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Mr Colin Green  
Director of Children, Learning and Young People  
Coventry City Council  
CC1/238, Civic Centre 1  
Earl Street  
Coventry CV1 5RS

Dear Mr Green

## 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.

## Coventry City Council children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Coventry City Council perform well. This good performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. The large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better overall and provision helps children and young people learn and stay safe. There have been a few changes in the strengths and areas for further improvement since last year. As found elsewhere, changes to secondary provision are taking place and more schools have become academies. Previous inspection judgements for these schools have been taken into account in the assessment.

An unannounced inspection of contact referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection identified strengths in early intervention arrangements and joint working between agencies. No areas for priority action were identified. A subsequent full inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children reported that safeguarding arrangements are good and provision for looked after children is adequate.

### Strengths

- The large majority of providers of early years and childcare are good or better and almost a tenth of them are outstanding. Day care provision is particularly strong. The very large majority of providers are good or better and almost a quarter are outstanding. This is an improvement on 2010.
- Provision for children under the age of five is at least good in the large majority of nurseries and primary schools. The achievement of five-year-olds at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved at a faster rate than across the country and is now in line with the averages nationally and for similar areas. After widening for three years, the achievement gap between five-year-olds from low-income families and others of the same age has recently narrowed.
- Provision in the large majority of secondary schools is good or better and, as in 2010, none of it is inadequate. Since last year, three schools have closed. When the previous inspection reports for those schools are taken into consideration, almost a quarter of secondary provision is outstanding. All the schools are good or better at ensuring the safety of their pupils and almost all are at least good at helping young people to enjoy their education and to achieve.
- Six of the eight special schools run by the local authority are good. The other two are satisfactory. Last year, one special school was outstanding but, in its most recent inspection, it was rated good because improvement had slowed as a result of staff changes and removal to a new site. However, this school has good capacity to improve.

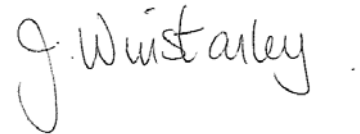
- For looked after children, the adoption agency is good and the fostering agency is outstanding. These have not been inspected since last year. Therefore the grades remain unchanged. The local authority now runs two children's homes, compared to three last year. One of the two homes was inspected recently and continues to be satisfactory. The other has not been re-inspected since 2010 when it was judged to be good.
- From 2007 to 2010, results for 11-year-olds improved at a faster rate than nationally and last year they were in line with averages elsewhere. The provisional figures for 2011 indicate that results have fallen this year.
- Over the last four years, the proportion of 16-year-olds achieving A\* to C grades in five subjects, including English and mathematics, has increased at a faster rate than nationally. It is now in line with the averages for similar areas and across the country. The same is true of the proportion of 19-year-olds achieving the equivalent of two A level passes. The attainment gap between 16-year-olds from low-income families and others of the same age has tended to fluctuate but has narrowed over the last two years.
- As has been the case for the last five years, the proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds who are not in work or any form of education or training is smaller than in similar areas.

### **Areas for further improvement**

- There is a continuing need to increase the number of primary schools that are good or better. As was the case last year, over a half are no better than satisfactory. However, with good support from the local authority, the two schools that were previously inadequate are now both satisfactory.
- Even taking into consideration the good sixth forms in the schools that have become academies, there has been a decline in the proportion of post-16 provision that is good or better. Inspection reports show that, in part, this results from insufficiently robust assessment arrangements to track students' progress and to ensure that they are stretched sufficiently.
- The proportion of care leavers who are in education, employment or training has fluctuated over the last five years. The most recent figure is considerably worse than the national average.
- Over the last three years, the achievement gap between 19-year-olds from low-income families and others of the same age has widened.

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 style with a period at the end.

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment