

9 December 2009

Mr Terry Piggott
Executive Director of Children, Schools and Families
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Floor 7, Municipal Offices
Smith Street
Rochdale
OL16 1LQ

Dear Mr Piggott

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

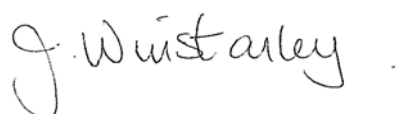
Children's services rating	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council perform well.

The overall effectiveness of inspected services is good. The proportion of primary schools judged to be good or outstanding is higher than the national average while a lower proportion has been judged to be inadequate. However, a lower proportion of secondary schools are good or better and there is some inadequate provision. The provision for very young children is more mixed. A higher proportion of nurseries and some childcare is good or outstanding than nationally but there are relative weaknesses in childminding. Judgements under the Every Child Matters outcomes are good or better in the large majority of cases and at least in line with performance in similar authorities. This includes those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving. The performance of the local authority's fostering and adoption agencies is good and private fostering arrangements are satisfactory. However, one children's home is currently inadequate. There have been two serious case reviews which were inadequate.

Performance against the national indicators, including staying safe and enjoying and achieving, demonstrate performance that is in line or better than performance in similar areas and nationally. There are key weaknesses at Key Stage 4 for some young people from minority ethnic groups where their performance is below the national average and below that of similar areas. A larger proportion of young people are not engaged in education, employment or training than nationally.

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.

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

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA