



Office for Standards  
in Education

**North Yorkshire**

**Local Education Authority**

**Inspection Report**

**Date of Inspection: January 2004**

**Reporting Inspector: Malcolm Wall**



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## **Basic information**

Name of LEA:	North Yorkshire Local Education Authority
LEA number:	815
Address of LEA:	County Council Northallerton DL7 8AE
Reporting Inspector:	Malcolm Wall
Date of Inspection:	January 2004

## Summary

### Introduction

North Yorkshire is England's largest county and one of its most sparsely populated rural areas. Although there is relative affluence, there is deprivation including low wage areas and those with very high levels of pupil mobility. The council has limited access to regeneration funding but it is using the resources it has imaginatively to tackle variations in the performance of pupils across the county. The population has grown since the previous inspection, and the number of pupils has peaked at approximately 86,000. The council faces considerable change with the planned closure of the Selby coalfield and the review of regional government.

High performance has been maintained at all key stages and standards of attainment in schools are generally above those in similar authorities<sup>1</sup> and the national average. At Key Stage 3 attainment is above that found in similar authorities and well above the national average. Nevertheless, even in the light of current levels of performance the targets set for Key Stages 2 and 4 in 2004 remain very ambitious.

There have been major changes within the council structure since the previous inspection. The political structure is now that of a leader and an executive committee. The education directorate has retained broadly the same structure although the library service is now in the business and community services directorate in order to focus on the council's public access strategy. The senior management team of the education service remains very lean but it has had to face serious but unavoidable staffing difficulties in the course of the last year.

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<sup>1</sup> North Yorkshire LEA's statistical neighbours are: Devon; Somerset; East Riding of Yorkshire; Dorset; Cornwall; Lincolnshire; Norfolk; Cambridgeshire; Shropshire; Herefordshire.

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**Main findings**

**Summary:** North Yorkshire is a lean but effective and well-managed local education authority (LEA). Relationships with schools are very good and highly focussed on raising standards and securing improvement through collaboration and partnership. Above average performance by pupils at all key stages has been maintained, and the performance by pupils at Key Stage 3 is impressive. The LEA has made good progress overall with very significant improvements in key aspects of corporate planning for education, decision-making and social inclusion. Although progress has been slower in a few aspects, the LEA knows its major strengths and weaknesses well, as its self-evaluation confirms. Elected members and officers provide very effective leadership and the capacity for further improvement is good.

<b>Areas of strength</b>	<b>Areas of weakness/for development</b>
<b>Corporate leadership of education</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate and education strategic planning</li> <li>• The priority the council gives to education and its associated spending on education</li> <li>• Leadership of elected members and officers</li> <li>• The support provided for early years education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of breadth in the policy for 14-19 education</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy for education and its implementation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategy for school improvement and its implementation</li> <li>• Good performance of schools and the related work of the LEA in monitoring and challenging them to improve</li> <li>• The focusing of support and targeting on areas of greatest need, and the very low numbers of schools requiring special measures or serious weaknesses</li> <li>• The supply and quality of teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the detail and clarity of the school organisation plan</li> </ul>
<b>Support to improve education in schools</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for school leadership and management</li> <li>• Support for raising standards as part of national initiatives in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3</li> <li>• The effectiveness and value for money of services to support school improvement, in particular the contribution of the advisory service</li> <li>• The financial and property services offered to schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of a common format for service specifications and service plans</li> </ul>
<b>Support for special educational needs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The support for leadership and management in mainstream schools in building the capacity to meet the special educational needs (SEN) of pupils</li> <li>• The parent partnership service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited progress in finalising the review of special schools due to unavoidable staffing difficulties</li> </ul>
<b>Support for social inclusion</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling underperformance and promoting social inclusion through targeting resources on specific localities</li> <li>• Support for school attendance and child protection</li> </ul>	



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## Recommendations

### **Key recommendations**

#### **Support for special educational needs**

- Move swiftly to finalise the review of specialist provision.
- Establish a timetable for the implementation of the LEA's preferred model of provision for special educational needs.

### **Other recommendations**

#### **Corporate leadership of education**

**Policy for 14-19 education:** build on the work already done to broaden the policy, so that it takes fuller account of the views and contributions of all partners.

#### **Strategy for education and its implementation**

**Improve the provision of school places:** provide greater detail and clarity within the school organisation plan about the actions, responsibilities and timescales to deal with changes in the demand for school places, including those for pupils with special educational needs.

#### **Support to improve education in schools**

**Support services to school management and schools as discerning purchasers of services:** develop a common format for service specifications and service plans, and ensure that schools have access to information and advice about services offered by a range of providers.

#### **Support for special educational needs**

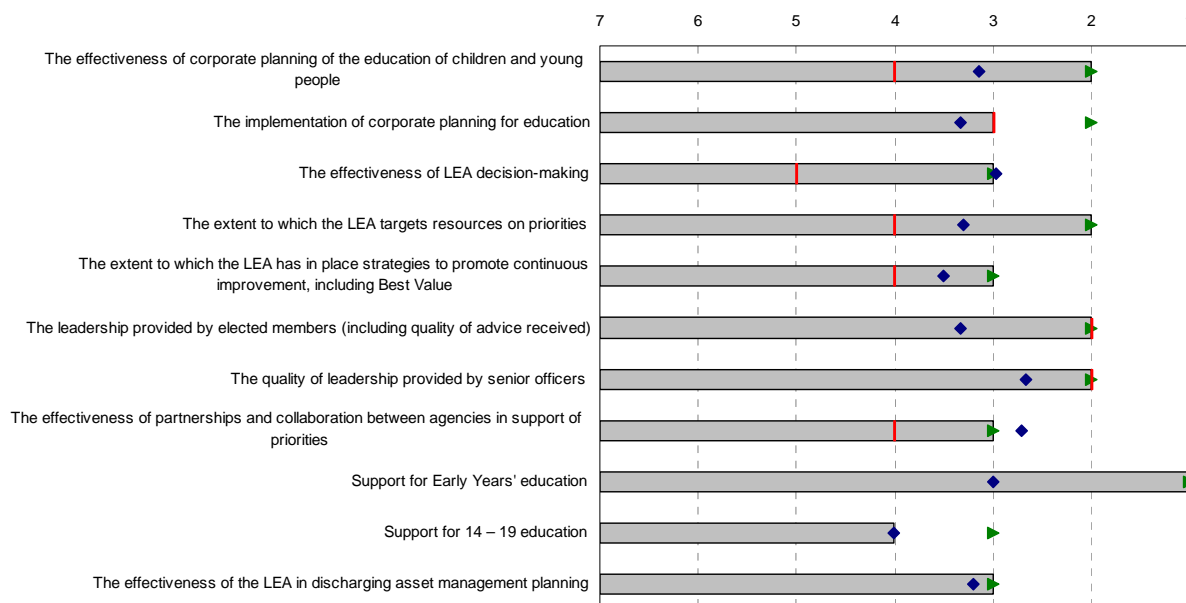
#### **Support for social inclusion**

**Pupils' behaviour:** establish the reason for the rise in fixed-term exclusions of fewer than 45 days and develop clear plans to deal with them.

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## Section 1: Corporate leadership of education

### Summary table of judgements



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

### Corporate planning for education and its implementation

1. At the time of the previous inspection, strategic planning in the education service was satisfactory but took place in a relative vacuum, with no clear corporate priorities. The corporate assessment in 2002 noted that this absence of a long-term vision statement with clear expected outcomes and milestones meant that resources and capacity were not effectively aligned to priorities. Rapid progress has since been made under the determined leadership of elected members and the chief executive. The quality of corporate planning for education is now good and the capacity for further improvement is also good. The council plan identifies priorities for the next three years, places a very high priority on education and improvement in the attainment of all pupils, and commits to passing on in full any increases in government grant for education spending over that period. Corporate and directorate planning are well aligned with the financial planning cycle. North Yorkshire is prudent in the way it uses scarce resources and schools acknowledge the priority they have received in the allocation of these funds.

2. Corporate plans have a shared vision, and are clear and well sequenced. There are close links between most service plans, the action plans for the Education Development Plan (EDP) and the council's overarching priorities. Strategic planning in the education service is good; it is a strength of the council's partnership with schools and is well integrated within the much improved corporate planning processes. Some key strategies, however, are very

recent and have yet to make their full impact, for example the preventive strategy for vulnerable children and the corporate social inclusion strategy. The development of the North Yorkshire local strategic partnership and the draft community strategy are also very recent. Nevertheless, all these developments are moving in the right direction and the council is now building upon the strong foundations provided by the education directorate in supporting school improvement and meeting the needs of individual children. While cross-cutting work in the council has been slower to develop, the priority to develop integrated services for children and young people is well understood, as indicated by recent changes in the way elected members identify cross-cutting themes to scrutinise the work of directorates.

### **Decision-making**

3. The speed, transparency and effectiveness of decision-making are highly satisfactory. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. The council has modernised its structure with clear levels of delegation to the executive members for education and senior officers. The executive takes decisions in an open and accountable way, and has a well-developed forward plan that contains the details of key decisions and when they will be taken. There is a strong political consensus between elected members about education matters and this supports effective and transparent decision-making. Elected members have been prepared to take some difficult and controversial decisions such as the delegation to schools of resources for special educational needs, and the executive has successfully used the procedures for scrutiny to inform the decisions it makes. Considerable care is taken with consultation and decision-making, reflecting the value elected members and officers place on the strong partnership with schools. However, this meticulous approach and the determination to gain the consensus necessary to manage change successfully have meant that slower progress has been made with some major developments, such as finalising the review of specialist provision for meeting special educational needs in the county and the 14-19 strategy.

### **Targeting of resources**

4. The LEA's targeting of resources to priorities has improved and is now good. Particular attention has been paid to the recommendation of the previous inspection to involve schools more fully in the council's budget-making process. Budget papers are clear and discussed in detail with schools both at a series of meetings across the county, attended by officers and elected members, and at the well-established Schools Forum. More than 70% of schools in the school survey regard budget consultation as good or very good.

5. The council's commitment to education is long-standing and well understood by schools. Consistent spending at around 3% above the Standard Spending Assessment in recent years continued in 2003-04, despite a difficult financial settlement for the council overall. The council's budget process starts from a rigorous budget review and ensures a more deliberate alignment of resources to priorities. This is supported by a medium-term financial strategy, which also includes the commitment to pass on in full additional resources received from the government to schools.

6. Budget management is generally very sound, though there is significant overspending on home-to-school transport, as the cost of contracts has escalated. This is

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sensibly being tackled on a whole council basis through a Best Value review of transport arrangements. The delegation to schools of SEN funding for specific groups of pupils was achieved in April 2003, but monitoring of its effects is at an early stage. At the end of 2002-03, the number of schools in deficit was much lower than average, at 2% in primary and 11% in secondary. This reflects the high quality of LEA financial support. School budget surpluses on the other hand are higher than average, though they are projected to fall significantly in the current year.

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

7. The LEA's strategies have improved and are highly satisfactory. The council as a whole has made significant progress in the last year in developing a cross-directorate performance management system. This means that well-established and effective performance management in education is increasingly integrated within the corporate approach. There is coherence across the main corporate and education plans. Most, but not all, service plans clearly relate activities to broader corporate and directorate objectives although the extent to which, for example, targets and success criteria are specified is variable.

8. Nevertheless, the culture within the education directorate is well focused on performance; there are clear systems for monitoring and reporting to senior officers and members, personal appraisal is well established. Accreditation under 'Investors in People' is being systematically used as a driver for improvement. Scrutiny has been well organised and efficient within education and the committee has usefully raised its profile by meeting in different venues across the county. Scrutiny committees have been appropriately reorganised to deal more explicitly with cross-cutting issues but it is too early to assess the effectiveness of this development.

9. The latest Best Value Performance Plan complies with statutory requirements. The Best Value review of pupil and parent services was a thorough exercise, with a clear action plan, which has resulted in improvements for service users, for example of the Parent Partnership service.

10. The LEA has a good understanding of what its priorities are for further improvement. This was reflected in the self-evaluation undertaken for this inspection, where the LEA's assessments have, for the most part, been endorsed by inspection findings.

### **Strategic partnerships**

11. Partnership work and collaboration with other agencies are highly satisfactory. Relationships between officers, elected members and schools are very good and effective collaboration between the LEA and other agencies continues to result in good quality and broadly available early years provision. Elected members and senior officers are very committed to developing effective partnerships and collaborative working arrangements. For example, the Children's Strategic Board, a recent development, is beginning to challenge the council and its partners to redeploy resources and to join together services for children and young people.

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12. The education service has a strong tradition of partnership work with schools and the wider community. The introduction of local strategies to raise achievement in areas of the county where the performance of pupils is more variable is supported enthusiastically by schools. The rationale for such local projects is transparent and there are high expectations on schools, within their communities, to begin to redress the inequalities in attainment across the county.

13. The council has offered effective leadership to develop work with the Youth Offending Team and the police. Relationships at a strategic level between social services and education are sound. Health representatives regard the LEA as approachable, responsive and supportive. Positive work is developing with the Connexions service, the North Yorkshire learning partnership and the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). For example, the LSC is supporting the council with resources to combat rural isolation through the development of the 14-19 strategy. Although at an early stage, after an extended consultation period, the local district councils are committed to the North Yorkshire local strategic partnership and expectations are high about what it can achieve.

### **Support for Early Years**

14. Support for early years is very good. There is a very high degree of commitment from elected members and from officers with extensive, relevant expertise. The LEA provides both strong leadership and effective support for the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). Roles are clear and partners recognise that the LEA carries out its responsibilities with fairness and transparency. Provision for young children is of high quality.

15. The LEA has a coherent strategy to raise attainment and improve the quality and range of provision in early years, which is consistent with its strategies for school improvement and special needs, and the council's commitment to promote social inclusion. The strategy is based on a thorough audit and detailed plans for its implementation are coherent with those of the EYDCP. There is sufficient provision in all areas to ensure a part-time place for all three- and four-year-olds whose parents want one, although in some more remote areas there is limited choice.

16. Monitoring and support procedures for the more than 600 early years and childcare settings in the authority are well established and differentiated according to need. The LEA knows these settings well. It provides valuable guidance on assessment, curriculum and support for children at risk of underachievement. Effective practice is disseminated well through accessible publications, newsletters and network meetings. Well thought out advice is provided on the development of foundation stage units and on developing childcare in extended schools.

17. The information available for parents is impressive. The children's information service is able to respond quickly to enquiries about childcare provision and to provide information and further points of contact about, for example, access to financial support. A newsletter aims to keep parents up to date on childcare issues and developments.

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**Support for 14-19 education**

18. The LEA provides satisfactory support for 14-19 education. The provision has some strengths and the capacity for further improvement is good but, to date, the development of the policy for 14-19 education has been slow. The policy is still in draft form. It emphasises school provision and gives insufficient attention to the wider contribution of partners. It also lacks specific details on important aspects, such as curriculum and timescales for implementation. However, it links well with the school improvement strategy and the drive for school autonomy, and a major strength is its statement of entitlement for all 14-19 students. The rural nature of North Yorkshire and the wide variety of types of schools hinder some young people's access to cohesive, broad 14-19 provision and the policy sensibly recognises this by building on well-established approaches that are already successful.

19. Support is provided through effective co-operation between the advisory service and the continuing education business unit. An adviser for 14-19 education has been appointed and the LEA's success in facilitating projects is appreciated by schools. Relationships are very strong with schools, the Connexions service and the North Yorkshire learning partnership and they are developing productively with the local LSC.

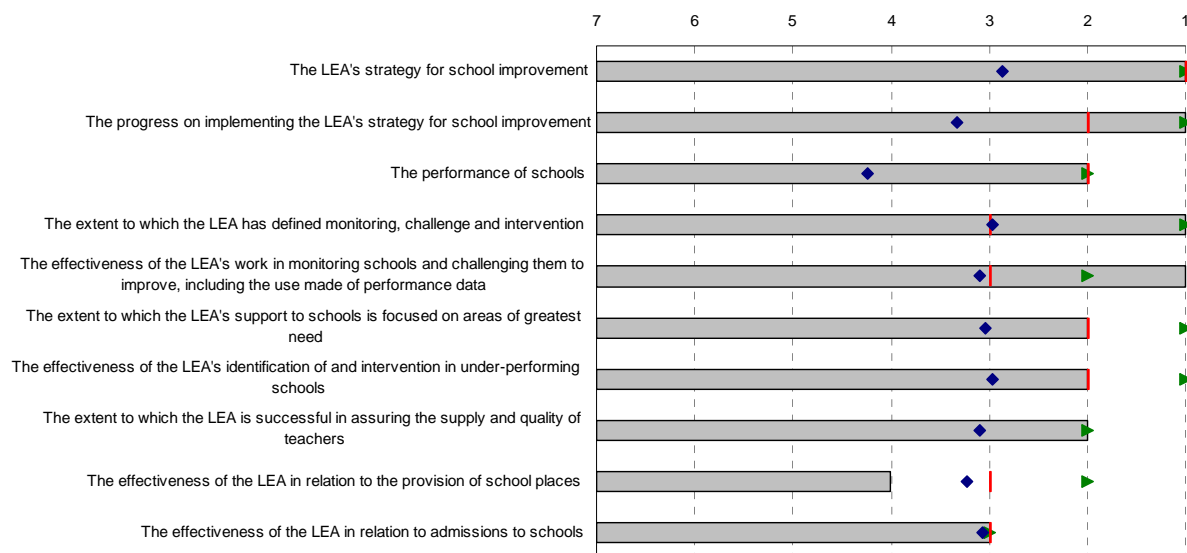
20. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 and the post-16 stage has been consistently high. The LEA is offering well-targeted support to the two schools that have not already achieved the national 2006 target for all schools of 25% of pupils gaining five or more A\*-G grades. The proportion of young people continuing in education or training post-16 is high but tracking of individual students' progress is not as effective as it is in the pre-16 stages. The range of flexible learning opportunities is widening and several well-focused projects are provided for vulnerable and disaffected young people.

***Recommendation***

- In order to improve support for 14-19 education, build on the work already done to broaden the policy so that it takes fuller account of the views and contributions of all partners.

## Section 2: Strategy for education and its implementation

### Summary table of judgements



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

### The strategy for school improvement and its implementation

21. The LEA's strategy for school improvement and its implementation are very good. The LEA has made good progress with these aspects of its work and its capacity for further improvement is very good. The strategy is supported by an effective education service plan that draws together strategic plans for school improvement, including the EDP, corporate plans for vulnerable children and social inclusion, and the planning of school places. The EDP is based on a thorough audit that draws on a very good range of quantitative and qualitative data. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified in relation to national and local priorities. This analysis provides a good foundation for determining activities and actions. The local priorities focus sensibly on increasing support for minority ethnic pupils, promoting new technologies and on extending opportunities in the areas of the arts and sport. Cross-cutting themes ensure that, within each priority, the implications for teaching and learning are consistently identified.

22. The EDP links very effectively with other school improvement activities, for example in targeting resources to specific areas of the county to tackle underperformance. Consultation has been very thorough, and there is a high correlation between its priorities and activities and the school improvement plans of schools. The LEA's targets are closely matched to those set by all schools. These are ambitious and sometimes individual schools fall short but the overall performance of pupils in all key stages is above the national average and that of similar authorities. The LEA monitors attainment effectively and has re-set, by agreement with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the council's executive,

the unrealistic targets at Key Stage 2 for 2004. Similarly, provisional data for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) performance show an unexpected dip in 2003 but the LEA has investigated the reasons for this and has implemented a strategy to support 11 of its secondary schools.

### **The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve, including the use made of performance data**

23. This important aspect of the LEA's work has improved and, overall, is now very good. The LEA knows the schools well and its clear processes for support or intervention are, with few exceptions, timely and very effective. The recommendations from the previous inspection report have been addressed well. Advisory visits to schools are well focused and challenging. They result in detailed, evaluative written reports that are sent to both headteachers and chairs of governors. The joint annual review process, involving the headteacher, chair of governors and link adviser, is of very high quality. It is supported by excellent performance information that now includes comprehensive data on individual pupils. Link advisers, headteachers and governors have been trained in the analysis and use of performance data and they agree rigorous targets with schools. The LEA's encouragement of schools to set aspirational targets results in some falling short but is one reason for the high overall performance of schools.

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

24. The LEA's system for differentiating and targeting support according to need is good; it is understood and highly valued by schools. All school improvement work has a clear purpose and the effective, agreed system of school categorisation implements fully a recommendation of the previous report. Although the written rationale for support which is an entitlement and that which may be purchased is not entirely explicit, schools identify and buy the support they need. Often, especially in the primary phase, they purchase LEA services but they also use other providers, frequently with support and guidance from individual link advisers.

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

25. The LEA's identification of and intervention in underperforming schools are good. The proportion of schools identified by inspection as requiring improvement is low. Only one school is in special measures, two have serious weaknesses and none is underachieving. Thus, only 0.75% of schools are in Ofsted's categories of concern. A further small proportion, 6.75%, have been identified as requiring additional monitoring and support, which is differentiated according to individual action plans.

26. Although, in a small number of cases, the LEA has not identified weaknesses early enough to prevent schools being categorised by Ofsted, its policy and procedures are usually effective. Schools in categories of concern are monitored and reported on effectively and they receive strong, well-targeted support. Each has a carefully planned exit strategy that

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ensures a gradual reduction in the level of support that is proportionate to the rate of improvement. Considerable use is made of highly effective schools to help weaker ones.

### **Providing school places**

27. The planning of school places is satisfactory. The LEA's approach is based on a clear commitment to the promotion of educational quality and high standards through school place planning. The school organisation plan has good links to strategic priorities and explains succinctly how the LEA considers the key principles of quality, cost and community in the review of schools. The recommendation of the previous inspection to provide more specific triggers for action, responsibilities and timescales has been partially implemented. However, the current document provides insufficient detail both on proposed actions arising from its very detailed analysis of the supply of, and demand for, school places, and on the planning of SEN provision.

28. In view of the overwhelmingly rural nature of the authority and the high number of small schools, the level of surplus places, at 11.7% in primary and 7.7% in secondary, is not excessive and reflects sound and considered action over a number of years. The percentage of primary schools with more than 25% surplus is lower than both statistical neighbours and the national average. The LEA reasonably argues that, in practice, a significant proportion of existing surplus capacity cannot be removed. However, it continues to take the initiative to avoid undue over-capacity: reviews of primary provision are being undertaken in three areas; a completed review of temporary classrooms has removed some of the excess capacity; and the confederation of two primary schools has been achieved, with discussions ongoing on further proposals. Sound practical advice to governing bodies has been issued on extended schools and developments are being pursued with the health service in two areas.

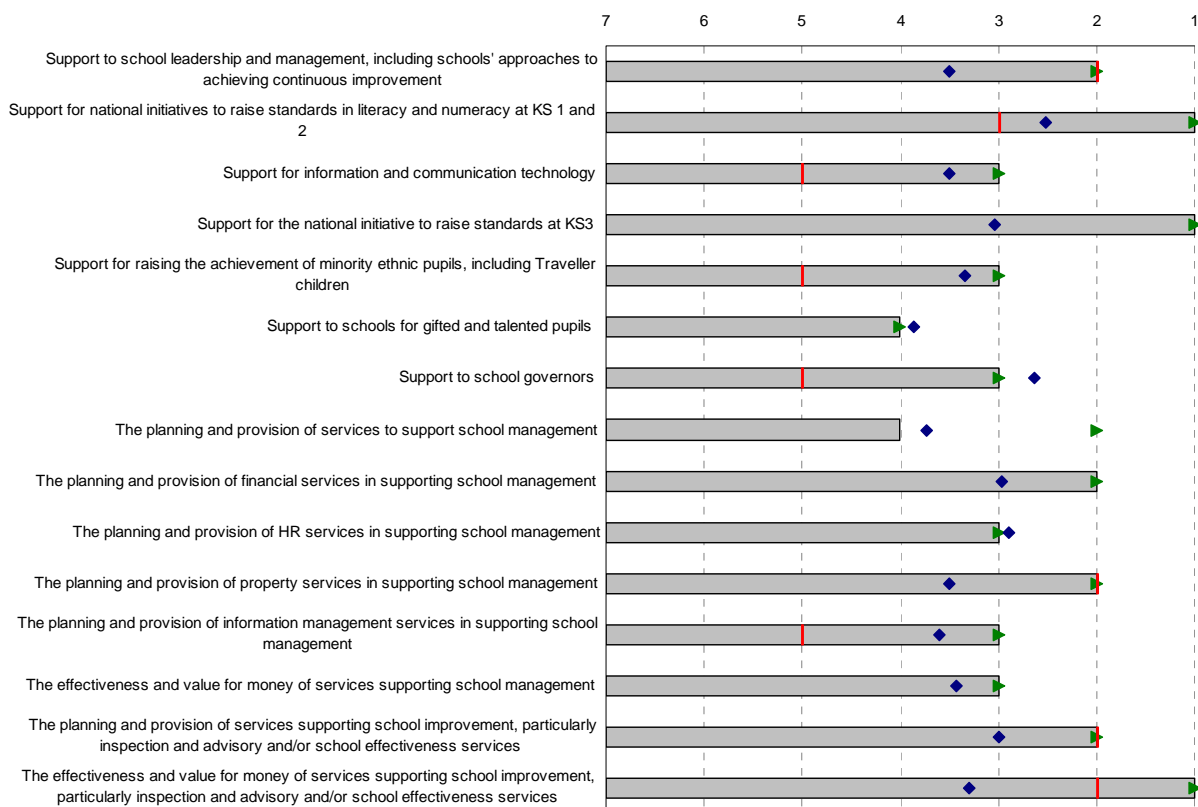
29. The school organisation committee is properly constituted and operates independently. While consultation is generally a strength of the LEA, the diocesan authorities feel they are insufficiently engaged in the development of the strategy for school places, as distinct from operational matters.

### ***Recommendation***

- In order to improve the planning of school places, provide greater detail and clarity within the school organisation plan about the actions, responsibilities and timescales to deal with changes in the demand for school places, including those for pupils with special educational needs.

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

#### Summary table of judgements



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

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

30. This aspect of the LEA's work remains good. The support to help schools improve is highly effective and provides very good value for money, and the capacity for further improvement is good. Ofsted's inspections of schools show that the standard of management and efficiency in North Yorkshire's primary schools is better than that found in similar authorities and nationally, while that in the secondary phase is in line. The LEA is very committed to helping schools to be autonomous, and headteachers and governors regard this as a strength of the relationship. The LEA has supported and guided them in developing effective self-evaluation systems. The joint annual performance review is a successful process in which the LEA moderates schools' self-evaluations and uses performance data of high quality to agree rigorous targets for improvement. Governors are actively involved in these procedures and, with headteachers, receive helpful and evaluative written reports from advisers. A good range of training for schools' middle and senior managers is provided or supported by the LEA and good practice is disseminated to schools in a variety of ways,

including a best practice website. Headteachers contribute regularly to evaluations of the LEA's support for school improvement and give it high ratings.

31. The LEA's support for the national initiatives to raise standards at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 is cohesive and very effective. Although North Yorkshire is a high-performing LEA, variations in performance are identified and support targeted to raise attainment further. The support for information and communication technology (ICT) has now improved to a highly satisfactory level. Achievement is still mixed but the LEA has developed a highly integrated strategy for this curricular area.

32. The quality of individual management support services is at least highly satisfactory. Information management has improved significantly; there is a sound strategy and good capacity for further improvement. Although schools are provided with helpful guidance on the application of the principles of Best Value, the specification and planning of services, while satisfactory overall, are of mixed quality. Most schools value the LEA's provision and purchase services from it or from providers it recommends but there is more to be done to support schools to be discerning purchasers of services.

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

33. The LEA provides very good support for the national initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy at Key Stages 1 and 2. North Yorkshire has a very well-managed and successful primary strategy, which links effectively with the Key Stage 3 strategy.

34. North Yorkshire is a high-performing LEA that encourages schools to set challenging, aspirational targets and focuses its support on the progress of individual pupils. The LEA's intensive support for primary schools with identified needs is based on careful analysis and tracking and leads to significant gains in pupils' attainment. Throughout the LEA, support is being given to: extending high attainers; reducing the gender gap in performance; addressing geographical variations in attainment; and improving the leadership and management of the strategy in some schools. As half the primary schools in North Yorkshire have less than 100 pupils on roll, advisers and consultants have developed significant expertise in dealing with the particular needs of small schools in delivering national strategies. The work of consultants is very well supported in a variety of ways by leading teachers and advanced skills teachers. Over 90% of the training provided has received excellent or very good evaluations. Very good links have been established with teams supporting the early years, special educational needs, and a range of community projects.

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

35. Support for information and communication technology in the curriculum has improved significantly and it is now highly satisfactory. The LEA responded vigorously to the previous inspection report by developing an integrated ICT strategy. In place now is a second three-year strategy, drawn up in consultation with schools, which clearly complements the corporate ICT plan and draws together developments for both curriculum and administrative ICT. Although there were significant problems with the early operation of the broadband connections, the LEA is on course for all schools to be connected by the target

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date of 2006. This is no mean achievement, given the scattered nature of the county's rural communities, and implementation is sensibly being integrated with the corporate wide area network, covering other council services.

36. Indicators of achievement are mixed. School inspection reports show improvement year-on-year in assessments of the quality of ICT in the curriculum. The LEA is in the top quartile of authorities in the percentage of pupils at Key Stage 3 obtaining a Level 5 or higher in teacher assessments in ICT. In contrast, though improving, it is in the bottom quartile of authorities in the percentage of pupils at Key Stage 4 who attained a nationally accredited award in ICT. The ratio of pupils to computers is below average, although improving, and officers are confident that the LEA will meet national targets. In 2003, more than double the number of teachers than the average nationally had completed training under the New Opportunities Fund. A database disseminating good practice on schools' intranet is increasingly used by schools. Schools generally have a high regard for the team of ICT associates, and their role in promoting good practice and collaboration between schools.

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

37. The LEA's support for the national initiative to raise standards at Key Stage 3 is very good. The strategy is very well managed and there are effective links with the primary strategy. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is well above the national average and the provisional 2003 results show rises in English, mathematics and science in comparison with 2002. Attendance rates and standards of behaviour are very high and the incidence of permanent exclusions is low. Nevertheless, the LEA has identified some variability in performance and has analysed the strengths and weaknesses of each school through the joint annual performance review. Its support is targeted accordingly.

38. The consultants work effectively and are deployed imaginatively in both Key Stages 3 and 4, and as link consultants to small groups of schools. Schools' evaluations of training are overwhelmingly positive. Transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 is aided by the fact that all but one of the Key Stage 3 strand managers operate throughout Key Stages 1 to 3, and by the pairing of primary and secondary link advisers. Visits of secondary teachers to primary classrooms are common and some cross-phase projects are in place, although there is scope for more. In addition to improving standards, positive effects of the strategy on teaching and learning and on pupils' attitudes across the Key Stage 3 curriculum have been identified by the LEA's monitoring.

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

39. The LEA's planning and provision of services to support school management are satisfactory, while the services' effectiveness and value for money are highly satisfactory.

40. Management services are generally of at least sound quality and all are rated above satisfactory by schools in the school survey. Services are operating rigorously on a genuinely traded basis and there is invariably a very high level of buy-back from schools. Prices are directly related to the cost of provision and these are clearly set out in the annual set of charges. School representatives are regularly involved in the development and monitoring of

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services through the traded services panel. Where reasonable, schools are able to purchase services at different levels, according to their need. However, there is no common format to service specifications and service plans and they vary in quality.

41. Given the pattern of school provision across a sparse, rural authority and the limited market for school services in many areas, there have been good reasons in the past for the LEA to place a greater emphasis on trying to provide a range of quality services than on developing brokerage from a range of suppliers. Most schools concur with this approach. Consequently, little exists in the way of a brokerage service and information is not routinely provided on alternative suppliers to assist schools to be discerning purchasers of services. Helpful guidance has been issued to schools on applying the principles of Best Value but the system of rolling contracts for LEA services, introduced at the request of schools, means that there is a presumption that schools will continue to buy back.

**Recommendation**

- In order to improve the planning and provision of management services and to help schools to be discerning purchasers, develop a common format for service specifications and service plans, and ensure that schools have access to information and advice about services offered by a range of providers.

42. **Financial services** for schools are good. The advice and support provided on budget management continues to be strong and includes very helpful budget modelling software and comprehensive data for benchmarking school spending. The majority of schools rate the service as good or very good.

43. **Human resources services** are highly satisfactory. There have been recent short-term problems with routine administration due largely to very high staff turnover and handling a number of major initiatives at the same time, including the introduction of a new payroll and human resources system. The result has been too many mistakes in the administration of the payroll. However, the situation has generally improved. Moreover, the new human resources system offers more sophisticated reporting, and schools have direct access to data on their own staff.

44. Casework and advice on human resources issues are generally well regarded, especially in the secondary sector, where well over half the schools rate the service as very good. The decision to move to single status for white-collar and manual staff as part of workforce reform caused considerable pain and upset, particularly in primary schools, and many schools are critical of the way the exercise was handled and the degree of support they received. Nevertheless, the LEA was right to carry through the changes in order to put in place more equitable and rational arrangements, while minimising additional costs.

45. The LEA's handling of **information management** was unsatisfactory at the previous inspection. However, considerable investment of effort and resources is now paying dividends, as this area of work is now highly satisfactory. This is reflected in schools' significantly improved views on the service.

46. As with support for ICT in the curriculum, the work is underpinned by a sound strategy covering corporate, curriculum and administrative ICT. Electronic communication

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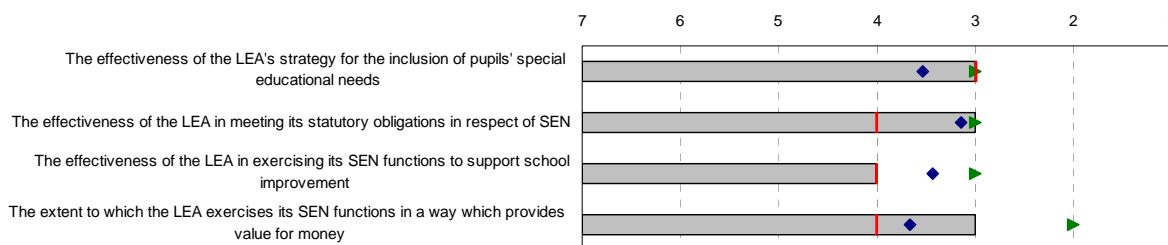
has significantly improved, though links are currently not always reliable, and their use across the LEA is increasingly routine. For example, an effective electronic 'red bag' brings weekly information to schools, with items clearly prioritised. The arrangements for the electronic collection of pupil data from schools and the electronic return to the DfES have been successfully implemented. Technical support is also much improved in terms of response times and a one-stop helpdesk. However, there are difficulties in providing adequate support to just over half of the secondary schools that use a different school administration system. Appropriately, the LEA is in the process of consulting on how this service can be improved.

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

47. Good progress has been made in this aspect of the LEA's work and the effectiveness and value for money of services to support school improvement are now very good. North Yorkshire provides highly effective school improvement services at costs that are below the averages for statistical neighbours and the nation as a whole. Relationships with schools are strong and productive. The quality of support for school improvement is regularly evaluated and challenged. Schools play a full part in the evaluation of the LEA's support and they rate it highly. Schools are free to purchase support from where they wish. Predominantly, they choose the LEA's advisory and improvement services but they do use other providers, especially in the secondary phase.

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

### Summary table of judgements



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

### The strategy for SEN

48. The LEA's strategy for the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs continues to be highly satisfactory. It is clearly linked to both the corporate objective of promoting social inclusion and the LEA's work to maintain high levels of attendance and reduce exclusions. Since the previous inspection, progress in one area has been affected by serious but unavoidable staffing difficulties within an already lean senior management team. However, the LEA's capacity for further improvement is now satisfactory.

49. The overall aims, key themes and principles underpinning the special needs improvement programme have been clearly set out. Consultation with schools has been lengthy, careful and thorough and has led to a firm commitment in schools to achieve greater inclusion. Since the previous inspection the LEA has established sound foundations for the structural changes that it is committed to making in the longer term. It has managed successfully the delegation of funds for pupils with low levels of special educational need and continued to work effectively with mainstream schools to improve their capacity to meet the needs of these pupils. Support for special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) is good. The disability access plan sets out a clear and detailed programme to improve access to schools.

50. Although the LEA's preferred pattern of provision for special educational needs clearly involves a continuum of mainstream schools, resourced provision and special schools, it has made limited progress in establishing this vision. A review originally timetabled for completion in 2002, which was delayed by the long-term absence of key staff, re-commenced in November 2003. This delay has led to frustration among a small minority of headteachers but recognition by the majority that in the meantime the LEA has made progress in other important areas.

51. In collaboration with schools, a clear dual role for special schools is emerging, to make direct provision for the pupils who attend the schools and to provide outreach support to mainstream schools. Many headteachers, in all sectors, recognise, welcome and are

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committed to this definition of the role of a special school. Several have been involved in inclusion pilots and are becoming more confident about increased inclusion in their schools.

***Recommendation***

- In order to improve the strategy for SEN, move swiftly to finalise the review of specialist provision and establish a timetable for the implementation of the LEA's preferred model of provision for special educational needs.

**Statutory obligations**

52. This aspect of the LEA's work is highly satisfactory. It continues to take reasonable steps to meet its statutory obligations. The percentage of statements for special educational needs issued for the first time within the recommended 18 weeks is in line with the national average. The LEA's monitoring indicates that between April and November 2003, the completion rate fell back slightly, threatening the achievement of its demanding target for 2003/04 but steps have been taken to rectify this.

53. Criteria used for making statutory assessments are consistent with the revised Code of Practice. Procedures are clear. An advisory panel meets regularly in each of five areas to advise and support the LEA in making decisions about statutory assessments. Although there are clearly identified priorities to guide the attendance of officers at annual reviews, schools report some inconsistencies in practice. The parent partnership service provides an impartial source of support and is valued by parents and schools.

**SEN functions to support school improvement**

54. This aspect of the LEA's work remains satisfactory. Rightly, the LEA has identified as a priority the need to further develop inclusive practice for pupils with high levels of special educational need. There are examples of shared good practice, including the use of advanced skills teachers between special and mainstream schools.

55. The progress of the lowest-attaining 20% of pupils in each cohort is monitored through the authority's own quality mark for special educational needs. Although not yet as well developed as other approaches to self-evaluation used in schools, this makes a valuable contribution to the joint annual performance review. The LEA intends to strengthen the data it provides to schools by including scales for assessing the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Sound support is provided by the advisory service and by pupil and parent services. The monitoring of provision is carried out effectively by well-informed link advisers.

56. Support and training for SENCOs in schools is good. However, the quality of advice from, and the overall effectiveness of, the educational psychology and behaviour support services varies across the county. The LEA is only now beginning to put in place clear statements to inform schools about the level of support they can expect.



**Value for money**

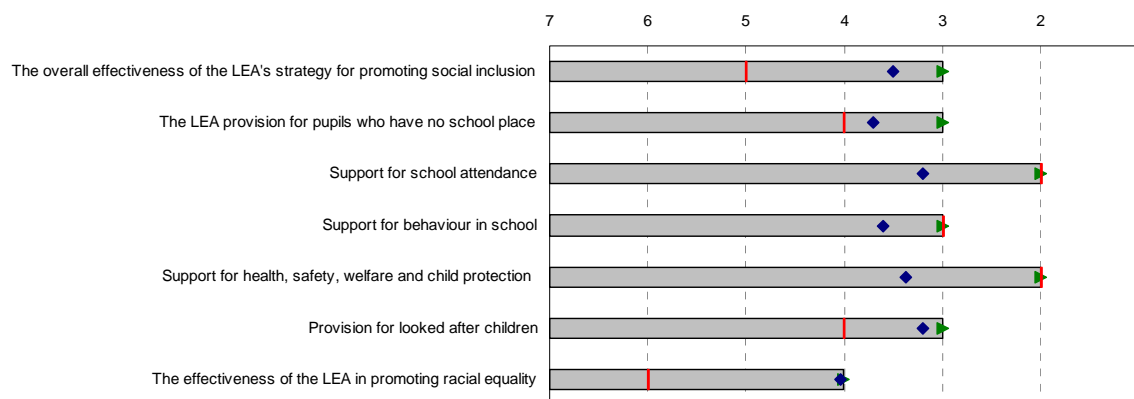
57. The LEA carries out these functions in a way that provides highly satisfactory value for money. Current spending on SEN, at £143 per pupil, is slightly higher than the average for similar authorities though below the national average, while school inspections indicate that the progress made by these pupils over the different key stages is also a little above that found in similar authorities.

58. Budget planning and monitoring of central budgets for SEN are sound, with few significant variations from budget. The exception is an overspend in the last year on home-to-school transport, noted in the earlier section on targeting resources. Spending on out-of-county placements is significantly below the national average and is currently running at approximately the same level in actual terms as three years ago.

59. The delegation of funding for pupils with low levels of SEN followed thorough consultation, a pilot phase and a sensible agreement to fund a four-year transition period. The LEA has introduced rigorous new procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of provision and the use of resources at school level. However, although headteachers generally support the concept of delegation, there remain misgivings on the part of a significant number about its current operation, particularly in relation to the formula for distributing funds and the effect on small schools.

## Section 5: Support for social inclusion

### Summary table of judgements



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

### The LEA's strategy for social inclusion

60. At the time of the previous inspection the LEA's strategy to promote social inclusion was unsatisfactory. Significant progress has been made and it is now highly satisfactory. The capacity for further improvement is sound.

61. The promotion of social inclusion has high priority within the council's corporate plans, including the recent local public service agreement. Leadership in this area has been improved by the establishment of a children's strategic board involving all statutory agencies and the voluntary sector. A draft local preventive strategy, intended to set the direction for services to reduce social exclusion, is currently out for consultation. The LEA recognises the need to provide an overarching statement that articulates clearly to its partners how its social inclusion strategy complements its special needs improvement programme.

62. Since the previous inspection, the LEA has allocated additional resources to high risk groups such as looked after children and those requiring education other than at school. The LEA has also increased its own capacity in this area. The authority does not attract significant funding for regeneration initiatives. However, it is increasingly able to maximise the effect of any funding that it does have through pooling expertise and resources and targeting their use on vulnerable localities. Three locality strategy plans have been established in areas where there is an identified need to raise standards, tackle underachievement and promote social inclusion. These plans are clearly targeted at school level priorities and needs and require input from all parts of the education service as well as collaboration with health, social services, and projects that focus on children and families, such as the Children's Fund and Sure Start. It is too soon to evaluate in detail the effect of these plans but initial feedback from headteachers has been positive.

63. The performance of schools in promoting social inclusion is evaluated thoroughly as part of the joint annual review process. The recently issued quality standards for an inclusive school provide useful advice for school self-evaluation. Officers ensure that elected members are well informed about the effectiveness of schools and services and the attainment of vulnerable groups. Services that support children in vulnerable groups are never less than satisfactory and the respective responsibilities of the LEA and its schools are clear. However, the LEA has been slow to specify what schools and pupils are entitled to expect from each of its centrally-funded services and there are inconsistencies of approach in some services across the authority and between the phases of education.

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

64. The LEA's provision for pupils who have no school place has improved since the previous inspection and is now highly satisfactory. The authority has published its policy and procedures for the reintegration and education of children otherwise than at school and is meeting its statutory responsibilities.

65. The LEA has two pupil referral units (PRUs) catering for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 who have been, or are at risk of being, excluded. One of these units has recently been inspected and is offering very good quality education. Attendance at both units is good. For pupils in Key Stage 4, the PRUs make sound and well monitored arrangements for work experience and college placements. In addition, the LEA has eight satellite centres across the county that provide for a wide range of pupils who have no school place, including those of primary age. Not all pupils attend full time; some have dual registration at the centre and at a school as part of a negotiated return to school, or an attempt to avoid exclusion. The curriculum and management advisory services monitor the quality of provision in PRUs, satellite centres, and for pupils whose parents choose to educate them at home.

66. The LEA monitors the attainment of these pupils and reports regularly to elected members. The number of pupils permanently excluded from school and receiving alternative tuition for more than a year is well below that found in similar authorities and nationally. The rate of reintegration into mainstream schools and the proportion of pupils receiving alternative tuition who achieve at least one GCSE A\*-G pass are broadly in line with both similar authorities and the national average. Officers have access to an up-to-date database of all pupils educated otherwise than at school, although in reality the numbers are such that they have personal knowledge of many. Area panels meet fortnightly to co-ordinate and review provision for all children out of school. Schools are aware of and use the clear referral procedures. The LEA also has clear procedures for following up children of school age who may not be on the roll of a school.

### **Support for behaviour**

67. Support for behaviour in schools remains highly satisfactory. However, the rate of progress has, until recently, been adversely affected by the unavoidable absence of senior staff. The behaviour support plan for 2001 to 2004 provides a comprehensive and useful guide to services. It fits clearly within the council's policy for social inclusion and is consistent with, and complementary to, the LEA's special needs improvement programme. Schools report inconsistencies in practice across the county and between primary and

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secondary schools. However, these are partly a result of funds and support being targeted appropriately at areas of greatest need. Nevertheless, the LEA has recognised the need to clarify what schools are entitled to from the behaviour support service. The Key Stage 3 consultants for behaviour and attendance are appropriately managed jointly by both the pupil and parent, and curriculum and management advisory services. Link advisers have information about rates of exclusion and support for behaviour forms part of the joint annual performance review in each school.

68. Behaviour is good or very good in more than eight out of every 10 schools inspected by Ofsted. Despite a rise in secondary schools, permanent exclusion rates from primary and secondary schools remain below the national average. Although the number of fixed-term exclusions of 45 days or more fell in 2003, secondary schools' use of shorter fixed-term exclusions has risen significantly since 2000/01 and the LEA has no clear plans to deal with this rise.

#### *Recommendation*

- In order to improve the support for behaviour, establish the reasons for the rise in fixed-term exclusions of fewer than 45 days and develop clear plans to deal with them.

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

69. The LEA has maintained its good performance in these aspects of its work. It fully meets all statutory obligations for health and safety, welfare and child protection. The LEA has strengthened its contribution to Area and Local Child Protection Committees and increased the amount of officer time that it makes available for management and training programmes.

70. The LEA provides comprehensive guidance and clear procedures for its own staff and those in schools. It maintains an up-to-date list of designated teachers, secures effective training for them and monitors their attendance. It monitors carefully the implementation of child protection procedures in schools and referrals are increasingly more appropriate. In the school survey both primary and secondary schools rated support as better than satisfactory, placing the LEA in the top quartile nationally.

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

71. Provision for looked after children has improved and is now highly satisfactory. Elected members and officers give a high priority to raising the attainment of these children as reflected in the council plan, in the EDP and in the challenging targets included in the local public service agreement. The targets have been set in conjunction with schools and are securely based on pupils' prior attainment. The extra funding generated through this agreement, together with money from the vulnerable children's grant, is being used to employ learning mentors and educational support workers to assist schools in meeting the needs of these children.

72. The attainment of looked after children is currently at least in line with that found nationally, although the small cohorts make comparisons difficult. Their progress is

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monitored effectively by the LEA and schools through the joint annual review process. There are clear procedures for monitoring attendance and no looked after child was excluded in 2002/03. All schools have designated teachers and the LEA has rightly made this a requirement for its quality mark for special educational needs. Procedures for sharing information with social services are sound. Although currently only two-thirds of looked after children have personal education plans, the social services department has targets for improvement in place.

### **Promoting racial equality**

73. At the time of the previous inspection, this aspect of the LEA's work was poor. Since then, good progress has been made and provision is now satisfactory. The LEA has responded positively to the recommendations of the previous report: sound procedures to counter racism have been implemented; data on the attainment of minority ethnic pupils are used effectively; their broader educational needs are met; and schools receive support to raise pupils' multi-cultural awareness. Throughout North Yorkshire, the attainment of minority ethnic pupils is broadly in line with that of their peers, as are their exclusion rates.

74. The LEA now has a satisfactory race equality scheme. Following guidance from the LEA, all schools have race equality policies, the implementation of which is monitored by link advisers. An education officer, with responsibility for social inclusion, and an equalities and diversity adviser have been appointed, and schools have been given clear guidance on responding to incidents of a racist nature. In 2002/03, the first year of termly reports, there was a high average response rate of 92% and those schools that did not respond received a visit from the adviser. Sensibly, further guidance is planned to improve schools' understanding and reporting of racist incidents. A successful community project is based in a primary school in Skipton and another one is being established in Scarborough. There has been some success in recruiting governors from minority ethnic groups but more remains to be done. The LEA's support for the professional development of staff from minority ethnic groups is at an early stage of development.

## Appendix A: Record of Judgement Recording Statements

Name of LEA :	North Yorkshire Local Education Authority
LEA number:	815
Reporting Inspector:	Malcolm Wall
Date of Inspection:	January 2004

No	Required Inspection Judgement	Grade	Fieldwork*
	<b>Context of the LEA</b>		
1	The socio-economic context of the LEA	2	NF
	<b>Overall judgements</b>		
0.1	The progress made by the LEA overall	2	
0.2	Overall effectiveness of the LEA	2	
0.3	The LEA's capacity for further improvement and to address the recommendations of the inspection	2	
	<b>Section 1: Corporate strategy and LEA leadership</b>		
1.1	The effectiveness of corporate planning for the education of children and young people	2	
1.2	The implementation of corporate planning for education	3	
1.3	The effectiveness of LEA decision-making	3	
1.4	The extent to which the LEA targets resources on priorities	2	
1.5	The extent to which the LEA has in place effective strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value	3	
1.6	The leadership provided by elected members (including quality of advice)	2	NF
1.7	The quality of leadership provided by senior officers	2	NF
1.8	The effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration between agencies in support of priorities	3	

1.9	Support for early years' education	1	
1.10	Support for 14 – 19 education	4	
1.11	The effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning	3	NF
<b>Section 2: Strategy for education and its implementation</b>			
2.1	The LEA's strategy for school improvement	1	
2.2	The progress on implementing the LEA's strategy for school improvement	1	
2.3	The performance of schools	2	
2.4	The extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge and intervention	1	NF
2.5	The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve, including the use made of performance data	1	
2.6	The extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need	2	
2.7	The effectiveness of the LEA's identification of and intervention in underperforming schools	2	
2.8	The extent to which the LEA is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers	2	NF
2.9	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to the provision of school places	4	
2.10	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools	3	NF
<b>Section 3: Support to school leadership and management, including schools' efforts to support continuous improvement</b>			
3.1	Support to school leadership and management, including support for schools' approaches to continuous improvement	2	
3.2	Support for national initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy at KS 1 and 2	1	
3.3	Support for information and communication technology	3	

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



<b>Section 5: Support for social inclusion</b>			
5.1	The overall effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for promoting social inclusion	3	
5.2	The LEA provision for pupils who have no school place	3	
5.3	Support for school attendance	2	NF
5.4	Support for behaviour in school	3	
5.5	Support for health, safety, welfare and child protection	2	
5.6	Provision for looked after children	3	
5.7	The effectiveness of the LEA in promoting racial equality	4	

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

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

Grade 1: Very good; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Highly satisfactory; Grade 4: Satisfactory;  
Grade 5: Unsatisfactory; Grade 6: Poor; Grade 7: Very poor

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## Appendix B

### Context of the inspection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the leadership provided by elected members;</li><li>• the quality of leadership provided by senior officers;</li><li>• the effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning;</li><li>• the extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge and intervention;</li><li>• the extent to which the LEA is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers;</li><li>• the effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools;</li><li>• support for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including Traveller children;</li></ul> |
|---|

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- support to schools for gifted and talented pupils;
  - support for school governors;
  - the planning and provision of property services to support school improvement;
  - the planning and provision of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services;
  - support for school attendance.

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

**Context of the LEA**

The context of North Yorkshire has not changed significantly since the previous inspection in 2000. North Yorkshire is England's largest county, covering more than 3,000 square miles, and more than half of the population of 570,000 live in some of the most sparsely populated rural areas. The remaining population live in only two large towns, Harrogate and Scarborough, or small market towns with populations generally below 15,000 people. This presents the council with the significant challenge to provide excellent education for learners of all ages in every community. Only seven of the county's 184 wards are in the 20% most disadvantaged wards nationally and the council has limited access to regeneration funding given the socio-economic pattern in the county. However, there are areas of relative deprivation, including low wage areas and those with very high levels of pupil mobility, in particular in the Catterick and Scarborough areas. Considerable change and uncertainty surrounds the closure of the Selby Coalfield and the outcome of the Boundary Commission review and the referendum about regional government.

The number of pupils on roll at mainstream schools has risen slightly since the previous inspection by approximately 500 pupils. Pupil numbers have peaked at approximately 86,000 and are expected to fall to around 83,000 by 2007. The percentage of the school population of minority ethnic heritage in 2001 was below the national average in primary schools, and broadly in line for secondary schools. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in maintained primary (10.2%) and secondary schools (5.9%) in 2002 is below the national figure, but broadly in line with that of similar authorities.

The percentage of pupils of primary school age with a statement of special educational needs in 2002 (2.4%) is broadly in line with the national average. In secondary schools, the percentage (3.4%) is below the national average.

The percentage of pupils below school age who are on the roll of primary schools is 67%. Places are available for the majority of all three- and four-year-olds whose parents seek it, in a variety of settings. Plans are well advanced to ensure all will have access to a place by March 2004.

There are three nursery schools and 329 primary schools, the smallest have 13 pupils on roll and the largest having 623 pupils. One hundred and fifty six primary schools have fewer than 100 pupils. There are 47 secondary schools, of which 24 have sixth-form provision, and 11 special schools. In most areas of the county, transfer to secondary school is at the age of 11. Two areas of the county, Ripon and Skipton, have selection for the local grammar schools. In addition, there are two pupil referral units, serving Harrogate, Scarborough and the surrounding areas, and 14 learning support units attached to mainstream schools.

Twelve schools have achieved Beacon status and 11 schools have specialist school status.

## **The performance of schools**

The performance of pupils in North Yorkshire is above the national average in all National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and in almost every measure at GCSE and General Certificate in Education at A and AS level.

Data from Ofsted inspections of schools indicate that the percentage of pupils entering primary schools with good levels of attainment is above that of similar authorities and the national average.

In 2002, at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 and above in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. Provisional data for 2003 show this remains the case generally. At the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English, mathematics and science is above the national average for 2002. At Key Stage 3, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above the national average and above similar authorities. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 6 and above in these subjects is also well above the national averages.

At the end of Key Stage 4, at GCSE, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A\*-C grades is above the national average and that of similar authorities. Provisional data for 2003 indicate that attainment has risen nationally on this measure of performance, although in North Yorkshire the performance of pupils fell back by 1.5%.

Performance targets in the EDP for 2004 and beyond are challenging. There was a shortfall in meeting the targets for 2002 and 2003 in Key Stage 2, although the schools' aggregated targets are generally within 3% of those set by the LEA. At Key Stage 3 the provisional data for 2003 show that the LEA is well placed to achieve the targets set for 2004. At Key Stage 4 the exceedingly high targets for GCSE have not been achieved but the schools' aggregated targets for 2005 align very closely to the LEA's proposed target.

The findings of the most recent school inspections show that the proportion of primary and secondary schools that are good or very good overall is above that found nationally or in similar authorities. The percentage of secondary schools found to be very good is almost double that found nationally. No schools in North Yorkshire were found to be in need of much improvement.

Attendance is well above national averages in primary and above in secondary. Unauthorised absence is below the national average in primary and secondary schools. The rate of permanent exclusion is below the national average for primary and secondary schools. The LEA's data, show a reduction in the rate of fixed-term exclusions of more than five days for primary schools in 2002/03 but an increase in secondary schools. The number of fixed-term exclusions totalling 45 days or more reduced in secondary schools in this period.

**Funding data for the LEA**

<b>SCHOOLS BUDGET</b>	<b>North Yorkshire</b>	<b>Statistical neighbours average</b>	<b>County Average</b>	<b>ENGLAND AVERAGE</b>
	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil
<b>Individual schools budget</b>	<b>2,588</b>	<b>2,486</b>	<b>2,540</b>	<b>2,708</b>
Standards fund delegated	31	58	56	61
Education for under fives	77	95	91	96
Strategic management	23	20	22	29
Special educational needs	119	102	110	120
Grants	18	15	14	53
Access	40	44	43	55
Capital expenditure from revenue	48	21	28	24
<b>TOTAL SCHOOLS BUDGET</b>	<b>2,944</b>	<b>2,840</b>	<b>2,905</b>	<b>3,145</b>
<b>Schools formula spending share</b>	<b>2,528</b>	<b>2,629</b>	<b>2,654</b>	<b>2,904</b>

Source: DfES Comparative Tables 2003-04

<b>LEA BUDGET</b>	<b>North Yorkshire</b>	<b>Statistical neighbours average</b>	<b>County Average</b>	<b>ENGLAND AVERAGE</b>
	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil
Strategic management	53	85	82	95
Specific Grants	15	13	12	16
Special educational needs	24	27	27	32
School improvement	30	33	34	36
Access	210	207	173	133
Capital expenditure from revenue	2	4	2	2
Youth and Community	40	50	50	74
<b>TOTAL LEA BUDGET</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>388</b>

Source: DfES Comparative Tables 2003-04

Note: All figures are net