

<b>Children's Trust Statutory Board</b> <b>Report to Statutory Board Meeting</b>	
<b>Section 1 – General</b>	
<b>Date of CTSB Meeting</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2010
<b>Title of Report /Agenda Item</b>	Ofsted Report - Outstanding local authority children's services 2009
<b>Author</b>	Geoff Evans
<b>Presenter</b>	Anne Whiteley
<b>Section 2 – Report Detail</b>	
<b>Report is for:</b>	
Info <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Decision: <input type="checkbox"/> Endorsement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	
That the Board recommended that the DSCB note the report and use the best practice and key characteristics identified to secure further improvements to safeguarding children and young people in Devon.	
<b>Summary:</b>	
The report identifies the main characteristics of the best-performing authorities to be :  consistency in practice that is driving real improvement of local services;  a clear focus on the children and young people who need support most and on their progress and development;  a deep understanding of local children, families and communities.	
<b>Report :</b>	

**Ofsted Report - Outstanding local authority children's services 2009**

**Recommendation: that the Board**

recommended that the Children's Trust note the report and use the best practice and key characteristics identified to secure further improvements to safeguarding children and young people in Devon.

**Summary**

- 1 Ofsted have published a report highlighting the aspects of best practice in the 10 children's services judged as excellent by Ofsted in 2009.
  - 1.1 The 10 local authorities judged to be performing excellently were : Blackburn with Darwen; Camden; City of London; Kensington and Chelsea; Kingston upon Thames; Lewisham; Richmond upon Thames; Tower Hamlets; Wandsworth; York.
  - 1.2 The report is intended as a discussion document for local authorities and partner organisations who are involved in improving outcomes for children and young people and to assist those organisations in analysing their own services against the characteristics of authorities which have been judged to be excellent.
  - 1.3 The report identifies the main characteristics of the best-performing authorities to be :
    - 1.3.1 consistency in practice that is driving real improvement of local services
    - 1.3.2 a clear focus on the children and young people who need support most and on their progress and development
    - 1.3.3 a deep understanding of local children, families and communities.
  - 1.4 Each of these characteristics is considered in more detail in the report and illustrated by case studies. A summary of the detail is shown in Appendix A of this paper. The case studies within the Ofsted report were produced by the 10 local authorities and are designed to illustrate what they themselves think has made a significant difference. Key themes from the case studies highlight the importance of
    - 1.4.1 A corporate approach to tackling inequality and disadvantage
    - 1.4.2 Early years & early intervention
    - 1.4.3 Prioritisation and targeting resources to vulnerable children & groups
    - 1.4.4 Knowing local communities (localisation of operations)
    - 1.4.5 Data and the scrutiny of performance
    - 1.4.6 The aspiration and tenacity of leaders across partnerships
- 2.0 Christine Gilbert, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector comments in the report's foreword: *'One message stands out in this report: excellent children's services make a difference not only by improving outcomes for all children*

*but also for those who are more vulnerable. These are not seen as incompatible priorities.'*

- 3.0 The full report can be found at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Outstanding-local-authority-children-s-services-2009>

**Summary of the Key Characteristics of Excellent Children's Services**

**1. Consistency in practice that is driving real improvement of local services**

The first characteristic of the excellent children's services is their ambitious, systematic and determined focus on improving local performance. They

- constantly scrutinise performance and quality and have a commitment to transparency
- Data are used to target support, intervention & define priorities
- Strong & effective partnerships are seen as crucial and they are clear about what needs improving, and why, and use their collective resources to bring this about.
- Challenge all services to improve & are not afraid to take action to secure improvement
- Welcome scrutiny and create external pressure for improvement
- Have high expectations, raising aspirations and will buck the national trend of underachievement by certain groups of children

**2. A clear focus on the children and young people who need support most and on their progress and development**

Excellent children's services place great importance on raising the achievement of vulnerable groups and narrowing the attainment gap with others. They

- focus on reducing inequalities as part of a local authority-wide policy which reflects the ambitions of all elected members and officer
- know which specific groups and individual children need to be targeted
- have a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention which is deeply ingrained in the thinking of managers and staff and consistently and genuinely shapes policy, practice and funding.
- Adapt services to respond to the diverse backgrounds of different groups of children and communities. Cultural needs are well understood.

**3. A deep understanding of local children, families and communities.**

Excellent children's services have a very good understanding of the needs of their local area. They

- use data to improve performance including the close examination of information for specific communities or groups of children.
- Have highly effective arrangements for consultation and engagement with children, young people, families and communities which are embedded in regular local practices and processes. The views of those consulted can be seen to make a difference.