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Ms Jane Portman
Executive Director, Children and Families Services
Bournemouth Borough Council
The Town Hall
Bourne Avenue
Bournemouth
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Dear Ms Portman

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.

Bournemouth Borough Council children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Bournemouth Borough Council perform well. This performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. As found elsewhere, changes to secondary provision are taking place and two schools have become sponsored academies. Previous inspection judgements for these schools have been taken into account in this assessment. The large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better overall and the very large majority help children and young people learn and stay safe. Areas of strength remain the same as last year. The areas identified for improvement have also not changed significantly as there has been no improvement in the overall effectiveness of primary or secondary schools.

A recent announced full inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children reported that safeguarding arrangements are good as is provision for looked after children. The borough's capacity to improve these services is also good.

Strengths

- Early years and childcare provision continues to be good with both registered childminder and day-care settings showing improvement since the last assessment. For children under five, the very large majority of provision in primary schools continues to be good or better and almost a third is outstanding.
- School sixth forms continue to be good and by the age of 19 numbers of young people in the borough gaining level 2 qualifications, or the equivalent to two good A levels, are in line with similar areas and the country overall and improving at similar rates.
- All provision for special education is good or outstanding. One local authority special school is outstanding and the other good, as is the special school sixth form and the pupil referral unit.
- Numbers of 16-year-olds achieving five GCSEs including English and mathematics improved well in 2010, and are in line with similar areas. Behaviour in secondary schools has continued to improve and persistent absence has reduced and is now in line with similar areas.
- Educational achievements for five- and 16-year-olds from families with low incomes improved well last year and are in line with the same groups nationally and progress was made in narrowing the gap with others in the borough.
- Services and outcomes for looked after children are good and the extent to which children and young people enjoy their education and achieve is outstanding. Both the local authority's children's homes and adoption agency are good. The very large majority of fostering and adoption

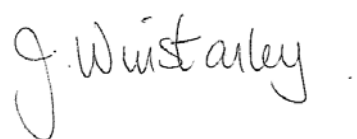
services commissioned by the local authority are good or better but only just under half of commissioned children's home placements are good or better although none are inadequate.

Areas for further improvement

- Primary schools are only adequate overall with over a third satisfactory at their last inspection. This has not improved since the last assessment. Two inadequate schools have made progress with mostly good support from the local authority and are now satisfactory, but a further school is now inadequate as it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
- Only half of the secondary schools in the borough are good or better and two have been judged inadequate at their last inspection.
- The level of development achieved by five-year-olds at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the standards achieved by 11-year-olds in national tests, although in line with similar areas and the national average, have not improved in recent years.
- Fewer 19-year-olds from families with low incomes gain level 2 or higher level qualifications than seen on average nationally and the standards they achieve are not improving.
- The recent inspection of the youth offending team found the services provided to require significant improvement.

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 black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment