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Mr Nick Whitfield  
Director of Education and Children's Services  
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames  
Regal House  
London Road  
Twickenham  
London TW1 3QB

Dear Mr Whitfield

## 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 Richmond 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 London Borough of Richmond upon Thames perform excellently. This performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. As found elsewhere, changes to secondary provision are taking place and some 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 as last year and areas for development have shown improvement.

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 with few areas for development and no areas for priority action.

### Strengths

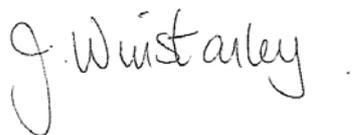
- Early years and childcare provision is outstanding, has improved further since the last assessment and there are no inadequate settings.
- For children under the age of five, almost all provision in nurseries and in primary schools is good or better, with almost a half now outstanding. The achievement of very young children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage improved further in 2010 and is well above the averages for similar areas and the country overall.
- Almost all primary schools are good or better. Children do much better in national tests than elsewhere and standards improved further in 2010.
- Standards achieved by 16-year-olds have improved very well over the last four years, are in line with the average for similar areas and much higher than for England overall. Attainment improved significantly last year for young people from families with low incomes and is now higher than the national average for the same group.
- The general further education college is good and young people do well in the qualifications they achieve by the age of 19 with increasing numbers, far more than average nationally, gaining higher level qualifications.
- For children and young people requiring specialist provision, special schools and special school sixth forms are good or outstanding. Young people with special educational needs who follow the national curriculum consistently do better than elsewhere in national tests at the age of 16. Fostering and adoption services for looked after children are good.

### **Areas for further improvement**

- Although the local authority secondary school inspected since the last assessment has improved and is now outstanding, there is further work to be done to improve provision in the remaining satisfactory local authority school and the three academies.
- Children and young people from families with low incomes achieve educational standards at least in line with the averages for similar areas and the country overall at the ages of five and 19, but they are not catching up with their peers in the borough.

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