

9 December 2009

Mr Alan Wood
Director of Children and Families
London Borough of Hackney
The Learning Trust
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1 Reading Lane
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Dear Mr Wood

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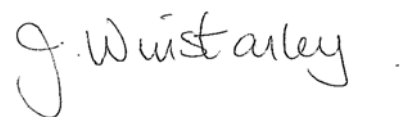
Children's services in the London Borough of Hackney perform well.

A higher than average proportion of both secondary and sixth form schools is good or outstanding. However, this is not the case for primary schools, as too many are satisfactory overall. Overall, there is very little inadequate provision. In relation to the Every Child Matters outcomes, judgements for staying safe and enjoying and achieving are good or better in a large majority of inspected and regulated services and settings.

Nursery school provision is very good, but a lower than average proportion of childminding and childcare provision is good or outstanding. Provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is good or outstanding in half of the four pupil referral units and four special schools; the remainder is satisfactory. The fostering agency, private fostering arrangements and the adoption agency are all good. Two serious case reviews have been conducted between April 2007 and July 2009. Ofsted evaluated one of these as adequate and the other as good.

Performance against the very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with similar areas and national figures. Good progress is being made to reduce the difference in performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable. In most instances, inequality gaps are smaller than those found nationally and outcomes are improving for pupils with special educational needs and those receiving 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.



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Divisional Manager, CAA