

9 December 2009

Mr Gareth Williams
Director of Children and Young People's Service
Leicestershire County Council
Room 115, County Hall
Glenfield
Leicestershire
LE3 8RF

Dear Mr Williams

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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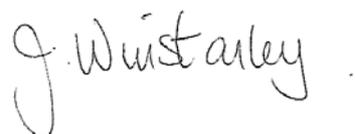
Children's services in Leicestershire County Council perform well.

The proportion of good or outstanding secondary schools, sixth forms and special schools is above the national average, with very little provision across children's services and settings that is judged inadequate. However, too much nursery and primary school provision remains only satisfactory. Childminder and childcare settings are satisfactory overall with a higher proportion of good provision reported in childcare settings than childminders. Provision for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable is good in all special schools but only adequate in the local authority's pupil referral unit. Performance in the local authority's fostering agency is adequate. Although two of the three children's homes are good the third is judged to be unsatisfactory. A recent serious case review has been completed adequately.

Performance against a very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with similar areas and national figures, with strengths in the timeliness of social care child protection processes and educational attainment at all key stages. There is good performance in relation to young offenders, with lower than average first-time offending rates. Outcomes for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable are usually good and the difference in their performance and others of the same age is improving, with the gap in academic achievement, especially at Level 2 qualifications at the age of 19, narrower than similar areas and that seen nationally. However, a smaller than average proportion of this group go on to higher education.

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".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA