

9 December 2009

Mr Martin Gocke
Acting Director of Children, Young People and Learning
Bracknell Forest Borough Council
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Dear Mr Gocke

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

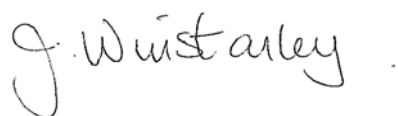
| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Children's services rating | Performs well (3) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|

Children's services in Bracknell Forest Borough Council perform well.

The overall effectiveness of the majority of inspected services and settings is good or better, however, the quality of provision varies across early years, education and social care. The fostering service and private fostering arrangements are good. The council's children's home is outstanding and the adoption service is satisfactory. The joint area review in 2008 judged safeguarding and provision for looked after children as good. Childminding and childcare settings are particularly good compared to such provision in similar areas and the national average. Nurseries are satisfactory overall, but one of the eight is inadequate. The performance of the council's schools is mixed. The large majority of primary schools is good or better. While none is inadequate, too many secondary schools and school sixth forms are only satisfactory and provision is not as good overall as in similar areas and the national average. The special school is outstanding and the pupil referral unit is satisfactory. The General Further Education College is good.

Performance against the very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is above or in line with similar areas and the national figures. Most children and young people have a good start in life and enjoy good health. Educational achievement is in line with the average for similar areas and England overall. The gap between the majority and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable is closing in some areas, but the picture is inconsistent for different groups of children and young people. For example, a low proportion of young people is in learning at age 17 and the proportion not in education, employment and training has now risen above the average for similar areas.

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.



Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA