



Robert Goodwill MP
Minister of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Councillor Mohammed Khan OBE
Leader of the Council
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Leaders Office
Floor 2, Old Town Hall
King William Street
Blackburn
BB1 7DY

18th December 2017

Dear Mohammed,

BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN BOROUGH COUNCIL: OFSTED SINGLE INSPECTION (8 DECEMBER 2017)

I am writing following Ofsted's publication of its report on Blackburn with Darwen Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, and the review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding board. Ofsted has judged services overall to be 'good'; the local safeguarding board is also judged to be 'good'.

I recognise that local authorities face significant challenges in delivering effective children's social care services, but the fact that they are so important to the most vulnerable children locally means that it is essential that they are delivered to a high standard. That Blackburn with Darwen has achieved a rating of good demonstrates that this can be achieved and I would like to congratulate everyone involved at the council on their contribution to this very positive outcome.

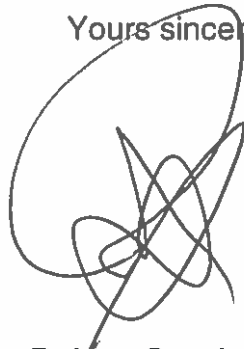
The Ofsted report shows that Blackburn with Darwen has made some good improvements since its last inspection, including its use of family support workers and advanced practitioners. Partnership working is clearly a strength and, as a result, services are well co-ordinated. The report highlights many examples of strong practice and demonstrates a welcome focus on doing the right thing for children. I am particularly pleased to read of council's commitment to, and ambition for, children and young people in its care.

It is positive that the DCS and senior leaders have an accurate view of the areas still in need of development and that there is now strong support from across the council for the service. I hope you will use these strengths in addressing the remaining areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted report, particularly with regard to services for children in need of help and protection.

Finally, I am keen to encourage effective local authorities to share their learning on improving and delivering good quality services with other authorities facing similar challenges. The Department for Education contracts with high-performing local authorities that have been rated good or outstanding by Ofsted to provide expert advice to councils in intervention for their children's social care services. Should you be interested in finding out more about this, please contact David Foster (david.foster@education.gov.uk) – he would be delighted to hear from you.

I am copying this letter to: Cllr Maureen Bateson MBE (Lead Member for Children's Social Care Services); Harry Catherall (Chief Executive); Linda Clegg (Director of Children's Services); Jake Berry MP; and Kate Hollern MP.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines, positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

Robert Goodwill MP
Minister of State for Children and Families