

15 July 2019

Message from Ofsted Lead Inspector to the children and young people in Wokingham

Inspection of children's services in Wokingham

Last month, I came to Wokingham with a team of Ofsted inspectors to look at the help, protection and care that children, young people and families get from the local authority. We were also interested to know what difference leaders in the local authority were making.

We have asked the local authority to share this letter with you. It tells you what the main things were that inspectors found. There is a more detailed report on our website that you can read if you want to.

Ofsted's inspection judgements on Wokingham Children's Services

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement to be good

What the inspectors found

- Senior leaders are doing everything they can to make things better for children and young people.
- They and their staff are working very hard to try to make sure that children and young people get a good service.
- That has been difficult because of lots social workers coming and going.
- Things are much better now than they were last summer.
- When children are in danger, the local authority and its partners work well together to protect them.
- Social workers listen to children and young people and take what they say seriously.
- But it is hard for children who have had lots of different social workers to get to know their social workers properly.
- Children and families still don't always get the right level of help and support they need quickly enough.
- Sometimes cases get closed too quickly before things have really got better.
- Too many disabled children and their families who need social work support have not been getting a good service.
- The support that children get from the independent advocate is very good
- Most children in care are living in settled placements but some children in care get a better service than others.
- Those whose social worker or personal adviser is from the Here4U looked after children and care leavers team generally have a more positive experience.
- When it is not safe for children to go back to live with their birth families, social workers are good at finding permanent homes for them.
- Foster carers are well supported.
- The virtual head is doing a good job in trying to improve the quality of personal education plans.

- Care leavers talk positively about their personal advisors and the support they provide, particularly in helping young people to become more independent.
- When children in care turn 18, those who want to, are able to keep on living with their old foster carers.
- Members of the children in care council have helped to make some things better for children in care and care leavers, but the corporate parenting board is a bit dull.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Parkes HMI
Lead inspector