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Ms Denise Hyde
Director, Children and Young People's Service
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Dear Ms Hyde

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.

North Lincolnshire Council children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs adequately (2)
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Children's services in North Lincolnshire Council perform adequately. This is the same as in 2010. The majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better overall and the very large majority of provision helps children and young people stay safe and to do well and enjoy their learning. Areas of strength and for further development are similar to last year's assessment.

An unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection carried out in November 2010 found one area of strength, a large number of aspects that met the requirements of statutory guidance and three areas for development; there were no areas for priority action. The areas for development identified at the previous unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services in November 2009 had been addressed.

Strengths

- The quality of early years and childcare provision has improved. There is now no inadequate provision and nearly two-thirds of registered day-care providers are at least good. Three children's centres have been inspected and all are judged to be good.
- For children under five, the large majority of provision in nursery and primary schools is good or better. Achievement at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is in line with similar areas and the national average, and improved better last year than at any other point over the past four years. This good improvement is also evident for children from low-income families. The large majority of primary schools make at least good provision for all ages of children.
- Outcomes continue to improve for 16-year-olds and the proportion who achieve at least five GCSEs at A* to C including English and mathematics is in line with similar areas and the national average. This was an area for development at the time of the last assessment. Standards for pupils from low-income families have also improved well since the last assessment, and the gap between them and their peers in North Lincolnshire narrowed.
- Much of the specialist provision made by the local authority is good or better. Both special schools were good last year; one is now outstanding but the other only satisfactory. The secondary special school sixth form is also outstanding. Both pupil referral units were good last year and this year one is outstanding. The adoption agency remains good and one of the local authority's four children's homes is now outstanding with a

further two judged to be good. The provision the local authority commissions elsewhere is all at least good.

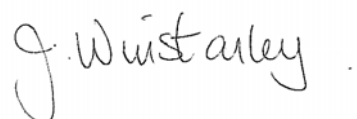
- The local authority has provided successful support to the one primary and two secondary schools that have been in an Ofsted category of concern. Only one (secondary) school remains inadequate and this had made outstanding progress between its last two monitoring visits. No other provision inspected by Ofsted in the local area is inadequate.

Areas for further improvement

- The proportion of good or better childminders has not improved since the last assessment and more than a third of these settings are only satisfactory.
- Similarly, while none are inadequate, almost a third of primary schools are only satisfactory. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 remains below similar areas and the national average, as does the rate of progression between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for both English and mathematics. Outcomes for 11-year-olds were disappointing in 2010 but provisional data for 2011 indicate a small rise in standards.
- Although there is an improving picture, only six of the 12 maintained secondary schools are good. Three of the four small secondary school sixth forms remain only adequate.
- Attainment by the age of 19 for young people from low-income families is not improving at the same rate as that of their peers in North Lincolnshire and the gap between the two groups is widening, particularly for the small number achieving level 3 qualifications.
- The recent inspection of youth offending services identified inadequate performance in the key areas inspected.

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 cursive script that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment