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Mrs Alison O'Sullivan  
Director of Children and Young People  
Kirklees Metropolitan Council  
Directorate Office  
Directorate for Children and Young People  
Ground Floor, Civic Centre 1  
High Street  
Huddersfield HD1 2NF

Dear Mrs O'Sullivan

## 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.

## Kirklees Metropolitan Council children's services assessment 2011

Children's services assessment	Performs well (3)
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Children's services in Kirklees Metropolitan Council perform well. This performance has been sustained from 2010 to 2011. The large 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. Strengths and an area for improvement remain similar to those identified in last year's assessment. The previous inspection judgements for two secondary schools that are now academies have been taken into account in making this assessment.

An unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment arrangements for children in need and children who may be in need of protection in July 2011 found one strength, a large number of areas that were satisfactory and six areas for development. There were no areas for priority action. An announced inspection of safeguarding and services for looked after children in October 2011 found that the overall effectiveness of both these areas of provision were good. It noted that both leadership and management and capacity for improvement were also good and that swift action had been taken to tackle the areas for development which were identified in the unannounced inspection.

### Strengths

- The large majority of early years and childcare settings are good. The proportion of registered day-care providers that are good or better has improved and four of the five children's centres that have been inspected are good.
- For children under the age of five, the very large majority of provision in nursery and primary schools continues to be good. Achievement at the Early Years Foundation Stage is above that of similar areas and the national average and has improved well, particularly in 2010.
- Good performance has been maintained in the quality of primary schools and the large majority are good or better. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 rose particularly well last year, although provisional data for 2011 indicate that this performance may not have been sustained.
- The large majority of secondary schools are good or better. However, one school now has a notice to improve. A recent monitoring visit by Ofsted found it to be making good progress and to be well-supported by the local authority.
- There has been sustained improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSEs at A\* to C including English and mathematics and this is in line with similar areas and the national average. Provisional data for 2011 suggest further good improvement. Nineteen per cent of the 2010 cohort

were of Asian heritage and these pupils also made good progress and achieved in line with similar areas. The gap in achievement between those 16-year-olds from low-income families and their peers has reduced well over the last two years and is not as wide as that in similar areas and nationally.

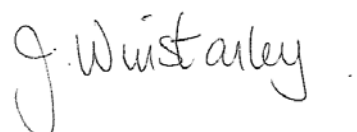
- Most specialist provision is at least good. Five of the local authority's six special schools continue to be good or better. All five local authority children's homes are good or better and the local fostering and adoption agencies are both outstanding. Private fostering arrangements in Kirklees are now good, having previously been inadequate.

### **Areas for further improvement**

- While safeguarding was judged as good at the most recent inspection, there are areas for development from the inspection of front-line child protection services which need to be addressed. These include: the use of the Common Assessment Framework; the implementation of the electronic recording system; and improving the record of strategy discussions to include evidence that decisions have been agreed by a social work manager and to note whether other agencies have been consulted.
- The quality of both pupil referral units has deteriorated, having moved to satisfactory from the previous judgement of good in both cases.
- Overall, the quality of post-16 provision in Kirklees remains the same as it was at the last assessment. However, the local further education college was judged to be inadequate in April 2011, having previously been satisfactory.
- At the age of 19, the rate of improvement for young people achieving level 2 and level 3 qualifications is not as good as that of similar areas and the national average. The achievement gaps between those from low-income families and their peers at this age remains wider than that of similar areas and the national 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 style with a large initial 'J'.

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Children's Services Assessment