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Childrens services Ofsted inspection

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The children's services department at Blackpool Council recently underwent an Ofsted inspection.

The inspection

Ofsted have said that some good work is happening in Blackpool. However, overall the inspection revealed that children's services is not doing as well as it could and was rated inadequate. This means there are things we need to do to improve.

Ofsted have written a letter to children in Blackpool and we want you to read it. You can find the letter from Ofsted below.

Ofsted did say that social workers like working in Blackpool and feel things are getting better.

Ofsted also said there have been improvements in some areas; for example, services to children in care and care leavers. Care leavers now feel better supported and have clearer plans.

Positive points

Although some positives did come out of the inspection Blackpool Council know there is a need to improve things for children in Blackpool quickly.

We are committed to making this happen.

We hope the below explains to you what we want to achieve for children in Blackpool.

- To be Happy and healthy
- To feel safe
- To do well in school
- To get a good job
- Have a voice, and be listened to

The result - for Blackpool to be a safe, healthy, happy environment for children and their families with good schools and good job prospects.

Ofsted letter



To the children and young people of Blackpool. Inspection of children's services

In November and December 2018, Ofsted inspectors visited your area. They looked at children and young people's experiences of the help, protection and care given to them by workers at the local authority. They also looked at what leaders at the local authority do to make these services better.

We have asked the workers at the local authority to share this letter with you. It tells you the main things that inspectors found. There is a more detailed report on our website that you can read if you want to.

What grades did inspectors give the local authority

Grades

Judgment	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate

What did the inspectors find

- Since the last inspection in 2014, services for children and families in Blackpool have not been good enough and they need to improve a lot.
- When some children are at risk of serious harm, they are not always kept safe in the right way or at the right time.
- Some children have had too many changes of social worker and have not always been provided with the help they need quickly enough.
- Social workers do not always understand what has happened to children in the past, as well as what is happening to them now. This needs to improve so that plans can be much clearer about what needs to be done to help.
- Social workers told inspectors they liked working in Blackpool and feel things are getting better. Inspectors found that social workers sometimes have too much work to do and need more training so that their work with children and families is of a better quality.
- Senior leaders know about this problem and have been trying to do something about it, but they have been too slow. They haven't reached a point yet where all children get the help they need quickly.
- The Council and its partners, who run other services, do not always work well together to help keep children safe and improve the way that families get the support they need.
- Senior leaders did not realise how much needs to change to make things better until the inspection. They made some changes straight away during the inspection but much more needs to be done.
- There have been improvements in some areas. Services to children in care and care leavers have got better. Most children in care live in settled foster placements and keep in touch with their social workers. Children's needs are reviewed on time by independent reviewing officers who explain things well. More needs to be done to help children get the right support in school.
- Care leavers now feel better supported and have clearer plans, although they are not always completed soon enough or brought up to date when things change. More needs to be done to help care leavers achieve in education, employment and training.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Schlechte
HMI Lead inspector

If you have any feedback on this information or children's services in Blackpool please email ofstedreportfeedback@blackpool.gov.uk

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