

9 December 2010

Mrs Marion Davis  
Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families  
Warwickshire County Council  
Saltisford Office Park, Ansell Way  
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Dear Mrs Davis

## Annual children's services assessment

Ofsted guidance published in July 2010 explains that the annual assessment of children's services is derived from the performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. This performance profile includes findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the local authority has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with data from the relevant indicators in the National Indicator Set (NIS).

In reaching the assessment of children's services, Ofsted has taken account of all inspected and regulated services for children and young people, arrangements for making sure children are safe and stay safe and performance against national measures. More weight has been given to the outcomes of Ofsted's inspections and regulatory visits (Blocks A and B in the performance profile).

The annual assessment 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, an assessment of 'performs excellently' does not mean all aspects of provision are perfect. Similarly, an assessment of 'performs poorly' does not mean there are no adequate or even good aspects. As in 2009, while the performance profile remains central to Ofsted's assessment, meeting or not meeting the minimum requirements alone does not define the grade. The assessment has involved the application of inspector judgement.

## Warwickshire County Council children's services assessment 2010

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Warwickshire County Council continue to perform well.

The very large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better, with many high quality services for children who are vulnerable. Private and voluntary children's homes are at least good. The local authority adoption agency is good and the local authority fostering agency is outstanding. Eight of the nine special schools, the two residential special schools, and two of the three independent special schools are good or better. However, the pupil re-integration unit with 242 students on roll was judged inadequate at its most recent inspection in June 2010, having previously been satisfactory. The majority of universal services for early years, nursery and primary and post-16 education are good. The one inadequate secondary school closed in August 2010, and although a higher percentage of secondary schools are outstanding than in similar areas, 40% are only adequate.

A recent unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services found a balance of strengths, satisfactory practice, some areas for development and no areas for priority action.

National performance measures show that almost all outcomes are in line with the averages for England or for similar areas and some are above average. Educational outcomes are generally good, with results in national tests above those in similar areas at the age of 11 and in line with similar areas at the age of 16 and 19. Obesity levels are below similar areas for children aged five and 11.

### Key areas for further development

- Improve the quality of provision and outcomes at the pupil re-integration unit.
- Improve secondary schools to ensure that more are good or better.

### Outcomes for children and young people

Local arrangements to encourage children and young people to live healthy lives are successful. Healthy lifestyles are supported well in the very large majority of inspected settings and services. Health outcomes are generally in line with those in similar areas and nationally. The take-up of school lunches is in line with similar areas in primary and secondary schools. Obesity rates are better than those nationally for children at the start of primary school and also at the age of 11. Children's level of participation in physical activity and sport has continued to rise in line with the national trend and is similar to that elsewhere. The contribution of Child

and Adolescent Mental Health Services to improving outcomes for children and young people is similar to that in England.

Arrangements for keeping children and young people safe are at least good across almost all services and settings. A recent unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services identified strengths in the quality of full assessments, the involvement of children in the assessment process and the quality of management and supervision of social workers. Areas for development include the need to improve the consistency of the quality of initial assessments of children and to establish greater consistency between teams working in the different districts. The number of children and young people seriously injured or killed on the roads is reducing faster than in similar areas and hospital admissions for unintentional or deliberate injuries are comparable to the national picture. The stability of placements for children in care is in line with similar areas and nationally, and that for children awaiting adoption is better than in similar parts of the country. The proportion of case reviews for looked after children that are completed on time is in line with that nationally.

Child carers, nurseries, secondary schools and colleges are good at helping children and young people to do well and enjoy their learning. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage children's achievement is in line with that in similar areas and nationally, and the gap between the highest and lowest achieving children is comparatively smaller than across the rest of the country. By the end of their primary education children's achievement is better than nationally and in similar areas; the number of good primary schools has increased in the last year. By the end of secondary education children achieve as well as those in similar areas, though the number of good or better secondary schools is lower than elsewhere. Special schools continue to improve and provide a high quality education, but the large pupil re-integration unit, based on four sites was very recently judged to be inadequate, with weaknesses in outcomes, effectiveness and leadership and management. Behaviour is good or outstanding in three-quarters of secondary schools and is comparable to similar authorities, as are persistent absence rates, which are reducing.

Successful arrangements for involving children and young people in planning and reviewing local services are in place; they are supported well to make a positive contribution to services through consultation and participation through the five area youth forums and county youth panel. Young people, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are engaged actively in all aspects of the local authority's work such as planning and reviewing services and the appointment of staff. The under-18 conception rate is reducing at a rate similar to the England average, but the local authority acknowledges the challenge it faces to meet national targets. Rates of permanent exclusions from schools are higher than those in similar areas. The number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system is similar to that in similar areas and nationally and the local authority reports further recent reduction; the rate of proven re-offending by young offenders is reducing and is better than in similar parts of the country, supported by an effective youth offending service.

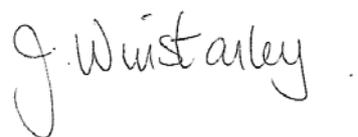
Young people are supported generally well across services and settings in developing the skills and attitudes required for securing work and achieving economic well-being. The quality of educational provision in school sixth forms and further education settings is good and is supported by successful partnership working. The proportion of young people in education, work or training is comparable to that in similar areas and nationally, though young offenders are under-represented in that group. There are good examples of projects to target vulnerable and at risk groups, for example in Nuneaton and Bedworth. The proportion gaining five higher level GCSEs or two A level qualifications or their equivalent by the age of 19 is comparable to that elsewhere. The proportion from low-income households who achieve qualifications by the age of 19 is improving. Effective support for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is leading to good achievement and participation in work-based learning. The take-up of formal childcare by low-income families is comparable to the national average and that in similar areas.

### **Prospects for improvement**

Most outcomes for children and young people are improving in Warwickshire. The local authority's review of its Children and Young People's Plan 2010-13 demonstrates that it understands local strengths and weaknesses and is providing secure leadership for services. Plans are outcome-based and have an increasing focus at area level. However, the needs of some of the most vulnerable young people in the county who attend the large pupil re-integration unit are not being met. Although the local authority had identified accurately the weaknesses in teaching and learning and taken steps to support improvement, insufficient action has been taken to challenge the unit leadership and to ensure full entitlement for all pupils.

This children's assessment is provided in accordance with section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment