

9 December 2009

Mr Peter Dwyer
Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services
City of York Council
Mill House
North Street
York
North Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Dwyer

Children's services annual rating

Ofsted guidance published in May 2009 explained that the annual rating would derive from a new performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. This profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the council has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant *Every Child Matters* indicators in the new National Indicator Set (NIS).

In considering the evidence in the profile to determine the children's services rating for 2009 it has become clear that the continuing gaps in the data are significant, particularly those relating to aspects of social care and services for Looked After Children. Ofsted has decided therefore to use 2009 as a transitional year easing into the full application of the new system in 2010. As a consequence, although the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's rating, we have interpreted the performance bands with flexibility and exercised professional judgement with caution.

The annual rating 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, a rating of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, a rating of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects.

Children's services rating 2009

Children's services rating	Performs excellently (4)
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Children's services in the City of York Council perform excellently.

The overall effectiveness of the very large majority of inspected services and settings is good or better, and outcomes for the majority of children and young people are very good. The outcome of a large majority of school inspections is good or better which is greater than the proportion in similar areas and the national picture. No schools are inadequate. The local authority's adoption and fostering agencies are outstanding and the children's homes are good or outstanding. A high proportion of childcare is good or better while nursery and primary schools perform better than is the case nationally and in similar areas.

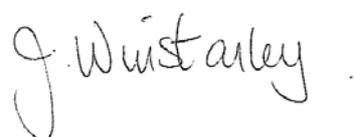
The joint area review in December 2008 judged both safeguarding and the provision for looked after children as outstanding. There has been one serious case review since December 2008 which was judged adequate.

Performance against a very large majority of the national indicators is better than or in line with similar areas. This includes outcomes in staying safe. Under enjoying and achieving the very large majority of indicators are in the top bands.

However, outcomes for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable are not quite as good. While there is no inadequate provision, one special school and one pupil referral unit are judged as adequate. This is in the context of good or better provision for the majority of young people. In addition the gap in achievement at Key Stage 2, between the majority of children and those in receipt of free school meals, is wider than the national average; and at Key Stage 4 there is a similar gap for young people with special educational needs. Outcomes for young people from a minority ethnic background are not as good at Key Stage 4 as in similar areas. Teenage conception is higher than both the national figures and those in similar areas.

The children's services rating is provided for the purpose of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The rating of local authority children's services will contribute significantly to the managing performance theme of each local authority's Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) organisational assessment and therefore to the score for each local authority overall.

Yours sincerely



Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA