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Ms Gillian Pearson  
Director of Children and Young People  
London Borough of Bromley  
Civic Centre  
Stockwell Close  
Bromley  
BR1 3UH

Dear Ms Pearson

## **Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in the London Borough of Bromley 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	3
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 Bromley makes a good contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people. It has been effective in bringing about improvements since the 2007 APA and the joint area review report published in October 2007. There has been good progress in outcomes related to being healthy and making a positive contribution. These aspects were judged as adequate in the 2007 APA and are now good. For the reasons given in the introduction to this letter, staying safe is provisionally judged as good pending the outcome of the serious case review. Provision of mental health support services has improved and is now good. Young people have good opportunities to contribute to and influence decision making. Educational attainment continues to be above average across all age groups and this is supported by an effective 14–19 strategy. Partners cooperate well to provide an increasingly relevant and interesting curriculum for older pupils. Most schools are judged in inspections to be good or better. However, the rate of improvement at Key Stages 1 and 2 is slower than nationally and a higher than average proportion of primary schools have been placed in a category of concern by Ofsted since the 2007 APA.

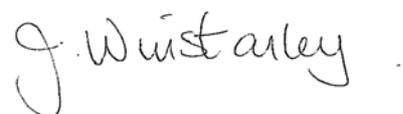
Children and young people's services are well managed, have good capacity to improve further and provide good value for money. Important progress has been made in improving services and the outcomes for vulnerable groups. In particular, the youth offending services were previously inadequate and are now judged to be adequate and improving. Youth services were inadequate in the past and are now judged to be good. A strong strategic commitment to partnership and multi-agency working and an accurate understanding of strengths and areas requiring further development underpins these improvements. However, there is still further work to do on some intractable problems such as reducing levels of teenage conceptions.

The council's analysis of its strengths and areas for development is consistent with the admissible 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". 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><b>Being healthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Well integrated provision results in good outcomes for most children and young people.</li> <li>▪ A good range of school and community based health promotion activities, in particular high engagement in the Healthy Schools programme.</li> <li>▪ Significant improvement in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services provision and access, in particular for vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Being healthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Levels of teenage pregnancy remain higher than in similar authorities despite this being a priority for the council and its partners.</li> <li>▪ Levels of obesity in young children remain high although are beginning to reduce.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Well developed Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) with good engagement of partners in developing, delivering and monitoring clear and achievable priorities and objectives.</li> <li>▪ Good performance and outcomes for children and young people in most areas of safeguarding in particular for looked after children.</li> <li>▪ LSCB partners have promptly and effectively addressed and made significant improvements on all safeguarding issues raised within the Joint Area Review and the 2006/07 APA.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Significant fall in levels of referrals of children in need to social care services and low levels of referrals to the Common Assessment Framework process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consistently above average attainment in relation to national figures and better than average pupil progress in secondary schools.</li> <li>▪ Above average attainment of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked after children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Higher than average number of primary schools placed in category of concern by Ofsted.</li> <li>▪ The rate of improvement at Key stages 1 and 2 is slower than that seen nationally.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lower than average exclusion rates.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good range of initiatives, which enable children and young people to make a positive contribution and influence decisions that affect them, in particular through the Youth Council and school councils.</li> <li>▪ Good systems in place to ensure the effective engagement of vulnerable children and young people, parents and carers in service design and monitoring; in particular for looked after children and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High levels of re-offending by young people</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very strong 14-19 strategy, good partnerships between schools, colleges and employers.</li> <li>▪ Attainment at Levels 2 and 3 that is higher than national figures and improving.</li> <li>▪ Higher than average proportion of young people, including looked after children and care leavers, involved in education, employment and training.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proportion of post-16 young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities involved in education, employment and training is lower than the national figure.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children's services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Track record of improvement as demonstrated in recent inspections.</li> <li>▪ Good and improving partnership and interagency working.</li> <li>▪ Strong strategic leadership, including the involvement of elected members, and increased capacity through recruitment to key posts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children's services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The support and challenge in primary schools has not been sufficiently effective to enable targeted schools to sustain long term improvement.</li> <li>▪ High level of unfilled permanent social care posts.</li> </ul>