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Ms Linda Sanders  
Corporate Director Social Care, Health and Housing  
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Dear Ms Sanders

## 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.

## London Borough of Hillingdon children's services assessment 2011

|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Children's services assessment | Performs well (3) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|

Children's services in the London Borough of Hillingdon perform well. This performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. The majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are judged good or outstanding and few are inadequate. Most are good at keeping children and young people safe and the majority help them to learn. Average educational attainment at the age of five, 11, 16 and 19 is improving steadily, key vulnerable groups do at least as well as their peers elsewhere and most gaps are closing, but the attainment of young people at the age of 16 and 19 compares more favourably with national figures than those for similar areas. The main strengths remain largely the same as last year, as do areas for further improvement. As found elsewhere, changes to secondary provision are taking place and more schools have become academies. Previous inspection judgements for these schools have been taken into account in the assessment.

A full inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children in 2009 judged the overall effectiveness of both as good. In 2011, Ofsted's unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection found areas of strength, many satisfactory aspects of practice and three areas for development, including one from the previous unannounced inspection that has not yet shown sustained impact. There are no priority actions requiring urgent attention.

### Strengths

- The large majority of provision for early years education in nursery and primary schools is good or better and more is good since last year. Average achievement at the age of five is improving steadily. Above average and increasing numbers of children from low-income families show a good level of development and the gap with others of the same age is closing well.
- The large majority of primary schools are good or better and more are now good. The one primary school judged inadequate in 2010 is now satisfactory. Eleven-year-olds make increasingly good progress from the age of seven. The proportion achieving the expected level in English and mathematics at the age of 11 has improved at a faster rate than nationally and is above that in similar areas. Provisional results for 2011 show improvement above national figures.
- The majority of secondary schools are good or better. Since last year, five mostly outstanding schools have become academies. The large majority of secondary schools have good or outstanding standards of behaviour and poor attendance by some young people is reducing. The proportion of 16-year-olds achieving five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and

mathematics is improving steadily. Young people from low-income families do well and the gap with their peers is closing. Young people from the Black minority group do not achieve as well as their peers although the gap is closing.

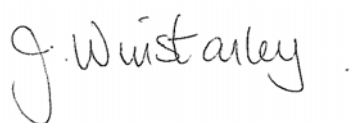
- Most provision for learning after the age of 16 is good or better but five sixth forms are in schools that have become academies. The college of further education is outstanding but an independent specialist college not used by the local authority remains inadequate. Above average and increasing numbers of 17-year-olds are in education or training, including care leavers. Average and steadily increasing numbers of 19-year-olds gain higher level and other qualifications, including young people from low-income families. The gap has closed well at level 2 and gradually at level 3, although showing increase in 2010.
- For young people not in mainstream education, the majority of specialist provision remains good or better but one special school that was previously good is now only satisfactory, as is the pupil referral unit.
- For looked after children, all arrangements for adoption and fostering are good. The local authority's four children's homes are good or better, as is one of the two run by independent providers. The other is now satisfactory, having been inadequate in 2010.

### **Areas for further improvement**

- Although the majority of provision for early years and childcare is good, as is the children's centre, over one-third of childminders and childcare remains only satisfactory, showing performance below elsewhere.
- One secondary school is now inadequate. The school is making satisfactory progress with helpful external support but the local authority's strategy does not detail the extent of ongoing work necessary to bring about improvement. The two secondary schools with academy status for some time are only satisfactory, as is the pupil referral unit.
- At the age of 16, attainment for young people with special educational needs is broadly average but the gap with their peers is getting bigger.

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

Yours sincerely



Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment