

17 December 2008

Mr Patrick Leeson
Strategic Director of Learning and Children's Services
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Guildhall 2
High Street
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 1EU

Dear Mr Leeson

Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames 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	4
Being healthy	3
Staying safe	4
Enjoying and achieving	4
Making a positive contribution	4
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 4

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames consistently delivers outstanding services. The council has made very good progress in responding to the recommendations made in the 2007 APA published in November 2007. The council is effectively narrowing the gap between the outcomes for most children and young people and those who are the most vulnerable. The council has sustained outstanding performance in improving the educational achievement and economic well-being of children and young people and in enabling them to stay safe. The council has also made very good progress in engaging and involving children and young people through the Participation Strategy. Children and young people achieve high standards at all stages of their education and a very large proportion is engaged in further education, training or employment compared to national figures. However, not all of the very small numbers of children who have been excluded from school receive adequate alternative tuition. The contribution the council makes towards improving outcomes for being healthy remains good with good progress being made in reducing waiting lists for the majority of services.

Children and young people's services have outstanding capacity to improve further and are well managed by highly effective leaders. High quality strategic planning sustains a very good track record of improvement in nearly all services.

The areas for further development set out in your self-assessment are consistent with the evidence. However, following the APA an additional area for development has been identified as follows:

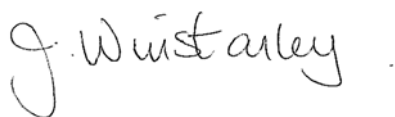
Enjoying and Achieving

- Provide the full entitlement of alternative tuition for the very small number of pupils who are permanently excluded from school.

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 large initial 'J'.

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"> ▪ Robust well targeted multi-agency promotion work, which is leading to improved outcomes. ▪ Good accessibility of child and adolescent mental health services for all groups through effective multi-agency working. ▪ Good progress in addressing the health needs of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. 	<p>Being healthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Waiting lists for occupational therapy remain too long. ▪ Immunisation rates including those for looked after children are too low.
<p>Staying safe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A wide range of effective multi-agency early intervention and prevention strategies and services. ▪ Very robust data and excellent use of analysis. ▪ Consistently above average performance in case management, including child protection arrangements. 	<p>Staying safe</p>
<p>Enjoying and achieving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High quality provision for early years education. ▪ Consistently high attainment across all key stages compared to national figures. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. ▪ Sustained performance in maintaining high levels of attendance and low levels of exclusion compared to national figures. 	<p>Enjoying and achieving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The very small numbers of pupils permanently excluded from school do not all receive adequate alternative tuition.
<p>Making a positive contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very good involvement of children and young people, including looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in decision making processes. ▪ Effective action to prevent offending and in reducing the number of first time 	<p>Making a positive contribution</p>

<p>entrants to the youth justice system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant success in reintegrating young people at risk into education. 	
<p>Achieving economic well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very effective collaboration between council, local partners and employers to ensure high quality education and training. ▪ Very high proportion of young people in employment education and training after the age of 16. ▪ Very high proportion of looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in education, training and employment. 	<p>Achieving economic well-being</p>
<p>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High quality strategic planning that sustains a very good track record of improvement. ▪ Highly effective corporate leadership underpinned by strong partnerships. ▪ Very good integrated workforce development. 	<p>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</p>