

8 November 2011

Mrs Judith Pettersen  
Director of Children's Services and Lifelong Learning  
London Borough of Hounslow  
Children's Services and Lifelong Learning  
The Civic Centre, Lampton Road  
Hounslow  
Middlesex TW3 4DN

Dear Mrs Pettersen

## 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 Hounslow children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs excellently (4)
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Children's services in the London Borough of Hounslow perform excellently. This performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. The large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or outstanding and none are now inadequate. Almost all are good at supporting children and young people to learn and the very large majority help them to stay safe. Educational attainment at the ages of five, 11, 16 and 19 is mostly in line with that found nationally and in similar areas, including for key vulnerable groups, and is improving steadily. Areas of strength remain largely as last year and progress has been made in the key areas for further development. 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 annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessments arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection found many satisfactory aspects of practice and two areas for development, both identified in the previous unannounced inspection. There were no priority actions requiring urgent attention.

### Strengths

- The large majority of early years and childcare is good or outstanding and shows improvement since last year in that no provision is now inadequate and more childcare is good or better. This addresses a key area for further development in 2010.
- Most provision for early years education in nursery and primary schools is good or better and shows further improvement. Achievement of five-year-olds reaching a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage improved significantly last year, and shows a faster rate of improvement than nationally over the last few years. Children from low-income families also show average achievement.
- The large majority of primary schools are good or outstanding and show slight improvement in outstanding provision. Most children make the expected progress in primary schools, and 11-year-olds achieving the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2 show improvement above the national rate over the last four years. Provisional results for 2011 are just below results for the previous year and the national average.

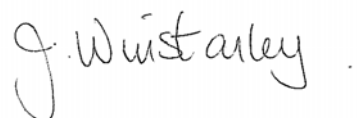
- The large majority of secondary schools are good or outstanding but since 2010, one good school and one that is outstanding have become academies. All schools have good or outstanding standards of behaviour and poor attendance by some young people is reducing steadily. At the age of 16 the proportion achieving five A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, shows steady improvement. Young people from low-income families achieve well and the gap with their peers has closed. Attainment for young people with special educational needs is slightly above that found in similar areas and above the national average. Minority ethnic groups show at least average attainment when compared with attainment in similar areas and nationally.
- Provision after the age of 16 remains mostly outstanding in school sixth forms but the further education college is now only satisfactory. Average numbers of 17-year-olds continue in learning and increasing numbers are in education, training or work, including care leavers. Above average and steadily increasing numbers of 19-year-olds gain higher level and other qualifications. This includes very high numbers of young people from low income families, and the gap with their peers has closed very well.
- Special schools are mostly outstanding, as is specialist provision after the age of 16.
- For looked after children, all arrangements for fostering and adoption are good and children's homes remain good or outstanding. Of the services commissioned by the local authority, the large majority of providers are good or better, including children's homes.

### **Areas for further improvement**

- Some of the local authority's provision now shows performance below that found elsewhere. While three children's centres are good or better, the other three are only satisfactory. In addition, the pupil referral unit is now only satisfactory, having been good in 2010.
- For five-year-olds from low income families and for 16-year-olds with special educational needs, achievement gaps with their peers in Hounslow show little sign of closing.

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 period at the end.

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment