City of York Council’s Children’s Services rated as Outstanding

Thursday 17 April, 2025

Independent inspectors, Ofsted, have rated York’s services for children and young people as Outstanding in all areas.

The inspectors reviewed four key areas of the council’s work including how it supports children who need help and protection: children in care, care leavers and leadership.

Each was rated as Outstanding following the inspection in February, leading to an overall rating of Outstanding. This puts York in the top seven per cent of local authorities’ children’s services in the country.

York Children’s Services were last inspected in 2022, when each of the areas inspected were rated as Requires Improvement.

York is the first local authority nationally to have moved from a rating below Good to Outstanding in all areas in a single inspection cycle.

The inspectors attributed the ‘relentless drive by senior leaders’ for the significant improvement in the standard and quality of children’s services, highlighting the council leadership’s aligned core values and strong commitment to children, young people and families.

They also recognised the council’s ambition and determination to provide outstanding services, creating an environment for improvement, based around putting children first.

The council’s commitment to recruiting and maintaining a stable workforce was also highlighted, noting that doing so created good experiences and progress for children.

Work to ensure that children’s views and feelings are central to decisions that are made for them was also praised, with inspectors recognising that children are supported to remain within their wider family networks where possible.

Cllr Claire Douglas, Leader of City of York Council, said: “One of my key priorities since becoming Leader has been to work as a single leadership team of politicians and officers to help the council improve the services it delivers for residents.

“I’m delighted by this recognition and pay tribute to the leadership of Cllr Webb, Martin Kelly as Corporate Director and to the ongoing hard work of all Children’s Services staff. This judgment shows that everyone being aligned, with a shared commitment to do the best for children and young people in York, is resulting in improved services and I couldn’t be happier”.

Cllr Bob Webb, the council’s Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, said: “Supporting children and young people in York to live safe, healthy lives and to fulfil their potential is central to everything we do as a council.

“Our fantastic team in York is absolutely committed to achieving the best for every child, young person and family they’re working with and I’m delighted that the inspectors have recognised the exceptional quality of support they provide each and every day.

“Our relentless focus on putting children and young people at the heart of everything will continue, so we can ensure that York is a great place for all children and young people to grow up, now and in the future.”

Martin Kelly OBE, the council’s Corporate Director of Children and Young People, said: “I’m immensely proud of our Children’s Services teams and the many colleagues across other parts of the council whose dedication and absolute commitment to achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and families in York have made this rating possible.

“Their resilience and desire to continually review, reflect and improve outcomes for the young people they’re working with is outstanding. I look forward to continuing to work with them, and our partners

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across the city, to support children, young people and families in York."

Yvette Stanley, *Ofsted's National Director for* Regulation and Social Care, said: "This inspection report highlights the determination of all those working across York to make a positive difference for children and their families. It is a rare achievement to move from a judgement of requires improvement to outstanding in all areas, and it was a pleasure to hear about the team's successes. I was particularly pleased to read how they have created an environment for improvement that always puts children first.

"This inspection outcome is a significant achievement and reflects the hard work and commitment of York's leadership team, their managers and frontline staff, as well as the wider council and safeguarding partners."

The judgement places York with only ten other authorities in the country, all of which have achieved a rating of Outstanding in all areas for their Children's Services.

A copy of the full report is available here.

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