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## **Children's services in Newcastle are 'excellent', says Ofsted**

Children's services in Newcastle are officially among the best in the country after being rated 'excellent' by government inspectors.

Ofsted's annual Children's Services Assessment, published today, has given the city council the highest possible accolade.

Inspectors pointed to improvements across schools and services as examples of the authority's excellence. And they judged that there was an improvement on last year when the authority was deemed to be performing 'well'.

The report stated that: "The very large majority of inspected settings, services and institutions help children and young people stay safe and learn well."

Joanne Kingsland, Newcastle City Council's cabinet member for Children's Services, said: "This is an outstanding achievement and I would like to congratulate and thank all of our staff in children's services, schools and other settings, for all their hard work and dedication."

John Collings, Executive Director of Children's Services, said: "I couldn't be any prouder that Ofsted has recognised our achievements. Our services and schools are making a real difference to the lives of children and young people who live, study or are cared for in our city. It spurs us on to keep working with our partners to guarantee a bright future for all children and young people in Newcastle."

The inspectors identified the following strengths:

- Improved provision in early years and childcare
- Good support to very young children and their parents or carers in children's centres
- Good progress made by children in their early development, including for children from low income families
- Primary schools and improving results for 11 year olds at Key Stage 2
- Effectiveness of local authority support to schools
- Secondary schools and academies
- The fast rate of improvement in GCSE results for 16 year olds, including young people from low income families
- Post-16 education and training providers' contribution to rising standards
- More 17 year olds staying in education or training than in smaller areas

- The rising proportion of 19 year olds continuing in education and the high proportion moving on to university
- The strength of specialist services, including special schools, the pupil referral unit, adoption and fostering agencies and children's homes

Areas for further improvement were improving school attendance rates and continuing to improve the consistency of assessments of children in need.

**ENDS**