

9 December 2009

Mr Nick Hudson
Director of Children and Young Peoples Services
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Progress House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HH

Dear Mr Hudson

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 Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council perform well.

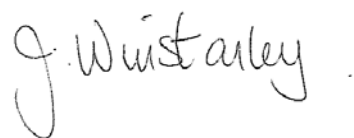
The overall effectiveness of schools and other settings is good. Over half of inspected services are good or better although there is too much provision which is just satisfactory. A higher proportion of primary and nursery schools are good or better and this is in line with the performance in similar areas. Childcare is satisfactory. Over half of secondary schools are good or better and the rest are satisfactory but this is below the national average. Provision post-16 is good as are the majority of special schools. The proportion of children's homes which are good or better is less than in similar areas and national figures; there is also some inadequate provision. The local authority's fostering and adoption services are good but arrangements for private fostering are unsatisfactory. The majority of judgements made under Every Child Matters are good or better, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving.

There has been no inspection of safeguarding and looked after children's services during this period. There has been one serious case review since December 2008 which was evaluated as good. The last annual performance assessment judged safeguarding as good.

Performance against the majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is at least as good as and sometimes better than that found nationally and in similar areas. However, children from a minority ethnic background achieve less well at the end of primary school and at Key Stage 4 than their peers in similar areas. The gap at Key Stage 2 between the achievement of most children and those young people with special educational needs is slightly larger than 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

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

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA