

9 December 2009

Mr Ged Rowney  
Director of Children's Services  
Stoke-on-Trent City Council  
Floor 2, Civic Centre  
Glebe Street  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST4 1RU

Dear Mr Rowney

## 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

<b>Children's services rating</b>	<b>Performs adequately (2)</b>
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Children's services in Stoke-on-Trent City Council perform adequately.

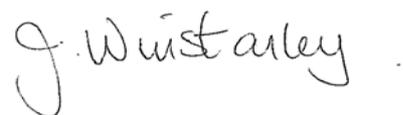
The overall effectiveness of the majority of inspected and regulated services and settings is adequate. Performance is good or better in just under a half of services. The quality of early years provision is good and better than that in similar authorities. Improvements to provision have been slower in the primary and secondary sector but nevertheless are reflected in half of primary schools and a third of secondary schools providing good or better education. Very few settings are inadequate. The large majority of judgements for staying safe and the majority of judgements for enjoying and achieving are in line with those for similar areas.

The quality of education and care provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is good. All six children's homes, four of five special schools and one of two pupil referral units are good or outstanding and none is inadequate. The local authority's fostering and adoption agencies were judged as adequate at their most recent inspection and private fostering arrangements were judged as good.

Performance against the majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with in similar areas. However, a third of indicators are below similar areas and national figures. The gap in achievement between children and young people whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and their peers is closing in line with similar areas and as seen nationally.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, CAA