

9 December 2009

Mr Ian Curryer
Acting Corporate Director of Children's Services
Nottingham City Council
The Sandfield Centre
Sandfield Road
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Dear Mr Curryer

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

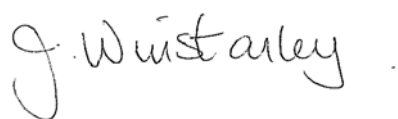
Children's services rating	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Nottingham City Council perform well.

The overall effectiveness of all inspected services, settings and institutions is good. Children get off to a good start with a higher than average proportion of good childminders and childcare settings. Similarly, most nursery schools are judged to be good or better, although the proportion is below national figures. Three quarters of primary schools are judged to be good or better, which is better performance than both similar areas and the national figures. Although no school provision is inadequate, too much of the local authority's secondary provision is only adequate. Less than a half of the 18 secondary schools are judged to be good. This is proportionally below both similar areas and national figures. Provision in almost all special schools and in two of the three pupil referral units is good or better. The local authority fostering agency is judged to be good. However, only two of the four children's homes are good. Two recent serious case reviews were carried out adequately.

Performance against the large majority of indicators in the National Indicator Set, including those for staying safe and enjoy and achieving, is in line with similar areas although not as good as national figures. Achievement at ages 11, 16 and 19 is below national averages, however, there is a clear and sustained trend in improvement in the proportion of young people achieving the higher grades at GCSE at age 16. The gap in achievement between children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and their peers is smaller than found elsewhere. A high and increasing number of young people stay in education, training or employment when they leave school. Nevertheless, the proportion gaining a level 2 or level 3 qualification by the age of 19 is well below similar areas and the national picture.

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

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA