

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 0300 123 1231
Textphone 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 020 7421 6666
Direct F 020 7421 5633
Juliet.Winstanley@ofsted.gov.uk



8 November 2011

Mrs Gillian Pearson
Director of Children and Young People's Services
London Borough of Bromley
Civic Centre
Stockwell Close
Bromley
London BR1 3UH

Dear Mrs Pearson

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 Bromley children's services assessment 2011

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

Children's services in the London Borough of Bromley perform well. This good performance has been maintained since 2010. The large majority of settings, services and institutions for children and young people are good or better and help them to stay safe. The very large majority ensure they enjoy learning and achieve well. Many secondary schools have converted to academy status. All of these schools were judged to be good or better at their last inspection and these judgements have been taken into account in this assessment. Over the last year there have been improvements in the overall effectiveness of registered early years provision, a reduction in the number of inadequate primary schools and no secondary schools or academies are now inadequate.

In April 2010 an inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children found both to be adequate. The latest unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements within children's social care that took place in May 2011 identified one area of strength and areas of practice that met requirements, with seven areas for development. The relevant areas of development identified at the previous inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children in April 2010 had been addressed with the exception of the quality of service provided by the out-of-hours service. Despite clear strengths in the overall quality of provision in the borough and educational outcomes, the findings of both social care inspections have been pivotal to the overall grade for this assessment.

Strengths

- Over three quarters of registered early years provision is at least good. This is a higher proportion of good quality settings for the youngest children than is average for a local authority in England. There has been an increase in the proportion of good or better registered childminding and registered day-care provision since last year and very little is inadequate. The first three children's centres to be inspected in the borough are all good, with good leadership and management in strong partnership with the local authority.
- The large majority of primary schools are good or better and around twenty percent are outstanding. There has been a reduction in the number of schools that are inadequate since last year. Schools receive effective support to improve from the local authority, including accurate evaluations of performance and progress. Although there is wide variation across schools, 2011 provisional test results for 11-year-olds show further improvement and are above the national average.

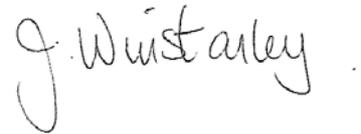
- A very large proportion of secondary schools, academies and sixth forms in the borough are good or better, as they were last year and just over half of all secondary schools are outstanding. The proportion of young people that achieve five good passes at GCSE including English and mathematics has risen consistently since 2007 and is well above national and similar area averages.
- Provision for vulnerable children and young people is of good quality overall. Three of the four local authority maintained special schools in the area are outstanding; the other continues to be satisfactory. The latest inspection of a school for children with physical disabilities and/or medical needs found their behaviour and safety outstanding. The local authority adoption agency and fostering agency are both good as they were last year. The Bromley Pupil Referral Service, catering for young people from within the local authority who have been excluded from their mainstream schools, has been recently inspected. The overall effectiveness of the provision is now good. An excellent feature of the service is the strong support provided during periods of transition.
- The proportion of young people from low-income families achieving good qualifications by the age of 19 is better than found nationally and the achievement gap between these young people and their peers has narrowed well since 2007.

Areas for further improvement

- As outlined in the May 2011 unannounced inspection, although there are no areas requiring urgent action, there are seven areas for development within children's social care contact, referral and assessment arrangements. The local authority has put an action plan in place to address these issues.
- While the number of five-year-olds that are achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year at school is broadly in line with the national average and there is a trend of improvement, the pace of improvement is not as fast as found elsewhere.
- Strategies to raise attainment and narrow the gap for children and young people from low-income families are not proving successful for all age groups. For example, the attainment of 16-year-olds from families with low incomes, although slightly above the national average, fell in 2010. Because GCSE results have not improved at the same pace for these young people as they have for their peers, the achievement gap between them has widened every year since 2007.

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