

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0117 945 6293  
Direct F 0117 945 6554  
South\_apa@ofsted.gov.uk



17 December 2008

Mr Michael O'Connor  
Acting Director of Children's Services  
Westminster City Council  
Westminster City Hall  
64 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1E 6QP

Dear Mr O'Connor

## **Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in Westminster City Council 2008**

This letter summarises the findings of the 2008 annual performance assessment (APA) for your council. The evaluations and judgements in the letter draw on a range of data and information which covers the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. As you know, the APA is not based on an inspection of your services and, therefore, can only provide a snapshot based on the evidence considered. As such, I am grateful to you for assuring the quality of the data provided.

Performance is judged on a four point scale as detailed in the handbook.

I should emphasise that the grades awarded are based on an overall 'best fit' model. For instance, an outstanding judgement of Grade 4 reflects that overall most aspects, but not necessarily all, of the services in the area are working very well. We know that one of the features of outstanding provision is the drive for greater improvement and no council would suggest, and nor would Ofsted, that a judgement of outstanding indicates that everything is perfect. Similarly within a judgement of inadequate overall, Grade 1, there could be some aspects of the overall service that are adequate or even good. Judgements are made in a rounded way, balancing all of the evidence and giving due consideration to outcomes, local and national contexts, priorities and decision-making.



The following table sets out the grades awarded for performance in 2008.

<b>Assessment judgement area</b>	<b>APA grade</b>
Overall effectiveness of children's services	3
Being healthy	4
Staying safe	3
Enjoying and achieving	3
Making a positive contribution	4
Achieving economic well-being	3
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	4

*Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale  
4: outstanding/excellent; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate*

## Overall effectiveness of children's services

Grade 3

Westminster City Council makes a good contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people. It delivers services which are consistently above minimum requirements and has sustained strong performance in most of the outcome areas for young people.

The council continues to make outstanding progress in helping to improve the health of children as well as providing access to services for the most vulnerable groups. Local services for safeguarding and for looked after children are good. Adoption work has become more efficient and the adoption rate is very good. Educational outcomes across all key stages are generally showing year on year improvement, especially at Key Stage 4. In particular, good support has been provided for looked after children and for minority ethnic groups. These groups make good progress. Outstanding progress has been maintained in children making a positive contribution. Both the number of first time offenders and the rate of re-offending have fallen. In achieving economic well-being, good and well targeted action has been taken to reduce numbers not in education, employment or training. The need to secure the recent improvements in outcomes at post-16 continues to be an area for improvement correctly identified in the council's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).

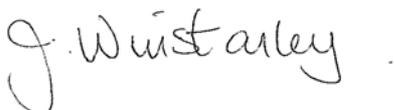
The council's work is underpinned by strong strategic leadership, clear vision and highly effective community engagement. Improvement has been sustained through effective performance management. There is a positive response to external performance assessment and a good capacity for accurate self review. The council is making good progress in responding to the recommendations of the joint area review, published in August 2007.

The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development is consistent with the evidence. There are no additional recommendations to make as a result of the APA.

The children's services grade is the performance rating for the purpose of section 138 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It will also provide the score for the children and young people service block in the comprehensive performance assessment to be published by the Audit Commission.

We are grateful for the information you provided as part of this process and for the time given by you and your colleagues in preparing for the assessment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Winstanley".

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager  
Local Services Inspection

## Major strengths and important weaknesses

Major strengths	Important weaknesses and areas for development
<p><b>Being healthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proportion of children participating in sport or physical education has increased substantially.</li> <li>▪ The comprehensive child and adolescent mental health service is increasingly targeted on the most vulnerable groups.</li> <li>▪ The number of children and young people being treated for substance misuse has increased significantly.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Being healthy</b></p>
<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Highly effective management processes have ensured that the number of looked after children continues to decline.</li> <li>▪ Adoption work is more efficient and the adoption rate is very good.</li> <li>▪ Well integrated and effective services for children with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The long term stability of children in placement remains below average.</li> <li>▪ Timeliness of initial child protection conferences is below the level of similar councils.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups has improved and is good.</li> <li>▪ Improvements in performance at Key Stages 2 and 4.</li> <li>▪ Targeted support for secondary schools has had a significant impact.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The wide gender gap in attainment, particularly for White boys.</li> <li>▪ The slow pace in improving attainment compared to similar councils.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The number of young people taking part in democratic activities and volunteering is high.</li> <li>▪ A good range of highly effective preventative services, for example, diversion schemes, reparation workers.</li> <li>▪ The number of first time offenders continues to be consistently below that of similar councils and the rate of re-offending has fallen significantly.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p>
<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participation of care leavers in employment education or training by age 19 is very good.</li> <li>▪ Good action to develop a more strategic</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The number of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities not in education, employment or training is above national averages.</li> </ul>

<p>view of the 14–19 agenda with a clearer focus on vocational and work related learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduced numbers of young people not in education, employment or training compared to similar areas or nationally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post–16 outcomes are below national averages.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strong strategic leadership, a clear vision and highly effective community engagement.</li> <li>▪ Highly effective financial and performance management frameworks.</li> <li>▪ Excellent partnership arrangements with a strong track record of delivering better outcomes and service improvements.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p>