

17 December 2008

Mr Martin Baker  
Director of Education and Children's Services  
London Borough of Barnet  
North London Business Park  
Oakleigh Road South  
New Southgate  
London  
N11 1NP

Dear Mr Baker

## **Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in the London Borough of Barnet 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	4
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**

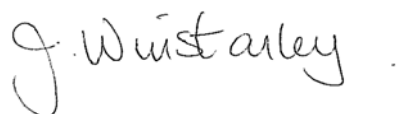
The London Borough of Barnet makes a good contribution to services for children and young people. The council has made good progress in responding to the recommendations made in the 2007 APA. Services delivered by the council are consistently above minimum requirements and it has sustained good performance in all of the outcome areas for children and young people due to clear determined leadership along with close partnership working. In addition to this, within the council there is a shared understanding and clear strategy to achieve its priorities and targets. There has been excellent progress in enabling participation of looked after children in reviews. The council has sustained its outstanding performance in respect of high standards achieved by children and young people including looked after children enabling them to achieve some of the best educational attainment nationally. Progress has not been as rapid in reducing the rate of teenage pregnancies, schools achieving the Healthy School Status, the allocation of qualified social workers and reducing the rate of youth re-offending.

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 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>▪ Effective monitoring and assessment of the health needs of looked after children.</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive and accessible child and adolescent mental health services.</li> <li>▪ Good support for young children with complex needs and their families.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Being healthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The slow reduction in teenage conception rates.</li> <li>▪ The number of schools achieving the National Healthy School Status is below the national average.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preventative and intervention services are well targeted and effective.</li> <li>▪ Good child protection planning and reviewing processes for children on the child protection register, particularly the reduction in re-registration rates.</li> <li>▪ Good overall performance in relation to placement stability.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Numbers of looked after children adopted within 12 months of the decision have further reduced and are below similar councils.</li> <li>▪ The numbers of looked after children with an allocated social worker are low.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consistently above average attainment in relation to local and national figures across all key stages.</li> <li>▪ High levels of attainment of looked after children which are well above national figures.</li> <li>▪ High percentage of schools judged to be good or better on inspection.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p>
<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased participation of children and young people in consultation and strategic decision-making.</li> <li>▪ High participation rate of looked after children in reviews.</li> <li>▪ Effective inter-agency working to reduce youth offending.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An increase in the proportion of young people who re-offend.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High levels of post-16 attainment at GCSE and A level.</li> <li>▪ High levels of attainment of Level 1 qualifications for young people aged 16 to 19 in general further education.</li> <li>▪ High proportion of young people in education, employment or training after the age of 16.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Insufficient range of provision to meet the needs of all young people aged 14 to 19.</li> <li>▪ Low apprenticeship success rates.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good track record of high educational attainment across all key stages.</li> <li>▪ Strong and determined leadership with effective partnership working.</li> <li>▪ Good development of comprehensive performance management systems.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen the improved financial management systems to consistently ensure a balanced budget.</li> </ul>