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Ms Gillian Palmer
Director of Children's Services
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Dear Ms Palmer

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 Greenwich children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in the London Borough of Greenwich perform well. In 2009 and 2010 services were judged to be performing adequately. The large majority of services, settings and institutions are now good or better overall and good at helping children to stay safe. The very large majority enable children and young people to enjoy learning and achieve well. There have been improvements in aspects of universal provision over the last year. For example, the proportion of good or better registered childminders and day-care providers is higher than last year.

In July 2010 an announced inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children judged the overall effectiveness of both services to be adequate. Capacity to improve was adequate for safeguarding and good for services for looked after children. In March 2011 an unannounced inspection of children's social care contact, referral and assessment arrangements identified one area of strength and areas of practice that meet requirements, with two areas for development. The areas for development identified at the previous unannounced inspection in August 2009, and further considered by the safeguarding and services for looked after children inspection, have all been addressed.

Strengths

- The proportion of good or better registered early years providers has improved. The large majority are now at least good, which is a higher proportion than found in similar areas and is in line with the national average. There are now no inadequate settings. The large majority of nursery schools and Early Years Foundation Stage provision within primary schools are good or better, as last year. The proportion of five-year-olds achieving a good level of development is higher than in similar areas and the national average, and has improved at a much faster rate over the last four years than the average in similar local authorities and across the country as a whole.
- Overall, there is very little inadequate provision of any type in the borough. The one inadequate secondary school is making good progress, supported by a challenging and ambitious statement of action and effective monitoring of progress by the local authority.
- The pupil referral unit is outstanding and the local authority's fostering agency is good, as they were last year. However, a recent inspection of the local authority's adoption agency judged this to be satisfactory and it was previously good.
- Although the local authority's own children's home is satisfactory, the very large majority of children's homes that are used by the local authority are good or better and none are inadequate.

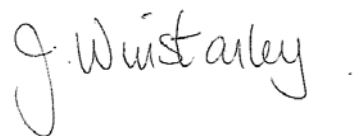
- Children's test results are improving rapidly at age 11 and performance is better than found in similar areas and in line with the national average. Provisional data for 11-year-olds in 2011 show further improvement.
- A higher proportion of secondary schools are now good or better. The proportion of 16-year-olds achieving five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is improving year on year at a faster pace than in similar areas and nationally. Although starting from a low base, the gap with the national average is closing rapidly and provisional data show further good improvement in 2011.
- The proportion of five-year-olds from low-income families that achieve a good level of development is considerably higher than found nationally and performance is amongst the best of all local authorities. The gap between these children and their peers in Greenwich has narrowed since 2007.

Areas for further improvement

- As last year, the majority of primary schools are good or better and none are inadequate. However, over 40% of primary school provision remains satisfactory. The most recent inspections show that almost all schools are at least maintaining and often improving their overall effectiveness. Monitoring inspections of satisfactory schools show that most are making good progress towards improvement.
- The residential special school is outstanding, as it was last year. However, following the most recent inspection in 2010, only one of the four local authority maintained special schools is now good, the other three being satisfactory. This is a lower proportion of good provision than found in similar areas and across England as a whole.
- Four of the six secondary sixth forms are good or better; the other two are satisfactory. Most young people from Greenwich attend the satisfactory further education college or the good sixth form college. The proportion of young people that are gaining qualifications by the age of 19 remains lower than in similar areas and nationally. Despite a significant improvement in 2010, the overall pace of improvement has not been as rapid as is average elsewhere over the last four years.

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