

9 December 2009

Ms Ann Baxter
Director of Children, Schools and Families
London Borough of Camden
Crowndale Centre
218-220 Eversholt Road
London
NW1 1BD

Dear Ms Baxter

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

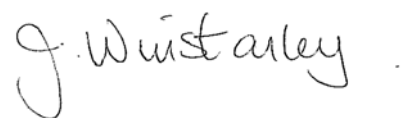
Children's services rating	Performs excellently (4)
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Children's services in the London Borough of Camden perform excellently.

A greater than average proportion of nursery, primary and sixth form schools is good or outstanding. However, secondary school provision is mostly satisfactory, although no secondary schools are inadequate and four of the nine secondary schools are good or better. Provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is at least good in all of the six special schools and the three pupil referral units. The fostering agency is outstanding. The joint area review in 2008 judged services for safeguarding and looked after children as outstanding.

A very 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. In most aspects the difference in the performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is smaller than the national average. Good progress is being made in narrowing the achievement gap for pupils in receipt of free school meals at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, and at Key Stage 2 the attainment of minority ethnic groups is good and improving.

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 blue ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA