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To the children and young people in Hertfordshire

Inspection of children's services in Hertfordshire

Last month, I came to Hertfordshire with a team of Ofsted inspectors to look at the help, protection and care that children, young people and families get from the local authority. We were also interested to know what difference leaders in the local authority were making.

We have asked the local authority to share this letter with you. It gives our judgements and explains what we found. There is a more detailed report on our website that you can read if you want to.

Ofsted's inspection judgements on Hertfordshire Children's Services

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

What the inspectors found

- Services for children and young people in Hertfordshire are good.
- Getting help early makes a real difference to families. It means that they don't have to have a social worker unless they really need one.
- The local authority and its partners, including the police, are quick to respond if children are at serious risk.
- Social workers are good at working with parents.

- Having specialist workers who know about things like mental health, drugs, alcohol and domestic violence working alongside social workers really helps.
- Social workers listen to children and young people and take what they say seriously.
- Disabled children and their families get a good service.
- Children don't come into care unless they really need to.
- Social workers are good at keeping in touch with children in care.
- The virtual school is doing a good job in trying to make sure that children in care do as well at school or college as they possible can.
- The support that foster carers get has been strengthened.
- Personal advisors are very good at keeping in touch with care leavers and doing everything they can to help and support them.
- Members of the children in care council are good at making sure that leaders know what it is like to be in care in Hertfordshire.
- Senior leaders really care about children and young people and they are always trying to make things better.
- There is still more work to do but senior leaders know what needs to be done.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nigel Parkes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nigel Parkes HMI
Lead Inspector