

17 December 2008

Mr Jim Gould  
Director for Learning and Care (Children's Services)  
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead  
Town Hall  
St Ives Road  
Maidenhead  
Berkshire  
SL6 1RF

Dear Mr Gould

## **Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead 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.

Assessment judgement area	APA grade
Overall effectiveness of children's services	3
Being healthy	2
Staying safe	3
Enjoying and achieving	3
Making a positive contribution	3
Achieving economic well-being	3
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	3

*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**

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead provides services that consistently deliver above minimum requirements for users. The council has maintained services that are good in four of the five outcome areas, although being healthy remains adequate. Universal health outcomes for children and young people are good and very good arrangements are in place to protect the health of looked after children. However, some areas for improvement identified in the joint area review (JAR) 2006, such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and therapy services, are longstanding and remain areas for development. Arrangements for the safeguarding of children and young people appear good and key performance indicators for 2007/2008 demonstrate maintained or improved performance in almost all areas. Levels of attainment are above the national average from when children start school to the end of Key Stage 3 and represent good progress. Whilst attainment at Key Stage 4 is also above the national average, the progress made by young people between Key Stage 2 and 4 is variable. Support for school improvement has been targeted at schools in most need and as a result no schools are currently in a category to improve. Children and young people's opportunities to make a positive contribution are good and their views are influencing the development of services well in areas such as anti-bullying and access to sexual health services. Young people are well prepared for their economic well-being because above-average numbers of young people move from Year 11 into further education and their attainment post-16 is above the national average. Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people is good. The Children's Trust is now fully established.

## Being healthy

**Grade 2**

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is adequate. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development in this outcome area underestimates a number of important weaknesses.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Full school participation and higher than average achievement rates in the Healthy Schools Programme.</li> <li>▪ Very good arrangements to ensure the health needs of looked after children are met effectively.</li> <li>▪ Good identification of children and young people requiring treatment for substance misuse in appropriately child-focussed services.</li> </ul>
Important weaknesses and areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Slow progress towards delivering comprehensive CAMHS.</li> <li>▪ Paediatric physiotherapy and occupational therapy services remain inadequate.</li> <li>▪ Integrated services for children and young people with learning difficulties</li> </ul>

and/or disabilities remain at an early stage of development.

## Staying safe

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. This is in line with the council's self-assessment. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

### Major strengths

- Clear understanding of thresholds across the partnership and good performance regarding initial and core assessments.
- Inspection judgements of the fostering service, private fostering arrangements and the adoption service were all good or better.
- Short term placement stability and adoption performance is good.

### Important weaknesses and areas for development

- Placement choice is limited.
- The analysis of the over-representation of children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds who are subject to a child protection plan and/or are looked after.

## Enjoying and achieving

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

### Major strengths

- Early Years Foundation Stage provision and outcomes are good.
- Levels of attainment at all key stages are above the national average and no schools achieve below the government floor targets.
- Looked after children are well supported and the number who leave care with qualifications is above average.

### Important weaknesses and areas for development

- Overall progress by the end of Key Stage 4, as measured by contextual value-added scores, has fallen since 2006.
- Increase in fixed term and permanent exclusions in secondary schools in 2007 which were higher than the national average.

## Making a positive contribution

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

<b>Major strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people, including those from hard to reach groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have very good opportunities to participate in the planning and management of services.</li> <li>A high-performing youth offending team with a reducing rate of re-offending which is now well below average.</li> <li>Effective multi-agency action to reduce anti-social behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Important weaknesses and areas for development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under-developed understanding of the role of the council as corporate parent, the corporate parenting strategy and the council's pledge for looked after children.</li> </ul>

## Achieving economic well-being

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development for this outcome area is consistent with the evidence.

<b>Major strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The percentage of young people achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications is above both statistical neighbours and the national average.</li> <li>Very good tracking and support systems are effective in reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training including those with learning disabilities and/or difficulties.</li> <li>Good support for looked after children and care leavers including financial support to continue in education, employment or training.</li> </ul>
<b>Important weaknesses and areas for development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 14–19 partnership arrangements between schools and further education providers are not sufficiently developed.</li> <li>Limited access to the full range of available vocational courses at both levels 2 and 3.</li> </ul>

## Capacity to improve, including the management of children's services

Grade 3

The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people is good and its management of these services is good. The Children's Trust was established in January 2008 and there is clear commitment to the priorities of the trust from all partners. Overall the council has maintained the good performance outlined in the APA 2007, but progress on some recommendations within the JAR 2006 has been too slow. Improved partnership working and the creation of a Children's Trust Commissioning Group has led to renewed vigour in moving forward these longstanding areas for development, such as CAMHS and integrated services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the development work in these areas is not yet impacting on outcomes for children and young people, although recent unvalidated data suggest improvements in waiting times for access to specialist mental health services and a reduction in permanent exclusions.

The renewed Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011 is based on a thorough review of progress, includes ongoing issues from previous inspection and the 2007 APA and provides a clear sense of ambition and direction. Priorities within the new plan are clear, reflected in the Local Area Agreement and underpinned by a robust outcome improvement plan. The council's self-assessment acknowledges its successes, but also clearly outlines areas of underperformance and is accurately judged in all areas, except Being Healthy. The council is providing good quality services overall whilst maintaining low expenditure across children's services and provides good value for money. The council is developing capacity well, for example through the integrated working training programme, although vacancies do exist within social care, education and specialist health services. There are improved systems in place to manage service performance, such as the regularly reviewed scorecard of indicators. Data are being used effectively to identify key areas for improvement, particularly in relation to vulnerable children and young people and those that are at risk of underperforming. There is early evidence that targeted work with schools is narrowing the gap for some groups of children and young people.

### Major strengths

- Priorities are clear, cover all outcome areas and take account of equality and diversity issues well.
- Well-planned and monitored action is delivering improvement across a range of priorities for a number of vulnerable groups.
- The council provides good value for money.

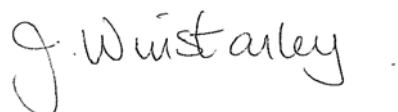
### Important weaknesses and areas for development

- Insufficient progress in addressing some recommendations from the JAR 2006 and APA 2007 regarding some health services, coordinated provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and developing the 14–19 partnership.

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 to support this process and for the time given by you and your colleagues during the assessment.

Yours sincerely

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

Juliet Winstanley  
Divisional Manager, Local Services Inspection