

9 December 2009

Ms Anne Whiteley  
Director of Children's Services  
Devon County Council  
Room 126, County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
Devon EX2 4QG

Dear Ms Whiteley

## 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 adequately (2)</b>
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Children's services in Devon County Council perform adequately.

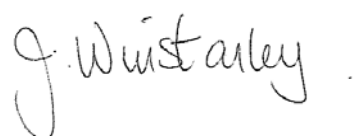
In the inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services in July 2009, provision for looked after children was judged to be good and provision for safeguarding was judged to be adequate. The overall effectiveness is good or better in the majority of services and settings. This places Devon within the band for performing adequately.

Within this, early years education and day care provision outside schools is a comparative strength. However, the quality of provision in mainstream schools is only broadly in line with the national average and there are particular weaknesses in educational provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The quality of special school provision is well below the national average, with three of the 10 special schools adequate and one inadequate. One special school is outstanding. A minority of pupil referral unit provision is good or better. Social care provision is better than this overall. Most children's homes are good or better, although one is inadequate. The local authority's fostering agency is good and adoption services are outstanding. The very large majority of inspected services and settings are judged to make a good or better contribution to keeping children and young people safe and helping them to achieve educationally.

In terms of performance indicators, a very large majority of the local authority's figures are at least in line with both the statistical neighbour and national averages. The same applies to those indicators in the staying safe and enjoying and achieving groupings. The way the one recent serious case review was conducted was inadequate.

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