

8 November 2011

Mr Tolis Vouyioukas
Interim Executive Director for Children and Young People's Services
London Borough of Newham
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Dear Mr Vouyioukas

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 Newham children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in the London Borough of Newham perform well. 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 few are inadequate. Most are good at keeping children and young people safe and helping them to learn. Areas of strength remain largely the same as last year and less provision is inadequate. Standards for 11- and 16-year-olds are now in line with those found in similar local authorities and nationally, educational attainment for almost all key vulnerable groups is at least average and gaps with their peers are usually small. Some progress has been made in addressing the key areas for further development from 2010. 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.

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 two strengths, many areas of satisfactory practice and a number of areas for development. Two of these are outstanding from the previous inspection. There are no priority actions requiring urgent attention.

Strengths

- For early years and childcare, six of the eight children's centres inspected are good or outstanding, although two are only satisfactory. This shows better provision overall than that found elsewhere.
- The large majority of early years provision in nursery and primary schools is good or outstanding. Young children from low-income families show a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the gap with others of the same age is the second smallest in the country.
- The large majority of primary schools are good or better. One primary school is no longer in need of improvement and the one school that remains inadequate continues to make satisfactory progress, with ongoing support from the local authority. Eleven-year-olds make the expected rate of progress from the age of seven. Standards for children at the age of 11 gaining the expected levels in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved more quickly than nationally over the last four years. Provisional results for 2011 are in line with the national average and show a continuing trend of improvement.

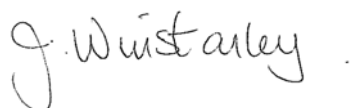
- The large majority of secondary schools are good or outstanding and none are now inadequate. Since last year, two good schools have become academies. Most have good or outstanding standards of behaviour and poor attendance by some young people is reducing steadily. At the age of 16, standards show steady improvement and the majority of young people now achieve five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics. Young people from low-income families and those with special educational needs do well, and gaps with their peers are smaller than those found nationally. Most minority ethnic groups achieve as well as others of the same age and gaps are small.
- All provision after the age of 16 is good or better and both colleges of further education are now outstanding. Steadily increasing numbers of young people are in education, training or employment, including average numbers of care leavers. Average and steadily increasing numbers of 19-year-olds gain higher level and other qualifications. This includes well above average numbers of young people from low-income families, where gaps with their peers have closed quickly.
- For young people not in mainstream education, all special provision and pupil referral units are good.
- For looked after children, almost all arrangements for adoption and fostering are good or better but the local authority's adoption agency is only satisfactory.

Areas for further improvement

- As in 2010, only the minority of early years and childcare provision is good or better. Including childminders judged satisfactory but with no children on roll, over 60% of childminders and 40% of childcare remain only satisfactory, although more provision is now good or outstanding and less is inadequate.
- Below average achievement at the age of five is improving steadily, but at a lower rate than nationally. At the age of 16, young people from the White ethnic group achieve well below those in similar areas and nationally, and the large gap with their peers is increasing.
- Children's homes remain a significant weakness. The local authority's one children's home is only satisfactory. Of the five that are independently run, one is good, two are satisfactory and two are inadequate.

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