, the council places a good emphasis on improving value for money as one of its top three priorities. All reports have a section detailing implications for value for money. Recent improvements are evident in both provision for looked after children and for home to school transport.

81. Partnership working is underpinned by a prudent alignment of budgets rather than their formal pooling. The integrated service for children with disabilities, which has developed from its origins as a Pathfinder Children's Trust, has a number of joint posts across the participating agencies; the head of commissioning is jointly funded by the council and the PCT. Ealing Council and its partners are tackling challenging workforce issues well. Difficulties in recruiting social workers have been eased by the appointment of staff from abroad, though there remain high numbers of agency staff. The partners have produced a wide-ranging joint workforce strategy for consultation. It is based on good data analysis and sets out how workforce capacity will be developed across the partnership.

82. Performance management is good. The council has developed high quality performance information and uses coherent systems for reporting and monitoring. Information on performance and finance is considered in tandem. A strong focus on performance is shown by staff in all areas, but target setting is not always specific enough nor sufficiently driven by outcomes. A good awareness of how Ealing compares with other local authorities and careful monitoring of performance has led to management action to improve outcomes. For example, timescales for the completion of initial and core assessments have improved, as has the stability of placements for looked after children. Systematic learning from complaints has led to better communication with parents.

83. Councillors show a good understanding of performance issues and are appropriately and regularly involved in considering them. The scrutiny function is well organised and asks pertinent questions of the executive in respect of policy implementation. Performance management for the partnership as a whole is developing well, with the introduction of a new 'balanced scorecard' of indicators, but it is too early for the new approach to demonstrate its impact.

84. The capacity of the council and its partners to improve further is good. The overall track record of securing improvement is good, even though levels of attainment in primary schools remain persistently below what is being achieved in comparable authorities. The council knows its strengths and weaknesses well and the verdict of this inspection correlates closely with the self-assessment. The ethos of the partnership is outward looking. It welcomes external challenge and seeks to learn from good practice elsewhere. The work of the council and its partners is founded on effective planning and management and there is a strong focus on value for money. Political and managerial leadership is

committed and has demonstrated an ability to develop constructive partnership working.

Annex: The children and young people's section of the corporate assessment report

1. The council performs well in this area and has achieved good outcomes for most children and young people. Strong leadership by senior officers and councillors is leading to improvements in services. The new administration, elected in 2006, has continued the council's commitment to the children's agenda in the new community strategy and corporate plan. The council and its partners have clear ambitions for improving outcomes for children and young people in Ealing. Their vision is set out well in the CYPP. Prioritisation to improve the outcomes for children and young people is good. The planning regime is organised well to take forward the CYPP's priorities, though outcomes and success criteria are not always specific enough. The partnership has clear, well-organised governance arrangements. It is beginning to develop a joint commissioning approach as well as a joint strategy for workforce development. Children and young people are widely consulted and there has been good involvement of children and young people in the development of the CYPP.

2. The council's financial management is good and there is a strong focus on improving value for money, which is good. The council is increasingly pro-active in re-directing resources to needs. For example, additional funding has been made available to raise the attainment of Black and minority ethnic groups and there is some evidence that gaps in attainment are beginning to close.

3. Performance management is good and based on high quality information and monitoring systems. The capacity of the council and its partners to improve further is good. This is based on a good track record overall, good leadership and management and a sound knowledge of current strengths and areas for development.

4. Children and young people are generally healthy. Partnership working between agencies and the interface between disciplines is good. The redesign of services and proactive multi-agency service provision are improving the health and well-being of children and their families. While the provision of immunisation is good, the uptake is insufficient to fully protect children against preventable diseases. Currently there is no baseline target for reducing obesity in children and young people, although the council and its partners are proactive in promoting healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. The health care of looked after children has improved, with a good proportion now receiving health assessments, including those placed out of the borough. Children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from coordinated, multi-agency assessments and interventions.

5. Children and young people appear safe. There is good information and advice for parents, carers, young people and professionals on safety issues and effective road safety initiatives. Multi-agency work to reduce bullying, discrimination, anti-social behaviour and domestic violence is effective. Good

systems are in place to identify and refer concerns, which are appropriately investigated. The LSCB is well structured, effective and appropriately represented. Effective child protection procedures are in place and these are well monitored. All children on the Child Protection Register have a qualified social worker and reviews are held regularly. Looked after children receive good multi-agency support; however, systems for keeping young people and carers informed of staff changes are not good enough. There is good multi-agency networking and support, with effective safeguarding practice for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly respite care provision. However, there is insufficient respite provision to meet needs.

6. The council works very effectively with its partners to ensure that children and young people enjoy life and achieve well. There are currently 10 children's centres across the borough providing a wide range of good quality childcare, education, family learning and parenting support services. The provision of early years child care and education is good and improving in the majority of settings, although the proportion of children reaching expected goals by the age of five is lower than the national average. The standards achieved by children at the end of Key Stage 1 are below the national average. The council's intervention to improve the leadership and management in some primary schools is not having sufficient impact. The quality of secondary education in the borough is good. Children and young people in secondary schools make good progress and achieve above average standards at Key Stage 4. The number of exclusions has fallen recently and provision is improving for children and young people educated in non-school settings. The authority has recognised that more work is needed to promote and support successful reintegration into mainstream schools. Standards achieved by looked after children are improving and a much higher than average proportion progress into further and higher education. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress at school.

7. The council's work to ensure that children and young people are helped to make a positive contribution is good. The council is strongly committed to the participation of children and young people in decision making. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities contribute well at their annual conference and those who are looked after engage very actively with the Corporate Parenting Committee. The Ealing Youth Action forum is developing well. While consultation is very good and involvement is widening, some participation is too recent to impact on services and for feedback to be fully embedded. While the quality of youth provision is good, the range of activities and facilities, and the extent of outreach work, is too limited to reach and engage all young people across the borough. Increasingly cohesive multi-agency work identifies and supports children and young people at risk from anti-social behaviour. The selective use of dispersal and anti-social behaviour orders complements preventative work which matches the circumstances of individuals. First-time offending figures are generally higher than in similar authorities. While coordinated multi-agency work is developing well and having a positive impact, partners remain well aware of the continuing need to work

ever more closely with all members of local communities to reduce anti-social behaviour and youth offending.

8. The support that families receive from the council and its partners to achieve economic well-being is good. Parents and carers have good access to information about childcare, employment and benefits through a wide network of well-used information points. Arrangements for vocational programmes for 14–16 year olds are excellent, with very effective collaboration between the college and the schools to ensure programmes meet the needs of young people. Planning and coordination of 14–19 education and training, led by the council, is very good and this has helped to increase the number of young people engaged in education, employment and training and to improved attainment at Key Stage 4. Effective action is taken to ensure that families have decent housing and the council is on target to achieve the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. All care leavers have a pathway plan which is regularly reviewed and updated, although some young people report that they are insufficiently involved. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have appropriate transition plans, drawn up in accordance with the council's procedures.