

9 December 2009

Mr John Weeks
Director of Children's Services
Cheshire East Council
Westfields
Middlewich Road
Sandbach
Cheshire CW11 1HZ

Dear Mr Weeks

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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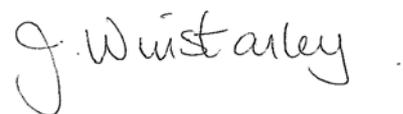
Children's services in Cheshire East Council perform well.

The overall effectiveness of a majority of inspected services and settings is good or better. Children get off to a good start with the large percentage of childcare, nursery education and primary schools judged to be better than similar areas and that found nationally. There is very little inadequate provision, but the proportion of secondary schools and school sixth forms that are judged to be good or better is below that found in similar areas and the national figure. Provision for those children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is variable. All day special schools are good and their performance is above that found in similar areas and that seen nationally. One children's home was judged to be inadequate at its last inspection. Judgements across all Every Child Matters outcomes are good or better across most inspected and regulated services and settings.

Cheshire East is a new unitary local authority and no inspection outcomes are available for fostering and adoption agencies. It is too early to judge performance against national performance indicators.

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".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA