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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 12 January 2010  
**Subject:** 2009 Annual Assessment of Children's Services  
**Report of:** Cllr Mrs Anita Lewis , Portfolio Holder for Children's Services  
**Summary:** The report presents the first annual performance rating for Central Bedfordshire Children's Services

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning  
**Contact Officer:** Sylvia Gibson, Assistant Director, Policy, Planning and Commissioning  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate)** Not applicable

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The proposal supports the delivery of the following Council Priority:

- Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people

### **Financial:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications related to the improvement strategy will be assessed when the strategy is being developed.

### **Legal:**

No Comments.

### **Risk Management:**

No Comments.

### **Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

No Comments

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

The improvement strategy described in this report will take particular account of the needs of vulnerable groups.

**Community Safety:**

No Comments.

**Sustainability:**

No Comments.

**Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:**

- This was not considered by the Children Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**That the Executive:**

- (a) notes the 2009 annual performance rating for Central Bedfordshire Children's Services;**
- (b) agrees the action to be taken to improve future assessment outcomes as stated as set out in paragraphs 10 to 13.**

*Reason for Recommendation(s): To meet the requirement that this performance rating is reported formally to the Council's Executive.*

*To ensure that Central Bedfordshire Council meets its statutory duty as set out in the Children Act 2004 to improve outcomes for children and young people.*

**Executive Summary**

The 2009 annual performance rating for Central Bedfordshire Children's Services was published by Ofsted on 9 December 2009. The rating for Children's Services in Central Bedfordshire Council is "Performs adequately". Central Bedfordshire Executive Committee is asked to note the 2009 assessment of Children's Services and endorse the action to improve future assessment outcomes.

**Background**

1. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires Ofsted to provide an annual rating of performance for each council's children's services. This rating also forms a significant component of the new joint inspectorate Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

2. The Council has a lead role in providing services for children and works with its partners, other agencies and the private and voluntary sectors to improve outcomes for children and young people. In order to arrive at the performance rating, Ofsted draws together evidence from all inspections of regulated services for children and young people for which the council has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, and all the relevant Every Child Matters indicators from the National Indicator Set. This means that Further Education colleges and services provided by the private, voluntary and independent sector are included in the assessment. The Annual Assessment judgement is formed from this performance data, and from Ofsted's understanding of the local context and judgements from inspections.
3. Ofsted's key principle is that emphasis should be placed on findings from the most recent front-line inspection and regulation of services and settings. In considering the evidence, Ofsted has recognised that gaps in the data and in the first hand evidence available are significant, particularly that related to aspects of social care and services for Looked After Children. As a result, 2009 is being deemed a transitional year, with full application of the new system commencing in 2010.
4. The annual rating uses the joint inspectorate CAA scoring system:

Performs excellently	An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements
Performs well	An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements
Performs adequately	An organisation that meets only minimum requirements
Performs poorly	An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements

5. The Council's Children's Services rating was published on 9 December 2009 on the Ofsted website.

### **The Annual Assessment Rating**

6. The rating for children's services in Central Bedfordshire Council is "Performs adequately". Ofsted concluded that the performance of middle and upper schools and of school sixth forms in Central Bedfordshire is too variable. Less than half of the middle and upper schools and school sixth forms were judged to be good or better. This is below both similar areas and the national average. The local Further Education College was also judged adequate.
7. A large proportion of childminders, childcare settings and nursery schools were judged good or better, and an above average proportion of primary schools were judged good or better. Provision for children and young people with special educational needs was judged to be effective in special schools.

8. No inspection outcomes were available for children's homes, fostering agencies or adoption agencies, and Ofsted considers that as Central Bedfordshire is a new Council, it is too soon to judge performance against national performance indicators.
9. Ofsted's rating and explanatory narrative are attached at Appendix A.

### **Improvement Strategy**

10. It is clear from the Ofsted judgement and from our own analysis that there is a compelling need to re-configure the existing school support and intervention strategy in order to bring about system change and improve achievement and the associated Children's Services Ofsted rating. The Children's Trust has therefore initiated a process to review and re-commission school support through the Children's Trust Commissioning Group.
11. The approach will be to identify statutory functions and to review all other Local Authority functions with the intention of commissioning these non statutory functions out to school trusts, networks, clusters or other agencies to improve outcomes and achievement. Those groups or agencies commissioned to deliver support for improvement would operate within a clear governance framework and against agreed targets for improvement.
12. The Children, Families and Learning Directorate will work actively with schools to promote strategic partnership arrangements to create the necessary infrastructure for delivering improvements. In doing this, officers will build on the developing good practice in established trusts and federations in Central Bedfordshire and beyond.
13. A report on the Policy to Raise Achievement in Central Bedfordshire Schools appears as a further agenda item at this meeting of the Executive. This report provides further information on the approach to be taken.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

14. Central Bedfordshire Executive is asked to note the 2009 assessment of Children's Services and endorse the action to improve future assessment outcomes.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Central Bedfordshire Children's Services Rating

#### **Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)

Comprehensive Area Assessment 2009: Additional information for local authorities and their partners on the new Ofsted annual rating of council children's services - Ofsted

**Location of papers:** Priory House, Chicksands