

9 December 2009

Ms Pauline Newman  
Director of Children's Services  
Manchester City Council  
PO Box 536  
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Manchester  
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Dear Ms Newman

## 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

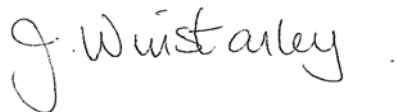
<b>Children's services rating</b>	<b>Performs adequately (2)</b>
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Children's services in Manchester City Council perform adequately.

Under half of all schools and settings are good or better and there are weaknesses in key areas of provision. The provision for very young children is mixed. Too much is just satisfactory. There is a lower proportion of childcare which is better than satisfactory than in similar areas and nationally; there is also some inadequate provision. The performance is better in nursery schools where a large majority is good or outstanding. The proportion of primary schools that are good or better is lower than the national average and a smaller proportion of secondary schools are good or better than in similar areas and across the country as a whole. Only one of the three pupil referral units is good and the others are satisfactory, while the percentage of special schools that are good or better is below similar areas. The local authority fostering and adoption services are satisfactory but arrangements for private fostering are inadequate. The majority of the Every Child Matters judgements under staying safe are good or better but there are weaknesses in both childminding, fostering and adoption. In addition, judgements on both enjoying and achieving and economic well-being are in the lowest quartile for secondary schools and, in the latter, the trend has been downwards. There have been three serious case reviews since December 2008; one was judged as good and two were adequate.

Although performance against the majority of national indicators is at least as good as that in similar areas, there are key weaknesses. Within staying safe there has been an improvement in the completion of initial assessments but this performance is currently below statistical neighbours. There are similar delays when reviewing the needs of looked after children. Achievement at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 is in line with similar areas for the majority of young people but weaknesses remain in the proportion of young people who are persistently absent from secondary school. Significant numbers do not regularly attend and there has been no improvement over the last three years. Fewer secondary schools have good or outstanding standards of behaviour than in similar areas. For some young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable, outcomes are significantly poorer. The number of teenage conceptions is higher than in similar areas, as is the number of young people who receive a custodial sentence.

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".

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, CAA