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Ms Gill Alexander
Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Learning
North Tyneside Council
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Dear Ms Alexander

Annual children's services assessment

Ofsted guidance published in April 2011 explains that the annual assessment of children's services is derived from the performance profile of the quality of services 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 other published data.

In reaching the assessment of children's services, Ofsted has taken account of inspection outcomes including the arrangements for making sure children are safe and stay safe and performance against similar authorities and/or 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 2010, 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.

North Tyneside Council children's services assessment 2011

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Children's services assessment | Performs excellently (4) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|

Children's services in North Tyneside Council perform excellently. This excellent performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. One significant achievement is that the very large majority of universal services, for all children and young people in North Tyneside, are good or better and none are inadequate. Provision of high quality helps children and young people learn well and stay safe. Specialist services are also consistently good or outstanding. Areas of strength remain as last year. The areas for improvement identified in 2010 have also not changed significantly.

Ofsted's last inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection took place in October 2010 when four strengths, many satisfactory aspects of practice and three areas for development were identified. There were no priority actions requiring urgent attention.

Strengths

- For children under five, the large majority of provision in early years and childcare settings is good or outstanding, as it was in 2010. The children's centres inspected are all at least good. The very large majority of nurseries are good or outstanding. Children are well prepared for school and, over the past four years, outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including for children from low-income families, have improved steadily and levels of development match similar areas.
- As in 2010, the large majority of primary schools remain good and none are inadequate. The results for 11-year-olds were not reported in 2010, but in previous years they matched similar areas and the national average. Provisional results for 2011 show significant improvement.
- Secondary schools continue to be mostly good or outstanding. The local authority provided effective support to the secondary school in an Ofsted category of concern last year and it is now satisfactory with good capacity to improve. Over the past four years, results at GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics have consistently matched the average for similar areas. The proportion of 16-year-olds in receipt of free school meals who achieve at least five good GCSE has also improved. Persistent absence from school is low. Provisional GCSE results for 2011 show significant improvement.
- Specialist education provision, including the two pupil referral units, all the special schools and their sixth forms, are consistently good or better. This is an improvement on last year with more schools judged outstanding and a local authority special school improving from satisfactory to good. The independent special schools for young people with complex needs are also good or better.

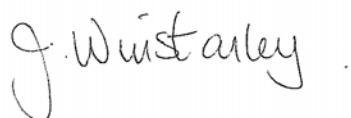
- The provision for learning post-16 is better than in 2010 and one school sixth form has improved from satisfactory to good. However, the general further education and tertiary college remains satisfactory as reported last year. Outcomes are improving at the age of 19 and the proportion of young people achieving a level 2 or level 3 qualification matches similar local authorities. Seventeen-year-olds in North Tyneside are more likely to be in education or training than their counterparts elsewhere.
- The good and outstanding performance of the adoption and fostering agencies, reported in 2010, has been maintained. One local authority children's home is satisfactory and all the others, including for children placed out of the area, are at least good.

Areas for further improvement

- The proportion of 19-year-olds from a low-income background who attain a level 2 qualification is improving and matches performance in similar areas. However, this is not yet the case at level 3, where the gap in attainment between these young people and others of the same age in North Tyneside is slow to close.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment