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Ms Kath Tunstall
Strategic Director for Services to Children and Young People
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
City Hall
Bradford
West Yorkshire BD1 1HY

Dear Ms Tunstall

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.

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs adequately (2)
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Children's services in the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council perform adequately, as they did in 2010. The majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better and the very large majority of provision helps children and young people to learn and to stay safe. Two of the three areas for development identified in last year's assessment remain the same this year but there has been an improvement in the quality of local authority children's homes. Previous inspection judgements for secondary schools that have become academies have been taken into account in making this assessment.

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 November 2010 where three strengths, many satisfactory aspects of practice and two areas for development were identified. There were no priority actions requiring urgent attention. All areas for development from the previous inspection of 2009 have been addressed.

Strengths

- There has been a good improvement in the quality of early years and childcare provision and almost two-thirds is at least good. The proportions of good childminders and good registered day-care providers have both improved well. In 2010 only one children's centre had been inspected. This year the number has risen to 14 of which 11 are good and one is outstanding.
- The proportion of good or better primary schools has increased since 2010 and the large majority are good or better. For children under five, the very large majority of provision in nursery and primary schools remains good. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage the proportion of children from low-income families achieving a good level of development is 39%. This is the same as in similar areas and close to the national average and the gap in achievement with all children in Bradford has reduced this year.
- The local authority provides good and well planned advice and support for any school in an Ofsted category of concern and monitoring visits show that this is having an impact on bringing about improvement.
- Local special schools have undergone considerable reorganisation. Recent inspection of the new schools shows that two of the four schools inspected are good. A fifth school inspected under pilot arrangements for the new inspection framework was found to be good with some outstanding features. Five of the six pupil referral units in Bradford are at least good and no specialist provision is inadequate.

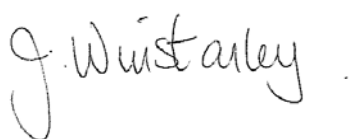
- The quality of local authority children's homes has improved since the last assessment and 11 of the 12 homes are good or better. The local authority's fostering and adoption agencies remain good.
- Achievement by the age of 19 continues to show steady improvement. The proportion of 19-year-olds from low-income families who achieve level 2 qualifications is in line with the national average and better than that in similar areas; at level 3, the proportion of 19-year-olds from low-income families who achieve at this standard is above average. In both cases, the gap with all young people in Bradford is reducing.
- The recent inspection of the youth offending service noted good outcomes in the key areas of performance.

Areas for further improvement

- As last year, too few secondary schools are good or better although only two are inadequate. Although examination results have continued to improve at the age of 16, the improvement rate is not as fast as that found nationally or in similar areas. The proportion who achieve at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics is below that of similar areas and the national average. Asian pupils form 35% of the cohort. For them, the rate of improvement is slightly better than that of all Bradford pupils. However, standards are below comparators for this group too. The proportion of 16-year-olds from low-income families gaining five GCSEs at A* to C including English and mathematics is also below average and the gap with all young people in Bradford is not reducing.
- Too much post-16 provision is only adequate. Less than half of secondary school sixth forms are good or better and one of the local further education colleges, previously good, is now only adequate.
- Education standards for 11-year-olds rose in 2010 and were close to the national average. However, provisional data for 2011 show a fall in the standards achieved.

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