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Mr Duncan Clark  
Strategic Director of Learning and Children's Services  
Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames  
Guildhall 2  
St James Road  
Kingston-upon-Thames  
Surrey KT1 1SN

Dear Mr Clark

## Annual children's services assessment

Ofsted guidance published in April 2011 explains that the annual assessment of children's services is derived from the performance profile of the quality of services 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 other published data.

In reaching the assessment of children's services, Ofsted has taken account of inspection outcomes including the arrangements for making sure children are safe and stay safe and performance against similar authorities and/or 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 2010, 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.

## Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames children's services assessment 2011

<b>Children's services assessment</b>	<b>Performs excellently (4)</b>
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Children's services in the Royal Borough of Kingston-Upon-Thames perform excellently. This performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. As in most areas changes are taking place to secondary provision and two schools have become academies. Previous inspection judgements for these schools have been taken into account in this assessment. The very large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better overall and provision of high quality helps children and young people learn and stay safe. Areas of strength remain largely as last year and the quality of learning post-16, which was an area for improvement, is much better. Progress has also been made in closing attainment gaps between children and young people from families with low incomes and others at the age of five and 19 although not at the age of 16.

An unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection carried out in 2010 found significant strengths and one area for development. There were no areas for priority action.

### Strengths

- Provision for early years and childcare has improved since last year and the large majority is good or better with no inadequate settings.
- For children under five, almost all of provision in nurseries and primary schools is good or better and much is outstanding. Children's level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has continued to improve well and is much higher than the average for similar areas. Improvement for young children from families with low incomes has also been good since the last assessment, they now do better than the same group nationally and the gap with other children in the borough is closing.
- The very large majority of primary schools are good or better with well over a third outstanding although one school is now inadequate. Provisional results for 2011 indicate standards achieved by 11-year-olds in national tests have improved well and are in line with the high average for similar areas and much higher than for England overall.
- The quality of secondary schools has improved and the very large majority are good or better with six of the 10 outstanding. The number of 16-year-olds achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics are consistently much higher than the national average and also higher for young people from families with low incomes.

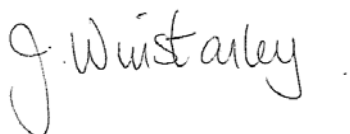
- Provision for learning after the age of 16 has improved with all but one secondary school sixth form now at least good and none are inadequate. Standards achieved by young people by the age of 19 have continued to improve well and far more gain level 2 or higher level qualifications than in similar areas or the country overall. Young people from families with low incomes also achieve well and standards have improved significantly recently. Gaps between these young people and others in the borough have narrowed considerably and are much narrower than the average gap for England.
- For children and young people requiring special provision, all special schools, special school sixth forms and pupil referral units are good or outstanding as they were last year. Young people with special educational needs who follow the national curriculum consistently do better than the same group nationally and attainment has continued to improve.
- For looked after children, fostering services and children's homes are good. Where the local authority commissions services for looked after children the very large majority are in good or better children's homes or with good or better fostering agencies.

#### **Areas for further improvement**

- The general further education college is only satisfactory, although making reasonable or better progress in improving the quality of provision and standards achieved by learners.
- Although 16-year-olds from low-income backgrounds consistently achieve higher standards in national examinations than elsewhere, the gap between these young people and others in the borough is wider than seen nationally and is not narrowing consistently.

This children's services assessment is provided in accordance with section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment