

9 December 2009

Mr Michael Jameson
Executive Director: People, Communities and Society
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Level 10 Civic Centre
West Street
Oldham
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Dear Mr Jameson

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 Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council perform well.

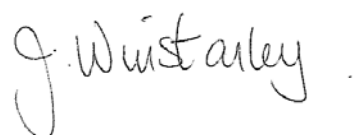
The overall effectiveness of a large majority of inspected and regulated services and settings is good or better. A higher than average proportion of both primary and nursery schools is good or outstanding and none are inadequate. However, a fewer proportion of secondary schools is good or better and there is too much provision which is judged to be only satisfactory. Achievement in secondary schools is judged by inspectors to be satisfactory but the support for achieving economic well-being is inadequate. The performance of the local authority's fostering and adoption agencies is outstanding and the children's home is good. The provision for very young children is more mixed. Overall, the proportion of childminding that is good or better is below the national average and non-domestic childcare is satisfactory. The joint area review in January 2009 judged safeguarding and the provision for looked after children to be good. There have been no serious case reviews since December 2008.

A very large majority of the national indicators, including those for enjoying and achieving and staying safe, show performance which is as good as or better than similar areas and national averages. Performance is particularly good in terms of the staying safe indicators.

Outcomes are less good for some young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable. There are some weaknesses in enjoying and achieving which relate to the relative poor outcomes for some groups of young people from the Black and Asian communities. In addition, a smaller number of looked after young people are in education, training or employment and they achieve less well at Key Stage 2.

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 period at the end.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA