

9 December 2009

Mr John Richards
Director of Children's Services
Peterborough City Council
Floor 2 Bayard Place
Broadway
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire
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Dear Mr Richards

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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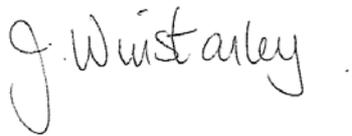
Children's services in Peterborough City Council perform adequately.

The performance of the local authority's schools and settings is mixed. Children get off to a good start in nursery schools, as almost all are good or better, however, the proportion of good or better childminders and childcare settings is below similar authorities and the national picture. An above average proportion of primary schools are good, or better, when compared with similar authorities and that found nationally. However, secondary education provision is too variable with only four of the 10 secondary schools judged to be good. This is below similar areas and national figures. Similarly, the proportion of good sixth forms and college provision is below that found elsewhere. Provision in special schools, pupil referral units, children's homes and an independent specialist college is almost always good, although a recent inspection judged a special school inadequate. The inspection judgements of both the local authority's fostering and adoption agencies are adequate, although private fostering arrangements were judged inadequate in 2007. The recent unannounced inspection of contact, assessment and referral arrangements, reported a range of satisfactory and good practice but identified two significant areas for priority action, including longstanding recruitment and retention issues, resulting in high caseloads for qualified social workers in the referral and assessment teams. The number of social care assessments completed within the expected timescales is lower than average. The quality of serious case reviews is varied, with one judged inadequate and a more recent one adequate.

Performance in national indicators is mixed with a majority of indicators in line with similar areas and national figures. However, there are weaknesses in how well the local authority does in important areas of enjoying and achieving and staying safe. The proportion of children killed and seriously injured on the roads is not reducing as fast as other areas and there are more emergency hospital admissions as a result of unintentional and deliberate injuries than found elsewhere. Educational achievement at all ages is below average, but especially at the age of 16. Minority ethnic groups do not generally achieve as well as their peers. However, the difference in performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and their peers is reducing and outcomes for this group are better than those found in similar local authorities. More young people than those found nationally are not in education, employment or training between the ages of 16 and 18.

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' and a trailing dot at the end.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA