

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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

Direct T 0161 618 8207
Direct F 0161 618 8514
North_apa@ofsted.gov.uk



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Miss Cynthia Welbourn
Corporate Director of Children's Services
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 8AE

Dear Miss Welbourn,

Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in North Yorkshire 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	4
Making a positive contribution	3
Achieving economic well-being	4
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

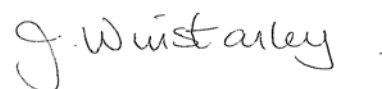
North Yorkshire County Council consistently delivers good services for children and young people. The council has made good progress in responding to the recommendations made in the 2007 APA. There has been outstanding progress in improving the performance of referral and assessment processes. Good progress has been made in relation to; reducing the length of wait for new children and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) cases, improving the number of completed personal education plans, extending the range of choices for learners within education, training and employment and improving the achievement of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in post -16 education and training. The council has successfully sustained good performance in all of the areas for children and young people who achieve high standards that compare favourably with educational attainment nationally. As a result the outcomes for children and young people with regard to their enjoyment and achievement and economic well-being are outstanding. Good performances by services are impacting well on the quality of children and young people's lives in terms of safeguarding and opportunities to live healthy lives. This is evident for example, in the high numbers of looked after children and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities living in safe and stable placements and the very well developed Healthy Schools programme. The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people is good. The council has a well developed strategy for the participation of children and young people including those who are looked after. However, the rate of young offenders who are not engaged in full time employment, education or training is high.

Children and young people's services have outstanding capacity to improve further. The children and young people's plan is based on an accurate analysis of needs, high levels of consultation with partners and rigorous monitoring of progress against challenging targets. Outstanding corporate leadership reflects a clear vision, gives clear direction and has high expectations particularly in improving the outcomes for vulnerable groups. It is the quality of leadership that underpins the effectiveness of the council in delivering effective services.

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"> ▪ Performance in reducing teenage conception is outstanding and is significantly better than statistical neighbours and national averages. ▪ The Healthy Schools programme is very well developed. ▪ Children and adolescent mental health service are easily accessible and offer a good range of support. 	<p>Being healthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although there is a rising trend in the number of looked after children who receive an annual health assessment it is still significantly lower than statistical neighbour and national averages.
<p>Staying safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A good reduction in the number children aged 0 to 15 killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents. ▪ The cases of children who are subject to a child protection plan are managed very effectively. Delays in undertaking plans are minimised and all children and young people who are subject to a child protection plan have an allocated social worker. ▪ Looked after children and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities live in safe and stable placements. 	<p>Staying safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The number of looked after children who are adopted is significantly lower than statistical neighbours and national averages. ▪ The very low number of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who have a transition plan to support their move from children's to adult services.
<p>Enjoying and achieving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High educational standards at all key stages. ▪ The achievement of vulnerable pupils and looked after children. ▪ Excellent levels of attendance. ▪ Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in schools. 	<p>Enjoying and achieving</p>
<p>Making a positive contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased funding to the youth offending service is improving and extending opportunities for restorative justice and reparation. ▪ The council has a well developed strategy for the participation of children and young people including those who are looked after. ▪ Effective arrangements for reviewing the care needs of looked after children 	<p>Making a positive contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rates of re-offending have slightly increased and are higher than in similar areas. ▪ The high rate of young offenders who are not engaged in full time employment, education or training.

<p>including their contribution to reviews which has risen by 11 percentage points to 99%.</p>	
<p>Achieving economic well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A comprehensive needs analysis accurately identifies future needs and underpins an integrated strategy that is strongly improving outcomes for children and young people. ▪ Good strategies exist regarding the transition of looked after children and young people into adult life, allowing them to achieve economic independence through education and/or employment. The proportion of young people not in education, training and employment is significantly below national levels, with a three year decreasing trend. 	<p>Achieving economic well-being</p>
<p>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The demonstrable record of year on year improvement leading to improved outcomes particularly in economic well-being. 	<p>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The council acknowledges it needs to improve the quality of support available to parents.