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Ms Pat Reynolds
Director of Children's Services
London Borough of Redbridge
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255-259 High Road
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Dear Ms Reynolds

Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in the London Borough of Redbridge 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 | 4 |
| 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 | 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

The London Borough of Redbridge consistently delivers good services and makes a good contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people. The council has made good progress in responding to the recommendations made in the 2007 APA. There has been outstanding progress in being healthy and the council has sustained good performance in each of the other Every Child Matters outcomes for children.

Educational standards have improved further from an already high starting point. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is above average and by the end Key Stage 4 is outstanding. However, in primary schools boys do less well than girls and in writing the attainment gap has widened. The council has been very successful in increasing the proportion of young people in education, employment and training. The proportion of most minority ethnic groups who are not in education, employment or training has fallen but the proportion of some remains above both national and statistical neighbours. Arrangements to support young people leaving care are good. Most have pathways plans in place and these are reviewed regularly. Health support for this group is well established, and by the time they are age 19 the ratio of young people in education, employment or training is good. While there has been good progress in making a positive contribution there has been a small rise in re-offending rates for young people and final warnings/reprimands for looked after children and young people. Successful early intervention strategies have led to a reduction in criminal behaviour overall and a reduction in first time offenders. The council has maintained strong partnerships across a range of services which provide good and in some cases outstanding support for children and young people. Safeguarding is good.

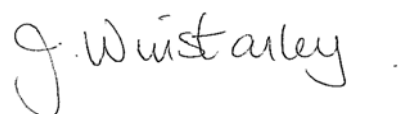
Despite a high vacancy rate the council has done well to maintain and improve services. The council is very effective in narrowing the gap between the most and least advantaged children and young people. The council knows itself well, has clear priorities, effective monitoring and is innovative in meeting the needs of children and young people. It has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

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 blue 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>Being healthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very good all round performance on child and adolescent mental health services targets and outcomes. ▪ Clear joint planning and interventions for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well established with a lead professional and care plans in place. ▪ There are good processes to support transition to adult services that involve the service user and their families using a single assessment. | <p>Being healthy</p> |
| <p>Staying safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There has been a 33% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents in the last year. ▪ The Local Safeguarding Children Board is very effective in safeguarding children and young people. The outcome of the serious case review was good. ▪ Innovative partnerships and collaborative working result in good performance of services for looked after children and those in child protection. | <p>Staying safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not all statutory reviews are completed on time. |
| <p>Enjoying and achieving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners make good progress and standards are high, especially by the end of Key Stage 4. ▪ Good progress with raising standards in the Foundation Stage. ▪ Very good support for identified schools with strong leadership and management of strategic interventions. | <p>Enjoying and achieving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Too much childcare provision is only satisfactory. ▪ In primary schools boys do less well than girls and in writing the attainment gap has widened. |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Making a positive contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful initiatives to reduce first time offending. ▪ High rates of young people volunteering for work within the community and for peer mentoring projects. ▪ Very good participation rates of looked after children in statutory reviews. | <p>Making a positive contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Re-offending rates are high. ▪ Final warnings/reprimands for looked after children and young people are high. |
| <p>Achieving economic well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A very high proportion of young people are in education, employment or training. ▪ Strong and effective partnerships and collaborative working across agencies and with the voluntary sector. ▪ Good levels of support for vulnerable children and young people. | <p>Achieving economic well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ While improving, the proportion of some minority ethnic groups in education, employment or training is lower than in similar councils. ▪ Despite some good initiatives to improve permanence of placements the numbers of care leavers in suitable accommodation is too low. |
| <p>Capacity to improve including the management of children's services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council leadership is proactive and innovative in meeting the needs of children and young people and seeking solutions to local and national challenges. ▪ The use of resources is outstanding and value for money is very good. ▪ Clear identification of appropriate priorities for service development. | <p>Capacity to improve including the management of children's services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The vacancy rate for social care staff is above average. |