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Ms Carol Chambers
Director of Children's Services
Rutland County Council
Catmose
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6HP

Dear Ms Chambers

Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in Rutland County 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	3
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

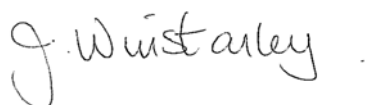
Rutland County Council consistently delivers good services. The council has responded effectively to the issues raised in the APA of 2007, with improvements evident in most areas. For example, the council's work to ensure that children and young people participate fully in local decision making and thereby make a positive contribution to their local community has significantly improved. The council provides a good range of well coordinated opportunities to enable young people to voice their views on a variety of issues. Through consultation, the council knows that children and young people want more and better leisure activities and is working with them to develop these. Services to keep children healthy continue to provide good and generally prompt healthcare. More priority is given to reaching vulnerable groups. Assessment and support to families in need is timely and effective. Partnership between agencies to safeguard children appears to be strong, maintaining good safeguarding performance. Looked after children experience stability, with few experiencing changes of school and less change than average in where they live. The fostering service was judged outstanding at inspection during 2007. All services can demonstrate how they are improving the achievement and economic well-being of children and young people. Early years childcare and education provision is good across most settings and there are high standards at the end of all key stages. Monitoring of schools' performance is robust and there is effective quality assurance.

The council has a good capacity to improve its services further. Good leadership and the '20 Year Vision for Rutland' ensures that it continues to set high aspirations for children and young people. Management is effective. Collaboration with strategic partners is well developed. Many partnerships with other statutory councils are a good working response to the on-going challenges facing a council of this size. The council's well developed approach to prioritisation means that it targets resources well to secure improvements, although it is partly reliant on partners' systems for management information to ensure this. 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". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager, Local Services Inspection

Major strengths and important weaknesses

Major strengths	Important weaknesses and areas for development
<p>Being healthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low infant mortality and high rates of breast-feeding. ▪ Health services for looked after children are timely and accessible. ▪ Good service for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and mental health needs. 	<p>Being healthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The target for the proportion of schools achieving the Healthy School Status is not met. ▪ Waiting times for some child and adolescent mental health services are too long.
<p>Staying safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective services to assess and safeguard children and families. ▪ Good placement stability outcomes for looked after children. ▪ No children killed or seriously injured on roads. 	<p>Staying safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not all children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who should have had a transition plan did so.
<p>Enjoying and achieving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children in early years settings achieve significantly higher than the national average in personal, social and emotional assessments and in communication, language and literacy. ▪ Consistently above average attainment at the end of all key stages in relation to national figures and good rates of progress. ▪ High levels of attainment of looked after children. 	<p>Enjoying and achieving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 3 dipped in 2007.
<p>Making a positive contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The improvement in the involvement of young people in decision making. ▪ Foster carers work well with the families of children looked after to help children deal with the challenges in their lives. ▪ The high levels and quality of participation of looked after children in their reviews and in developing the Children's Rights Service. 	<p>Making a positive contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people do not always find activities accessible, attractive and relevant.

<p>Achieving economic well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proportion of young people gaining Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications at ages 16 and 19 are above the national average. A-level results are significantly above national figures. ▪ Significant increase in the number of young people entering young apprentice schemes. ▪ The high proportion of teenage mothers in education, employment or training. 	<p>Achieving economic well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities for young people to gain qualifications in work based learning are limited.
<p>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong leadership, ambitious vision and effective partnership arrangements. ▪ The impact of the Children’s Trust in evaluating provision. ▪ Good track record of improvement in educational improvement and economic well-being. 	<p>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data derived from partnership arrangements is not always Rutland specific, making effective targeting of resources more difficult.