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Mr Andrew Bunyan
Strategic Director Children and Young People
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Dear Mr Bunyan

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.

Derby City Council children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs adequately (2)
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Children's services in Derby City Council perform adequately. This is the same as in 2010. The large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better, and very few are inadequate. Almost all provision supports children and young people well in staying safe and the large majority helps them enjoy their learning. Areas of strength remain the same as last year but a high proportion of school and post-16 provision is still only adequate. As found elsewhere, changes to secondary school provision are taking place and two more schools have become academies. Previous inspection judgements for these schools have been taken into account in the assessment. There has been good progress in raising educational standards at 11 and 16 years of age, but not all key areas for improvement identified in last year's assessment have been achieved fully.

A recent inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children found both to be adequate. The local authority and partners have clear ambition and appropriate priorities to promote further improvements, but progress in some areas has been delayed by changes in senior management. A new permanent Director of Children's Services took up post in June 2011. The capacity for improvement is now adequate. In response to findings from inspections and serious case reviews the local authority has made measurable improvement.

Strengths

- The large majority of early years and childcare provision is good or better and all provision is now at least satisfactory. The proportion of good or better providers has increased over the last year. Two of the four children's centres, inspected for the first time during the year, are good or better.
- Slightly more provision for children under the age of five in nurseries and primary schools is at least good this year, with 72% now being judged good or better at their last inspection. There has also been a reduction in the proportion of inadequate provision. However, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the age of five fell and is below national averages.
- Educational standards for 11- and 16-year-olds continue to rise. Although the proportion of 11-year-olds attaining the expected level in both English and mathematics remains below similar areas and national averages, standards improved by 2% this year. Local authority held information shows the proportion of looked after children attaining Level 4 in English and mathematics at the age of 11 continues to rise over time and is above national averages.

- Education standards for 16-year-olds have improved at a faster rate than elsewhere and are now in line with national averages and above similar local authorities.
- As was the case last year, almost all specialist provision is good or better. Two special schools are now outstanding, as are both residential special schools. All secondary special sixth form provision and both pupil referral units are good. For looked after children, the local authority fostering and adoption agencies are good. Only two of the seven local authority children's homes are now good, one fewer than last year, however, the large majority of private and voluntary run homes used by the local authority to place children in their care are good or better.
- Two primary schools previously subject to an Ofsted notice to improve have improved and been judged satisfactory during the year. Recent Ofsted monitoring visits to schools requiring improvement report satisfactory or good progress. Local authority support for schools causing concern is leading to improved provision and locally held data illustrate good improvement in standards achieved in primary schools targeted for additional support.
- The proportion of 19-year-olds from low-income families who achieve level 3 qualifications is slightly below average, but the gap in achievement with all young people in Derby is reducing more rapidly than elsewhere.

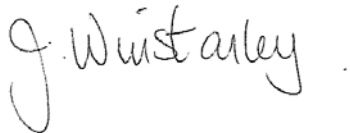
Areas for further improvement

- There has been some progress in addressing key areas for improvement from last year. However, there continues to be too much school provision that is only satisfactory with less than a half of all schools good or better. One secondary school and a primary school inspected during the year were issued with a notice to improve as they are failing to provide satisfactory provision. The proportion of schools where behaviour is judged good has reduced over the year and there has been no improvement in the number of young people who are regularly absent from school.
- The safeguarding and services for looked after children inspection reported the shortage of school places. This means that some children, including vulnerable children and young people, do not have a school place and are waiting too long to start school.
- Outcomes for 16-year-olds from low-income families continue to be an area for further improvement, as last year. They do not do as well as those from similar backgrounds nationally and the gap with all other young people of the same age in Derby City remains wider than found elsewhere.

- Education standards for 19-year-olds remain low. Over time improvement is not keeping pace with national gains and the gap in achievement of both level 2 and level 3 qualifications with national averages is getting wider.

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