

9 December 2009

Mr Michael O'Connor
Director of Children's Services
London Borough of Westminster
13th Floor West
City Hall
64 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6QP

Dear Mr O'Connor

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 well (3)
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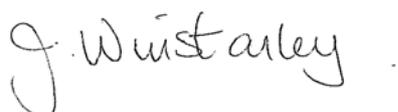
Children's services in the London Borough of Westminster perform well.

The overall effectiveness of the large majority of inspected services and settings is good or better. A higher than average proportion of primary schools is good or outstanding. However, too much secondary and sixth form school provision is satisfactory. Only three of the eight secondary schools in Westminster are good or outstanding.

Childcare provision on non-domestic premises is of good quality overall and provision in nursery schools is very good, with 13 out of 14 inspected being good or better. However, there is less good quality childminding provision than found nationally, despite almost 60% being good or outstanding. Provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is good overall. The two special schools are good, as are two of the three pupil referral units, with one being satisfactory. The local authority fostering agency and the adoption agency are good. The joint area review in 2007 judged both safeguarding and services for looked after children in the local authority as good. Two serious case reviews have been evaluated between 1 April 2007 and 15 July 2009 and Ofsted has evaluated them as good. Judgements for staying safe and enjoying and achieving are good or better across a very large majority of inspected and regulated settings.

Performance against a very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is above or in line with similar areas and national averages. Improving the performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is a challenge, for example in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, national indicators show that inequality gaps are generally narrower than the national average, such as the achievement of students from low income families that are achieving at level 2 and 3 by the age of 19.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA