

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

Direct T 0117 945 6293  
Direct F 0117 945 6554  
South\_ap@ofsted.gov.uk



17 December 2008

Mr Matt Dunkley  
Director of Children's Services  
East Sussex County Council  
PO Box 4, County Hall  
St Anne's Crescent  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 1SG

Dear Mr Dunkley

## **Annual performance assessment of services for children and young people in East Sussex 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.

<b>Assessment judgement area</b>	<b>APA grade</b>
Overall effectiveness of children's services	3
Being healthy	4
Staying safe	4
Enjoying and achieving	3
Making a positive contribution	4
Achieving economic well-being	3
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

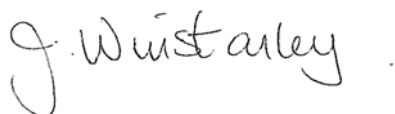
East Sussex County Council makes a good contribution to improving outcomes for children and young people and delivers services which are consistently above minimum requirements. The council has made good progress in responding to the recommendations of the joint area review report, published in November 2007. Planning and multi-agency collaboration has been strongly supported by extensive consultation. Progress has been outstanding in developing and strengthening opportunities for children and young people to make a positive contribution and to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles. The council continues to prioritise the reduction of local teenage conception rates and has implemented a new strategy for 2008-09. The council has had a significant impact on the support given to children and young people in schools, through initiatives such as the 'Making Good Progress' pilot for assessment, and increased provision of breakfast clubs and after school activities. The progress of children and young people across a broad range of accredited pathways has improved, although the standards attained, especially in Key Stage 4, do not always match those in comparable councils and nationally. There have been notable increases in the attainment of a significant number of looked after children and young people. Good progress has been made in developing opportunities for young people to prepare for future economic well-being. The council's capacity to improve is outstanding, built on appropriate ambitions for children and young people, strong and well informed leadership, rigorous systems for scrutiny and financial management and effective cooperation between partner agencies both at a strategic and operational level. The council continues to take appropriate action to ensure that provision and outcomes are consistent across all geographical areas of the county.

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". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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>▪ With 100% participation in the Healthy Schools Programme, a high proportion have gained the new Healthy School status.</li> <li>▪ Excellent progress in the development of a comprehensive child and adolescent mental health service.</li> <li>▪ Sustained high performance in promoting the health of looked after children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Being healthy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reducing the number of teenage conceptions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Outstanding fostering service and short breaks for disabled children.</li> <li>▪ Excellent performance in achieving placement stability for looked after children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Staying safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The number of looked after children with an allocated social worker is significantly below that found in similar councils.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Timely and apt interventions because the council knows its schools well.</li> <li>▪ The rate of progress in raising standards, with a stronger upward trend in some areas than that of comparable councils and nationally.</li> <li>▪ Notable increases in the attainment of a significant number of looked after children and young people.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enjoying and achieving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relatively low levels of attainment in Key Stage 4.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very high levels of engagement with children and young people – through formal consultation, focus groups and targeted outreach.</li> <li>▪ Strong performance within the Youth Justice Board framework.</li> <li>▪ Contribution to their reviews by 100% of looked after children and young people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Making a positive contribution</b></p>
<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective strategic planning based on a review of provision and assessment of</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieving economic well-being</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The falling but still significant number of young people not in</li> </ul>

<p>need, such as provision for those with autistic spectrum disorders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good integration of services and multi-agency working, including effective 14–19 partnerships.</li> <li>▪ Effective arrangements for transition.</li> </ul>	<p>education, employment or training.</p>
<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective cooperation between partner agencies at a strategic and operational level.</li> <li>▪ Strong leadership of children’s services responding to the excellent ambition of the council and its partners for children and young people.</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive and accurate data shaping planning, regularly reviewed and updated.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Capacity to improve including the management of children’s services</b></p>