

9 December 2009

Mr Mike Dillon
Director of Children's Services
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Seafield House
Kirkleatham Street
Redcar
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Dear Mr Dillon

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

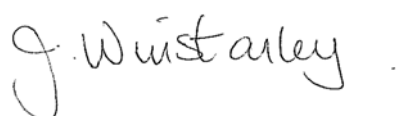
Children's services rating	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council perform well.

A higher than average proportion of nurseries and primary schools is good or outstanding compared with similar areas and the proportion nationally. None have been judged inadequate. Similarly, a greater proportion of childminder and childcare settings is also good. The two school sixth forms are both good. None of the secondary schools are inadequate, but the proportion of those rated good or better is smaller than in similar areas and that found nationally. Two special schools are good but one is inadequate. The pupil referral unit is adequate. Performance of the local authority's fostering agency is outstanding. One children's home is outstanding but one is only satisfactory. One serious case review was judged to be inadequate in July 2009. It raises serious concerns about the variable quality of independent management reviews, including that of the local authority, and incomplete recommendations and action plan.

Performance against a large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with similar areas and the national picture. The difference in the performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and others of the same age is still too wide, especially as children get older. However, at age 11, the gap is closing. For example, the difference in the achievement between pupils with special educational needs and all children in Redcar and Cleveland is smaller than in similar areas. This is also the case for 11-year-old pupils who are from low income families. The proportion of young people achieving a level 2 or 3 qualification by age 19 is in line with the national average. However, a smaller proportion of young people from low income backgrounds progress to higher education than in similar areas and found nationally. The proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training is well above the national figure.

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.



Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA