

9 December 2009

Mr Stuart Smith  
Executive Director of Children's Services  
Liverpool City Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Dale Street  
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Dear Mr Smith

## 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

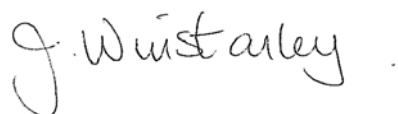
<b>Children's services rating</b>	<b>Performs Well (3)</b>
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Children's services in Liverpool City Council perform well.

The overall effectiveness of the large majority of regulated and inspected services and settings is good or better. Provision is particularly effective in nursery schools, secondary schools and special schools, where performance is mostly good or better and above that of similar areas and the national average. A very small percentage of inadequate provision is located in child care settings, primary schools and secondary schools. Provision and services for those children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is more variable. The joint area review held in February 2008 judged safeguarding and services for looked after children to be good. Three of the four children's homes are good and the local authority adoption service is also good. However, local authority fostering and private fostering arrangements are only satisfactory. Judgements for all Every Child Matters outcomes are good or better in a large majority of inspected and regulated services and settings, with weaker performance identified in fostering services across being healthy, staying safe and achieving economic well-being.

Performance against a large majority of indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is generally in line with all other areas. Improvements have been identified in outcomes for children and young people known to the care system, including the percentages of referrals going on to initial assessment and core assessment. Gaps in achievement between those children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and others the same age are variable but generally consistent with similar areas and those found nationally. Although still high, the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training show a decreasing trend and more young people from low income background progress to higher education than in similar areas.

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.



Juliet Winstanley  
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