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8 November 2011

Ms Barbara Shaw  
Acting Director of Children's Services  
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council  
Adult and Children's Services  
Seaford House, Kirkleatham Street  
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Cleveland  
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Dear Ms Shaw

## 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.

## Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Redcar and Cleveland Borough 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 and almost all provision helps children and young people learn well and stay safe. Areas of strength remain the same as last year and the areas identified for improvement have also not changed significantly.

The December 2010 unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection found that significant progress had been made in almost all the areas identified for development at the previous inspection in January 2010. There were no areas requiring urgent remedial action.

### Strengths

- For children under five, the large majority of provision in early years settings and childcare is good or outstanding. The children's centres inspected provide effective support to children and their families. The very large majority of nurseries are good or outstanding. Children are well prepared for school and, over the past four years, outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved steadily and match the average for similar areas.
- Much provision in primary schools is good or better. The first monitoring visit to the primary school in an Ofsted category of concern found that the work of the local authority has been extensive and its contribution to supporting improvement has been satisfactory. The Key Stage 2 results were not published in 2010, however, in previous years, they matched those of similar areas. Provisional results for 2011 show further improvement.
- The local authority secondary schools are mostly good, as they were in 2010. The academy has not yet been inspected and was satisfactory when last inspected as a local authority school. The proportion of young people achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics is in line with similar local authorities and has improved year on year at a faster pace than the national rate of improvement. The provisional GCSE results for 2011 show that these standards have been maintained. Results for young people from low-income families are also improving and they do as well as young people in similar areas. The attainment gap between these young people and the majority of all young people in Redcar and Cleveland is narrowing.

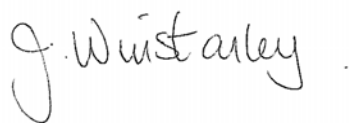
- As in 2010, all special schools, bar one, and the special sixth forms, are good. The special school that was inadequate in 2010 is now satisfactory.
- The provision for learning post-16 is consistently good in the two colleges. The school sixth forms are also mostly good. Education outcomes at the age of 19, match similar areas at level 2 and are above at level 3. The proportion of 19-year-olds from low-income families with a level 2 or a level 3 qualification is rising and is now above the average performance of their peers in similar areas.
- The quality of provision for looked after children and young people remains very good. The local authority children's home and the adoption agency are outstanding. The fostering agency is good.

### **Areas for further improvement**

- Levels of development for children from low-income families are below similar areas at the Early Years Foundation Stage. The gap between them and the majority of children in Redcar and Cleveland is not closing.
- The pupil referral unit is making satisfactory progress but remains inadequate.
- A revised strategy to reduce further the above average proportion of young people not in education, work or training is currently being implemented. It is too early to see its full impact and the current 2011 figure, provided by the local authority in its assessment, is still high.

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