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Ms Di Smith
Director of Children's Services
Brighton And Hove City Council
Kings House
Grand Avenue
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Dear Ms Smith

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

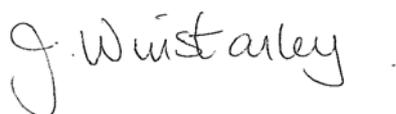
Children's services rating	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Brighton and Hove City Council perform well.

The area has more childcare settings and primary schools which are good or better than is the case nationally or in similar areas. Nurseries are mostly good or better, with over half that are outstanding. Childminder settings are satisfactory overall, although more are good or better than seen nationally or in similar areas. Fewer secondary schools are good or better by comparator standards and one is inadequate. Although fewer than average school sixth forms are good or better, the needs of by far the large majority of young people following AS and A levels are catered for very well by the two good sixth form colleges which serve the area. For children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable, provision is good overall. Both children's homes are outstanding as is the local authority fostering agency. The adoption agency is good and private fostering arrangements were judged satisfactory when last inspected. Special schools are mostly good.

Performance against a very large majority of national indicators, including those for staying safe and enjoying and achieving, is in line with national averages and those for similar areas. Procedures for ensuring children and young people stay safe are implemented efficiently and more assessments of children and young people's needs are completed on time than is the average for similar areas. Achievement at age 11 is above that of similar areas, although it is just below at age 16. The proportion of young people who achieve level 2 or 3 qualifications by age 19, however, is significantly higher relative to the same comparator. Gaps in achievement between children and young people from low income families and others are in line with those seen nationally or in similar areas. For those with special educational needs, the achievement gap is also in line with these comparators. The inequality gap for young people progressing to higher education, however, is significantly narrower than in 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