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Mr John Coughlan CBE
Director of Children's Services
Hampshire County Council
Children's Services Department
2nd Floor, Ashburton Court
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Winchester, Hampshire
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Dear Mr Coughlan

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.

Hampshire County Council children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs excellently (4)
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Children's services in Hampshire County Council perform excellently. This very strong performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. The very large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better and provision of high quality helps children and young people learn well and stay safe. The many strengths remain from last year and the proportion of good and outstanding provision has increased overall. Areas for improvement have also not changed significantly. A number of schools, almost all of which were good or better at their last inspection, have become academies and these inspection grades have been taken into account in making this assessment.

In August 2011, an announced inspection of safeguarding arrangements and services for looked after children and young people judged the overall effectiveness of both areas to be good with some outstanding features.

Strengths

- The large majority of childminding and childcare provision is good or better and the proportion of good and outstanding providers has increased. There is now no inadequate childminding. The 10 children's centres that have been inspected are either good or outstanding.
- For children under five, the very large majority of provision in nurseries and primary schools is good or better. The proportion of good and outstanding providers has increased and there is now no inadequate provision. The large majority of primary schools are good or better and this proportion has also increased. Test results for five- and 11-year-olds are in line with similar areas and the national average and continue to improve.
- The large majority of secondary schools are good or better. The achievement of 16-year-olds at Key Stage 4 is in line with similar areas and the national average and continues to improve.
- The large majority of provision in special schools is good or better and two-thirds of the residential special schools are outstanding.
- For young people who stay on in education and training, the large majority of post-16 provision is good or better. Achievement at level 2 and level 3 at the age of 19 is in line with the average elsewhere and improving. Over the last four years, the gap in performance between young people from low-income backgrounds and the majority of 19-year-olds in Hampshire is closing.
- Safeguarding arrangements and services for looked after children are good. Leadership, management and partnership work are outstanding. Outcomes for children and young people in care or leaving care are good.

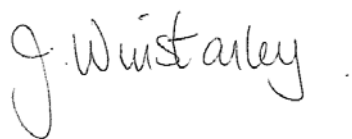
The capacity of the local authority and its partners to improve is outstanding. All the local authority's children's homes are at least good and over a quarter are outstanding. The very large majority of provision commissioned in children's homes elsewhere is good or better. The local authority's fostering and adoption services are good and the very large majority of services commissioned from independent fostering and adoption agencies are either good or outstanding.

Areas for further improvement

- The quality of pupil referral units and school sixth forms remains uneven, with too much that is only satisfactory. There is now more satisfactory provision in general further education colleges than in 2010 and one of the local authority special schools has been judged to be inadequate.
- The local authority's success in closing attainment gaps is mixed. Although improving, the attainment of five- and 16-year-olds from low-income backgrounds remains below the average for counterparts elsewhere; the attainment gap between these children and young people and the majority of those at the same age in Hampshire has widened over the last four years.
- The performance of the Wessex Youth Offending Service, which serves Hampshire and two other local authorities, is inconsistent across the area. Some teams and offices produce work of a much higher standard than others and overall performance is below average.

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