

**Report to:** CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE

**Date:** 12<sup>TH</sup> February 2009

**Report of:** Director of Children's Services

**Report No:**

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**Report Title:**

**ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT LETTER - 2009**

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**Confidential**

This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public.

**Purpose:**

To present the 2008 Annual Performance Assessment letter to members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

**Recommendations:**

Members to note the APA letter and improved judgements for 'Staying Safe', 'Enjoy and Achieve' and 'Capacity to Improve'.

**Summary:**

*(on its own page*

The report presents the findings of the 2008 Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services.

There have been improvements to the grades for

- Staying Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Capacity to Improve

The overall grade for Children's Services remains a 3 – Good.

The report summarises the strengths and areas for improvement identified by inspectors.

*with background  
docs)*

**Bolton  
Council**

## **Background**

Each year OFSTED undertake an inspection of the contribution that local councils make to outcomes for children and young people in their area. This inspection is known as an Annual Performance Assessment.

The inspection process involves a team of OFSTED inspectors reviewing the following evidence:

1. Key performance data for children's services.
2. The findings of inspections of early years settings, schools, children's social care services, 14-19 provision, Youth Offending Teams and other services to children and young people in the local area.
3. Briefings from Government Office North West on the strengths and areas for improvement within children's services in Bolton.
4. The results of the annual Audit Commissions Survey of schools.
5. The results of the annual 'Tellus' survey of the views of children and young people.

The review of inspection evidence is then followed by an on-site visit in which inspectors follow up lines of enquiry through interviews with Council officers.

The outcomes of the inspection are summarised in a letter to the Director of Children's Services.

## Findings of the 2008 Annual Performance Assessment

During the Annual Performance Assessment, OFSTED inspectors reach judgements on the Council's contribution to each of the five outcomes areas for children and young people:

1. Being Healthy
2. Staying Safe
3. Enjoy and Achieve
4. Positive Contribution
5. Economic Wellbeing

In addition to the above, judgements are also made on the Council's capacity to improve outcomes for children and young people and an overall grade is reached for children's services. The overall children's services grade goes forward to contribute to the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

The above judgements are graded on the following scale:

### Annual Performance Assessment - Grading Scale

Grade	Descriptor
<b>Grade 4: A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users</b>	A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for children and young people, is innovative and cost-effective, and fully contributes to raising expectations and the achievement of wider outcomes for the community.
<b>Grade 3: A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users</b>	A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for children and young people, has some innovative practice, and is increasingly cost-effective whilst making contributions to wider outcomes for the community.
<b>Grade 2: A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users</b>	A service that delivers only minimum requirements for children and young people, but is not demonstrably cost-effective nor contributes significantly to wider outcomes for the community.
<b>Grade 1: A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users</b>	A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for children and young people, is not cost-effective and makes little or no contribution to wider outcomes for the community.

### Annual Performance Assessment – Grades

The table below shows the 2008 APA grades for Bolton Council's Children's Services Department.

Judgement	2007 Grades	2008 Grades
Overall effectiveness of children's services	3	<b>3</b>
Being healthy	3	<b>3</b>
Staying safe	3	<b>4</b>
Enjoying and achieving	2	<b>3</b>
Making a positive contribution	3	<b>3</b>
Achieving economic well-being	3	<b>3</b>
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	3	<b>4</b>

For comparison, the table below shows the grades achieved in the 2008 Annual Performance Assessment by all English councils. For example, Bolton was one of only 17 councils to achieve a grade 4 for Staying Safe in 2008 and one of 33 to achieve a grade 4 for capacity to improve.

	<b>Grade 1 - Inadequate</b>	<b>Grade 2 - Adequate</b>	<b>Grade 3 - Good</b>	<b>Grade 4 - Outstanding</b>
<b>Children's services</b>	4	35	99	9
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	4	32	78	33
<b>Every Child Matters outcome areas:</b>				
<b>Being healthy</b>	2	31	96	18
<b>Staying safe</b>	8	39	83	17
<b>Enjoying and achieving</b>	5	37	92	13
<b>Making a positive contribution</b>	0	12	98	37
<b>Achieving economic wellbeing</b>	3	27	100	17

## Strengths and Areas for Improvement

In addition to the grading of the Council's contribution to outcomes for children and young people, the APA letter identifies a major strengths and areas for improvement for the Council and its partners. These strengths and areas for improvement are summarised in the table below. The areas for improvement are taken forward as part of the Children and Young People's Plan or through the Council's business planning process.

Major strengths	Important weaknesses and areas for development
<b>Being healthy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive access to health care for looked after children.</li> <li>Decrease in the number of teenage conceptions.</li> <li>Good improvements in waiting times for child and adolescent health services, with particularly good access for vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>	<b>Being healthy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing infant mortality rates, which are now significantly higher than the national average.</li> <li>Increasing numbers of young people admitted to hospital due to narcotic and psychodysleptics poisoning.</li> </ul>
<b>Staying safe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good reduction in numbers of children and young people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents.</li> <li>Strong and inclusive family support services, representing excellent value for money.</li> <li>Effective implementation of the common assessment framework, with a clear understanding of thresholds across agencies.</li> </ul>	<b>Staying safe</b>
<b>Enjoying and achieving</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharp focus on underperformance of schools.</li> <li>Improved attainment at Key Stage 3 and 4 is rapidly bridging the gap with the national average.</li> <li>Good and improving attendance in both primary and secondary schools.</li> <li>High quality provision in special schools and pupil referral units.</li> </ul>	<b>Enjoying and achieving</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proportion of pupils whose GCSEs include A* to C in English and mathematics, which is currently below the national average.</li> <li>Achievement of looked after children at Key Stage 4.</li> </ul>
<b>Making a positive contribution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well developed mechanisms and opportunities for children and young people to contribute to local decision making affecting their lives.</li> <li>Decreasing numbers of young people committing a first offence and a repeat offence.</li> </ul>	<b>Making a positive contribution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numbers of looked after children receiving final warnings or being convicted is rising.</li> </ul>
<b>Achieving economic well-being</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive and coherent 14–19 strategy based on excellent working partnerships.</li> <li>Sustained improvement in the percentage of young people achieving Level 2 and 3 by age 19.</li> <li>Wide range of practical and applied options available within broad 14–19 curriculum including an extensive diploma programme.</li> <li>Consistent improvement in apprenticeship frameworks and NVQ success rates for work-based learners to above national averages.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieving economic well-being</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proportion of young people not engaged in education, employment or training is improving but is still below the proportion found in other similar areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity to improve including the management of children's services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong leadership and well-focused strategic management enhanced by a self-critical and enabling self-assessment.</li> <li>Strong work force development.</li> <li>Discernable improvement trends in key indicators.</li> </ul>	<b>Capacity to improve including the management of children's services</b>

## Recommendations

- Members are invited to note the grades and recommendations of the 2008 Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services.