

9 December 2009

Mr Gordon Jeyes
Executive Director for the Office of Children and Young People's Services
Cambridgeshire County Council
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Dear Mr Jeyes

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) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|

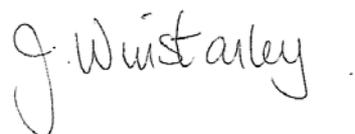
Children's services in Cambridgeshire County Council perform well.

Children get off to a good start with a higher than average proportion of childminders and childcare settings that are good or better. This is also true for nursery and primary schools, with the proportion judged to be good or better above both similar areas and that seen nationally. Almost no provision is judged inadequate. However, too much secondary and sixth form provision is only adequate. Provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is satisfactory overall, with only a half of special schools and pupil referral units judged good or outstanding. One pupil referral unit is inadequate. Performance in the local authority's fostering and adoption agencies and private fostering arrangements is good. Although one of the children's homes is judged outstanding too many are judged to be only satisfactory. A recent unannounced inspection of contact, assessment and referral arrangements for children in need, identified a number of strengths, but a lack of capacity in two teams impacts on overall performance. However, the inspection judged that effective action is taken to safeguard children.

Performance against the large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with similar areas and national figures. Educational achievement at the age of 11 and 16 is high; however, the difference in performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and that of their peers, gets wider as they get older. This trend continues to 19 with fewer young people from low income families going on to university when leaving school. Overall achievement at 19 is good and a high proportion of young people are engaged in education, employment or training.

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



Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA