

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
Textphone 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 020 7421 6666
Direct F 020 7421 5633
Juliet.Winstanley@ofsted.gov.uk



8 November 2011

Ms Joy Hollister
Director of Community and Children's Services
City of London Corporation
Department of Community and Children's Services
PO BOX 270
Guildhall
London EC2P 2EJ

Dear Ms Hollister

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.

City of London Corporation children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs excellently (4)
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Children's services in the City of London perform excellently. This performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. Of the small number of settings inspected by Ofsted, all are good or outstanding and much better than elsewhere in the country. Most are good at helping children to learn and the majority at helping them to stay safe. Areas of strength remain largely the same as last year in that educational provision and attainment are particularly strong, standards at age five, 11 and 19 are well above average and gaps for key vulnerable groups are very small. Progress has been made in the key areas for further improvement.

The joint area review in 2007 judged safeguarding and services for looked after children as outstanding. In 2011, Ofsted's annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection found significant strengths in senior management. Findings also identified many satisfactory aspects of practice and four areas for development that included one from the previous inspection requiring further work. There were no areas for priority action.

Strengths

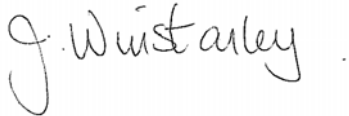
- All provision for early years and childcare is now good or outstanding and much better than that found elsewhere. Both childminders are now good, addressing an area for further improvement identified in 2010, and all registered day care remains good or outstanding.
- For children under the age of five, provision for early years education remains outstanding. Achievement at age five is well above average and continues to improve far more quickly than nationally, and significantly in 2010.
- The local authority's one primary school remains outstanding. Standards for 11-year-olds are well above average. The attainment of children from low-income families, those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups is also well above average and gaps with others of the same age are very small. Provisional data for 2011 show all girls reaching the required level.
- After the age of 16, almost all young people are in education, employment or training and almost all achieve level 2 and higher level qualifications by the age of 19.
- For looked after children, all providers commissioned by the local authority are good or outstanding.

Areas for further improvement

- The local authority's adoption service is only satisfactory.

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 style with a large initial 'J' and a period at the end.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment