

9 December 2009

Ms Julia Almond  
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Dear Ms Almond

## 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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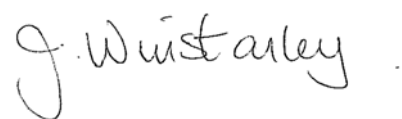
Children's services in Telford and Wrekin Council perform adequately.

The overall effectiveness of inspected services and settings is adequate. Children receive a good start to their care and education in the early years. The proportion of childminder and childcare settings that are good or better is greater than in similar areas and found nationally. The quality of primary and secondary schools is uneven, with just under two thirds of primary schools and a half of secondary schools judged to be good or better. Post-16 provision is good or better in four out of five schools, outstanding in the further education college and satisfactory in the sixth form college. Inspection judgements for enjoying and achieving are in line with similar areas and national averages in the large majority of settings and services.

The quality of education and care provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is mixed. Two of four special schools are good and one is inadequate. Three of four pupil referral units are good. In their most recent inspections the children's home and fostering agency were judged to be adequate and private fostering arrangements to be inadequate.

Performance against the very large majority of national indicators including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving is in line with similar areas. However, a quarter of indicators for staying safe and enjoying and achieving are lower than those found nationally. The gap in achievement between children and young people whose circumstances have made them vulnerable and their peers is generally in line with similar areas and the gap nationally. By the time they reach the end of secondary education, the gap is narrowing for children with special educational needs and those who take up free school meals.

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.



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