THE RT HON LORD LAMING CBE DL

27 March 2015

Dear Nigel,

It was a real pleasure to learn of this very positive inspection report by Ofsted on the services in Leeds for children and families. May I begin by offering to your elected members, Chief Executive, you and your management teams, the social workers, foster carers, schools and other key services my warmest congratulations on an excellent achievement.

As you know, I have read many hundreds of inspection reports yet I cannot bring to mind any quite as positive and encouraging as the report published today. It is a remarkable success story which reflects so well on the City of Leeds, not least because great changes have been brought about in a relatively short space of time. The "Child Friendly" aspiration could so easily have become little more than a well intentioned slogan. But through great skill, commitment and very hard work, it has become a reality. It has done my heart good to read such a glowing and positive report. The City of Leeds has demonstrated to every other local authority just what can be achieved for children and families even during a period of financial constraint.

The inspirational leadership has set the values and ensured they are translated into day to day practice. The job satisfaction for the staff has understandably resulted in less turnover and fewer days away because of sickness. These factors demonstrate so well that the City of Leeds is a good employer, providing high quality services at standards seldom achieved elsewhere. I offer you all my warmest congratulations. I should also like to add a word of support to the inspection team. They have produced a well researched, clearly written, constructive report and they have had the courage to be unequivocal in their assessments and evaluation statements, credit also belongs to them for a job well done.

The City of Leeds is now pioneering standards of services that raise the bar for all other service providers. Maintaining these standards will not be easy but Leeds has demonstrated that it is well able to meet this challenge. I hope the report will be widely read and will encourage others to achieve the very best for each child during the formative stages of their lives. I have been thrilled by reading this report and I wish you all continued success in this important work.

All good wishes,

Herbert Laming

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