

9 December 2009

Mrs Gillian Pearson
Director of Children and Young People's Services
London Borough of Bromley
Civic Centre
Stockwell Close
Bromley
London
BR1 3UH

Dear Mrs Pearson

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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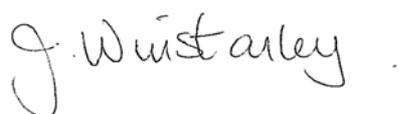
Children's services in the London Borough of Bromley perform well.

The overall effectiveness of a large majority of inspected services and settings is good or outstanding. Children make a good start in life: an above average proportion of childminding and childcare provision, over 70%, is good or outstanding. The large majority of nursery schools are at least good. A higher than average proportion of primary, secondary and sixth form schools is good or outstanding and no secondary schools are in Ofsted categories of concern.

However, provision for children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is only satisfactory for pupils in the pupil referral unit and one of the four special schools. The other three special schools are outstanding. The fostering agency is good. In the June 2009 unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements, inspectors found no areas for priority action, but some areas for development. All three serious case reviews conducted between 1 April 2007 and 15 July 2009 have been evaluated by Ofsted as adequate.

Performance against the very large majority of indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is above or in line with similar areas and national averages. The difference in the performance of children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable is still too wide for some, such as Key Stage 2 pupils in receipt of free school meals and pupils with special educational needs at Key Stage 4, where the inequality gap is greater than the national average. However, good progress is being made in improving the attainment of minority ethnic groups, notably Black pupils, at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

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 black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, CAA