



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS  
IN EDUCATION

**INSPECTION OF  
KNOWSLEY  
LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

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**OFFICE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS  
in conjunction with the  
AUDIT COMMISSION**

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This inspection was carried out by OFSTED in conjunction with the Audit Commission under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997. The inspection used the *Framework for the Inspection of Local Education Authorities*, which focuses on the effectiveness of LEA work to support school improvement.

2. The inspection was in two stages. An initial review carried out in January 1999 established a picture of the LEA's context, the performance of its schools, its strategy and the management of services. The initial review was based on data, some of which has been provided by the LEA, on school inspection and audit reports, on documentation and on discussions with LEA members, staff in the Education department and in other Council departments, and representatives of the LEA's partners. In addition, a questionnaire seeking views on aspects of the LEA's work was circulated to 79 schools.

3. The second stage of the inspection carried out in March 1999, involved studies of the effectiveness of particular aspects of the LEA's work through visits to four secondary, three special and eleven primary schools. The visits tested the views of governors, headteachers and other staff on key aspects of the LEA's strategy. The visits also considered whether the support which is provided by the LEA contributes, where appropriate, to the discharge of the LEA's statutory duties, is effective in contributing to improvements in the school and provides value for money. In addition to the standard themes, the visits to different schools covered:

- Early Years Education;
- Special Educational Needs (SEN);
- Support to Schools on Attendance and Behaviour.

4. This report draws on material from the initial review, from the school survey and from the school visits, together with evidence relevant to the themes drawn from recent HMI visits to Knowsley schools.

\* *LEA Support for School Improvement: A Framework for the Inspection of Local Education Authorities*, London, OFSTED, 1997.

## COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Knowsley is a small Metropolitan Borough within the Merseyside conurbation, Like other areas of Merseyside, and in some respects more so, it suffers from considerable deprivation, though to say this is to understate the bleakness of much of the environment, and the challenge facing the schools. Educational aspirations, among a mainly white population suffering high unemployment and predominantly low incomes, are low. The task for the LEA and the schools is to raise them.

6. In engaging with that task, the LEA, acting in this sense in consensus with the broad policy thrust of the Council as a whole, has placed great emphasis on partnership with schools, other departments of the Council and other agencies. Its strengths, which are considerable, are those which spring from a co-operative, consensual approach. Its weaknesses are the other side of the coin. Where there is a need for challenge or hard decisions, the LEA too often falls short.

7. The strengths include a relationship with the schools that falls short of being excellent only because it largely lacks challenge. The schools value the services the LEA provides, as well as the consultative nature of its approach. In many aspects of its work, the LEA was more highly rated in the school survey than any other LEA in the current survey. Overall, the LEA provides an effective infrastructure which enables the senior management of schools to concentrate on the main task of improving standards; in primary schools the rate of improvement in standards is high. At primary and secondary level, the LEA has had considerable success in reducing the number of pupils excluded. The number of schools judged to have serious weaknesses or to require special measures is low. Strengths in the performance of LEA functions include:

- strong corporate approach;
- the effective co-ordination of action between two or more relevant agencies;
- arrangements for consultation;
- appointment of new headteachers;
- management services generally;
- support for schools in serious weaknesses;
- support for governing bodies;
- support for early years;
- support for literacy in primary schools;
- support for behaviour;
- support for gaining external funding.

8. The weaknesses, although less in number than strengths, are considerable. They are largely related to a lack of readiness, in the Council as a whole and in the LEA, to upset the equilibrium of what are felt to be (and in many respects are), excellent relationships with the schools. Those weaknesses are thus most easily discernible in areas of school improvement where the principal function of the LEA is to provide challenge, and where hard decisions about the targeting and use of scarce resources are necessary.

9. Areas of weakness, most of which the LEA recognise and are addressing through the EDP are:

- its use of assessment data to target resources to need;
- a pattern of SEN provision that neither meets the needs in full, nor closely
- adheres to the LEA's stated policy in favour of inclusion;
- target setting;
- the monitoring of schools by link advisers;
- the overall management of pupils' support services; support for attendance in secondary schools;
- support for development planning;
- support for ICT.

10. The visits conducted for this inspection suggests that the LEA's collaborative, but less than challenging, approach works better in the primary schools than the secondary. There are many other factors at work, not least the significant loss of pupils to neighbouring LEAs at age 11, but that pattern of effectiveness is paralleled by performance statistics that decline sharply after Key Stage 2. This is not to say that the secondary schools are doing worse than other schools in similar areas. They are certainly not, but they need to do better. In particular, a figure of 14 per cent of all pupils achieving no grade at GCSE demands an intensity of challenge from the LEA which is not currently there.

11. Overall, then, a significant culture shift is needed, not least in a Curriculum and Quality Support Division, the LEA is weakest where the national agenda requires it to be strong in a challenge it offers schools to set, and strive for more demanding targets. This would not be incomparable with the maintenance of close, collaborative relations with the schools. The LEA wishes to maintain the stance of a 'critical friend', but needs to readjust the emphasis, to the adjective, not only the noun.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A To improve the management of its functions the LEA should:**

- i. ensure that expenditure on management is effectively deployed to enable the LEA to provide an appropriate, strategic lead on such issues as SEN, sixth form provision and schools causing concern (paras 18, 38, 39, 43, 44, 63, 69);
- ii. establish clear procedures for evaluating services (paras 47, 74, 82).

### **B To improve overall service provision to schools, the LEA should:**

- i. complete the principles and processes whereby the LEA identifies and specifies its core role and its traded services (para 78, 99);
- ii. ensure services are targeted at areas of greatest need (paras 74, 1 35, 1 38);
- iii. review the school funding formula to ensure that resources are delegated to schools in line with needs (paras 66, 67, 69).

### **C To secure effective implementation of its approach to school improvement, the LEA should:**

- i. continue to improve the development planning within the Education Department (paras 41, 43);
- ii. improve the support given to schools for their development planning (paras 95, 98);
- iii. finalise criteria for intervention in schools and support for schools causing concern (paras 44, 1 27).

### **D To enable the advisory and inspection service to fulfil its role, as set out in the EDP, the LEA should:**

- i. strengthen the monitoring and evaluation role of the link adviser to provide or secure for schools adequate challenge and support on the curriculum, teaching, school planning and management (paras 74, 77, 79, 95, 99, 130, 151);
- ii. review the strengths and weaknesses of the current advisory team and implement a training programme to enable it to carry out its revised functions (paras 77, 79);
- iii. improve its support for raising standards in the use of information technology in primary schools (paras 48, 78, 129);
- iv. further help schools to access a full range of curriculum support services whether provided by the LEA staff or by others (paras 48, 78, 100, 129);

- v. improve the identification and dissemination of good practice in schools (paras 78, 100, 107).

**E To ensure that performance data is used effectively to improve standards, the LEA should:**

- i. ensure that link advisers are better equipped in the interpretation of data to help schools identify key messages and establish effective school systems and procedures (paras 77, 107, 108, 151);
- ii. improve the analysis of data which give a measure of value-added for individuals and groups of pupils (paras 22, 107);
- iii. ensure that performance data is used more effectively to inform LEA priorities for action (paras 107, 119, 127, 156).

**F To improve particular aspects of its work on school improvement, the LEA should:**

- i. ensure that support for numeracy is provided according to need and improve the support and challenge to secondary schools (paras 117, 118);
- ii. provide a clearer lead for secondary schools in teaching literacy (para 11 2); improve technical support for ICT (paras 48, 129);
- iii. ensure that the target setting process is rigorous and that schools are challenged when necessary (paras 41, 108, 109).

**G To improve the provision for special educations needs, the LEA should:**

- i. revise the basis for funding SEN to ensure that resources are targeted at areas of greatest need (paras 68, 69, 145);
- ii. establish a strategic plan for SEN, linked to the priorities in the LEA's EDP with an aim to achieve greater inclusion for pupils with SEN (paras 43, 102, 143, 144);
- iii. establish systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, including pupils' attainment and progress (para 69, 144);
- iv. ensure that special schools receive specific support to establish relevant, challenging targets for their pupils (para 41, 43, 102).

**H To raise the attainment of disadvantaged groups and individuals, the LEA should:**

- i. formulate and implement a strategy and update the EDP (para 43).

**I. To improve the support for improving attendance, the LEA should:**

- i. strengthen the management of the service and ensure that resources are deployed to areas of greatest need (paras 46, 87, 138)

**J. To improve the support for excluded pupils, the LEA should:**

- i. ensure that the support is sufficient to meet individual needs and in line with new statutory guidance



## 1. THE CONTEXT OF THE LEA

### ***Socio-economic context***

12. Knowsley is one of Merseyside's five metropolitan districts. It is a small borough and the population is concentrated in four urban areas (Halewood, Huyton, Kirkby, Prescott/Whiston), separated from one another by green belt land, and each adjoining other LEAs. The Council rightly identifies a number of recent positive developments, for example attracting businesses to the area following the decline of traditional manufacturing over two decades. Nevertheless, underlying the Council's conscious attempts to promote a forward looking image are a range of indicators which signal some of the highest levels of deprivation and concentrations of poverty in England.

13. More detailed information on the context of the LEA is given in Appendix 1, but illustrative of that data showing the challenging circumstances in which the LEA and its schools operate are examples such as that the number of children living in households where no adult is employed is more than double the national average, as is the proportion of children living in one parent households. Only 5.3 per cent of adults have higher education qualifications compared to 13.1 per cent nationally and more than twice as many households receive Council Tax Benefit compared to the average for all other councils. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is double the national average at primary level (51.2 per cent), three times at secondary level (54.5 per cent). It is almost double that for its statistical neighbours in both phases.

### ***Characteristics of the pupil population***

14. The population of Knowsley is increasing in average age and there has been a significant reduction in the proportion of young people compared to adults over the last decade. This, combined with a net loss of over 14 per cent of pupils to schools out of the Borough at age 11, has an impact on the number of surplus school places within the LEA. The total pupil population in January 1998 was 26,659 which includes rising fives. Approximately 15 per cent of places were surplus in each of primary and secondary phases and 11 per cent in nursery classes. The percentage of pupils aged 16 remaining in full time education in 1997 was low (51 per cent, compared to 67 per cent nationally).

15. The proportion of primary age pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need in Knowsley is above average at 3.0 per cent compared to 2.6 per cent nationally, and the number of such pupils who attend special schools is well above average at 2.2 per cent compared to 1.1 per cent nationally. The variation from the national norm is even greater at the secondary stage where 5.8 per cent of the pupils in the LEA have a Statement of Special Educational Need compared to 3.9 per cent nationally and 2.9 per cent of secondary school pupils attend special schools compared to 1.6 per cent nationally.

16. There is little ethnic diversity in the area and 99 per cent of the pupil population is of white UK origin.

### ***The organisation of schools***

17. In the primary phase there are two infant schools, two junior schools and 56 primary schools. Of these 28 are county schools, six are Church of England schools and 26 are Roman Catholic schools. Admission arrangements are left to schools. Most admit pupils at the beginning of the school year in which they are five but some have two admission points in September and January. All but four of the primary phase schools have nursery classes which, together with independent nursery provision, provides places for all three and four year olds whose parents want a place.

18. In the secondary phase there are 11 secondary schools, six for pupils aged 11-16 and five for pupils aged 11-18, one of which is grant maintained. Seven of the secondary schools are county schools and four are Roman Catholic. Admissions to secondary schools are mainly based on a 'feeder school' system. There is a Community College which comes under Further Education regulations and has sites at Huyton and Kirkby. The teaching of GCE advanced level at the Kirkby site has been discontinued, which means there is now no county sector A-level provision in the Kirkby area.

### ***The structure of the LEA and education department***

19. The Education Committee has 25 members and 17 co-opted members. There is only one sub-committee which deals with student grant appeals, transport appeals and governor appointments. The committee's elected members are drawn from the Borough Council which has 65 Labour members and one Liberal Democrat. There are eight advisory groups which help to formulate policy.

20. The Education department is led by the Director of Education and four Assistant Directors. Each of the Assistant Directors leads a division. There is a Directors' Advisory Panel, including headteacher representatives, with five groups to advise on the implementation of policies in schools.

## 2. THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS

21. Children's performance on entry to school is generally below average. Attainment on entry to nursery schools is very low and it is still below average on entry to reception classes according to OFSTED data.

22. **Attainment is close to national averages at Key Stage 1. below at Key Stage 2 and well below at Key Stage 3 and beyond. When compared to its statistical neighbours, attainment is generally higher in Knowsley LEA at Key Stages 1 and 2 but below at Key Stage 3 and beyond.**

- In 1998 the proportion of pupils achieving level 2 in the Key Stage 1 mathematics test was 85.6 per cent; nationally the proportion was 84.8 per cent and 81.4 per cent for statistical neighbours.
- In 1998 the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 in the Key Stage 2 science test was 64.5 per cent whereas nationally the proportion was 69.5 per cent and 60.8 per cent for its statistical neighbours.
- The lower performance at Key Stage 3 is illustrated by the results in English where only 46 per cent attained level 5; nationally the proportion was 65.1 per cent and 54.3 per cent for statistical neighbours. The gap at Key Stage 3 with national averages is three times that in Key Stage 2.
- In 1998 23.7 per cent of Knowsley's pupils achieved five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE which is only just half the national average.
- In 1998, 14 per cent failed to achieve one or more GCSE grades A\*-G which is well above national averages.

23. **The overall rate of improvement is high in Key Stage 2; although gains have been made in Key Stage 3 and for GCSE, the process is more gradual**

- In 1997, the LEA was ranked ninth out of 107 LEAs in improved results by its schools in Key Stage 2 tests.
- From 1995 to 1998 the proportion of pupils gaining the national expectation in the Key Stage 2 English and mathematics tests rose from 36.4 and 37.2 to 59.1 and 54.7 per cent respectively. In English the gap with national results has been halved over this period.
- From 1995 to 1998 at Key Stage 3 the improvement in the science results is half that for mathematics for the same period.
- From 1995 to 1998 the proportion of pupils gaining 5+ A\* - C at GCSE rose by 3.8 per cent, whereas nationally the figure was 3.2 per cent.

**24. OFSTED inspection data confirms that attainment is generally below national averages after Key Stage 1; further analysis reveals that the GCSE results attained by pupils are, on average, better than those gained by pupils in similar schools nationally.**

25. There are three schools requiring special measures and two with serious weaknesses. Eighteen out of 55 primary schools (33 per cent) inspected in Knowsley were rated good or very good in relation to the standards of achievement of their pupils; this compares with 38 per cent for statistical neighbours and 52 per cent for primary schools nationally. At secondary level the comparable percentages are 20 for the LEA, 35 for the statistical neighbours and 59 per cent for all secondary schools nationally. Because of the small numbers of secondary schools in the LEA, this data need to be treated with some caution. There are particular strengths in mathematics in primary schools and significant weaknesses in IT in primary schools and science at Key Stage 3. Girls do better than boys at GCSE but the gap is much less than that observed nationally. Fourteen per cent of pupils fail to gain one GCSE at grade G or better and this is far too high.

26. OFSTED has also provided data which compares the GCSE results for Knowsley schools with other schools with similar socio-economic characteristics. On this analysis for 1995 to 1997 the results for three Knowsley schools were broadly in line while they were better than like schools in five cases and much better for a further three.

**27. OFSTED data shows that Knowsley schools have many strengths which contribute to raising pupils' achievement but also many weaknesses**

28. In primary schools, pupils' attitude to learning is good. The quality of teaching, lesson planning and organisation requires improvements in a significant number of schools. In secondary schools the reports highlight teachers' subject knowledge, management of pupils and the provision of extra-curricular activities as strengths. Areas for improvement are the quality of teaching, use of assessment to plan subsequent work and staff development. Many secondary pupils have poor learning skills.

29. The ethos of Knowsley schools is generally good. All Knowsley schools are judged to be satisfactory or good in respect of pupil behaviour, welfare and guidance, links with parents and pupils' personal, moral and social development. Poor attendance and punctuality are the areas of major weakness in both the primary and the secondary sectors; pupils' cultural development is also unsatisfactory.

30. Knowsley primary schools are led soundly. In the seven secondary schools inspected, leadership and financial efficiency were good. In a significant number of primary schools, there are not enough textbooks.

**31. Attendance levels are close to national averages at primary level but below in secondary schools. Exclusion rates are low and below the national average.**

### 3. LEA STRATEGY

#### ROLE AND PRIORITIES

*The Council has a strong inter-disciplinary approach to improving the quality of life and work in Knowsley, and there is evidence that this corporate approach aids the coordination of services to schools.*

*The LEA has a long established and very clear philosophy based on consultation and partnership with schools which has created a climate of goodwill. The LEA is highly valued for the help and support it has provided to its schools; it has provided insufficient challenge, however.*

*A weakness is that the Education Department, supported by the elected members, has not given a sufficiently strong strategic lead for SEN, and has been too slow to formulate intervention strategies. The LEA recognises these weaknesses but key elements of the revised strategy are still only in draft form.*

#### ***The strategy of the Council.***

32. The Council defines its purpose as the provision of services of high quality to all who live or work in the Borough, to local employees and to visitors. In providing these services, the Council has identified seven key aims. One of these refers specifically to education "education and training opportunities promote real achievement and improvements in the quality of life in the Borough."

33. There is a strong, corporate approach; educational initiatives are scrutinised against the Council's key aims and, similarly, Borough-wide strategies are examined for their relevance to education. There are two current initiatives which have particular potential to contribute to school improvement. These are the Cultural Strategy and the Community Information Programme (CIP). For the latter, projects are being developed under a series of key sectors that include education, libraries, one-stop shops, vulnerable people, business support and e-mail networks.

34. The Council attaches considerable importance to the quality of good personal relationships. In line with this policy, Investors in People (IIP) status has been awarded to the whole council. A significant number of schools have followed the Council lead and gained IIP status for themselves.

35. The LEA has had a clear strategic agenda since 1995, which identified six major strategic objectives against which the LEA regularly measured its performance. These were to:

- maximise the number of three and four year olds in education; reduce surplus places, allowing for choice and diversity;
- attract and retain pupils within the Borough;
- raise attainment levels;

- improve attendance;
- provide educational support for economic regeneration.

36. Progress has been made in each of these areas. Good progress has been made on raising attainment levels in primary schools and accessing external funding to support economic regeneration; the number of surplus places has been reduced by four per cent. More limited progress has been made in raising levels of attainment in secondary schools. Further details are given in Appendix 2.

### ***Strategic Planning***

37. The Director of Education has been in post for five years, but all the four Assistant Directors have been appointed within the last 18 months following promotions to other LEAs of the previous postholders. The perception in several schools is that such a drastic change at senior level over a relatively short period of time has hampered the LEA's capacity to respond as quickly as it should have to recent Government initiatives. Equally significant, however, is that an important cultural change is slowly, and sometimes painfully, taking place and this transformation is not yet completed.

38. The LEA has higher than average costs for strategic management; there are four Assistant Directors while in most LEAs of a similar size there are at most three. This is consistent with the LEA strategy that at both LEA and school level strong leadership is a key contributory factor. However, in some key respects, strategies for change need to be strengthened and, until the cultural shift moves beyond rhetoric, the high cost of the senior management team does not represent value for money consistently.

39. The LEA has been successful in creating a genuine sense of partnership and a climate where it can influence most schools. The Director has been instrumental in bringing about a sea-change in relationships and is highly regarded by the schools. The Audit Commission survey shows that many aspects of the LEA's work are highly valued. However, the LEA has given a weak strategic lead on issues such as SEN and has been slow to adopt a challenging role as, for instance in target setting and monitoring of the school's work through the link adviser.

### ***Education Development Plan***

40. The Education Development Plan (EDP) sets out seven priorities for school improvement in the period 1999 to 2002. These are to:

- raise attainment in literacy;
- raise attainment in numeracy;
- to improve access to, and the use of, information and communication technology (ICT) in all schools;

- to support school self-review and the improvement of school leadership, management and governance;
- working in partnership to support the improvement of teaching and enhance opportunities to learn;
- to promote social inclusion by enhancing opportunities to learn for all pupils

41. The EDP has been approved by the DfEE for three years but will need some further modification in the light of this report. The DfEE draws attention to the need for more detail about proposed support for schools causing concern and for targets set by individual schools to aggregate to LEA targets.

42. The EDP contains all the required elements. Pursuing its priorities for school improvement and based on its analysis of specific local needs and weaknesses, it goes beyond the minimum requirements for target setting in the DfEE guidance by setting additional local targets for science at the end of Key Stage 2, for English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3, and in the GCSE for pupils leaving school without a nationally recognised qualification, for post-16 education, for ICT and for reducing authorised, as well as unauthorised, absence.

43. Inclusive education for pupils with SEN has no overall coherent strategy, although more detail is supplied about LEA support for SEN in an annex to the EDP. The LEA's current inclusion policy is "inclusion where possible - segregation where necessary", but the terms "possible" and "necessary" are ill-defined. SEN pupils are identified as one of the disadvantaged groups to be targeted in priority 7, but this is the weakest part of the EDP. The EDP acknowledges that the programme of intervention strategies has yet to be devised, lead responsibility is not determined and monitoring and evaluation procedures not specified. It is not clear why some of the objectives have not been integrated into earlier priorities; there is clearly an overlap.

44. There has been full consultation with schools. This has been effective in ensuring a close link between LEA priorities and those listed in individual school development plans (SDPs). The schools report high levels of satisfaction with the process and the 'partnership approach' is a key element of the EDP. Issues that have not been completely resolved so that policies are still in draft form include intervention strategies and support for schools causing concern. The LEA has been slow to take action before the statutory requirement to produce an EDP precipitated discussions. Reluctance by the LEA to disturb the carefully nurtured relationships with the schools has hindered progress here. Through the EDP, the LEA aspires to providing a better balance between help and support on the one hand, and challenge on the other, but it is not committed until draft policies are confirmed.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

45. Implementation of the EDP will be co-ordinated by the Senior Assistant Director. Outline arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the plan are appropriate but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

46. In 1998 the LEA surveyed schools on the full range of services it provided. The schools reported general satisfaction, but also a few areas of concern, for instance,

EWS support. The LEA subsequently made some modifications to the EWS support but further improvements are required.

47. The LEA has a number of mechanisms for evaluating whether it has achieved its targets. It uses a range of performance indicators, there are reports to council, District Audit, and external consultants are sometimes employed. Service reviews are the responsibility of the Strategic Research Division. There have been reviews of, for instance, early years provision and the Performing Arts team but some services have not been reviewed recently. In some cases the monitoring of the work of the service has been too insecure to assess whether the objectives have been met, for instance, the advisory service. To meet the requirements of the Best Value initiative the LEA will need to strengthen its evaluation and adopt a more systematic approach.

48. The Audit Commission survey was sent to 79 schools in the LEA; the response rate was 72 per cent. In general, the schools' responses were very positive (Appendix 2). Compared to the other nine LEAs in the survey the Knowsley score was significantly higher in 82 per cent of the categories and in 65 per cent the LEA received the highest rating. In 77 out of 78 (exception being the teaching of religious education) the LEA rating was above the average for all ten LEAs. Categories which received relatively lower ratings were curriculum uses of information technology, the teaching of non-core subjects and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The responses indicate a high degree of satisfaction on the part of the schools with the LEA provided services.

### ***Communication and consultation***

49. Reference has already been made to consultation arrangements regarding the EDP. The LEA has extensive and generally effective arrangements for regular consultation with its governors, headteachers and the associations which represent its employees. All governing bodies are represented on area forums and the governing bodies of individual schools are consulted directly. Consultation with headteachers takes place through area groups which elect representatives to the Director's Advisory Panel. The LEA consults with the teachers' unions through a Teachers' Pay and Conditions Working Group of the Education Committee on which elected members are not directly represented. There are extensive and lengthy ad hoc consultations on reorganisation of schools and services.

### ***Statutory Duties***

50. The LEA takes reasonable steps to meet its statutory duties.

### ***School Places and Admissions***

51. The LEA has approximately 1.5 per cent surplus school places in its primary and secondary schools, although the pattern varies across the LEA. Six primary schools have more than 30 per cent surplus places. There are sufficient nursery places in the borough to enable all three and four year olds whose parents require it to attend for five half-day sessions per week.

52. The LEA is taking reasonable steps to review the number of school places. The 1980s and early 1990s was a traumatic period in the LEA's history, when 13



schools were closed and others reorganised. In the last seven years, a rigorous process has continued and over 1600 places have been removed; this has been achieved mainly by a reduction in capacity and only one primary school has been closed. There are on-going reviews and a further 800 places have been targeted for removal by September 2000. However, there are no stated principles which guide the decisions or deal with the 11 per cent of surplus nursery places or reduction in sixth form places. In 1998 21.7 per cent of primary school leavers chose schools outside the Borough and 7.1 per cent of the Year 7 cohort in secondary schools came from outside the Borough. This is a net loss of 332 pupils at age 11 but the LEA has had some success in reducing this trend as a result of improved standards in its schools.

53. The LEA issues appropriate guidance to its schools and admissions policies are being reviewed as part of the School Organisation Plan. Each primary school currently makes its own admission arrangements and requests for admissions are made direct to the school. The LEA coordinates transfers to secondary schools at age 11 and each secondary school is associated with a number of primary schools in order to promote good links. As a result of these arrangements the LEA has relatively little routine input into the process of admissions. In two secondary schools visited, the LEA responded positively and usefully to requests for help when the schools concerned faced a new, but nevertheless welcome, position of being over-subscribed. Some other schools expressed disquiet at the lack of a strategic steer in this area. Information about schools and admission procedures is provided for parents by the LEA and there are processes for handling appeals against non-admission. The number of appeals lodged was seven in 1997/98, an increase of five on the previous year; these figures are low.

54. There was some criticism in schools of the way in which the policy appeared to allow sixth forms to wither in an unstructured way. As a result there is now an uneven pattern of sixth form provision in distinct areas of the Borough. This undesirable situation cannot be resolved by the LEA acting alone. All the partners engaged in planning sixth form provision must pay greater attention to the lack of educational effectiveness in some of the existing provision.

55. Pupils excluded from school are supported through the Central Support Service following referral by the Pupil Review Group. Part-time tuition, up to a maximum of six and one-quarter hours, is provided for any pupils in Year 9 or below, mostly at the Pupil Referral Unit. The time allocated is insufficient to meet pupils' individual needs and should be reviewed in line with recent Government guidance. Older pupils attend projects which combine educational and vocational elements until they reach school leaving age.

### ***Liaison with other services and agencies***

56. The LEA has fostered excellent relationships with its various partners in order to achieve the corporate aims of the wider council, as well as to promote its own educational objectives. There are excellent liaison arrangements with Social Services, Diocesan Authorities, Health Authorities, Police and the Merseyside TEC. The various partners speak warmly of their association with the LEA.

57. There is much good practice. For example, contacts with other departments of the Council, such as Social Services, take place at several levels, ranging from

strategic planning at the Chief Officers' Group to operational delivery through two joint funded teachers who help to co-ordinate the education and care of 'looked after' children and support for early years. Other examples of inter-departmental cooperation with Social Services include Area Child Protection Committee, inter-agency training, the Pupil Review Group which oversees the education provision for excluded pupils, and the Young Carers' Project which provides support for pupils whose education may be at risk through having to care for an adult. The two departments have consulted and worked together in the development of various plans including the Children's Services Plan, the Behaviour Support Plan and, most recently, the EDP.

58. Two of the more innovative features of collaboration between the LEA and other partners are encouraging the presence of pupils from the Schools' Council on several of the council committees to put the children's perspective, and employing a Parent Partnership Co-ordinator who helps promote links with parent groups and self-support groups, and helps the LEA to implement the SEN Code of Practice.

## **BUDGET PLANNING AND EXPENDITURE**

*Education is given a high priority and funded generously.*

*The funding of schools is not completely clear and open because the LEA does not publish its education budget compared to education Standard Spending Assessment (SSA).*

59. The Council has a strong corporate ethos linked to its financial strategy and decides priorities in relation to seven stated aims which include education. The Council gives clear and strong priority to education, including a commitment not to cut the funding delegated to schools, now called the individual schools budget, (ISB) and to fund in full the teachers pay award and any rise in the number of pupils. In addition the Policy and Resources Committee sets aside resources for bids for new projects and initiatives. Raising educational attainment is one of two stated priorities for this. In 1998/99 an additional £1.2m was allocated to "Raising Attainment projects" and this will then be rolled forward, protected and increased to keep pace with inflation. Schools were generally satisfied with both the level of funding and their ability to influence the Council's decision making.

60. The Council follows its financial strategy and priorities in setting its budget but neither reports nor measures its budget against individual SSA figures. In practice it has funded education just above education SSA since 1995/96 and is likely to do so in 1999/2000:

### **Education Budget**

	<b>1994/95</b>	<b>1995/96</b>	<b>1996/97</b>	<b>1997/98</b>	<b>1998/99</b>
SSA (£m)	77.31	69.94	73.14	74.48	81.51
Spend (£m)	75.11	72.76	75.02	74.64	81.88
comparison (%)	99.7	104.5	102.6	100.2	100.5

(source LEA)

61. Within its three year financial plan, the Council considers spending priorities through the Autumn, firms up budgets with an Away-day of all committee chairs in January to agree priorities and then finalises budgets to committees.

62. The Council is committed corporately to developing Best Value with a local performance review programme “*Doing Better For Less*”. There are strong systems of client and commissioning; service level agreements (SLAs) for every service have been developed, reviewed and scrutinised, including review of the overhead costs relating to central departments.

63. Knowsley provided an analysis of its 1998-99 education budget broken down into the *Fair Funding* categories that are required from April 1 999. Compared to 35 other LEAs, these show higher than average net spending per pupil on a few areas: strategic management, insurance, school meals, premature retirement, discretionary awards, education psychologists. This reflects explicit policy decisions to have a strong senior management team, generous clothing grants and discretionary awards and a comparatively large education psychology and guidance team. Insurance claims have been high, and the reduction in surplus places has led to high numbers of premature retirements.

64. There is lower than average spending per pupil central support costs and special education, reflecting the tight control over support services through SLAs and the level of SEN spending that is delegated.

## **DELEGATION TO SCHOOLS AND CENTRAL EXPENDITURE**

*The LEA has a policy of high delegation to schools and has already achieved most of the requirements for Fair Funding.*

*Following the conclusion of the District Audit study into SEN funding the LEA should set out a clear action plan and consider reviewing the basis of the delegation of funding for statements for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and specific learning difficulties (SpLD) in primary schools. Ideally it should be more closely linked to actual numbers of pupils with statements.*

### **Delegation of resources to schools**

65. In 1998-99 Knowsley delegated 92.5% of the potential schools budget to schools through the LMS formula. This is high compared to the metropolitan LEA average, 90.7%. Within the broader general schools budget the LEA only retained 23% centrally, compared to the metropolitan LEA average of 27%. The LEA has already achieved most of the delegation required by Fair Funding. In 1999-2000 the ISB is 78 per cent of the local schools budget (LSB); national comparisons are not yet available.

66. The LMS formula and related issues including costs of services provided by the LEA, are discussed with headteachers and governors in the LMS Working Party which reports to committee. The Audit Commission Survey showed satisfaction with the formula. It has been continually updated and in general headteachers and governors believe it is fair, but it is complex and would benefit from the fundamental review that is proposed by the LEA, because of the additional delegation required in 2000 and concerns about the means of delegating funding to primary schools for statements.

67. Expenditure per pupil is just above that in other metropolitan boroughs and statistical neighbours for pupils in most age groups. In 1 997-98 compared to metropolitan borough averages, the spend per primary pupil was £1655 (£1603) and per secondary pupil £2262 (£2255). It is further above average for pupils aged 0-3 and 16-19, and below average for pupils aged 11-13. Within its area reviews the LEA should consider the educational and financial viability of its smaller nursery classes and sixth forms.

### **Resources for Special Educational Needs**

68. Knowsley delegates more funding for SEN than other LEAs. This makes SEN expenditure comparisons difficult. Funding for SEN at stages 1,2 and 3 of the SEN Code of Practice is delegated through the formula mainly using eligibility for clothing grants. The deprivation indicator is used as a proxy for SEN. This is in addition to funding allocated to all schools using the same indicator to contribute towards combating social disadvantage. Further funding (£621,100 in 1998-99) is delegated through the LMS formula to primary schools to meet the needs of pupils with MLD or SpLD at stages 4-5, using the same proxy indicator. Therefore primary statements for MLD and SpLD do not bring additional resources to the school unless the pupils live in another LEA. Statements of other special needs are individually resourced. Secondary schools receive delegated funding for stage 3 in relation to their roll, not to needs, and statements are individually resourced.

69. The LEA acknowledges that the methods of delegating funding for SEN cause confusion, are not tightly enough monitored and should be reviewed. It invited District Audit to present an overview to the SEN Review Group and then agreed the terms of a study to investigate SEN funding and report in summer 1 999. This will inform a full review of the LMS formula and relates to the ongoing policy review of SEN, improving common definitions of Stage 3 across schools and the development of moderation.

### **Notification Of Budgets and Service Entitlements**

70. Schools are notified of their provisional budgets in February (pending SEN allocations) and final budgets by the end of March. Clear notification is given about SLAs for core and traded services.

### **Capital and external funding**

71. There is a corporate commitment to capital improvements to education buildings, funded by DfEE capital allocations, external grants and capital receipts from both closed school sites and from disposal of other council assets.

72. The Council has been successful in bidding for the New Deal for Schools and for external funding from the Standards Fund, Single Regeneration Budget, EU, Lottery funds, Capital Challenge, and is part of the Merseyside Health Action Zone. To date it has decided not to bid for an Education Action Zone. Bids are co-ordinated corporately and developed in the Education Department with considerable benefits to education and individual schools. One school has achieved Sports College Status and another is bidding for Arts College status. Headteachers contribute through the External Funding Working party which reports to the Director of Education. One

significant project is the £18.5m funding over three years (£8m this year) to provide an intranet for the Borough. This will give schools free local phone calls, links to the internet, each other and the LEA, community facilities and Liverpool University.

## 4. THE MANAGEMENT OF SERVICES

73. There are four divisions each headed by an Assistant Director. These relate to strategic support, curriculum and quality, student services and management services. References have been made to strategic support in the preceding section. The Management Services Division is extremely well managed and the Curriculum and Quality Support Division is ably led. Before managers in Student Services or Strategic Support can be fully effective in tackling difficult issues the corporate cultural change in developing a more challenging role needs to be more visibly embraced.

### CURRICULUM AND QUALITY SUPPORT DIVISION

*In the recent past, the advisory team has not been deployed to best effect and its work has been inadequately monitored.*

*Link advisers effectively co-ordinate help and support to schools when asked to do, or where OFS TED report has indicated significant weaknesses; they too rarely challenge schools to further improve standards.*

*The LEA has the personnel, expertise and resources to provide the full range of services at primary level. It lacks sufficient expertise and credibility at the secondary level to help schools bring about the improved standards demanded by the EDP.*

74. The advisory service was not used to best effect in 1997/8; inadequate monitoring of the deployment of advisers and contacts with schools means that it is not possible to assess accurately whether the division achieved its objectives in that period. For instance, too much time was spent in attendance at governing body meetings and too little on providing critical but constructive advice to schools. This is recognised by the LEA.

75. There are nine advisers who provide coverage for the early years, primary, secondary and special sectors. There are subject advisers for the core subjects only; this is appropriate for a small LEA. All advisers have a link role with individual schools. The current emphasis is on the advisory role although most schools involved in Section 10 inspections request pre- or post-OFSTED support; this is regarded as useful by the schools visited.

76. There are a number of strengths in the current arrangements. There are good relationships and a climate in which link advisers are able to, and do, influence schools positively. Good use is made of formal and informal networks to provide schools with the help and support which they have identified as necessary for themselves or by an OFSTED report. There has been no written policy but, in practice, the service has been sufficiently flexible to provide extra, and usually effective, support to schools identified as causing concern.

77. There are significant weaknesses, however. These have been analysed by the LEA, consultations have taken place with the schools and new working practices are planned from April 1 999. At a late stage, however, the detail had not been fully agreed. The major weaknesses are that the link adviser's work with schools is not sufficiently focused on improving standards, there is a lack of challenge, and the deployment is not well-informed by the use of data assimilated by the LEA. In all but four of the schools visited, the link adviser was not effectively monitoring the standards of the school. In seven primary, two

secondary and two special schools, the school was not making sufficient use of data in its possession and was not being actively helped by the LEA. The LEA should have acted earlier to remedy these weaknesses.

78. The small training, development and support team is located in the division. Its main functions are to contribute towards school improvement and to raise attainment through advice, support and training. In addition, the LEA have set up networks at secondary level for all subjects which are co-ordinated by the schools themselves. This is an appropriate structure and better provision than that for many LEAs of a similar size. The LEA rightly does not seek to provide the full range of INSET; the challenge is to more effectively disseminate good practice and help schools to identify good quality training.

79. The need for improvements in the service is particularly important in relation to secondary schools, to provision for pupils with SEN and to ensure that link advisers are well equipped to perform the changed role. The LEA does not have the capacity to deliver the full EDP without remedying the current lack of sufficient secondary senior management expertise.

## **PUPILS' SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Services which support pupils with SEN**

*Individual services are generally well managed; overall management is improving but there are still weaknesses.*

*Resources, for instance EWS and behavioural support services, are not sufficiently targeted at areas of greatest need.*

80. The Student Services Division is responsible for the delivery of a number of services to pupils and schools which have a direct bearing on standards and quality, and also on the realisation of the Department's aims related to social inclusion. These services include those connected with educational welfare, child guidance, the administration of statements of SEN, admissions, transport, careers, awards and free school meals.

81. The Division, comprising around 75 staff, is headed by an Assistant Director who has line management responsibility for six heads of service. The Assistant Director has been in post for approximately one year and has in that time worked to unite six previously distinct services. Whilst substantial progress has been made in drawing together staff in the teams around the common theme of access, more remains to be done.

82. Some individual services are well managed but existing arrangements for oversight of the various services lack coherence. There is no common approach to appraising the heads of service and the head of the Educational Psychology Service is not formally appraised by the Assistant Director who line manages the service. The quality of planning and evaluation is inconsistent between the services. Some, for example the EWS, do not give a clear enough focus on central objectives against which the success of the service can be judged.

## **Special Educational Needs and Transport Service**

83. This service is mainly responsible for determining and issuing the outcomes of statutory assessment and the provision of transport where required. It provides a range of guidance for parents, and for schools in relation to their statutory duties. There has been only one parental appeal to the SEN tribunal. During the last 18 months, the service has established systems for monitoring the outcomes of annual reviews. The rate at which draft statements are issued within 18 weeks significantly improved from 16 per cent in 1996/97 to 60 per cent in 1997/98. There are some consistent weaknesses in Statements; the level of provision is not specified nor is there any expectation for integration or re-integration written into the Statement or its amendments.

## **The Child Guidance Service**

84. The Child Guidance Service, which includes Child Guidance Social Workers and Educational Psychologists, has a strong element of direct child guidance social work in addition to the statutory casework of educational psychologists. The service works with schools in all phases, and is highly valued by schools, however, there is a lack of expertise required to support special schools with pupils who have very complex needs. The service operates an open referral system as well as a standard minimal allocation which is set out as a SLA. The service is costly but its development plan is not sufficiently aligned with the LEA's priorities; there has been insufficient evaluation of the value for money provided by the service.

## **The Sensory Impaired Service**

85. The Sensory Impaired Service succeeds in its aim to meet the needs of pupils with visual and hearing impairments in mainstream schools. Although small groups of pupils do attend the same school, there are no specified units. Support is offered to schools on the basis of SLAs. A service development plan is in place which has some developing links with the LEA's development plan. The schools have a high regard for this service.

## **Central Support Service**

86. This service provides support to schools in meeting the needs of disruptive pupils. It provides short term, off-site provision in the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and it supplies tutoring for permanently excluded pupils. Deployment of school support is through referral to a nominated key worker, as are placements at the PRU. Visits to schools, confirmed that this support is consistently valued and considered to be effective. Tutoring is provided through the Pupil Review Group. The Service is evaluated through Ofsted inspections which indicate that it is well managed.

## **Education Welfare Service**

87. The EWS supports schools in raising pupil attendance by identifying school based strategies, identifying non-attendance and undertaking casework; it is a centrally funded service. Referrals are entered on a database and the EWOs prepare a statistical analysis at the end of six weekly target periods. The management of the service should improve the targeting of resources. Many schools expressed



dissatisfaction with the service both in the LEAs own survey in 1 998, and in visits to schools by the inspection team.

## **MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

*The management support services are well organised and managed, meeting the needs of schools, and accountable to them. There are effective mechanisms for involving schools in monitoring, developing and evaluating services.*

*The LEA is strengthening further the close links between management support services and the curriculum and quality service to further focus support for schools with weaknesses.*

*The services are highly regarded by the schools.*

### **Personnel**

88. An SLA sets out what schools can expect, and the service appears timely, effective and efficient. It is highly regarded with 100% buyback and is closely monitored by headteachers, together with financial support through the Finance and management working party. Model policies have been issued and their adoption by schools monitored. The LEA is helping schools become self sustaining; for instance, it provides individual support for capability procedures, followed by a phone-line advice service which is accessible and accurate. The LEA is seeking to further improve use of the service by providing benchmarking reports to schools. The service works closely with school budget staff to provide co-ordinated support, particularly for schools with weaknesses.

### **Finance**

89. There are effective systems in place for monitoring school budgets and expenditure, and reports to committee. Schools are given sound advice in budget preparation and planning. There is close monitoring of school balances and 14 schools have deficits with agreed plans for reducing these within a maximum of three years. Schools with surplus balances over 30K or 5% of their budget are also required to have plans for their reduction. School budgets and plans are monitored and reported to Committee. Each school is audited every three years. The LEA responds well to comments from the school administrative officers network and has developed an innovative arrangement to cover one LEA finance officer post with short secondments by school administrative officers. This extends the close understanding between LEA and schools.

### **Property services**

90. The section has clear aims linked to supporting school improvement and to the programme of area reviews of school places and to meeting statutory duties including health and safety. The management of property services is a strength of the LEA. Schools rated the service highly and it is effective. Most of the repairs and maintenance budget has been delegated for some years and there is 80 per cent buyback of the surveyors service which monitors and manages contracts. The Maintenance and Buildings Working Party includes headteachers who feed in views

from colleagues, monitor and review the SLA for the surveyors and consider criteria and priorities for the service including the development of the Asset Management Plan. This is an example of a good working arrangement with headteachers.

91. Over the past five years there has been significant lead from the LEA in developing risk management strategies to combat the high level of arson (C1.Im claims in 1 990) and security incidents. All schools now have fencing, all buy in to the Knowsley security force night patrols, many have CCTV. Schools visited reported that this strategy is being very effective in reducing the incidences of crime and vandalism directed against the schools.

### ***Information technology***

92. Currently support for the schools SIMS financial and administrative systems is a central service and an SLA is being revised for delegation in 2000, when it is also expected that all schools will be making most returns and administrative links to the LEA on-line. The LEA is developing an integrated data system to include SEN data; this project is well led and should provide improved data analysis and benchmarking.

93. Previous reference has been made to the Community Information Programme (para 35).

## **5. SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN STANDARDS, QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS**

### **IMPROVEMENT IN THE SCHOOLS VISITED**

*The contribution of the LEA to improvement in the primary schools has been sound generally and often good where the OFS TED report indicated significant weaknesses. In the secondary schools visited, the LEA contribution has been more limited, sometimes good through specifically funded projects but weak in supporting curriculum and development planning. In special schools support for leadership has been good, but unsatisfactory for curriculum guidance and training.*

#### **Primary schools**

94. The inspection team made judgements about improvements since their OFSTED inspections in 11 primary schools. Ten of the schools had made improvements in their provision and five had made considerable progress.

95. All the schools have made sound use of the services that are provided by the LEA but in two schools the degree of support was judged to be insufficient. Overall the effectiveness of the LEA was good in four, sound in four and unsatisfactory in three schools. A significant weakness in eight schools was that the link adviser did not effectively monitor the standards of the school and was too reliant on the school to raise issues. In four of the schools there were weaknesses with development or curriculum planning; there was no record that this had been identified by the link adviser.

96. Appropriately, the LEA has given most support to schools where the OFSTED report identified major weaknesses, and these schools have made the most progress. One school judged to have serious weaknesses, has improved to become a "very good school, striving for excellence".

#### **Secondary schools**

97. Judgements on improvements were made in four secondary schools. In three of the schools standards at GCSE are improving but remain well below national averages and are adversely affected by poor attendance. In all four of the schools the quality of education is sound and in two it is very good.

98. In three schools, their use of services was judged to be good while in the fourth it was sound; the effectiveness of LEA services actually used was also good. This positive picture overall masks some weaknesses. In particular, the LEA support for planning improvement was weak in two schools and barely satisfactory in a third. These three schools questioned whether the LEA had the expertise to criticise constructively on the full range of curriculum issues and development planning; they tend not to ask for this support.

99. The schools make extensive use of the LEA finance and personnel services; these are highly regarded. The schools made limited use of the advisory service. In one school the LEA had been asked to do a full curriculum audit but had struggled to do so and the quality of individual subject reviews was very variable; this was an

unreasonable expectation of a small advisory service

100. All four schools were well led and prepared to act on their own initiative. The issue for the LEA is to disseminate more widely the good practice that exists within schools. Three schools judged that the LEA does not take sufficient steps to help schools identify effective trainers in areas where the LEA lacks the expertise.

### ***Special schools***

101. Judgements on improvements were made in three special schools. All schools have made progress and in one case it is significant following the appointment of a new headteacher.

102. In all three schools there was uncertainty about the policy direction and their role within it. The support for management was effective but there was sometimes inadequate advisory support to establish relevant challenging targets for their pupils.

103. There is an LEA funded project, led by the Northern Support Centre in collaboration with a group of schools, aimed at raising the attainment of pupils with SEN in numeracy. This is planned and led well; pupils involved have improved their attainment.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF PERFORMANCE DATA AND TARGET SETTING**

*The LEA is improving its provision and use of performance data, but there are still weaknesses.*

104. The LEA has not had adequate systems in place to provide relevant and easily interpreted information to schools in the past. It is now seeking to deal with this weakness, but further improvements are necessary.

105. The LEA has recently adopted the baseline assessment scheme devised for Leeds City Council. This is now enabling teachers to plan appropriate programmes of work and is beginning to be used to make informed predictions of attainment at Key Stage 1.

106. Each primary and secondary school is supplied with a school performance profile for each relevant key stage. This includes data which sets the school's results in a national and local context, and compared to other similar LEA schools. In general, the schools find the information useful and it has led to some improvements. For instance, one school has been able to identify another similar school with better attainment and has observed its practice; similarly another school strengthened procedures when it became apparent that a nearby school had a better attendance record.

107. The LEA is starting to develop analyses which estimate added value between two key stages. Analysis of performance is a strength in some secondary schools, but the practice is not effectively disseminated and the LEA has not given sufficient leadership until very recently. The decline in standards from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4 is a major issue for the LEA and is complicated by the net export of pupils at the end of Year 6. The debate has not been sufficiently informed by rigorous analysis of the progress made by individuals or groups of pupils.

108. The process for target setting is clearly set out but is not rigorously applied in all cases; link advisers have not been successful in renegotiating targets that have been set too low by the school. This was the case in two each of the primary, secondary and special schools visited.

109. All of the schools' targets were accepted by the LEA on the grounds of expediency. The LEA acknowledges that a more challenging approach will be required in future years. Considerable improvements will be necessary in order to meet the GCSE targets.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN LITERACY**

*The LEA's support in primary schools is effective; it is variable in the secondary phase, where work has only just begun. The school survey showed that the schools value the LEA 'S support.*

110. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in 1998 was close to the national average for level 2 and above in both reading 76.7 per cent (77.4 per cent, nationally) and writing 80.3 per cent (81 .4 per cent nationally). At the end of Key Stage 2, there is a gap between the attainment of Knowsley's pupils at level 4 or above, 59.1 per cent and the national 64.7 per cent. However, there has been considerable improvement since 1995. The gap between the national average and the LEA's figure has more than halved.

111. The main changes have been the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in primary schools and the preparation for it in secondary schools. All of the primary schools visited had introduced the literacy hour, generally effectively. In this they have been supported well by the LEA. Some have been able to build on local initiatives that existed before the introduction of the national strategy. The move into the NLS itself has been supported through a combination of consultancy, INSET and written guidance. The support is nearly always well fitted to the needs of the schools although there was an exception in one where more intensive classroom support was needed instead of the "light touch" approach provided. Support for literacy in one special school has been particularly successful through encouraging the school to adapt the national strategy to the particular needs of its pupils.

112. Improvement in secondary schools is at a very early stage and is less secure than in primaries. The LEA has been successful in getting all the secondary schools visited to appoint literacy co-ordinators and to begin at least some work to improve the teaching of literacy. In one school, the LEA has paid for the Successmaker computerised individualised learning scheme, and paid for two general teaching assistants who are being well used by the school. The head of department in this school had been on an LEA organised course focused on literacy and participating schools had shared their experiences via the LEA. The school was using the support well and developing initiatives of its own accord. In another school, the LEA input was minimal, despite need. The lack of a clear strategy for improvement in the secondary phase has led to wide variations in effectiveness and a stronger lead by the LEA will be necessary if standards are to improve further.

113. Schools are well supported by the Schools Library Service, and the Public Libraries generally are a rich resource that have been considerably improved recently. The schools value these services very highly.

114. The support for literacy in primary schools provides good value. It has, in most though not quite all schools, been accurately matched to the needs of the schools which have themselves deployed any extra funding they have received judiciously. The value provided in secondary schools varies from poor to good.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN NUMERACY**

*The LEA 's support in primary schools is effective; it is weak in the secondary phase.*

115. The Key Stage 1 results in mathematics in 1998 were slightly above the national average, but for other age groups standards are lower; Key Stage 2 results, though ahead of statistical neighbours were below the national average. Attainment at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is low in comparison with national figures and they are below those for similar LEA's. The EDP sets out suitable planned actions to address the low standards which supplement the planned introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) in September 1999. The actions build on some useful early initiatives undertaken by the LEA in Key Stages 1 and 2, including the Knowsley Maths Project which trained parent volunteers in assisting teachers with basic numeracy work. Another important initiative has been the setting up of Summer Numeracy Schools to increase the proportion of pupils attaining level 4 by the time they start Year 7 but in general the LEA has not given sufficient focus to Key Stage 2/3 liaison and also performance at GCSE.

116. The Audit Commission school survey indicates that, overall, schools regard the LEA support to improve the teaching of numeracy positively. It is more highly regarded by primary schools than by secondary schools, but secondary schools in Knowsley are more positive about the LEA's support than in any of the other LEAs surveyed.

117. Support for numeracy was a particular focus in three of the visits to primary schools and two of the secondary schools. Only two of the schools had made a significant improvement in mathematics since the time of their OFSTED inspections. Two had worsened. The LEA support for numeracy was effective in two primary schools and unsatisfactory in one. Where it was satisfactory the LEA had given suitable guidance about the school mathematics policy and provided useful training on materials to supplement the published work scheme. Where it was ineffective, the LEA had provided insufficient help or insufficient challenge to enable the school to remedy weaknesses in standards in Key Stage 2 and in its assessment work.

118. In the secondary schools, the LEA had made a very effective input in one school but its contribution in another was ineffective. In the latter case, there was insufficient challenge provided by the LEA to take the school forward and to improve the poor GCSE results in mathematics. Where the support was good the LEA had been influential in establishing a Summer School which had had a wider positive impact on the teaching of mathematics in the school.

119. In general the support for numeracy in primary schools provides sound value but it is unsatisfactory in secondary schools. The weak performance at GCSE level is not clearly identified in the LEA's analysis of the performance of its schools.

## **SUPPORT FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATION**

*Support for early years is effective. The LEA has established a high quality of provision which continues to improve.*

120. The LEA has made nursery education a priority since its inception in 1974, and set out that priority formally in 1995. Knowsley offers a nursery place to all three and four year olds; it has the highest proportion (93 per cent) of under fives in nursery of any metropolitan authority. It is a measure of the LEA's success that it is a net importer of pupils into its nursery provision - the reverse of the situation in secondary schools.

121. The priority attached by the LEA to early years provision has paid off: it prepares children very well for their start on the National Curriculum and contributes to the standards they achieve at the end of Key Stage 1. Of the schools visited, all had improved since the OFSTED inspection, most were good and none was less than sound. In most of the schools where the LEA's early years support was inspected, that support was good.

122. The support is provided through a combination of consultancy work by the specialist adviser, INSET and networks established through area meetings. The support is effective and the schools survey shows it to be highly valued. Its particular strength is that it involves all of the staff working in early years, both teachers and nursery assistants. The weakness most commonly reported after inspection was in planning for progression. Clear improvement has been made in that area. The weakness remaining is that too little is done to integrate pre-school children currently in special schools into mainstream provision and so to provide them with a broader experience, particularly of using language with their peers.

123. The LEA's support for early years is effective, albeit costly: it provides good value.

## **SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS IN SPECIAL MEASURES AND WITH SERIOUS WEAKNESSES**

*The number of schools in special measures and with serious weaknesses is low and much lower than in similar LEAs.*

*Where the OFS TED report has identified significant weaknesses, the LEA acts decisively, and usually effectively, which contributes to the number of serious concerns remaining low.*

124. The LEA currently has one secondary and two primary schools in special measures; all three have been identified since October 1 997. The secondary school has received three monitoring visits and the primary schools one each. The LEA has given substantial support to the secondary school but it is not always effective and progress is slow. It is too early to judge LEA effectiveness in relation to the primary schools.

125. In addition, two primary schools are currently identified by OFSTED as having serious weaknesses, but have yet to receive a monitoring visit. Three other schools have received monitoring visits but made rapid progress so that further monitoring by HMI was not considered necessary. Indeed, they are now good or very good schools. In two cases, developments were aided by the appointment of a new headteacher.

126. Eight primary schools were identified by the LEA from their OFSTED reports as causing concern. All these schools have received additional support; advisory, financial and personnel according to need. This is an effective strategy as five have already made significant improvements. This action is helping to ensure that schools do not deteriorate further so that they develop serious weaknesses or require special measures.

127. Although there has been no written policy, it is clear that the LEA has acted on information from OFSTED reports to allocate considerable support to schools causing concern, according to need and usually to good effect. The flaw in this strategy, exemplified by the secondary school that was placed in special measures, is that it is too reliant on OFSTED reports and does not make sufficient use of the LEA's own monitoring or data on schools.



## 6.SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### SUPPORT FOR TEACHING

*The LEA 's support for teaching has strengths and weaknesses. The LEA can act effectively to deal with weaknesses which are clear to see and to implement such a national initiative as the NLS. It is much less effective at challenging the schools to identify problems for themselves and so to move forward.*

*Support for the teaching of IT is improving from a very unsatisfactory position.*

128. Support for teaching is provided through a combination of centrally provided INSET and consultancy work by advisers in the schools. The LEA has also, with some success, improved staff development procedures, through IIP. The support is limited by gaps in subject expertise in the small advisory service. In practice, the general adviser attached to each school is the key figure. The support these advisers offer varies in effectiveness. Amongst the schools visited, the LEA's support was effective in four, satisfactory in seven but weak in five. This balance of view was reflected in the school survey which showed the schools on average as regarding the LEA's support as just about satisfactory.

129. The school visits showed that teaching is improving. The proportion of good schools has increased since the time of their inspections. The improvement in the teaching of literacy in the primary and special schools has been particularly noticeable. The LEA has identified ICT as a particular area of weakness but, until now, with the coming of the EDP, the deployment of support for teaching, especially through INSET, has not been based on a clear analysis of schools' weaknesses . Teaching of ICT is beginning to improve but from a low base and very unevenly. The LEA is, only now, beginning to shift its emphasis away from improving provision of equipment to improving the use of that equipment in the classroom. Several schools report that expensive computer equipment has been under-used for up to six months because of delays in accessing technical support; three schools visited have still not resolved this issue.

130. The LEA has worked to good effect in some schools where clear weaknesses on the part of individual teachers were identified in the inspection report. Since appraisal has been neglected in some schools, however, the schools lack a powerful tool to identify weakness. For both primary and secondary teachers, the LEA has sought to establish networks, for example through meetings for heads of subject departments. These have, for the most part, proved effective forums for the exchange of views and mutual support. Within the resources available to it the LEA is responsive to schools' requests for help and support. It is less effective, particularly in the secondary phase, in challenging schools to improve in areas which they have not identified as weaknesses for themselves.

131. Support for teaching varies in its effectiveness. Strengths have to be balanced against weaknesses but overall, the support offers satisfactory value.

## **SUPPORT FOR BEHAVIOUR AND REDUCING EXCLUSIONS**

*Support for behaviour is good; the number of exclusions is low.*

132. The high quality of LEA support is reflected in the low numbers of exclusions in all but some Voluntary Aided schools, the positive reports on pupils' behaviour in Ofsted Reports and was confirmed by school visits. Although this is not an area where direct cause and effect can be established, the importance attached by the whole Council to the quality of relationships is replicated at school level.

133. Behaviour was inspected in four primary, four secondary and two special schools. In each case, the LEA has had a positive impact on improving behaviour. There were several examples of successful inter-agency work where support provided centrally and access to an alternative curriculum outside the school enabled schools to retain pupils who might otherwise have been excluded. This must, at least in part, explain the relatively low rate of exclusions.

134. Three Kirkby secondary schools have collaborated to offer from 1 997 onwards an education support programme (KESU) to pupils at risk of exclusion. For pupils involved there has been an overall improvement in attendance and there has been a significant reduction in the number of permanent exclusions from the three schools. The initiative is school-driven, supported by the LEA. Headteachers in other regions within the Borough expressed interest in the venture.

135. LEA support for behaviour provides good value although the LEA is rightly reviewing provision to ensure that resources are targeted at areas of greatest need.

## **SUPPORT FOR ATTENDANCE**

*Support for improving attendance is good in primary but unsatisfactory in the secondary schools.*

136. Raising attendance levels was one of the six key aims in the LEA strategic plan for 1995 to 1998. Over this period, attendance levels have risen by 2 per cent to 94.3 per cent in primary schools and by 2.8 per cent to 87.3 per cent in secondary schools. These rises are greater than national averages and indicate that LEA initiatives are having some effect.

137. The primary figures for 1998 are in line with national averages; at secondary level, the LEA average is well below national averages and it is still too low. There is considerable evidence that low attendance levels depress the GCSE results.

138. LEA support for improving attendance is currently good in the primary schools but unsatisfactory in the secondary sector. The disparity arises because the EWS service is not deployed to maximum effect. This is recognised as a particular action point in the EDP.

139. There have been some useful initiatives. The EWS has done a successful attendance 'Blitz' where 500 homes were visited to pick up early problems, and there

is a Mayor's award which emphasises positive rewards through an award for 100% attendance. Much work needs to be done if the target of 91 per cent attendance for secondary pupils is to be achieved by the year 2002.

140. The Audit Commission survey indicates that the schools judge the LEA's support for improving attendance more positively than is the case in any of the other LEA's surveyed, with an average rating between satisfactory and good in both primary and secondary schools; the LEA's own survey showed dissatisfaction with the EWS service in particular.

141. Visits to schools established a mixed picture, particularly in terms of the involvement of the EWS, and when value for money is taken into consideration. Although the LEA has been effective in improving the efficiency of registration procedures through the introduction of computerised systems the support for attendance showed unacceptable variation. There was little correlation between the needs of the school and the amount and quality of EWS support. In two of the secondary schools and one of the special schools, there was insufficient EWS input to fully address the below average attendance levels, while in two primary schools the support was too generous.

## **SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

*The proportion of pupils attending special schools is high. This conflicts with the LEA's stated policy for inclusion. Resources are not always targeted towards the greatest need and strategic planning by the LEA has been weak. Hence, there is general confusion about the way forward.*

142. The LEA's policy for SEN is based on a principle of 'inclusion where possible and segregation where necessary'; it has no specific planned goals or related strategy. This is against a background of high numbers of statemented pupils and much higher than the average nationally for pupils educated in special schools.

143. Progress is currently being made in reorganising provision for pupils with emotional and behaviour difficulties (EBD), following too long a period of review and consultation. However, two-thirds of the schools visited, and some teachers from support services, are unsure about the strategic direction for SEN and their role in it. Many felt that this lack of direction had developed in recent years and activity in the early 1990s had been more positive.

144. Although there are many examples of good practice in the schools, the weaknesses in the current policy have created anomalies which indicate the need for improved strategic planning.

- The majority of pupils with moderate learning difficulties who require a Statement are educated in special schools, but a high proportion of pupils with physical disabilities and the majority of those with sensory impairments, including educationally blind and profoundly deaf pupils, are educated in mainstream schools;
- Pupils with both physical disabilities and significant learning difficulties, some of whom are able to take GCSE courses in neighbouring secondary schools, are

- placed in the same school as those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, creating a very wide age and ability range in a relatively small school. This puts pressure on curriculum planning and delivery, and ultimately on the quality of education;
- A resource school for pupils with physical disabilities is not fully accessible, resulting in pupils missing whole subjects in Key Stage 4 for substantial periods of time;
- The LEA does not ensure that schools use the same criteria for Stage 3 of the Code of Practice or for statutory assessment (although some development for the latter has taken place recently). This leads to different interpretations and misunderstandings between teachers and officers as to why some pupils have a Statement and others do not;
- Special schools for MLD pupils provide places for pupils who are under five, although Knowsley has much nursery provision which could provide ideal opportunities for pupils with SEN to have access to good peer group models, especially for language development.

145. This funding and support mechanism creates a number of issues which have an impact on pupils with SEN.

- Few primary schools use funds to employ their own support assistants or teachers to support pupils with SEN more flexibly, and to achieve better cost effectiveness;
- Support teachers usually provide assessment and IEPs for pupils in mainstream schools and, although the quality of these varies, this practice creates dependency for schools and does not contribute to developing the skills of teachers and SENCOs in mainstream schools;
- If pupils have longer-term learning difficulties which require a Statement, they usually transfer to the special school and the rate of re-integration from the special schools is very low.

146. In OFSTED inspections, six of the special schools were judged to be good and two required some improvement; none is in special measures. The progress made by pupils with SEN in mainstream schools is mixed. For schools inspected under the new Framework, the quality of provision for pupils with SEN in primary schools is in line with other schools at Key Stage 2, but below in Key Stages 3 and 4.

147. The Audit Commission surveyed schools in ten LEAs. The Knowsley schools rated the assessment of SEN, provision and review of statements and meeting the needs of SEN as significantly higher than the average for other LEAs.

148. The popularity of the status quo with most schools and elected members, may explain the lack of progress shown by the LEA. However, the LEA is in possession of the full picture and officers do not defend aspects of the present practice. There is no effective quality assurance of SEN provision or clear direction for a policy based on inclusion. The LEA needs to urgently review its provision for pupils with SEN.

## **7. SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF SCHOOLS**

### **SUPPORT FOR MANAGEMENT**

*Support for school self-review is improving but there are still weaknesses; it is at an early stage.*

*Procedures for appointing and training headteachers and for co-ordinating help and support requested by heads are good. Support on financial and personnel matters are also good. Critical support for curriculum and development planning is variable.*

149. Recent OFSTED inspection findings show that leadership and financial efficiency are good generally in secondary schools; in one notable exception, the LEA has acted decisively and removed financial delegation from the school. Primary schools are soundly led and in line with the national picture.

150. Nevertheless, there are weaknesses and the LEA has rightly placed a high priority on improving the leadership of schools by headteachers and governors and it is a priority in the EDP. The Director of Education has attended the interviews of the 35 new headteachers appointed in the last four years (roughly half the schools). Within the new appointments there has been a good gender balance and a good balance of internal and external recruitment. Although there is effective leadership of long-standing in schools, the recent appointments of new headteachers have provided access to fresh ideas and, where necessary, a challenging of the status quo. This is evident in the improvements made in some schools which had previously been causing concern.

151. Support for self-evaluation has been unsatisfactory but is now improving, particularly in the provision of performance data, but there is still much work to be done. Link advisers have been effective in facilitating help and support identified by headteachers; they have only recently started to focus on key issues such as performance analysis and development planning. Although there are centrally organised courses for action/development plans, the support from the link adviser was inadequate in a majority of schools visited.

152. Evidence from other HMI monitoring and from discussions with headteachers, indicates that the LEA's conferences for headteachers are of good quality. In addition, there is a substantial and effective programme for training senior managers; standards fund money has been obtained for 22 deputy heads undertaking the National Professional Qualification for Headships, and five are on the Leadership for Headteachers scheme. Headteachers participate in the Headlamp scheme. Newly appointed headteachers meet together regularly with some external inputs on specific issues and have assigned mentors; these sessions are highly valued.

153. Hence, although some aspects are good, there are weaknesses and the value for money is sound overall.

## SUPPORT FOR GOVERNING BODIES

*Most of the schools visited were governed reasonably well at the time of their inspections and had dealt with the identified weaknesses. Through a responsive service, the LEA provides effective support for its governors but it fails to challenge them to raise standards.*

154. The support is provided through a programme of training for governors, through regular meetings for them at an area level, and through a newsletter which provides them with up-to-date information about local and national policy. Additionally, the link advisers frequently attend governing body meetings; both they and other LEA officers make themselves available to offer specific advice when problems crop up with matters like finance and personnel. The LEA is responsive to the needs governors express. These aspects of LEA support are good; the school survey confirms that the support is highly valued.

155. The school visits showed improvement in any weaknesses identified by the OFSTED inspection. The governors are becoming more closely involved with the schools and, where necessary, they have put in place missing policies and organised themselves better through structures of sub-committees, charged with specific responsibilities. Secondary school governors now understand and use performance data better than they did. In the past it has proved difficult to appoint LEA nominated governors and, more generally, to find governors with the necessary knowledge and skills. The LEA has dealt with these problems by appointing, as its nominees, officers from Council departments other than education. This strategy has been very effective: these nominees are making a valuable contribution to the governing bodies on which they serve.

156. The strengths of the LEA's support derive from its responsiveness to identified problems. Its weakness is in more positive intervention, for example in a school which is moving into budget deficit, and in driving schools forward more generally. The link advisers' routine attendance at governing body meetings is valued by the schools but is a costly use of limited advisory time, particularly since in some schools it fails to challenge schools and governors to further improvement. Overall, this use of advisory time does not give value for money, but in other respects the LEA support gives good value.

## APPENDIX I CONTEXT OF THE LEA

### (a) Characteristics of the pupil population

Indicator	Date	Source	LEA	National
1. Number of pupils in LEA area of 1997 compulsory school age	Jan 1998	DfEE Form 7	24,540	
2. Percentage of pupils entitled to 1997 DEE free school meals				
i. primary	Jan 97	DfEE	51.2	22.8
ii. secondary	Jan 97	DfEE	54.5	18.2
3. Percentage of pupils living in households with parents/carers				
(i) with Higher Educational qualifications	1991	ONS Census	5.3	13.5
(ii) in Social Class 1 and 2	1991	ONS Census	13.1	31.0
4. Ethnic Minorities in population aged 5-15. Percentage of ethnic group:	1991	ONS Census		
Asian			0.0	0.5
Bangladesh			0.0	0.8
Black African			0.2	0.6
Black Caribbean			0.1	1.1
Black Other			0.5	0.8
Chinese			0.2	0.4
Indian			0.2	2.7
Other			0.4	1.1
Pakistani			0.0	2.1
White			98.4	89.9
5. Percentage of pupils:				
(i) with a statement of SEN				
primary	1997	DfEE	3.0	2.6
secondary		DfEE	5.8	3.9
(ii) attending special school				
primary	1997	DfEE	2.2	1.1
secondary		DfEE	2.9	1.6
6. Participation in education:				
(i) % pupils under 5 on the roll of a maintained school	1998	Audit Commission	92.2%	61.0%
(ii) % pupils aged 16 remaining in full time education.	1997	Career Decisions	51%	67.4%

### (b) Organisation of schools

#### Types of school

Nursery schools	0
Infant schools	2
Junior schools	2
Junior and infant schools	56
Middle schools	-
Secondary schools 11-16	6
11-18	5
Special schools	8
Pupil Referral Units	1

#### Surplus places

% Surplus	Year	LEA	National
Primary	1998	14.40%	9.5%
Secondary	1998	15.0%	11.5%

## Class size Rate per 1000 classes

Size of class	Year	LEA	National
31 or more KS1	1997	307.5	289.6
KS2	1997	356.8	379.0
36 or more KS2	1997	25.3	22.9
32 or more KS2	1997	14.1	35.0

Source: DfEE

## c) Finance

Indicator	Source	Year	LEA	National
% expenditure in relation to standard spending assessment	LEA	1997/98	100.2%	-
Funding per pupil: ASB £ per pupil	CIPFA Stats	1997/98	1461 1323 1162 1196 1185	1179 1352 1153 1130 1162
£ per pupil Secondary ASB	CIPFA Stats	1997/98	1495 1461 1875 2519 2565 2772	1532 1585 1858 1958 2308 2429
Aggregated schools budget: £ per pupil	S122 Budget Stats	1997/98	1571 2191 6496	1511 2091 5177
General schools budget: £ per pupil	CIPFA	1997/98	2023 2820 10634	2069 2783 11159
Potential schools budget: Primary Secondary Special	CIPFA Stats Section 122	Estimates 1997/98 and section 122	1739 2319 8240	1722 2307 8861
Capital expenditure £ per pupil	CIPFA	1997/98	88	98



## APPENDIX 2: THE PERFORMANCE OF MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

### PUPILS' ATTAINMENT

#### Attainment at age 7 (Key Stage I)

	Year	% of pupils achieving Level 2 or above					
		Teacher Assessment			Tasks/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1997	80.00	81.41	1.41	74.00	75.46	-1.46
	1998	80.00	79.29	-1.71	75.66	74.22	1.44
English (reading)	1997	80.00	80.15	0.15	80.00	80.35	0.35
	1998	80.00	79.79	-0.21	80.00	88.66	8.66
English (writing)	1997	78.00	79.05	1.05	80.00	82.76	2.76
	1998	78.00	77.32	-1.68	81.00	80.28	-0.72
Mathematics	1997	83.00	85.24	2.24	83.00	85.89	2.89
	1998	85.00	85.58	0.58	84.00	85.62	1.62
Science	1997	83.00	85.57	2.57			
	1998	86.00	85.09	-0.91			

Source: DfEE

#### 2. Attainment at age 11 (KEY STAGE 2)

	Year	% Pupils achieving Level 4 or above					
		Teacher assessment			Task/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1997	59.48	63.00	-3.52	55.51	63.00	-7.49
	1998				59.04	65.00	-5.96 prov
Mathematics	1997	61.54	64.00	-2.46	57.99	62.00	-4.01
	1998				54.90	59.00	-4.40 prov
Science	1997	66.06	69.00	-2.94	62.54	68.00	-5.46
	1998				64.44	69.00	-4.56 prov

Source: DfEE

#### Attainment at age 14 (KEY STAGE 3)

Source: DfEE

	Year	% Pupils achieving Level 5 or above					
		Teacher assessment			Task/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1997	42.16	60.00	-17.84	42.22	57.00	-14.78
	1998				44.93	65.00	-20.07 prov
Mathematics	1997	41.79	64.00	-22.21	38.45	60.00	-21.55
	1998				44.27	59.00	-14.73 prov
Science	1997	38.32	61.00	-22.68	38.47	60.00	-21.53
	1998				36.50	56.00	-19.50 prov

## Key Stage 4: GCSE results

Level achieved	Year	LEA	National	Difference
1 A*-G	1996	80.4	93.9	-13.5
	1997	85.7	94.1	-8.4
	1998	86.6	93.4	-6.80
5 A*-C	1996	23.6	45.6	-22.0
	1997	23.4	46.3	-22.90
	1998	23.6	46.1	-22.50
5 A*-G	1996	69.1	88.1	-19.00
	1997	73.2	88.6	-15.40
	1998	76.0	87.3	-11.30

Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the school year and on the roll in January of that year

Source: DfEE

## Attainment at age 18

### A level results

### Average point score per pupil

Number entered	Year	LEA	National	Difference
2 or more	1996	11.0	16.8	-5.8
	1997	9.5	17.3	-7.8
	1998	11.0	17.7	-6.7
Less than 2	1996	2.0	2.9	-0.9
	1997	1.3	2.9	-1.6
	1998	2.2	3.0	-0.8

Source: DfEE

## Vocational qualifications of 16 to 18 year olds

Level achieved	Year	LEA	National	Difference
Pass entries	1996	58.3	79.2	-20.9
Pass entries (Advanced)	1997	75.00	75.6	-0.6
	1998	87.00	78.6	8.4
Pass entries (Intermediate)	1997	66.7	69.2	-2.5
	1998	73.5	65.1	8.4

*The percentage of students who were in the final year of a course leading to approved vocational qualifications who achieved them on the basis of the work done in that year*

## Attendance

	Year	LEA	National	Difference
Attendance in Primary schools	1997	92.8	93.9	-1.1
	1998	94.3	N/A	N/A
Attendance in Secondary schools	1997	86.6	90.9	-4.3
	1998	87.3	N/A	N/A

Source: DfEE

**PROGRESS AGAINST KEY AIMS 1995-98**

	1995	1998
% 3 and 4 year olds in education	91	92
Surplus places	19	15
KS1 average	77.1	80.8
KS2 average	46.2	59.4
KS3 average	31.2	42.5
GCSE % 5+ A*-C	19.9	23.7
Attendance:		
primary	92.3	94.3
Secondary	84.5	87.3

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