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17 December 2008

Ms Alison Delyth  
Director of Children's Services  
Borough of Poole Council  
Civic Centre  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH15 2RU

Dear Ms Delyth

## **Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in the Borough of Poole 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	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

The Borough of Poole consistently delivers good services for children and young people. The council has made good progress in responding to the recommendations made in the 2007 APA and also the recent joint area review report, published in April 2008, which judged local services for safeguarding, for looked after children and for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to be good.

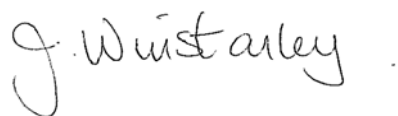
Outcomes for children and young people in each of the five key areas are good. The council delivers services which are consistently above minimum requirements. Good opportunities exist for children and young people to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles and to make a positive contribution. Safeguarding is good although long-term placement stability for looked after children is below average. Good progress has been made in improving educational outcomes for children and young people at most key stages. The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training has remained below average. Children and young people of all ages attain above average standards apart from Key Stage 2, where they are broadly average. Looked after children achieve well. A positive start has been made in setting up collaborative partnerships and implementing diplomas, but there is more to be done to broaden opportunities for 14- to 19-year-olds.

The council's capacity to improve further is good. It has clear ambitions for children and young people, based on a thorough understanding of local need. This is gained through effective and wide ranging consultation that includes children and young people. Leadership is effective and well informed and the good services are provided from a comparatively low cost base. There is very effective cooperation between partner agencies at both strategic and operational level. However, the coordination and commissioning of voluntary services are not systematic. The Children's Shadow Board makes a good contribution to decision making processes.

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>▪ Good access to sexual health services, with good take up.</li> <li>▪ Good and timely access to child and adolescent mental health services for children and young people, including looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</li> <li>▪ A fully integrated and effective substance misuse service.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Being healthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited impact of teenage pregnancy strategy in reducing conception rates of 15- to 17-year-olds.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective systems to track missing children of all ages.</li> <li>▪ Impact of preventative support on reducing numbers of children and young people entering care.</li> <li>▪ Short-term placement stability significantly improved for looked after children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long-term placement stability for looked after children is below average.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good academic standards at four out of five key stages, with attainment rising in the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 4.</li> <li>▪ Good provision and outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.</li> <li>▪ Decrease in permanent exclusions in primary and secondary schools.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standards in mathematics are below average at Key Stage 2.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good participation of children and young people, including vulnerable groups, in decision making.</li> <li>▪ Reduction in young people entering the youth justice system for the first time, and in re-offending rates.</li> <li>▪ Children's Shadow Board actively involved in influencing and evaluating services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proportion of supervised juveniles in full-time education, employment or training has declined.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standards reached by the age of 19 are consistently above average in comparison with similar councils and national figures.</li> <li>▪ Young people, including those from vulnerable groups, receive a good range of guidance and support for training and employment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited progress in establishing some elements of provision for 14- to 19-year-olds and in implementing diplomas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clear ambition and priorities based on a thorough analysis of need and wide-ranging consultation.</li> <li>▪ Good capacity through strong leadership and effective partnership working.</li> <li>▪ Strong focus, shared strategy and increased investment in preventative services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordination and commissioning of voluntary services are not systematic.</li> </ul>