



Office for Standards  
in Education

**City of York**

**Local Education Authority**

**Inspection Report**

**Date of Inspection: February 2004**

**Reporting Inspector: Susan Hatton HMI**



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## **Basic information**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Name of LEA:         | City of York Local Education Authority        |
| LEA number:          | 816   |
| Address of LEA:      | Mill House<br>North Street<br>York<br>YO1 6JD |
| Reporting Inspector: | Susan Hatton HMI                              |
| Date of Inspection:  | February 2004                                 |

## Summary

### Introduction

The City of York comprises the urban area of York and many surrounding small settlements. It is a relatively affluent area although there are pockets of deprivation. The total population is growing but the school-age population is declining and this decline is projected to continue.

Standards of attainment are almost always above, and rarely less than in line with national averages. Standards are generally in line with, and occasionally above, those found in similar authorities<sup>1</sup>, particularly for older pupils.

Since the previous inspection in 2000 there have been significant changes within both the council and the education department. In June 2002, a new political constitution was introduced establishing an executive consisting of a leader and portfolio holders. In May 2003, the Liberal Democrats took control of the council after a period of two years during which there was a minority Labour administration. However, both parties see education as a major priority and, on most issues concerning education, there has been and is tacit agreement. After an initial period of anxiety about the implications of this change, schools and others stakeholders report no major change of emphasis or direction. The current director took up post in September 2001 following a period in which there were two acting directors. Also at that time, education and leisure services were merged into one department. A restructured senior management team was not fully in place until the middle of 2002. Despite these changes there was no significant loss of momentum or focus and in 2001 the council was awarded Beacon status for its work on tackling underachievement.

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<sup>1</sup> The City of York LEA's statistical neighbours are: Northumberland; Isle of Wight; Warwickshire; Darlington; Warrington; Worcestershire; East Riding of Yorkshire; Calderdale; Bedfordshire; North Lincolnshire.

**Main findings**

**Summary:** The City of York is a good local education authority (LEA) that has maintained and, in many areas, significantly improved its effectiveness since the previous inspection. Good strategic planning ensures coherent approaches across services and leads to well-integrated provision, widespread good practice and positive outcomes for pupils. The LEA has established an honest dialogue with schools and other partners that enables an early and accurate identification of potential difficulties and challenges alongside a shared responsibility and enthusiasm for tackling these. This LEA knows what it does well and what it needs to do better. Its capacity to improve is very good.

| <b>Areas of strength</b>   | <b>Areas of weakness/for development</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Corporate leadership of education</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate and education strategic plans and their implementation</li> <li>• Decision-making, targeting resources on priorities and strategies to ensure continuous improvement</li> <li>• The leadership of elected members and senior officers</li> <li>• The effectiveness of partnerships with other agencies</li> <li>• Support for early years</li> <li>• Asset management planning</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Strategy for education and its implementation</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategy for school improvement and its implementation</li> <li>• The good performance of schools</li> <li>• The LEA's work in monitoring and challenging schools, targeting support and identifying and intervening in underperforming schools</li> <li>• The management of school places and admissions</li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Support to improve education in schools</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to school leadership and management, including governors</li> <li>• Support for raising standards at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and for raising the achievement of Gypsy/Traveller children</li> <li>• Financial services</li> <li>• Services to support school improvement</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pace of developing support for gifted and talented pupils</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Support for special educational needs</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategy for special educational needs (SEN)</li> <li>• The meeting of statutory obligations and support for school improvement in respect of SEN</li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Support for social inclusion</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategy for social inclusion</li> <li>• Provision for pupils without a school place and support for school attendance, behaviour and child protection</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not all looked after children have personal education plans</li> <li>• The analysis and use of data about racist incidents</li> </ul> |

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**Recommendations****Key recommendations**

There are no key recommendations.

**Other recommendations****Corporate leadership of education****Strategy for education and its implementation****Support to improve education in schools**

**Support for gifted and talented pupils:** ensure that the next steps in the strategy to support gifted and talented pupils are implemented promptly and that outcomes are monitored and evaluated by link advisers.

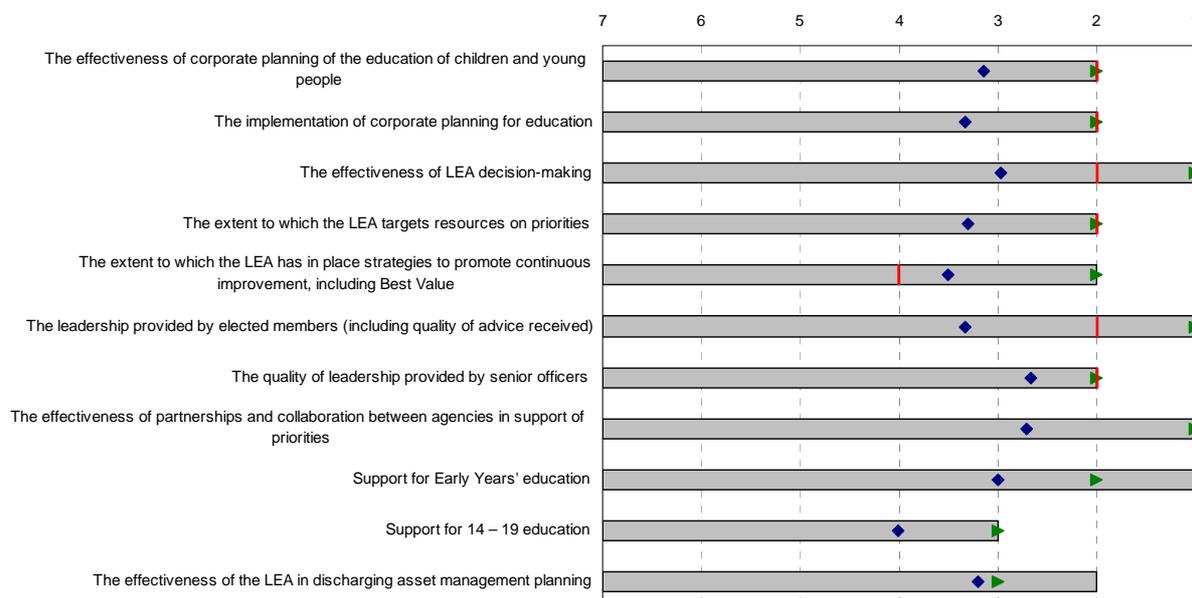
**Support for special educational needs****Support for social inclusion**

**Looked after children:** ensure that all looked after children have an up-to-date personal education plan.

**Racist incidents:** analyse reports of racial incidents in schools to identify recurring patterns and their frequency, and to identify effective ways in which schools are dealing with these incidents. Share these findings with schools.

## Section 1: Corporate leadership of education

### Summary table of judgements



The bar represents the grade awarded to the LEA, the triangle represents the LEA's self-evaluation grade, the vertical line represents the LEA's previous grade and the diamond represents the average grade of all LEAs inspected in the last year. 1 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 3 = Highly Satisfactory, 4 = Satisfactory, 5 = Unsatisfactory, 6 = Poor, 7 = Very Poor.

### Corporate planning for education and its implementation

1. Corporate planning for education and the implementation of that planning remain good. The collective determination of elected members, officers, schools and other partners to raise standards and promote social and educational inclusion is at the heart of the LEA's success. Despite changes in political control and in the composition and structure of the senior management team within the education department, the council's vision and priorities for education have remained clear and consistent. The LEA's relationship with its schools is one of genuine partnership. Schools recognise that elected members and senior officers have a real understanding of what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

2. Education has a high priority within corporate plans. Elected members and senior officers value education as a major contributor to the new administration's two over-arching priorities: pride in the city and community safety. There is a coherent planning framework in place. The education and leisure strategic plan successfully links the work of the department and its services to the corporate objectives, particularly those relating to education and achievement, crime and security, and social inclusion. The priorities identified in this plan are shared and agreed with schools and stakeholders. The strong emphasis on promoting social and educational inclusion is made explicit in the local public service agreement between the council and the government. It is demonstrated in the LEA's effective work with other council departments, health services and the voluntary and independent sector. The

partnership work to support and develop provision for early years is a particular strength of the authority.

3. Progress in implementing corporate plans is monitored systematically by senior officers and reported regularly to members. Difficulties are identified quickly and acted upon, as in the case of the completion of statements for pupils with SEN. Monitoring and reporting procedures, together with the outcomes of the scrutiny and Best Value review processes, result in improvements in service delivery.

### **Decision-making**

4. The speed, transparency and effectiveness of decision-making are very good. The clarity and thoroughness of consultation and communication processes are major strengths of this LEA. Transparency is ensured by the publication of the council's forward plan, detailing when key decisions are to be taken, and by the clarity of arrangements for the delegation of decision-making to the executive member and senior officers. The executive member is well advised by a panel of elected members from all political parties and representatives of the main groups of stakeholders.

5. Major decisions in education are communicated to schools and other stakeholders well in advance and their views are always sought and listened to. Members adopt a careful approach to decision-making, exemplified by the successful reorganisation of special school provision. They ensure a rigorous evaluation of the options available and the maximum involvement of schools and other stakeholders. They are concerned to secure a significant amount of consensus in order to ensure the success of their strategies.

6. Members also ensure that they are kept well informed about emerging issues. As a result they were able to act decisively to minimise the effect of the funding difficulties in 2003-04 and to amend the previous policy on the admission of five-year-olds in the light of the financial implications for schools.

### **Targeting of resources**

7. The LEA's targeting of resources to priorities remains good. York supplements a low level of funding through the Formula Spending Share with significant additional resources and makes the most of opportunities to increase this through external sources. A continued commitment to education is reflected in the council's medium-term financial strategy, which assumes that additional government resources for schools will be passed on in full.

8. Effective consultation involves schools appropriately in the budget-making process and the Schools Forum is well established and supported. Budgets reflect LEA priorities, although the alignment of service planning and financial planning is not sufficiently explicit. Rigorous and regular budget-monitoring procedures help to ensure that central budgets are managed efficiently. The weak monitoring and control of the budget for SEN, identified at the time of the previous inspection, have been tackled effectively, although in the current year significant increases in the costs of out-of-city placements have led to a projected overspend.

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9. Although progress on overall formula review has been comparatively slow, there have been two significant developments. Firstly, in line with a recommendation in the previous inspection report, funding was an important element in the review of provision for SEN and the proposed delegation of funding for some pupils with statements has been handled well. Secondly, within the past year, external consultants have carried out a fundamental reappraisal of the funding formula. As a result, the LEA now has a good understanding of how this exercise can be carried forward, with initial changes being introduced from April 2004.

### **Strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value**

10. The LEA has made considerable progress with its strategies to promote continuous improvement and these are now good. A strong performance and improvement culture is underpinned by robust processes for planning and monitoring. Service plans are consistent with departmental and corporate objectives. Individual appraisal is well established and linked to service planning. Staff know what is expected of them and how their work contributes to the broader priorities of the council and education department; they are proud of their work and keen to develop it. Performance monitoring is undertaken systematically, both at officer level and in quarterly reports to elected members.

11. Performance management across the council as a whole is less well developed. However, the council responded vigorously to criticisms in the 2002 corporate assessment and has developed a far-reaching improvement programme, under the banner of 'Transforming York'. The education and leisure department is regarded corporately as an exemplar from which other departments can learn.

12. Continuous improvement within the education service is well secured by a systematic approach to self-evaluation. In the self-evaluation carried out for this inspection, the LEA demonstrated a good knowledge of its own performance. The structure for review, developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management, is used effectively as part of the process of service planning and improvement. Furthermore, a Best Value review of access and inclusion recommended practical improvements that have been translated into service plans and are already making an impact on the quality of services.

### **Leadership by elected members and advice given to them**

13. Elected members continue to provide very good leadership. The shared commitment of the two main political parties to provide a high quality education service in order to support school improvement and promote social inclusion is so strong and unambiguous that it survived two years of a minority administration and a change of political control in May 2003. Elected members have a high profile and have secured the trust and support of headteachers, governors and other stakeholders. Members are responsive to the good professional and impartial advice provided by senior officers and well informed about the work of the education department and of schools. They carry out effective scrutiny of carefully chosen policy decisions that are fundamental to the promotion of school improvement and social inclusion.

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**Support for 14-19 education**

14. This aspect of the LEA's work is an important strand in the council's social inclusion agenda and is highly satisfactory. The LEA has established strong and effective strategic partnerships with a range of stakeholders and has led the development of a well-defined vision and shared strategy for 14-19 education. Clear, relevant priorities have been identified that are well aligned with the local area strategy and take full account of economic and industrial developments.

15. The award of Pathfinder status has secured additional funding to build capacity and accelerate progress in this area, including the preparation of a statement of entitlement for the age group. The LEA works with its four schools that have sixth forms, York College, the local Learning and Skills Council and business partners to secure a good range of alternative forms of post-16 education. Participation rates are already high and measures to increase access further, including for those students who have previously opted out of school, are being developed. Attainment targets are extremely challenging and, although not achieved, they have contributed to higher than average levels of attainment at age 16. Overall standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT among school leavers are good. Schools are developing a suitable range of alternative curriculum patterns in Key Stage 4. In partnership with the college, they already offer an appropriate range of vocational qualifications and plans to extend this further are in place. Information on the attainment of individual students in Key Stages 3 and 4 is used well by the LEA to differentiate its support to schools.

**Asset management planning**

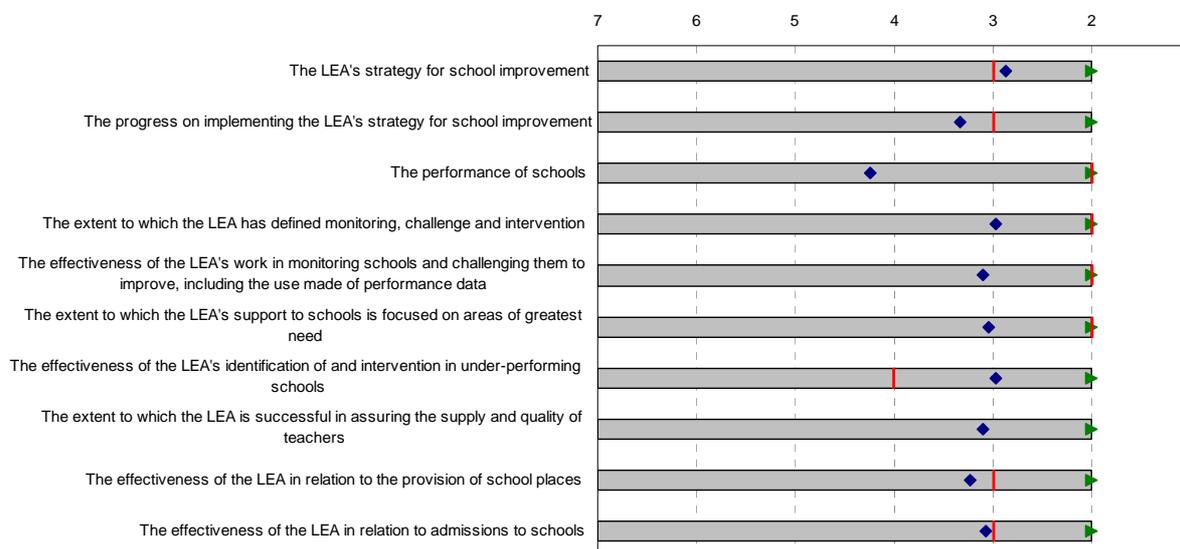
16. Two years ago, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) assessed the LEA's asset management plan as unsatisfactory, largely because of the inaccuracy of data on the condition of school buildings. This fundamental shortcoming has been rectified and asset management planning is now good.

17. The enhanced central team understands the accommodation needs of schools. The asset management plan presents a clear strategy, both for tackling these and for furthering the LEA's broader strategic objectives, for example through the reorganisation of special school provision. Crucial to the LEA's success in this area is the effective engagement of schools. All schools have their own asset management plans. Transparent procedures for the prioritisation of projects have been introduced in consultation with schools and are well understood by them. Information for schools is clear and accessible and an excellent concise guide is available.

18. The LEA has been successful in attracting additional funding, particularly through the Targeted Capital Fund. A major project, funded through the Private Finance Initiative, covering one special school and three primary schools, is close to the construction phase and is being managed very effectively by the LEA.

## Section 2: Strategy for education and its implementation

### Summary table of judgements



The bar represents the grade awarded to the LEA, the triangle represents the LEA's self-evaluation grade, the vertical line represents the LEA's previous grade and the diamond represents the average grade of all LEAs inspected in the last year. 1 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 3 = Highly Satisfactory, 4 = Satisfactory, 5 = Unsatisfactory, 6 = Poor, 7 = Very Poor.

### The strategy for school improvement and its implementation

19. The strategy for school improvement and its implementation are good. Recommendations from the previous report have been implemented and integrated effectively into strategic and operational plans. The strategy is fully consistent and coherent with those for SEN and social inclusion. As a result, activities are well chosen and resources are well targeted to maximise their effect. Furthermore, the strategy emphasises the responsibilities of self-managing schools in raising standards and the LEA's programme of support and intervention is differentiated effectively to meet the needs of particular schools.

20. The education and leisure strategic plan guides the direction of school improvement by drawing together the work of schools and centrally-managed services and providing a framework for statutory and other plans. The Education Development Plan is good with a sound audit, searching self-review and clear links between priorities, activities and success criteria. Consultation with schools about priorities and costs has been thorough and very effective; they recognise both the relevance of the plan and the influence that they have had upon it. Progress in implementing the strategy for school improvement is monitored regularly by senior officers and service managers and the evaluation of its impact on standards, schools and pupils is increasingly leading to further refinement.

21. Since the previous inspection, standards of achievement have continued to improve from a relatively high baseline. Although both LEA and school targets have been too

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ambitious and have not been achieved, they have made a significant contribution to performance that has very often been above the national average and at least in line with that found in similar authorities. The LEA and schools recognise that, when the current statutory targets were agreed, there were flaws in both the range and quality of data and the target-setting process itself. Both have improved significantly and are now very good.

22. The LEA and its schools share a culture that celebrates improvement such as that at Key Stage 3 in 2003 where provisional data indicate the best-ever results for York. The proportions of pupils achieving Level 5 and above were above the national averages by 7.7% in English and almost 6% in mathematics and science. The LEA and schools analyse rigorously any dip in performance, such as that at Key Stage 2 in 2003 where the decline was slightly greater than that found nationally, although overall performance did not fall below the national average. A thorough review did not find any common causes for the dip. However, it did provide evidence to support and extend changes already planned in the light of the Primary National Strategy with its emphasis on improving leadership and management in schools. Elected members are well informed about targets and about the LEA's performance compared with that of other authorities.

### **The LEA's monitoring, challenge and intervention in schools and the targeting of support**

23. These aspects of the LEA's work, which were subject to highly differentiated fieldwork during the inspection, remain good. The LEA has improved its procedures for monitoring and challenging schools and has kept pace with increased national expectations about the quality and use of performance data.

24. Monitoring follows clear procedures. The LEA analyses systematically performance data and management information from across the range of services. This ensures that schools' needs are identified accurately and that intervention, challenge and support are focused, timely and effective.

25. Improvement planning in schools is well supported by a comprehensive range of performance data that is circulated to an agreed timetable and regularly updated. During the annual review and target-setting meeting, schools and advisers use these data effectively to identify areas of, and targets for, improvement. The inclusion of Fischer Family Trust data enables the analysis of the performance of individuals and groups of pupils such as those at various stages of the Code of Practice for special educational needs.

### **Effectiveness of the LEA's identification of, and intervention in, underperforming schools**

26. There has been considerable improvement in the effectiveness of the LEA's identification of, and intervention in, underperforming schools and these are now good. No schools are in special measures or have serious weaknesses, and the weaknesses of the one school in the latter category at the time of the previous inspection were remedied within a year. The very small number of schools in challenging circumstances or classified as underachieving receives effective support that secures good improvement.

27. A thorough process has been developed in consultation with headteachers and governors to identify schools that are causing concern or likely to do so, in line with a recommendation in the previous report. From the first stages of such identification, there are full discussions between officers, governors and senior school staff. An action plan, specific to the school's difficulties, is prepared to guide the provision of support and the steps to be taken to build back the school's autonomy. The quality of action plans is very high. They set out a clear sequence of measures to be taken and the indicators of success. Progress is carefully monitored and reported.

### **Supply and quality of teachers**

28. This aspect of the LEA's work is good. Other than in some specialist subjects in secondary schools where there are national shortages, York does not have difficulty in staffing its schools. Its strategy to support recruitment, while not extensive, is coherent and suitable for this context.

29. The LEA has a clear picture of recruitment issues and of the quality of teaching in schools, which from inspection evidence is very similar to the national picture. Where the quality of provision in a school is affected by long-term absence of teachers, this is closely monitored. The LEA operates an agency to offer trained supply teachers that is valued by schools. The recently-revised continuous professional development strategy provides coherent opportunities for career progression for teachers at all stages in their career, balancing well the needs of individuals, schools and national priorities. It is part of the wider range of measures to attract and retain teachers.

30. Arrangements for the induction and support of newly-qualified teachers are of a very high standard, and there are sound measures to support newly-appointed headteachers. Opportunities for teachers and headteachers to contribute their expertise to other schools, for example by working as part-time consultants or as advanced skills teachers, provide a means of professional development and make a valuable contribution in encouraging teachers to continue to work in York.

### **Providing school places**

31. School place planning, which was highly satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, is now good. The school organisation plan describes very clearly how school place planning contributes to the strategic aims of the LEA to raise school standards and promote social inclusion. The plan reaches practical conclusions for dealing with issues of supply and demand for school places, including areas of growth and decline in pupil numbers. The latter is now a significant issue for the authority, since the level of surplus places has risen in the last year. Previously in line with the average for similar authorities, it is now above that average, largely as a result of the recalculation of school capacities. The LEA, however, has a strong track record of taking effective action through school amalgamations and closures in the primary sector. Good use has been made of a corporate venture fund to finance capital work, allowing the removal of surplus capacity.

32. A major special school reorganisation, involving the closure of four schools and the opening of two new ones each sharing a site with a mainstream school, is close to

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completion. This is a significant achievement and demonstrates how planning for special needs can be integrated effectively with mainstream school place planning. A major review of secondary provision on the west side of the city is well advanced. The project is designed to tackle surplus capacity and to promote the LEA's objectives of improving school standards. Those closely affected speak highly of the quality of the LEA's consultation and the involvement of partners, including the relevant diocesan authority.

### **Admissions to schools**

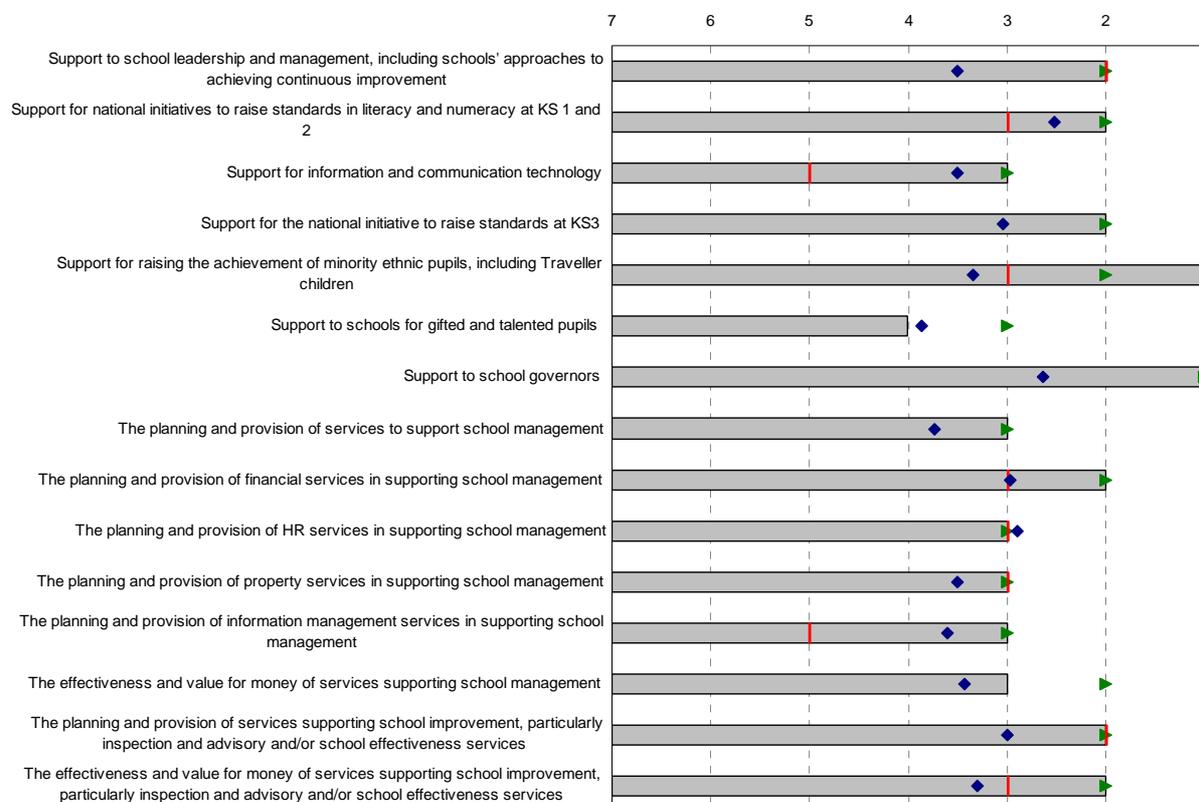
33. Since the previous inspection, when the admissions function was highly satisfactory, the LEA has put into practice new arrangements for both primary and secondary schools. These major changes have been handled well and the management of admissions is now good.

34. The secondary review, implemented in 2001, introduced an admissions system based on catchment areas, with a view to promoting 'local schools for local people'. The principle is generally supported by schools and understood by parents. One tangible benefit has been a significant reduction in secondary appeals. It is too early to evaluate the impact of changes to the primary admissions system, implemented from September 2003.

35. The admissions booklet for parents is very well produced and provides the necessary information, including helpful guidance to parents on what to look for when considering a school in York. Feedback from parents in 2004 showed a very high satisfaction rating in terms of the admissions process and the information provided by the LEA. Looked after children are not specifically given prominence within the criteria for oversubscribed schools, as recommended in the Code of Practice. However, consultation is taking place on this matter for implementation in respect of 2005 admissions. In the meantime, applications on behalf of looked after children continue to be given high priority, since they are considered under the criterion relating to exceptional social or medical factors.

### Section 3: Support to improve education in schools

#### Summary table of judgements



The bar represents the grade awarded to the LEA, the triangle represents the LEA's self-evaluation grade, the vertical line represents the LEA's previous grade and the diamond represents the average grade of all LEAs inspected in the last year. 1 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 3 = Highly Satisfactory, 4 = Satisfactory, 5 = Unsatisfactory, 6 = Poor, 7 = Very Poor.

#### Support for school leadership, management and continuous improvement

36. Support for school leadership, management and continuous improvement remains good. The school improvement service works very effectively with schools to improve the quality of leadership and management of staff and governors in ways that promote self-management. The LEA's development of a quality standard framework, in consultation with headteachers and supported by other systems of quality assurance, has significantly improved the effectiveness of school self-evaluation. Where leadership and management are weak, the service has shown itself to be very capable of taking timely and effective action to bring about improvement. Reports to elected members enable them to evaluate the quality of leadership, management and governance in schools and the effectiveness of actions taken by officers to improve these.

37. The well-integrated and focused support and advice provided by the school improvement service contribute effectively to all aspects of school improvement. Advisers

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and officers use their good knowledge of schools, a thorough analysis of performance data and the outcomes of school inspections to identify systematically strengths and weaknesses. Resources and support are then well targeted in proportion to schools' needs in ways that secure productive links between different initiatives. Advisers and consultants share their detailed and evaluative visit reports with schools and governors. These provide thorough assessments of the current situation and recommendations for actions to bring about further improvement.

38. The authority has developed a number of valuable ways to enhance the leadership and management capacity of headteachers and senior managers, including extensive use of national initiatives. Headteachers and senior managers have many opportunities to work collaboratively with senior officers to develop and implement the educational priorities and policies of the city. Together with the highly effective consultation process developed by the LEA, this has established a culture of openness in the identification of strengths and weaknesses, which plays an important part in preventing problems from escalating. The LEA effectively identifies and supports groups of schools to tackle shared concerns or disseminate good practice.

39. There is a very high level of take-up by schools of the LEA's traded services. In addition, the LEA supports schools in making their own arrangements to purchase services. It publishes a useful list of quality-assured consultants and information about alternative sources of continuing professional development. Services from all sources are carefully evaluated and the outcomes used to bring about improvement.

### **Support for the implementation of national initiatives at Key Stages 1 and 2**

40. The LEA has maintained its good support for the national initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy at Key Stages 1 and 2. This support has contributed to standards of achievement in English and mathematics that have been consistently above national averages at Key Stage 1 and, with the exception of 2003, at Key Stage 2.

41. The work of the LEA's consultants, leading teachers, advanced skills teachers and Beacon schools in promoting literacy and numeracy is managed, co-ordinated and monitored very effectively. It is targeted accurately at those schools that are underachieving as well as those that are low achieving and this is leading to improved standards. The LEA has established projects to tackle specific concerns such as oracy and the achievement of boys, in addition to continuing to provide a core programme of training. The impact and effectiveness of support are evaluated regularly at LEA level and with individual schools to ensure that it remains focused and that links with other initiatives are maximised.

### **Support for information and communication technology (ICT)**

42. Support for information and communication technology (ICT), which was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, is now highly satisfactory. The ICT strategy was adopted in the autumn of 2002. It was developed in consultation with schools, is consistent with national priorities and corporate policies, and supports the LEA's overall strategy for school improvement. The strategy has had a limited impact on standards of

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attainment as a result of this relatively late start. Nevertheless, the capacity for further improvement is good.

43. A recognition of the contribution of ICT to the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum is central to the LEA's strategy and gives purpose and drive to its implementation. The level of curriculum support has been increased, in line with a recommendation in the previous report. Consultants are well qualified and experienced. Their work is well managed to ensure that it contributes effectively to the national initiatives at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. All advisers and consultants have been trained to evaluate standards and quality of work in ICT. Through their contacts with schools, as well as regular systematic audits, the school improvement team has a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of schools that enables support to be targeted in proportion to need.

44. All teachers in both primary and secondary schools have completed training under the New Opportunities Fund, and the LEA is on track to meet the targets of its various funding sources. A number of cutting-edge developments are taking place in groups of schools, and arrangements to disseminate what is learned from these are well developed. The LEA has produced a good scheme to support assessment by teachers of pupils' attainment and progress.

### **Support for the national initiative at Key Stage 3**

45. Support for the Key Stage 3 initiative is good. The LEA has a clear strategy based on sound consultation with schools and a detailed audit. This has enabled the new co-ordinator to work effectively from the outset, targeting additional support where it is most needed. Planning is clear and ensures continuity with both the primary strategy and with developments in Key Stage 4. Strand consultants, supported by a group of associate teachers, provide expert guidance and support to schools. Their work is well managed by advisers, and this makes a significant contribution to the integration of the strategy with other elements of the school improvement programme. High quality learning materials have been developed to support the transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools.

46. The provisional Key Stage 3 results for 2003 show significant improvement on standards that were already high. Attainment now exceeds national averages in all core subjects, and the performance of statistical neighbours in English. Comprehensive performance data are beginning to be used to target support towards specific groups of pupils who are achieving at lower levels.

### **Support for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsy and Traveller children**

47. This aspect of the LEA's work has improved considerably and is now very good. The number of minority ethnic pupils is small and unevenly distributed between schools, with none having more than 15%. Attainment levels are in line with those of the school population in York and, with the exception of Key Stage 2 mathematics, they exceed both the national averages and those of similar authorities. Support services for those with English as an additional language are good. York has very small numbers of asylum seekers, who are well supported by the education service.

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48. Support for Gypsy and Traveller children is a strength of this authority. Both their attainment and attendance show year-on-year improvement, and the attainment of children in Key Stages 1 and 2 exceeds the national average for Traveller children, with younger children achieving at similar levels to the age group nationally. The specialist support service increasingly works in an advisory role to schools and to families. A range of highly effective strategies has been developed. This includes: pre-school work with mother and baby groups; encouraging parents to use places in local play groups; the provision of study packs to accompany children when travelling; the production of a time chart showing when and how Gypsy and Traveller children are most at risk in terms of educational continuity; and working closely with specialist officers of other services such as the Connexions service and the welfare and social services. Good use is made of the Vulnerable Children Grant, which is monitored carefully and its impact evaluated using the published criteria. Provision for short-stay pupils from circus and fairground families is also very good and the service has formed sound contacts with families who visit the city at regular intervals.

### **Support for gifted and talented pupils**

49. Support for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. In the last 18 months the LEA has increased the pace of development and improved the clarity of focus in this aspect of its work. Prior to this, progress was slow with the result that it is too early for support to have had any sustained effect. The LEA does not attract funding from the Excellence in Cities initiative and it has been able to allocate only a limited amount of core funding. The co-ordination of this work is one of a number of responsibilities held by a senior adviser. However, the LEA has made a positive commitment by securing further support from an advanced skills teacher. Furthermore, in order to maximise the effect of its limited resources, it has effectively integrated support for gifted and talented pupils with support for the national initiatives at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, the 14-19 pathfinder initiative and the work of link advisers. Close links have been established with the National College for Gifted and Talented Youth and more than 50 pupils have been accepted for membership.

50. A recent audit of schools has provided the LEA with the information necessary to target training and support. The LEA has implemented effectively the first part of its three-phase strategy, concentrating on raising awareness and building capacity in schools. Guidelines, launched at a well-supported major conference this term, set out very clearly the next steps of the strategy, and provide advice and examples of good practice to schools. Schools are encouraged to set challenging targets for higher attaining pupils through the annual target-setting process. The strategy recognises that the monitoring of provision and individual pupils' progress by schools is a key area for development. Limited guidance is offered to schools to alert them to possible welfare difficulties that very able children may encounter.

### ***Recommendation***

- Ensure that the next steps in the strategy to support gifted and talented pupils are implemented promptly and that outcomes are monitored and evaluated by link advisers.

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**The planning, provision, effectiveness and value for money of services to support school management**

51. The planning, provision, effectiveness and value for money of management services are highly satisfactory. The LEA adopts a pragmatic approach to service provision and, given its small size, promotes appropriately a mixed economy of direct provision and procurement from external sources. No detached or extensive brokerage service is offered to schools by the LEA and comparatively limited advice on procurement has been given to schools. Nevertheless, there are numerous examples, in respect of ICT, grounds maintenance, and cleaning and catering, of the LEA acting to secure services from those best placed to provide them effectively and at good value.

52. Where the LEA does provide the service, the majority of these services are rated by schools as at least satisfactory and there is a very high level of buy-back. Services are generally tailored to meet schools' needs and have been developed appropriately in response to schools' requirements. The booklet describing services to schools is clear and well organised, although the detailed specifications are inconsistent. Where appropriate, services are available at different levels and schools are not tied into unreasonably lengthy contracts. Regular monitoring of service quality takes place and services report on their performance on a half-yearly basis to elected members.

53. Highly differentiated fieldwork was carried out in respect of three individual services, concentrating on specific issues of quality of delivery. Financial services are good. The highly regarded peripatetic bursar service, initially introduced mainly for small schools, has been expanded at schools' requests. Consistent financial reporting has been successfully introduced and training has been provided. An extensive training programme is well attended, although training for governors, heads and senior managers about the strategic management of resources, for example where pupil numbers are falling, is currently limited.

54. Support for human resources is highly satisfactory. After a period of staffing shortages and management vacancies, a team of well-qualified and experienced staff is now firmly established under new leadership. Schools already report noticeable improvement in reliability and responsiveness, although they regard basic appointment procedures as overly bureaucratic. In collaboration with a private firm, the LEA has introduced an innovative pilot scheme on staff well-being, with the aim of reducing teacher stress, but affordability issues for schools are currently limiting its wider application. The teacher supply agency, already referred to in paragraph 29, is self financing and well used by schools.

55. Information management and support for ICT in administration were judged unsatisfactory in the previous inspection, when the LEA had no clear strategy. Considerable improvement has been made and it is now highly satisfactory. Complementary corporate and education strategies tackle ICT in a coherent manner across schools and the central directorate. Secondary schools rate this function in the top quarter of authorities surveyed.

56. Electronic communications are much improved: the use of e-mail is increasingly routine; the annual electronic collection of pupil data was implemented very efficiently; there is an increasing use by schools of an intranet; and arrangements are in place to increase the proportion of schools with broadband connections from just over half of schools to all schools, ahead of the national target date.

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57. The LEA took the decision not to provide ICT technical support. Schools purchase this from a range of providers. Details of the services offered by the main supplier are included in the services to schools booklet. Schools report variable quality of provision and the LEA is appropriately taking action to tackle underperformance through a new accreditation process.

### **The planning and provision of services to support school improvement**

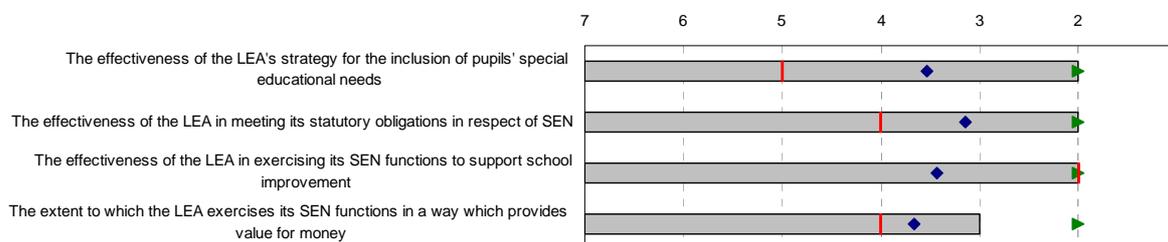
58. The planning and provision of services supporting school improvement continue to be good. The overall leadership of these services is of high quality. The well-planned deployment of advisers and consultants is in line with the service's priorities, secures the close integration of school improvement strategies and optimises individuals' specialist contributions. Performance management is thorough: targets are set and reviewed; effective use is made of national standards in assessing performance; and professional development needs are identified and catered for. Service plans are well linked to both corporate and departmental objectives and reflect the needs of schools. Outcomes and targets are identified, though a small number of measures of progress are too imprecise for sharp interim evaluation. The scope of the work undertaken, combined with the small size of the school improvement team, leads to demanding workloads for officers, which they respond to positively and with enthusiasm.

### **Effectiveness and value for money of services to support school improvement**

59. The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school improvement remain good. The school improvement service is effective; it has developed good strategies to respond to the needs of schools in difficulties, to challenge all schools to improve and to monitor their improvement. The service is rated highly in the survey of schools. Attainment levels in schools are generally improving and exceed national averages. The net cost of the service is low. It makes good use of external sources of expertise to complement the specialisms of its own small team of officers and provides advice to schools on obtaining expertise and consultancy from alternative sources.

## Section 4: Support for special educational needs (SEN)

### Summary table of judgements



The bar represents the grade awarded to the LEA, the triangle represents the LEA's self-evaluation grade, the vertical line represents the LEA's previous grade and the diamond represents the average grade of all LEAs inspected in the last year. 1 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 3 = Highly Satisfactory, 4 = Satisfactory, 5 = Unsatisfactory, 6 = Poor, 7 = Very Poor.

### The strategy for SEN

60. The LEA has made significant progress with its strategy for SEN. Unsatisfactory in 2000, this is now good. The strategy is clearly linked to the corporate objective of raising the achievement of all pupils at every stage in their education and to the LEA's commitment to improve educational opportunity and outcomes for vulnerable children. Schools have contributed fully to the development of the strategy. There is a wide, shared understanding about the meaning of inclusion that is supported fully by them and by the LEA's other partners.

61. The special needs development strategy outlines clearly the overall aims, principles and actions to support developments in York. It is based on a strong commitment to co-ordinated service planning and delivery, and effective partnership work. Information about the nature and scale of existing and emerging need is good; it is used effectively to inform the planning of a continuum of provision in mainstream schools, resourced units and two new special schools. The LEA has successfully implemented proposals to restructure its special schools to support its overall strategy for inclusion. Building designs and planned ways of working for the new special schools encapsulate and promote the vision for inclusion in York. Mainstream schools are being well supported to develop their capacity to be more inclusive and support for SEN co-ordinators, including those for early years, is good. Multi-agency working is improving outcomes for children, for example the Children's Fund supports the strategy for early intervention in two nurture groups. Disability access planning is suitably advanced and is based on a thorough audit of all schools.

62. The management of services has been restructured as part of a thorough review of SEN undertaken in line with a recommendation from the previous report. As part of the review, the formula for funding SEN in schools was revised in order to improve their ability to meet identified need. Consultation on the formula change was thorough. Schools understand and support fully the basis for the special needs element of the budget, although actual delegation is being delayed until the start of the 2004-05 financial year. Suitable

transition arrangements are in place to reduce the turbulence such a change can have on individual school budgets.

### **Statutory obligations**

63. The LEA has made significant improvements in this aspect of its work, which is now good. The percentage of statements of special educational need issued for the first time within the recommended 18 weeks is now above the national average, although there was some slippage in the early part of 2002/03 academic year.

64. The education service has good links with other agencies such as health and social services. A good example of this co-operation is the highly successful portage service that fully supports the LEA's early intervention strategy. The criteria used for making statutory assessments are consistent with the Code of Practice. Procedures are very clear. Annual reviews and individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with statements are well managed. Reviews lead to changes in provision, where necessary, and the specificity of targets in IEPs is leading to improved educational outcomes for pupils with statements. The parent partnership service is effective with very few appeals going to tribunal.

### **SEN functions to support school improvement**

65. This aspect of the LEA's work remains good. The inclusion and SEN strategy rightly focuses on the achievement and progress of pupils. The LEA provides good support to schools in setting targets for these pupils and Ofsted inspections show that they make at least satisfactory progress. The LEA has improved the quality and use of pupil-level performance data. Data are available for all pupils, although the link between the special needs and the main pupil databases is not yet secure. Analysis of the performance of pupils on the SEN register provides value-added information that has recently been shared with schools. Monitoring of the progress made by pupils with statements and at School Action Plus is good. The outcome of pilot work to develop a school self-evaluation framework for inclusion is being shared with schools in preparation for the delegation of resources at the start of the new financial year. Capacity-building in mainstream schools to implement the inclusion strategy is a strong feature of the successful partnership that exists between the LEA and schools. Good practice is shared, for example, by advanced skills teachers and through specialist outreach work linking special and mainstream schools. A range of support services provides good quality training and development.

### **Value for money**

66. The LEA provides highly satisfactory value for money in this area of its work. Since the previous inspection, it has reviewed the funding formula for SEN and, with the agreement of the Schools Forum, has delayed the further delegation of resources until the start of the new financial year in order to respond to the concerns of primary schools. Therefore, the introduction of procedures to monitor spending by schools on SEN and the progress made by pupils is only just beginning.

67. Central spending on SEN is above that of similar authorities but overall costs are in line. Current spending on out-of-city placements is £440,000 above the original budget level.

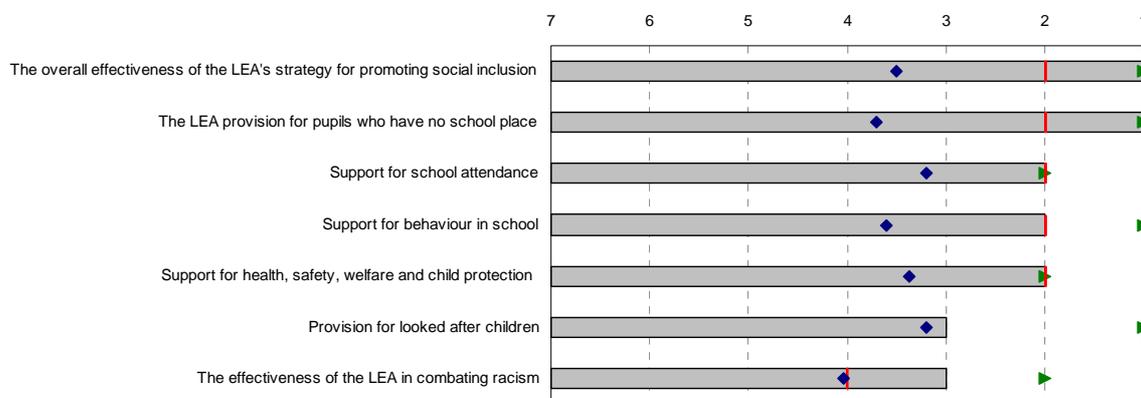
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Elected members receive regular budget-monitoring reports and continue to scrutinise the cost of out-of-city placements closely before agreeing to make additional resource available. Furthermore, they acted promptly to reduce the use of these places by half. Nevertheless, the significant increase in the cost of each place puts this budget under constant pressure. Expenditure in all other categories of spending is well managed and controlled.

68. Support services have developed service level agreements with schools that are well understood and operate efficiently for the benefit of pupils. Limited benchmarking data are available for the education psychology service and the regional partnership is attempting to make data available on a wider group of services.

## Section 5: Support for social inclusion

### Summary table of judgements



The bar represents the grade awarded to the LEA, the triangle represents the LEA's self-evaluation grade, the vertical line represents the LEA's previous grade and the diamond represents the average grade of all LEAs inspected in the last year. 1 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 3 = Highly Satisfactory, 4 = Satisfactory, 5 = Unsatisfactory, 6 = Poor, 7 = Very Poor.

### The LEA's strategy for social inclusion

69. The LEA's strategy to promote social inclusion is very good. The LEA has built successfully on its previously good practice and developed innovative ways of working with schools and other partners to deliver the council's strategic objective for inclusion and improve the opportunities and attainment of pupils in vulnerable groups. The council has placed inclusion at the core of its work on raising achievement. It is committed to the delivery of well-integrated services through children's centres, two new special schools with a community focus and mainstream schools.

70. Corporate plans for inclusion are clear and well sequenced. The local preventive strategy gives coherence to the work of the council's directorates and partners such as the health services and the police. The children's service directorate is increasing the number of foster places available in the city which, in turn, is supporting the education directorate's priority to reduce the number of children in expensive out-of-city care and education. This two-fold strategy is beginning to release resources to promote inclusion projects and early intervention work. The education and leisure strategic plan co-ordinates very effectively the delivery of related plans such as those for SEN and behaviour support. Progress on priorities is reviewed regularly and resources are redeployed to improve provision further.

71. The LEA works very well with its partners and there are good examples of agencies combining resources to deliver co-ordinated services that have positive outcomes for children and young people in York, such as the partnership with health to improve adolescent mental health. Successful work with Key Stage 4 pupils educated other than at school is very well managed in collaboration with local colleges and voluntary agencies. Projects supported by the Children's Fund and Sure Start are based clearly on a careful audit of need with the result that they are highly focused on the most vulnerable groups. The LEA provides very good

support to schools for their work on inclusion, such as the development of a strategy to combat bullying. The evaluation of projects is very thorough and the outcomes are disseminated effectively.

72. Services to support inclusion are highly focused on the needs of vulnerable groups. Their effectiveness is never less than highly satisfactory and most services are good or very good. The council has entered into information sharing protocols with most of its partners and is maintaining the information referral tracking system despite the withdrawal of government grant.

### **Provision for pupils educated other than at school**

73. The LEA's provision has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. A high priority is placed on the reintegration and education of children educated other than at school. The LEA meets its statutory responsibilities in all respects. It has developed a range of innovative schemes to support these pupils and a very effective system for tracking pupils who are not on the roll of a school.

74. The LEA has two pupil referral units (PRUs). Both make effective provision, one for secondary-age pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4, the other through short-term placements for pupils in Key Stage 4. They are part of an integrated access and inclusion service that ensures all excluded pupils receive full-time provision. They also make provision for pupils who are at risk of exclusion. Schools understand the referral process and work closely with the PRUs to ensure continuity and reintegration of pupils, where appropriate. Trend data show that an increasing number of Key Stage 3 pupils return successfully to school. Pupils perform very well at GCSE and on all value-added measures. For pupils in Key Stage 4, there are good arrangements for work experience and college placements, which are rigorously monitored. All pupils have an assigned key worker to monitor their progress and attendance, and the quality of college-based courses is monitored carefully by the advisory service. The team managing work-based placements has had appropriate health and safety training.

75. The LEA offers a very useful advice leaflet to parents who are considering educating their children at home. The quality of this education is monitored and reported to senior officers. Where it is found to be unsatisfactory, there is a well-established follow-up procedure. A combination of home tuition and support by the small hospital school service meets the needs of pupils with medical needs. Support for teenage mothers is appropriate including access to a childcare grant to enable them to return to school. The LEA also provides a worker dedicated to identifying and supporting girls at risk on sexual health matters.

### **Support for behaviour**

76. Support for behaviour in schools remains good. The behaviour support plan clearly outlines the LEA's strategy and systems of working. It provides a thorough evaluation of what has been successful and supports this through an analysis of relevant data. The plan fits coherently within the council's preventive strategy and the LEA's strategy for inclusion and SEN. The behaviour support service has a clear service level agreement with schools who

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rate the overall quality of support as good. However, the LEA's decision to support two nurture groups, in line with its commitment to early intervention, reduced the level of support available for primary schools and their comments in the school survey reflect this. Schools were quick to make the LEA aware of the effects of this reduction. The LEA has taken action to respond to these concerns and intends to review provision through the next behaviour support plan. Multi-agency work is a strength of the LEA's support for managing difficult behaviour in schools. Although behaviour in schools in York is good, the LEA and its partners are not complacent.

77. The LEA and its schools have brought about a significant reduction in the already small number of pupils in primary and secondary schools who are permanently excluded. However, the use of fixed-term exclusions has risen, as it has nationally. This trend is being monitored very closely, and resources are being used to target preventive work towards particularly vulnerable groups such as Traveller children and a small number of pupils with challenging behaviour in Year 6.

### **Support for health, safety, welfare and child protection**

78. Highly differentiated fieldwork was carried out in respect of this area of the LEA's work. The LEA meets all statutory obligations for health, safety and welfare, and support for child protection is good. Child protection procedures have been rewritten and additional investment made to improve the effectiveness of the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC). All child protection cases are allocated to social workers. All schools have a designated teacher for child protection. The LEA provides comprehensive guidance and clear procedures for its own staff and those in schools. It maintains an up-to-date list of designated teachers and monitors their take-up of training. The ACPC provides very good training for individual staff, whole schools and governors. Thresholds for referral were reviewed thoroughly with headteachers at a recent conference. Schools are confident about the operation of child protection procedures and the effectiveness of cross-agency co-operation.

### **Provision for looked after children**

79. Provision for looked after children, which was very good at the time of previous inspection, is now highly satisfactory. Elected members and officers demonstrate the high priority given to raising the attainment of these children by, for example, prioritising resources and ensuring good access to additional tutorial support, computers and study support materials. All looked after children have an allocated social worker and those with statements are supported effectively by a named educational psychologist. However, only three-quarters of looked after children have a personal education plan. Children in short-term or out-of-city placements are less likely to have a completed plan, although the educational progress of the latter is monitored regularly and thoroughly. The council's strategy to increase the number of foster care placements in the city is increasingly successful in improving the continuity of care and education for these pupils.

80. Good guidance and training are available to schools. All schools have a designated teacher. The attainment of looked after children is variable although the numbers in each year group are very small, making a comparison with national averages unreliable. There are

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clear procedures for monitoring attendance and no looked after child was excluded in 2002/03. Looked after children in Years 10 and 11 have good access to a range of vocational qualifications and packages of work-based experience.

***Recommendation***

- Ensure that all looked after children have an up-to-date personal education plan.

**Promoting racial equality**

81. The LEA's support for promoting racial equality has improved and is now highly satisfactory, although a recommendation from the previous report has not yet been implemented in full. Schools are now required to report racist incidents, and procedures are used to check that they do so. Although this information has been summarised in a report to elected members, no further analysis has been undertaken or shared with schools and no checks made on how individual incidents are dealt with.

82. The authority has a race equality scheme. It works closely with other services and agencies, and has developed regular and effective mechanisms for consulting minority ethnic community groups. The LEA has produced a model anti-racism policy that most schools have adopted. A training programme, for teachers, support assistants, headteachers and governors, has enhanced schools' awareness of racism and their understanding of ways of responding. A survey of attitudes to bullying shows that pupils consider that there is less racial harassment in schools than a year ago and this was confirmed by a small group of representatives from minority ethnic communities. However, Gypsy and Traveller children still encounter some harassment. Officers help schools to provide anti-racist education by making teaching materials available and by arranging for members of minority ethnic communities to meet groups of pupils.

***Recommendation***

- Analyse reports of racial incidents in schools to identify recurring patterns and their frequency, and to identify effective ways in which schools are dealing with these incidents. Share these findings with schools.

**Appendix A: Record of Judgement Recording Statements**

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Name of LEA :        | City of York Local Education Authority |
| LEA number:          | 816                                    |
| Reporting Inspector: | Susan Hatton HMI                       |
| Date of Inspection:  | February 2004                          |

| No  | Required Inspection Judgement   | Grade | Fieldwork* |
|-----|---|-------|------------|
|     | <b>Context of the LEA</b>   |       |            |
| 1   | The socio-economic context of the LEA   | 2     |            |
|     | <b>Overall judgements</b>   |       |            |
| 0.1 | The progress made by the LEA overall  | 2     |            |
| 0.2 | Overall effectiveness of the LEA  | 2     |            |
| 0.3 | The LEA's capacity for further improvement and to address the recommendations of the inspection                       | 1     |            |
|     | <b>Section 1: Corporate strategy and LEA leadership</b>   |       |            |
| 1.1 | The effectiveness of corporate planning for the education of children and young people                                | 2     |            |
| 1.2 | The implementation of corporate planning for education  | 2     |            |
| 1.3 | The effectiveness of LEA decision-making  | 1     |            |
| 1.4 | The extent to which the LEA targets resources on priorities   | 2     |            |
| 1.5 | The extent to which the LEA has in place effective strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value | 2     |            |
| 1.6 | The leadership provided by elected members (including quality of advice)  | 1     |            |
| 1.7 | The quality of leadership provided by senior officers   | 2     | NF         |
| 1.8 | The effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration between agencies in support of priorities                         | 1     | NF         |

|   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|----|
| 1.9   | Support for Early Years' education  | 1 | NF |
| 1.10  | Support for 14 – 19 education   | 3 |    |
| 1.11  | The effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning   | 2 |    |
| <b>Section 2: Strategy for education and its implementation</b>   |   |   |    |
| 2.1   | The LEA's strategy for school improvement   | 2 |    |
| 2.2   | The progress on implementing the LEA's strategy for school improvement  | 2 |    |
| 2.3   | The performance of schools  | 2 |    |
| 2.4   | The extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge and intervention  | 2 | NF |
| 2.5   | The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve, including the use made of performance data | 2 |    |
| 2.6   | The extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need   | 2 | NF |
| 2.7   | The effectiveness of the LEA's identification of and intervention in underperforming schools  | 2 |    |
| 2.8   | The extent to which the LEA is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers  | 2 |    |
| 2.9   | The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to the provision of school places  | 2 |    |
| 2.10  | The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools   | 2 |    |
| <b>Section 3: Support to school leadership and management, including schools' efforts to support continuous improvement</b> |   |   |    |
| 3.1   | Support to school leadership and management, including support for schools' approaches to continuous improvement                      | 2 |    |
| 3.2   | Support for national initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy at KS 1 and 2  | 2 |    |
| 3.3   | Support for information and communication technology  | 3 |    |

|   |  |   |    |
|---|--|---|----|
| 3.4   | Support for the national initiative to raise standards at KS3  | 2 |    |
| 3.5   | Support for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsy/ Traveller children   | 1 |    |
| 3.6   | Support to schools for gifted and talented pupils  | 4 |    |
| 3.7   | Support to school governors  | 1 | NF |
| 3.8   | The planning and provision of services to support school management  | 3 |    |
| 3.8a  | The planning and provision of financial services in supporting school management   | 2 |    |
| 3.8b  | The planning and provision of HR services in supporting school management  | 3 |    |
| 3.8c  | The planning and provision of property services in supporting school management  | 3 | NF |
| 3.8d  | The planning and provision of information management services in supporting school management  | 3 |    |
| 3.9   | The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school management   | 3 |    |
| 3.10  | The planning and provision of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services            | 2 |    |
| 3.11  | The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services | 2 |    |
| <b>Section 4: Support for special educational needs (SEN)</b> |  |   |    |
| 4.1   | The effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for special educational needs  | 2 |    |
| 4.2   | The effectiveness of the LEA in meeting its statutory obligations in respect of SEN  | 2 |    |
| 4.3   | The effectiveness of the LEA in exercising its SEN functions to support school improvement   | 2 |    |
| 4.4   | The extent to which the LEA exercises its SEN functions in a way which provides value for money  | 3 |    |

| <b>Section 5: Support for social inclusion</b> |  |   |    |
|--|--|---|----|
| 5.1  | The overall effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for promoting social inclusion | 1 |    |
| 5.2  | The LEA provision for pupils who have no school place                          | 1 |    |
| 5.3  | Support for school attendance  | 2 | NF |
| 5.4  | Support for behaviour in school  | 2 |    |
| 5.5  | Support for health, safety, welfare and child protection                       | 2 |    |
| 5.6  | Provision for looked after children  | 3 |    |
| 5.7  | The effectiveness of the LEA in promoting racial equality                      | 3 |    |

*\*NF' under fieldwork means that no fieldwork was conducted on this function during this inspection.*

***JRS numerical judgements are allocated on a 7-point scale:***

Grade 1: Very good; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Highly satisfactory; Grade 4: Satisfactory;

Grade 5: Unsatisfactory; Grade 6: Poor; Grade 7: Very poor

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## Appendix B

### Context of the inspection

This inspection of City of York LEA was carried out by Ofsted in conjunction with the Audit Commission under section 38 of the Education Act 1997.

This report provides a commentary on the inspection findings, including:

- the progress the LEA has made since the time of its previous inspection in 2000;
- the overall effectiveness of the LEA and its capacity to improve further;
- the LEA's performance in major aspects of its work;
- recommendations on areas for improvement.

The summary is followed by more detailed judgements on the LEA's performance of its individual functions, which sets the recommendations for improvement into context.

All functions of the LEA have been inspected and judgements reached on how effectively they are performed. Not all functions were subject to detailed fieldwork, but in all cases inspectors reached their judgements through an evaluation of a range of material. This included self-evaluation undertaken by the LEA, data (some of which were provided by the LEA), school inspection information, HMI monitoring reports, and audit reports. In addition, the inspection team considered the earlier Ofsted/Audit Commission report on this LEA and a questionnaire seeking the views of all schools on aspects of the work of the LEA. In those areas subject to fieldwork, discussions were held with LEA officers and members, headteachers and governors, staff in other departments of the local authority, diocesan representatives, and other agencies and LEA partners.

The functions that were not subject to detailed fieldwork in this inspection were:

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the quality of leadership provided by senior officers;</li><li>• the effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration between agencies in support of priorities;</li><li>• support for early years education;</li><li>• the extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge and intervention;</li><li>• the extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need;</li><li>• support for school governors;</li><li>• the planning and provision of property services;</li><li>• support for school attendance.</li></ul> |
|---|

Inspection judgements are made against criteria that can be found on the Ofsted website. For each inspected function of the LEA an inspection team agrees a numerical grade. The numerical grades awarded for the judgements made in this inspection are to be found in Appendix A. These numerical grades must be considered in the light of the full report. Some

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of the grades are used in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment profile for the education service.

**Context of the LEA**

The context of the City of York council has not changed significantly since the inspection of 2000. The council comprises the urban conurbation of York and many surrounding small rural settlements. The population is relatively affluent; 11 of the council's 22 wards are in the 25% least deprived nationally. In March 2003, the unemployment rate was 1.9% compared to 3.3% nationally and a regional average of 3.9%. However, there are areas of deprivation, including low wage areas, and two wards are in the 25% most deprived nationally. The council has limited access to regeneration funding but does attract funding for Sure Start and the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative.

The overall population of 177,400 is growing but the school-age population is predicted to decline over the next 20 years. This decline is already evident in primary schools whereas secondary schools expect to see the beginning of the decline from September 2004. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic communities is well below the national average.

The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in maintained primary and secondary schools is below the national average. The percentage of pupils in primary and secondary schools with a statement of special educational need is in line with national averages.

Educational provision is available for all three- and four-year-olds whose parents seek it in a variety of settings, including one nursery school and 19 nursery classes attached to primary schools. There are 58 primary schools, including 10 controlled and 10 aided schools; two pupil referral units; and four special schools, although this will reduce to two in September 2004. Of the 11 secondary schools, four have sixth-form provision and there are two controlled and two aided schools.

The LEA has four schools with Beacon status, (one secondary, two primary and one special school) and nine secondary schools with specialist status.

### **The performance of schools**

Since the previous inspection, the performance of pupils in tests at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, and in every measure at GCSE and GCE A and AS level has been almost always above, and rarely less than, national averages despite variable rates of improvement.

Information from the inspection of schools, taken together with data from the Foundation Stage profile, indicates that attainment on entry to school is, overall, in line with that found nationally.

At Key Stage 1, in 2002, the proportions of seven-year-olds achieving Level 2 and above in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with national averages. Provisional data for 2003 indicate continued improvement in reading and mathematics.

In 2002, the proportions of 11-year-olds achieving Level 4 and above in English, mathematics and science were above both the national averages and those of similar authorities. Nevertheless, the LEA missed the challenging targets it had set itself by 5.7% in English and 4.1% in mathematics. Provisional data for 2003 show that performance in both remains just above the national averages, although it has fallen by more than 3% in English and more than 2% in mathematics. This is a greater fall than that found nationally and makes the LEA's targets for 2004 and beyond very difficult to achieve, despite the close match with schools' aggregated targets.

At Key Stage 3, the proportions of 14-year-olds achieving Level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science were above the national averages and in line with similar authorities in 2002. Provisional data for 2003 show significant increases in these proportions. In English, attainment is now above both the national average and that of similar authorities. The 2004 target for mathematics is attainable but those for English and science require further substantial increases of 4% and 5% respectively. However, funding generated by the local public service agreement is being targeted at raising attainment in science in 2004.

In 2002, the proportion of 16-year-olds gaining five or more grades A\*-C at GCSE, was above the national average by over 7% but the LEA missed its own target by more than 5%. Provisional data for 2003 indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving these grades has risen by nearly 2% and remains above both the national average and that of similar authorities. Nevertheless, an increase of over 4% is needed to meet the 2004 target.

The findings of the most recent school inspections show that more primary schools in York were found to be good or very good overall than nationally. In the case of secondary schools, 14% more schools were in this category. Furthermore, no schools in York were found to be in need of much improvement.

Attendance is above the national averages in both primary and secondary schools and unauthorised absence is in line with national figures. The rate of permanent exclusion is below the national average in primary schools and well below in secondary schools.

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**Funding data for the LEA**

| SCHOOLS BUDGET                        | York         | Statistical<br>neighbours<br>average | Unitary<br>Average | ENGLAND<br>AVERAGE |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                                       | £ per pupil  | £ per pupil                          | £ per pupil        | £ per pupil        |
| <b>Individual schools budget</b>      | <b>2,404</b> | <b>2,541</b>                         | <b>2,613</b>       | <b>2,708</b>       |
| Standards fund delegated              | 97           | 55                                   | 58                 | 61                 |
| Education for under fives             | 112          | 83                                   | 98                 | 96                 |
| Strategic management                  | 19           | 21                                   | 28                 | 29                 |
| Special educational needs             | 154          | 101                                  | 109                | 120                |
| Grants                                | 35           | 17                                   | 41                 | 53                 |
| Access                                | 35           | 42                                   | 55                 | 55                 |
| Capital expenditure from revenue      | 13           | 27                                   | 20                 | 24                 |
| <b>TOTAL SCHOOLS BUDGET</b>           | <b>2,869</b> | <b>2,886</b>                         | <b>3,024</b>       | <b>3,145</b>       |
| <b>Schools formula spending share</b> | <b>2,581</b> | <b>2,642</b>                         | <b>2,808</b>       | <b>2,904</b>       |

Source: DfES Comparative Tables 2003-04

| LEA BUDGET                       | York        | Statistical<br>neighbours<br>average | Unitary<br>Average | ENGLAND<br>AVERAGE |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                                  | £ per pupil | £ per pupil                          | £ per pupil        | £ per pupil        |
| Strategic management             | 87          | 80                                   | 86                 | 95                 |
| Specific Grants                  | 7           | 14                                   | 19                 | 16                 |
| Special educational needs        | 26          | 22                                   | 32                 | 32                 |
| School improvement               | 20          | 41                                   | 33                 | 36                 |
| Access                           | 128         | 156                                  | 128                | 133                |
| Capital expenditure from revenue | 0           | 1                                    | 2                  | 2                  |
| Youth and Community              | 66          | 53                                   | 70                 | 74                 |
| <b>TOTAL LEA BUDGET</b>          | <b>333</b>  | <b>367</b>                           | <b>370</b>         | <b>388</b>         |

Source: DfES Comparative Tables 2003-04

Note: All figures are net

**Notes**