

9 December 2009

Mr Nick Page
Acting Strategic Director of Children's Services
Salford City Council
Minerva House
Pendlebury Road
Swinton
Salford
Lancashire M27 4EQ

Dear Mr Page

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 adequately (2)
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Children's services in Salford City Council perform adequately.

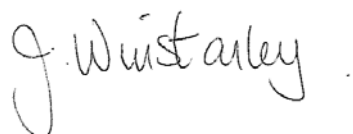
Under half of schools and settings are good or better and the others are satisfactory. The provision for very young children is generally good; this is particularly so in the 30 nurseries where the proportion of good and outstanding provision is above that across the country as a whole. There is some good childcare but too much is just satisfactory and there is some inadequate provision. The proportion of primary schools which are good or outstanding is smaller than in similar areas. Secondary school performance is good with three quarters of the 14 secondary schools judged to be good or better; none are in an Ofsted category of concern. This performance is better than the country as a whole and in similar areas. Local authority fostering and adoption services are good and arrangements for private fostering are satisfactory. All of the council's children's homes are judged adequate or better. The judgements made under Every Child Matters, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, are good or better in a majority of schools and settings.

The unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment services carried out in July 2009 identified some key weaknesses. There were significant weaknesses in the processes for assessing the needs of vulnerable children. In addition, the inspectors were unable to establish from records that action had been taken to ensure that a small number of children were free from the risk of harm. This inspection judgement has been pivotal in determining the rating for children's services.

A large majority of the national indicators are in line with or better than outcomes in similar areas. This is especially true in enjoying and achieving where standards of achievement have risen. Children score more highly at the Early Years Foundation Stage than in similar areas, and achievement at Key Stage 2 is in line with the national average. The number of children achieving five good passes at GCSE is just below the national average but in line with similar areas. There are, however, key weaknesses in staying safe; fewer initial assessments are made than nationally and more children stay on the child protection register for more than two years.

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". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA