

9 December 2009

Mr Andrew Christie
Director of Children's Services
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Town Hall
King Street
Hammersmith
London
W6 9JU

Dear Mr Christie

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 Hammersmith and Fulham perform well.

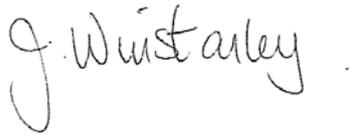
The overall effectiveness of the large majority of inspected services and settings is good or better. Achievement that is in line with similar authorities and that found nationally at Key Stage 2 rises to well above both at Key Stage 4. Pupils from minority ethnic groups do well at both key stages. Increasing numbers of young people remain in education, employment or training. Achievement of a level 2 qualification has improved to above that of similar areas although in line with the national average. Level 3 qualifications are well above national and similar area averages. Most secondary schools are good or better, as are the large majority of primary schools, although there is a small amount of provision that is only satisfactory in both and one primary school requires special measures. However, despite strong provision, the rate of permanent exclusions from school is very high. One sixth form school is outstanding and the other two are good. The general further education and tertiary provider is good. Provision for children whose circumstances make them vulnerable is mostly good. One special school is outstanding and the other four are good, showing performance above similar areas and that found nationally. However, while one pupil referral unit is good the other is only satisfactory, partly from a weakness in achieving economic well-being. The proportion of young offenders in suitable education, employment or training is much higher than in similar authorities and that seen nationally.

Young children get a good start. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in line with the national average, improving, and above similar areas. Most nurseries and the large majority of childcare settings are at least good, showing performance above similar areas and that found nationally. The performance of childminders is below the national average although above similar areas, partly because of weaknesses in being healthy and staying safe. Looked after children achieve as well as their peers nationally and in similar areas at Key Stage 2. Both children's homes are good but the fostering agency is only satisfactory, due partly to a weakness in staying safe. The joint area review in 2008, judged safeguarding to be adequate and the recent unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements found no areas for priority action.

Performance against the very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is at least in line with similar areas and broadly in line with or better than the national figure, although there are weaknesses in four out of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The difference in the performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and others of the same age compares favourably with national figures, but less favourably against figures for similar areas. Some gaps are closing, most noticeably for pupils eligible for 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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA