

9 December 2009

Mrs Phyllis Dunipace
Executive Director, Children and Young People's Services
London Borough of Lambeth
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Dear Mrs Dunipace

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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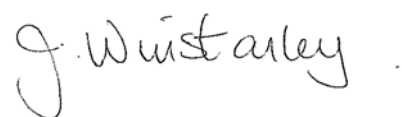
Children's services in the London Borough of Lambeth perform well.

The overall effectiveness of the large majority of inspected services and settings is good or better. An above average proportion of nurseries and secondary schools is good or outstanding, as are the large majority of primary schools.

A lower than average proportion of both childminders and childcare settings on non-domestic premises is good or outstanding. Services for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable are generally good. Agencies for adoption and fostering are good and arrangements for private fostering are also good. One of the five special schools is satisfactory, but the rest are good or better. However, two of the three pupil referral units are only satisfactory. The joint area review report published in 2009 judged services for safeguarding and looked after children to be good. An unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in August 2009 found no areas for priority action but some areas for development. In relation to the Every Child Matters outcomes, judgements for staying safe and enjoying and achieving are good or better across a very large majority of inspected and regulated services and settings.

Performance against a very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with or above similar area and national averages. The difference in the performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and others of the same age is still too wide, but achievement gaps are generally smaller than the national figure. Good progress is being made in raising the attainment of pupils from almost all minority ethnic groups and those entitled to free school meals.

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
Divisional Manager, CAA