

9 December 2009

Ms Barbara Hughes
Interim Director of Children and Family Services
North East Lincolnshire Council
The Municipal Offices
Town Hall Square
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire
DN31 1HU

Dear Ms Hughes

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 North East Lincolnshire Council perform well.

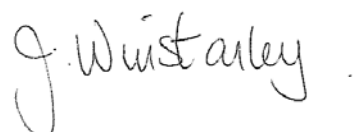
The overall effectiveness of a large majority of inspected and regulated services and settings is good or better. Performance in nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units, school sixth forms and the sixth form college is above that found in similar areas and nationally. However, performance in primary and, particularly, secondary schools is not as strong, with both performing below comparators. The overall effectiveness of childcare providers is above that found in similar areas and nationally, although for childminders it is below that found nationally. Judgements for staying safe and for enjoying and achieving in inspected services are good or better in a very large majority of cases.

The local authority's fostering and adoption services and the private fostering arrangements are good or better. Three of its children's homes are currently outstanding, four are satisfactory and one is inadequate. Three serious case reviews have been carried out of which one was conducted adequately and two inadequately. The local authority has made improving the quality of these a priority.

Performance against the very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is at least in line with similar areas and national figures. However, there is a significant weakness in relation to educational outcomes and some secondary schools do not meet the minimum standards expected by the government at the age of 16. Achievement at the age of 19 is also low. At ages 11 and 16, gaps in achievement for groups whose circumstances make them vulnerable show good recent improvements.

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



Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA