

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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Mr Nigel Richardson
Director for Children and Young People's Services
Kingston-upon-Hull City Council
The Guildhall
Alfred Gelder Street
Kingston upon Hull
HU1 2AA

Dear Mr Richardson

Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in Kingston-upon-Hull City 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	2
Making a positive contribution	3
Achieving economic well-being	2
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

Kingston-upon-Hull Council delivers services for children and young people that exceed minimum requirements for users. The council’s capacity to improve is good. The council worked hard to reduce the negative impact of the severe flooding in the area in the summer of 2007 and ensured services for children and young people returned to normal as quickly as possible.

The contribution the council makes towards improving outcomes for being healthy, staying safe and making a positive contribution are good. This performance matches the grades awarded in 2007. Progress in the area of enjoying and achieving and economic well-being is adequate. Although there is evidence that in some areas the range and quality of interventions is narrowing the gap and improving performance particularly in primary schools, the rate of progress made by children in some secondary schools is slow and an above average proportion of these schools are still classified by Ofsted as causing concern. There has been good improvement in the percentage of 19-year-olds achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications in the last year.

Clear strategic direction is provided within the children and young people’s plan, which incorporates the views of all users. The council continues to work effectively with city and regional partners to tackle issues identified in the previous APA letter. This is particularly reflected in the on-going improvements in some aspects of economic well-being.

Being healthy

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council’s analysis of its strengths and areas for development in this outcome area underestimate a number of important weaknesses and overvalue the areas where progress has been made. The table below sets out the evidence for the grade awarded.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong and effective partnership work between the local health services and the council demonstrated by successful joint strategies, commissioning arrangements and jointly appointed senior posts. For example, there have been significant improvements in maternity services and child and adolescent mental health services. ▪ The number of schools that have achieved Healthy School status has increased at the end of July 2008. Regarding participating schools 71% had achieved Healthy School status exceeding the national target of 57%. ▪ All children and young people are well supported by a full range of accessible child and adolescent mental health services with waiting times for services in all but one area better than the national average.

- The percentage of looked after children who have their health checks undertaken has improved significantly and is now in line with the average performance of statistical neighbour councils.

Important weaknesses and areas for development

- Although reducing more quickly than in similar areas, the overall number of teenage conceptions remain high.
- Despite a good coordinated strategic approach to improving maternity services, the proportion of mothers who initiate breast-feeding remains low.

Staying safe

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development in this outcome area underestimate a number of important weaknesses and overvalue the areas where progress has been made. The table below sets out the evidence for the grade awarded.

Major strengths

- There has been a good reduction in the number of children killed or injured in road traffic accidents. Numbers have reduced by 14% which is more than the national average.
- The previously high number of referrals made to children's social care services is reducing. This has been achieved by a strong multi-agency ethos and good coordination of early support. This is managed through a locally well developed range of approaches, for example, the common assessment framework and family group conferences.
- A high proportion of looked after children live in stable foster placements and in the most recent inspection (2007), Hull's fostering service was judged to be good.
- The majority of the council's children's homes are judged to be good. The council's secure children's unit was judged to be outstanding in a recent inspection.

Important weaknesses and areas for development

- The number of children who were re-registered or re-subject to a child protection plan that had previously been registered or subject to a child protection plan is high compared to the average of statistical neighbour councils or the national average.

Enjoying and achieving

Grade 2

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is adequate. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development in this outcome area underestimate a number of important weaknesses and overvalue the areas where progress has been made. There has been limited progress on the key issues identified in the previous APA and the joint area review. The table below sets out the evidence for the grade awarded.

<p>Major strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attainment at Key Stage 2 continues to improve at a faster rate than the average of statistical neighbour councils and nationally, with a significant reduction in the number of schools below floor target level. ▪ The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions continues to decline in all schools, and for those secondary children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, it is below the average level of similar areas and the national average. No children were permanently excluded in special schools. ▪ The percentage of care leavers achieving at least one GCSE pass is now higher than the national average. ▪ Outcomes for children at age five are continuing to improve with a higher proportion reaching expected levels. There is a faster rate of improvement for the 20% of children who are the lowest achievers. ▪ The percentage of schools judged good or better by Ofsted between September 2007 and July 2008 increased and is now in line with the average of statistical neighbour councils. ▪ The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades including English and mathematics in the GCSE rose markedly in 2007.
<p>Important weaknesses and areas for development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has continued to decline since 2005. It is well below the average performance of statistical neighbour councils and the national average in reading and writing and well below the national figure in mathematics. Standards are declining faster than the average of statistical neighbour councils and the national average. ▪ Although the rate of improvement has been better than the average of statistical neighbour councils and the national average up to 2006, the percentage of young people attaining five A* to C GCSE grades (not including English and mathematics) declined slightly in 2007, as did the overall contextual progress measure between Key Stage 2 and 4. Half of all secondary schools are designated as National Challenge schools. ▪ Despite good outcomes from Ofsted inspections overall during the last year, the number of secondary schools in a category of concern is higher than the average of statistical neighbour councils.

- Despite good improvements in the attendance of children with persistent absence, attendance in both primary and secondary schools remains below the average of statistical neighbour councils and the national average and declined in 2007. There is a continuing higher rate of decline in primary schools.

Making a positive contribution

Grade 3

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is good. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development in this outcome area underestimate a number of important weaknesses and overvalue the areas where progress has been made. The table below sets out the evidence for the grade awarded.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a strong culture of children and young people's participation supported by a range of innovative practices. Examples include the website 'Cluedupinhull', the work undertaken as part of the 'My Place' project and the routine involvement of children and young people in staff selection processes. ▪ There has been a good response to the joint area review recommendation to improve the identification of young carers. Increased awareness across all agencies and additional funding is ensuring that the needs of young carers are well met. ▪ Effective partnership work between the council, health, police and schools using a 'restorative' model of justice, is beginning to impact on the number of first-time offenders. In the last quarter of the year, numbers entering the system fell to below the average of statistical neighbour councils.
Important weaknesses and areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proportion of young offenders in full time education, employment or training is lower than the average of statistical neighbour councils ▪ The current re-offending rate is higher than the average of statistical neighbour councils and the national average.

Achieving economic well-being

Grade 2

The contribution of services to improving outcomes for children and young people in this aspect is adequate. The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development in this outcome area underestimate a number of important weaknesses and overvalue the areas where progress has been made. The table below sets out the evidence for the grade awarded.

Major strengths

- The percentage of young people attaining a Level 2 qualification at age 19 is improving at a faster rate than the average of statistical neighbour councils and the national average. The proportion of young people attaining Level 3 qualifications increased at a faster rate than the average of statistical neighbour councils
- The number of care leavers in education, employment or training has remained consistently high over the past three years and is above the average of statistical neighbour councils and the national average.
- Effective progress has been made in the implementation of the 14 to 19 strategy and the number of young people continuing in learning is above the average of statistical neighbour councils and is increasing faster than the national average. There are clear progression routes at all levels with good and outstanding provision in post-16 colleges.

Important weaknesses and areas for development

- Despite improvements this year, the percentages of young people achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by age 19 remain below the average performance of statistical neighbour councils and well below those nationally.
- The number of young people not in education, employment or training is declining but remains above the average of statistical neighbour councils and well above the national average. Currently the council is working with the DCSF to reduce the rate further.
- Only half of all teenage mothers are known to the Connexions service and the percentage in education, employment or training is low.

Capacity to improve, including the management of children's services

Grade 3

The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people is good. The council maintained a clear focus on the needs of children and young people as they tackled the significant challenges of severe flooding in the area in summer 2007. Despite these difficulties the council has continued to make improvements and maintained its performance in a number of areas although progress in enjoying and achieving has been less strong. A high proportion of secondary schools are still classified as causing concern by Ofsted and rates of attendance lag behind the average found in statistical neighbour councils. The council acknowledges this and points to the better than average outcomes achieved in school inspections this year as an indication of improvement. However, these improvements require further impetus in order to achieve the rapid transformation in outcomes for children and young people clearly outlined in the children and young people's plan. The quality of senior leadership and strategic partnership arrangements are important elements in the progress achieved so far. Successful improvement planning has taken place following the joint area review in February 2007 and the council now has a robust

performance management system in place. Children, young people and their families regularly assist in designing and reviewing services.

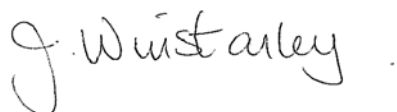
Children's services are a key priority for the council. As a result, it is working hard to maintain its focus on improving core outcomes, whilst continuing to stretch capacity across an ambitious improvement agenda. Performance management within the service continues to strengthen and a clearer focus is being placed on ensuring data is used effectively to determine actions taken and to improve outcomes.

Major strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Strong partnerships continue to have a positive impact on improvements in a number of areas, particularly health and economic well-being.▪ Priorities for improvement are based on detailed self-evaluation, consultation and external challenge.▪ A strong focus on ensuring that data are used effectively to determine actions and improve outcomes particularly in terms of being healthy and achieving economic well-being.
Important weaknesses and areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Educational attainment in secondary schools and attendance generally remain low.

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 to support this process and for the time given by you and your colleagues during the assessment.

Yours sincerely



Juliet Winstanley
Divisional Manager
Local Services Inspection