

9 December 2009

Ms Eleanor Schooling
Director of Children's Services
London Borough of Islington
222 Upper Street
London
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Dear Ms Schooling

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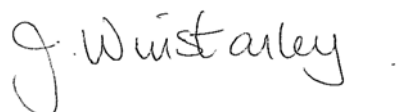
Children's services in the London Borough of Islington perform well.

A higher than average proportion of nursery, primary, secondary and special schools and pupil referral units is good or outstanding. No schools are in Ofsted categories of concern. However, two of the five sixth form schools are only satisfactory.

A below average proportion of childminders and childcare settings are good or outstanding. They do not do as well as similar areas or nationally, in the being healthy and staying safe outcome areas. Provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is generally good. The children's home, the fostering agency, private fostering arrangements and the adoption agency are all good. Judgements for staying safe and enjoying and achieving are good or better across the large majority of inspected and regulated provision.

Performance against the large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, are in line with or above similar areas and national figures. The difference in the performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and their peers, is still too wide, although inequality gaps are generally smaller than national averages. The attainment of Black pupils has improved and the number of young people not in education, employment or training has reduced. Improved educational outcomes for pupils with special educational needs at age 11 and age 16 has led to a narrowing of the achievement gap for these pupils.

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