

9 December 2009

Mr Andrew Webb
Director of Children's Services
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
3rd Floor
Stopford House
Town Hall
Stockport
SK1 3XE

Dear Mr Webb

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 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council perform well.

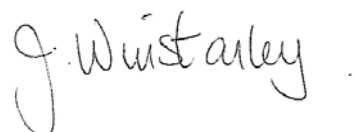
The overall effectiveness of a large majority of inspected and regulated services and settings is good or better. Provision for very young children is good. A greater proportion of nursery schools and childcare is good or outstanding than is the case nationally and in similar areas. Childminding is satisfactory. A larger proportion of primary schools are good or better than nationally but there are key weaknesses in secondary provision. No secondary school is outstanding and too many are satisfactory. These schools do not do as well as in similar areas and the national average in enjoying and achieving and achieving economic well-being. Performance of the local authority's fostering and adoption agencies is good as is the children's home.

Overall, performance against the national indicators, including staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is good with a large majority demonstrating performance in line and sometimes greater than similar areas. The proportion of secondary schools with good or outstanding behaviour is lower than similar areas and the national average.

Outcomes for young people whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are less good than for all children who live in Stockport. The gap at Key Stage 4 between all young people and those with special educational needs has widened over three years. At the age of 19 there remains an inequality gap between those who achieve a level 3 and those who do not, which is wider than across the country and 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