

9 December 2009

Ms Jane Humphreys  
Corporate Director, Children, Education and Social Care  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
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Dear Ms Humphreys

## 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

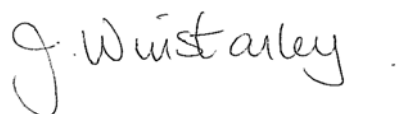
<b>Children's services rating</b>	<b>Performs well</b>
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Children's services in Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council perform well.

A higher than average proportion of both primary and secondary schools, including the schools' sixth forms, is good or outstanding. There are no inadequate primary schools but two of the 14 secondary schools are inadequate. Most nurseries are also good or better and the proportion is greater than that of similar areas and the national picture. A greater proportion of childminder and childcare settings are just satisfactory overall; these types of settings do not do as well as those in similar areas or found nationally in being healthy and staying safe. One special school is outstanding, one is good and one is satisfactory. The pupil referral unit is good. The performance of the local authority's fostering and adoption agencies is good. Private fostering arrangements are also good. Two of the four children's homes are outstanding and two are good. They do particularly well in ensuring that children are healthy and safe. One serious case review was judged to be inadequate in June 2009.

Performance against a large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with similar areas and the national figure. Educational achievement matches the national averages at ages 11 and 16 but there are some inequalities for 16-year-olds who have special educational needs and those from low income backgrounds. The gap in outcomes for these young people compared with others of the same age is wider than the national figure. Achievement of a level 2 qualification by the age of 19 is above similar areas, but at level 3 it is below. A greater proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds than in similar areas and found nationally are not in education, employment or training. Performance for care leavers and for young people known to the offending services is good with a higher than average number engaged in education, employment or training.

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