

9 December 2009

Ms Elaine McHale  
Corporate Director for Children's Services  
City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council  
County Hall  
Bond Street  
Wakefield  
West Yorkshire  
WF1 2QW

Dear Ms McHale

## 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 (3)</b>
-----------------------------------	--------------------------

Children's services in the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council perform well.

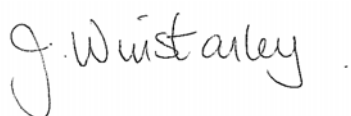
The overall effectiveness of the majority of inspected and regulated services and settings is good or better. Performance in nursery schools, secondary schools, pupil referral units and the sixth form college is above that found in similar areas and nationally. Primary and special schools perform slightly better than provision found nationally but not quite as well as in similar areas. The overall effectiveness of non-domestic childcare settings is above that found nationally and in similar areas, although for childminders it is below that found nationally. Judgements for staying safe and enjoying and achieving in inspected services are good or better in the very large majority of cases.

The local authority makes good provision for children whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The pupil referral unit is good and four out of six special schools are outstanding. Provision in children's homes and both local authority and private fostering agencies is good; the adoption agency is adequate. Three serious case reviews have been carried out of which two were adequate and one good.

Performance against the large majority of national indicators is at least in line with similar areas and better when compared with national figures. For staying safe this is true for the large majority of indicators when compared with national figures although performance is slightly lower against similar areas. For enjoying and achieving a very large majority are at least in line with similar areas and the national figures. The rate of teenage conceptions is slow to reduce and the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training has risen. The achievement of very young children, although improving, is below that found in similar areas, and the gap between high and low performance is too wide and not reducing. There has been a good reduction in the number of primary schools not meeting the minimum standards expected by the government at the end of primary education.

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