

9 December 2009

Ms Rosalind Turner  
Managing Director - Children Families and Education Directorate  
Kent County Council  
Room 2.39  
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Dear Ms Turner

## 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

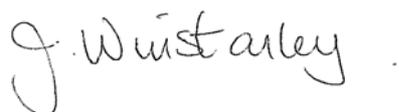
<b>Children's services rating</b>	<b>Performs well (3)</b>
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Children's services in Kent County Council perform well.

The overall effectiveness of a large majority of the inspected services and settings, for which the local authority is responsible, is good or better. Most nurseries are good or better as are childcare settings, although provision offered by childminders is satisfactory overall. The area has fewer than average good or better primary schools by national and similar area standards. Secondary schools however, perform well overall and more sixth forms are good or better than seen in similar areas or the country overall. Provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is mostly good. More special schools are good or better than is the case nationally or in similar areas and the local authority fostering and adoption agencies and private fostering arrangements are all good. Only half the children's homes in the area are good however, although none are inadequate. Similarly, only half of the local authority's 18 pupil referral units are good or better and one is inadequate. The June 2008 joint area review judged safeguarding arrangements, provision for looked after children and services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to be good. All of the five serious case reviews have been conducted adequately or better.

Performance against a very large majority of the national indicators for children's services, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with similar areas and the country overall. Differences in achievement between children and young people from low income families and their peers is the same as seen nationally and in similar areas, other than at age 11, where the gap is wider than seen nationally or in similar areas, although it is closing slowly.

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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