

**Inspection report**  
**NEWHAM**  
**Local Education Authority**

Date of inspection: January 2003

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## **Basic information**

Name of LEA:	Newham Local Education Authority
Address of LEA:	Newham Town Hall London E6 2RP
Lead inspector:	Linda Kelsey HMI
Date of inspection:	January 2003

## Introduction

1. This inspection of Newham local education authority (LEA) 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 (December 2001)*. The inspection focused on the effectiveness of the LEA's work to support school improvement. The inspection also took account of the Local Government Act 1999, insofar as it relates to work undertaken by the LEA on Best Value.

2. The inspection was based on a range of material, which included self-evaluation undertaken by the LEA, and data, some of which was provided by the LEA. That material also included school inspection information; HMI monitoring reports, audit reports, documentation from, and discussions with, LEA officers and members. There were other discussions with focus groups of headteachers, staff in other departments at that local authority and diocesan representatives. Other agencies and LEA partners submitted written evidence of participation and joint working and participated in focus groups. In addition, the inspection team considered the earlier Ofsted/Audit Commission report on this LEA (published in January 1999). A survey, seeking views on aspects of the work of the LEA, was circulated to 91 schools, and the inspection team considered its results. The response rate to the survey was 54 per cent.

3. For each inspected function of the LEA, an inspection team agrees a numerical grade. An inspection team may make up to 52 key inspection judgements. An inspection judgement is made against criteria for each inspected function of the LEA. These criteria, and the guidance notes on functions of an LEA that may be inspected by Ofsted, can be found on the Ofsted website. The numerical grades awarded for the judgements made in this inspection are appended to this report, along with short explanations of what each numeric grade represents. Judgements on inspected functions of an LEA are made during the inspection of the LEA and indicate the effectiveness of the LEA's performance of individual functions at the time of the inspection. The numeric grades awarded by the inspection team complement the areas of the report which comment on the individual functions scrutinised on this inspection, and, as such, must be considered in the light of those comments.

4. Some of the grades are used in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) profile for the education service. It is intended that the CPA for education will be updated annually so the grades from this inspection will contribute to the next annual assessment.

5. The CPA for the education service takes account of the performance of several aspects of the local service, including pre-school and adult education. The CPA for education is composed of a number of inspection judgements, as well as other performance indicators, such as improvement trends at Key Stage 3. The assessment, published in December 2002, gives star ratings for each local authority for a range of local services, for example social services, benefits, environment etc, whereas this report focuses on the local authority's work to support school improvement.

6. The inspection also involved studies of particular aspects of the LEA's work through visits to two primary schools and two secondary schools. Those visits tested the views of

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governors, headteachers and other staff on key aspects of the LEA's strategy and as part of a national policy and provision for asylum seekers. The visits also considered whether the support that is provided by the LEA contributes, where appropriate, to the discharge of the LEA's statutory duties, and is effective in contributing to improvements in the schools and provides value for money.



## Commentary

7. Newham LEA serves an ethnically diverse, highly mobile and growing population. There are a number of factors which contribute to the high mobility of its people including inward migration, a young population, high fertility rates, a significant percentage of housing being in the private sector and significant inflow of refugee and asylum seeking families. English is an additional language for over half of the school-aged population. There is a high incidence of health problems and social disadvantage. Unemployment is very high. The number of looked after children and children at risk has increased sharply.

8. The first inspection, in 1999, judged the LEA to be good, serving its people well and playing a leading role in implementing national policies for social inclusion. This continues to be the case and some important areas such as support for early years have been strengthened further. There have been radical changes to the constitution of the council following the election of a Mayor in May 2002. Other key changes include the appointments of a new director of education and community learning and a new divisional director for school improvement.

9. Pupils' attainment is below the national average at all key stages. However, there are good rates of improvement, both against national trends and similar authorities. Performance becomes closer to national norms as pupils progress through the key stages, and, by Key Stage 4, performance is close to the national average. This is a powerful indication of the value added by the schools and reflects the highly satisfactory collaboration and partnership working with schools and other council departments and agencies. The number of schools requiring special measures or having serious weaknesses has fallen significantly.

10. The LEA continues to look for new ways to resolve difficulties and has a good track record in solving problems. There is acceptance of, and great pride, in the ethnic diversity of the borough. The LEA's determination to improve educational opportunity in the borough, and the genuine enthusiasm which goes with it, are key characteristics. Elected members and officers have a strong commitment to enhancing social inclusion and schools share this. Funding mechanisms and other support have been restructured to enable schools to deploy support where it is needed most, particularly in addressing special needs at an early stage. The well established and effective strategy for including pupils with special educational needs in main stream schools is a distinguishing feature of the LEA.

11. The LEA discharges the majority of its functions well. The leadership provided by officers, the strategy for special educational needs, support for early years, and personnel services to support school management are all very good. The performance in the following functions is good:

- leadership by councillors and the advice given to councillors by officers;
  - the speed and transparency of decision making;
  - defining and sharing with schools the LEA's approach to monitoring, challenge and intervention;
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- support for literacy, numeracy and governors;
- support to schools in assuring the supply and quality of teachers;
- the effectiveness of strategic planning and expertise of support for school improvement;
- in respect of special educational needs, meeting statutory responsibilities, supporting school improvement and providing value for money ;
- provision for pupils who have no school place; and
- support for behaviour and attendance.

12. The LEA performs the remainder of its functions at least satisfactorily. There is only one important weakness and that is in the services for child protection. The education department does all that is normally expected in this area. However, despite improvements in the management of social services, there is a persistent problem in recruiting social workers which reduces the quality of the services.

13. The Mayor and council members exercise energetic and visionary leadership. Together with the lead officers, they have focused their work on establishing a clear strategy for improvement, which reflects both local and national priorities. The achievements above are very significant and the LEA has made good progress through diligent implementation of its policies. There is willingness by councillors and senior officers to take the necessary decisions and the good quality of relationships between them makes for strong co-operation. Poor services are not tolerated.

14. This is a good authority which acted on the recommendations of the last report and has made significant progress in a number of areas. The all round high performance of the education service is reflected in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment for education, published in December 2002. This assessment gave the education service two stars (the second highest category) for current performance and three stars for its capacity to make further improvement. This inspection found that the LEA has good capacity for further improvement and the undoubted ability to address the very few recommendations made by this report.

## Section 1: The LEA's strategy for school improvement

### Context

15. Newham is located north of the Thames on the east side of London. Once associated with docks and railways, it is now an area of changing landscape and economy. The plans for a major international rail terminal at Stratford, improved links to central London and the growing use of the City Airport are offering plentiful opportunities for regeneration. The area is attracting significant public and private investment.

16. The richly diverse population of around 239,500 has the youngest age profile in London, with 28 per cent under 16 years old. Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi children make up more than 30 per cent of this group. The white United Kingdom population has decreased in size and is characterised by an older age structure. Other white groups have increased, particularly refugee and asylum seeker families from Eastern Europe. The Indian and Black Caribbean populations are relatively stable in size. These trends are leading to greater diversity in Newham's population. Mobility rates have increased to 11 per cent in primary schools and dropped to 5 per cent in secondary schools. English is an additional language for 61 per cent of primary and 56 per cent of secondary age children.

17. Unemployment rates are one of the highest nationally. The borough is the fifth most disadvantaged district in England and Wales, and the third most deprived in London. Ninety five per cent of the population live in wards that are among the 10 per cent most deprived in England and Wales. There are a number of health and social challenges; Newham has the shortest life expectancy in the country. The incidence of schizophrenia and tuberculosis is well above the national rate. Perinatal and infant death rates are also above the national average. The number of looked after children has increased.

18. The compulsory school age (5-16) population is around 45,000. Forty per cent of primary aged pupils and 43 per cent of secondary aged pupils are entitled to free school meals. These are well above the national averages. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is below the national average. The well-established policy of inclusion means that the majority of these pupils are in mainstream schools.

19. Newham has 90 schools and one pupil referral unit (PRU). There are eight nursery schools and one early excellence centre. Of the 66 primary schools, five have infant and four have junior status. There are fifteen secondary schools, thirteen of these are 11-16. There are three post 16 providers, including a joint sixth form centre in the two 11-18 schools which both have specialist status. Three of the remaining secondary schools also have specialist status. There are two special schools for pupils with special educational needs, one for emotional and behavioural difficulties, (EBD) and one for physical and moderate learning difficulties (PMLD). There are eight Beacon schools; five secondary and three primary. The Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme is in place and covers all primary and secondary schools. In primary schools, the gifted and talented Key Stage 2 pilot covers eight schools.

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**Performance**

20. Performance in Newham has improved significantly since the last inspection, although it remains below the national average at all key stages. However, the number of pupils achieving the wider balance of one or more A\*-G grades at General Certificate of secondary education (GCSE) is above the national averages and well above that of similar authorities. There are good rates of improvement at all key stages compared with national trends and those of similar authorities. Pupils make significant improvement over time. The gap between results nationally and in similar authorities is closing at all key stages.

21. At the end of Key Stage 1, performance is well below the national average and below that of similar authorities in reading and writing. Performance in mathematics is below average, but above that of similar authorities. Improvement is above the national rate in reading, writing and mathematics.

22. At the end of Key Stage 2, performance is well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Performance is broadly in line with similar authorities in mathematics and science and below in English. Improvement in results over time in all three core subjects is well above the national trend and above that of similar authorities.

23. At the end of Key Stage 3, performance is below the national average in English and well below national average in mathematics and science. In all three subjects performance is broadly in line with similar authorities. Improvement, however, is well above the national trend in English and mathematics and well above similar authorities in science. It is above the national trend in science and above similar authorities in English and mathematics.

24. At the end of Key Stage 4, the picture is mixed. Performance for pupils achieving one A\*-G grade is above the national average and well above the average for similar authorities. For pupils achieving 5A\*-C grades at GCSE, performance is below the national average but broadly in line with similar authorities. Improvement is above the national trend and that of similar authorities for pupils achieving five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE and above the national trend and well above that of statistical neighbours<sup>1</sup> for pupils achieving 1 A\*-G grade for GCSE.

25. The percentage of primary schools judged in Ofsted school inspections to be good or very good is well below the national average and below that of similar authorities. For secondary schools, the percentage is below the national average and broadly in line with similar authorities.

26. Attendance is below the national figure for primary schools and above it for secondary schools. Unauthorised absence is well above the national figure for both primary and secondary schools. The rate of permanent exclusion is broadly in line with the national figure for primary schools and below the national figure for secondary schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Newham's Statistical neighbours are: Birmingham, Blackburn and Darwen, Bradford, City of Nottingham, Greenwich, Hackney, Leicester City, Luton, Manchester, Slough.

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## **Funding**

27. The LEA's Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) for primary and secondary education is well above the average for outer London boroughs, as is its allocation of Standards Fund grant. This reflects the comparatively high levels of deprivation found in local schools. A wide range of other revenue and capital grants has also been secured to support the education service. Bidding for grant funding is co-ordinated effectively. Consultation with schools on grant application and deployment is generally good. Information and support for schools in making best use of external funding opportunities is satisfactory and in some cases good. However, there is no single point of contact for schools to enquire about grant funding opportunities or a co-ordinated library of information.

## **Council structure**

28. The council has 60 elected councillors, 59 are Labour and one is Christian People's Alliance. The first elected Mayor, who took office in 2002, is responsible for making the great majority of the council's executive decisions. The full council takes decisions on the policy framework and the allocation of budget shares to each of the broad service areas. Officers make the majority of day to day decisions. The borough is divided into 10 community forum areas, which are involved in community governance.

29. The cabinet member for education, who is also the leader for the labour group, meets the director of education weekly and the Mayor monthly. There is one scrutiny committee and 6 scrutiny commissions, one of which is for education. The chair of this commission meets with the director of education and the cabinet member for education fortnightly. By choice, the one opposition councillor does not sit on the scrutiny commission for education. Additional members from the community or partner organisations can be co-opted onto the commissions as necessary. The education scrutiny commission includes five faith and parent governor co-optees.

30. All decisions are open to scrutiny, whether made by officers or the Mayor. Scrutiny commissions look at issues in detail, and their findings inform the work of the scrutiny committee. Under these new political arrangements, councillors report feeling more involved and have become better informed. The decision making process has speeded up.

## **The LEA's strategy for school improvement**

31. The strategy for school improvement continues to be highly satisfactory. The LEA has a clear vision to raise standards across all services in Newham and the local strategic partnership has confirmed that aspiration.

32. The Education Development Plan (EDP) is at the centre of the strategy for school improvement. The second EDP contains a full audit, which relates clearly to the local context and draws on an appropriate range of data. There is a thorough analysis identifying strengths and weaknesses for the national and local priorities. There is a sound evaluation of the previous EDP but only a rudimentary analysis of its cost effectiveness.

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33. Targets are extremely challenging and will require improvement rates well beyond those currently being achieved. Under a Local Public Service Agreement the LEA has agreed targets for Key Stage 3 in 2003. Results for 2001 showed that these targets could be exceeded. However, the agreed Key Stage 3 targets for 2004 are between 10 and 13 percent higher than the 2003 targets and the LEA recognises that schools will require considerable support and challenge to achieve them.

34. The school improvement strategy deals very well with both national and local priorities in a clear and well-organised manner. Excellence in Cities and the Education Action Zone programmes are strong and linked closely to the school improvement strategy. There are clear links between action, activities and priorities. All actions and activities are at least sound and, if implemented satisfactorily, will lead to significant improvement. Responsibilities and accountabilities for raising attainment are clear. Recruitment and retention of teachers is appropriately defined as a local priority and addressed well. Other themes are less comprehensively treated, for example, special educational needs and schools causing concern. Success criteria are well chosen generally. There are, however, no success criteria for the length of time primary and special schools spend in special measures, none relating specifically to special educational needs and none relating to the recruitment of teachers, although there are for the retention of teachers.

### **Implementing the strategy for school improvement**

35. The implementation of the LEA's strategy for school improvement is highly satisfactory. Good leadership, a relatively stable work force and improving services have given schools greater confidence for the future. Expectation and aspirations are high. Good progress has been made since the appointment of a new director of education in May 2001, the re-structuring of the senior management team and the change in constitution of the council. These changes, together with closer collaboration between services both within the education department and across the council, have given even greater impetus to the aim of raising standards.

36. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous. The re-structuring of the school improvement team and the new leadership have helped to create a more assertive and able workforce. Schools are categorised clearly according to the need for support and intervention and resources targeted appropriately. The improved analysis of data has aided school self review. Sound progress has been made in identifying and disseminating good practice.

37. The involvement of the co-ordinator for Excellence in Cities as a member of the school improvement support services management team is a major strength ensuring this initiative is included within all planning for raising standards.

38. Issues raised in the previous report have been addressed fully with improvement secured in all areas. Unvalidated data for 2002 indicates that attainment has continued to improve against national averages, in particular, in mathematics at Key Stage 2 and 1A\*-G at Key 4 so that by Key Stages 3 and 4 attainment is either in line with similar authorities or better. The targets for Key Stage 3 and 4 were met in 2002. Targets at Key Stage 2 were not met in English and mathematics. Pupils' attendance at school has continued to improve. There is better support for controlling pupils' behaviour through a range of differentiated

provision from the behaviour support team (BST). Services for special educational needs are good and contribute to the drive for school improvement. There has been an increase in the number of part time places for three and four years olds and the authority has already met government targets.

### **The allocation of resources to priorities**

39. In the last inspection the LEA's targeting of resources to priorities was highly satisfactory. It remains so. Education Standard spending assessment (SSA) increases have been more than fully passed on to schools over a period of several years, reflecting the position of education as a key corporate priority. Spending is currently some two per cent below SSA, even though, in some years, the spending has risen by significantly more than the SSA increase. Education spending remains a high priority for the future and the council's three-year budget strategy included an assumption that increases in SSA would continue to be passed to schools. In recent years, continuing high spending on social services and the depletion of council reserves have become increasingly significant restricting factors. The LEA did not originally propose to pass on in full the increase in School Formula Spending Share for 2003/4. However, it subsequently agreed to a significant further revenue contribution to the education capital budget which filled the gap.

40. Within the education budget, spending in 2002/3 is significantly below SSA for primary schools (96 per cent) and secondary schools 11-15 (94 per cent). The LEA has, as a long-standing priority, funded under fives and youth and community provision at a relatively high level. Revenue spending per pupil, inclusive of government grant, is well above the average for outer London boroughs, as indicated below:

	Newham	Outer London boroughs	All English LEAs
Primary Local Schools Budget (LSB) per pupil	£3,278	£3,087	£2,929
Secondary Local Schools Budget (LSB) per pupil	£4,568	£4,003	£3,768

*Source: 2002/2003 Section 52 returns*

41. Capital spending has been consistently high by comparison with other LEAs and has included significant contributions from the revenue budget. This reflects a recognition by the LEA of the current poor state of its school buildings.

42. Consultation with schools on the budget has improved significantly over the last two years. The LEA moved quickly and effectively in establishing a schools forum and there is a real sense of partnership with schools on budget related issues. The LEA has made a commitment to using the Forum for consultation on all aspects of its education spending in the future, rather than the more limited range of issues required by statute. This is a positive step. Periodic Best Value reviews are the principal means through which budgets are subjected to scrutiny. Individual proposals for change are, however, analysed with satisfactory rigour during the budget making process.

43. The LEA maintains a quite detailed model of school spending needs which is regularly updated and revised in consultation with schools. This provides a sound basis for

budget planning. Changes within the education budget closely reflected the LEA's key school improvement priorities and much of the growth in delegated funding in recent years has been targeted at Key Stage 1. Future growth in budgets reflects the priorities in the EDP and proposed improvements for 2003/4 focus on Key Stage 2. There has also been significant growth in some SEN budgets and in education otherwise than at school. The latter relates to improved provision for new arrivals in Years 10 and 11 who have limited English language skills.

44. The LEA currently delegates a similar proportion of total spending on schools to the average for outer London boroughs and likewise devolves a similar proportion of Standards Fund grant. The LEA's long standing commitment to improving education spending in relation to SSA has provided welcome stability for schools and significantly improved their ability to plan spending over the medium term. Schools receive reasonably helpful information early on in the budget making process about their likely individual allocations. Support and challenge for school budget planning is satisfactory overall. School spending is monitored effectively and intervention occurs when it is needed. Although a comparatively large minority of schools have deficits, these are nearly all modest as a proportion of their annual budget and have been sanctioned in advance by the LEA. The control of centrally held budgets is satisfactory.

#### **Structures to ensure continuous improvement, including Best Value**

45. The LEA's strategies to promote continuous improvement were highly satisfactory at the time of the first inspection. They were not inspected by fieldwork in the current inspection and evidence seen indicated that they remain so.



## **Section 2: Support for school improvement**

### **Summary**

46. The reorganisation of school improvement services, combined with changes in management, has brought improvement since the first inspection. The relationship between the education department and the schools, including their respective roles in bringing about school improvement, has been redefined and changed for the better. Schools know what support will be deployed to them and have full confidence that the LEA will deliver effective services. There are some improvements still to be made, particularly in the planning and evaluation of work to enable a better focus on pupils' attainment. Nevertheless, on balance, the collective effect of the services is highly satisfactory.

### **Monitoring, challenge, support and intervention**

47. The LEA's work in these areas was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection but had weaknesses deriving from inconsistencies in the way officers worked with the schools. The delivery of the functions of monitoring, challenge, support and intervention has improved and is now good.

48. School development officers carry out the work of monitoring, challenge and intervention effectively. There is strong partnership working between the LEAs and its schools. The schools have a very clear understanding of the procedures and were involved in producing the well-written guidance on the roles and functions of advisory staff. The basis for the LEA's assessment of schools' needs is the self-evaluation that each school does annually.

49. The work carried out by schools on self-evaluation is supported by effective LEA guidance. The moderated results of self-evaluation, carried out by the LEA, lead to each school being placed in one of five categories, which determine the amount of support and intervention from the LEA. The central place of self-evaluation in the process of categorisation has the benefit that schools not only understand that process but support its conclusions. The process of categorisation is effective and ensures that officers' work is deployed where it is most needed.

50. Schools rightly value the support from all of the LEA's school improvement services. The school development officers form one section of the education department's school improvement division and provide the main support for schools. A separate section provides support with developing the curriculum and teaching through the work of advisory teachers and through the LEA's programme of in-service training. Schools gain access to a significant proportion of this work through subscription to a service level agreement. Nearly all of the schools purchase this support, the majority of them at one of the higher of the available levels.

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**The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring and challenging schools**

51. The LEA's work in monitoring and challenging schools was satisfactory at the time of the last inspection and as a result did not require fieldwork during this inspection. However, evidence from other aspects of school improvement work shows that they are now highly satisfactory.

52. All schools receive three visits a year by their assigned school development officer and those in categories of greater concern receive more. The high basic level of monitoring is justified because the high turn over of staff and pupils can cause rapid changes in the nature of the schools and in dealing with the problems that confront them. The schools are confident that they are known well by the officers of the education department. They also receive well written reports from the officers following monitoring visits and the officers report their findings to governing bodies annually. The officers make good use of their monitoring visits to promote school improvement.

53. The LEA makes good use of the information it has about its schools in order to increase the challenge it offers them. One of the three visits each year is concerned with setting the schools' academic targets. In advance of these visits, the schools are supplied with a good range of relevant performance data. This enables the schools to set their targets on the basis of information about individual pupils. This process challenges schools. In 2002, preliminary results show that targets for performance at the end of Key Stage 2 were not met. The LEA has responded well to this situation by increasing the priority and time that it attaches to Key Stage 2.

**The effectiveness of the LEA's work with under-performing schools**

54. The effectiveness of the LEA's work with under-performing schools was satisfactory at the time of the first inspection. As a result of inspections by Ofsted, seven schools were subject to special measures and a further ten had serious weaknesses. Progress has been made and the LEA's work is now highly satisfactory. There are currently six schools with serious weaknesses, and one requiring special measures. A further six are causing the LEA concern. The authority will continue to face difficulties in its work with under-performing schools because the changing nature of the pupil population puts additional challenges on schools.

55. The LEA's work in this area is systematic and effective. The action plans for schools in special measures and those that have serious weaknesses are drawn up through collaboration between the school development officer and the schools themselves. The plans are derived from analysis of the schools' weaknesses and relate logically to making the necessary improvements. The level and type of support provided by the LEA is closely linked to the needs identified. Headteachers in schools causing concern are clear about the specific support which the LEA will provide to ensure that the necessary improvements are made. The services supporting teaching and learning and of management support services are valued by schools.

56. The LEA knows its schools well and difficulties are tackled promptly and incisively. The present arrangements for monitoring and intervention have made some progress in the

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earlier identification of schools experiencing difficulties. The potential of these arrangements to secure further improvement is good.

### **Support for literacy and numeracy**

57. Support for literacy and numeracy was good at the time of the first inspection. The LEA's self evaluation and other documentary evidence confirm that work in these areas remains effective and no fieldwork was carried out. Until 2002, in literacy, the attainment of the pupils in the Key Stage 2 tests rose and met the LEA's targets. However, in numeracy, like literacy, the target for 2002 was not met. The LEA support is planned appropriately to close the gaps.

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

58. In the first inspection the support for ICT in the curriculum and its teaching was unsatisfactory. It has improved and is now satisfactory. The work has been reorganised and a single management structure now covers both curriculum support and support for ICT in school administration.

59. Schools have had some success in raising standards. Since 1999, the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 at the end of Key Stage 3 has risen by 13 per cent, compared with the national gain of seven per cent. In 2002 the percentage reaching the required level was 44.6 per cent. However, meeting the 2004 target of 61 per cent will demand an even faster rate of progress than has so far been achieved. Despite high commitment, this target appears unrealistic on current trends.

60. All schools have been provided with broadband connections and the ICT support service has plans for further up grades to the connection service. As a result pupils have more frequent and active involvement working with the Internet and with email. A city learning centre has been established as part of the LEA's Excellence in Cities work. The centre is making a valuable contribution to the ICT work of those pupils who visit it, particularly in graphic design. However, because of transport difficulties in this crowded urban area, teachers in schools, which are not close to the centre, find it impractical to use. The support service is aware of this problem and plans to develop the facilities of the centre to make more use of them through remote working.

61. The support service meets the need of primary schools well. This is less the case for secondary schools. The primary schools are well supported by the ICT consultants whose first hand teaching experience enables them to concentrate on supporting the effective use of ICT across the curriculum rather than just technical matters.

62. There are some weaknesses in the planning of the service. The ICT strategy has a strong statement of aims, and sets the necessary targets for attainment. However, it fails to show a logical route from its statements of principle to the raising of pupils' attainment. There is also a plan to increase some primary school pupils' access to ICT through a scheme to be funded by Private Finance Initiative. The plan is based on a government scheme. Its weakness is that it intends to provide improved access for only half of primary school pupils

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in Years 5 and 6. It does not involve any proposal to raise the attainment of pupils in the other schools, nor is there a plan for the continuation of the work into the secondary schools.

### *Recommendation*

#### **In order to improve support for ICT in secondary schools:**

- identify the specific curriculum needs of each school and implement a plan which provides greater support to raise standards of attainment.

### **Support for raising standards at Key Stage 3**

63. This was not inspected previously. Support for raising standards at Key Stage 3 is highly satisfactory.

64. There was striking improvement in pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2002 which met the LEA's targets. In English this was evidence of effective support by the LEA because the authority had embarked on literacy work in Key Stage 3 before the strategy came fully into operation. Since 2000, schools have steadily closed the gap between their pupils' attainment and that of pupils in similar authorities. However, they have yet to establish consistent improvement in progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 when compared to the national rate.

65. The LEA has a well-staffed team of consultants to support the strategy. They, and any additional support, are deployed on the basis of agreements negotiated with each school individually. The management of the work is strong in its co-ordination of activities from parts of the school improvement service beyond the team itself. For example, the part of the service supporting gifted and talented pupils is collaborating with the strategy's staff in work to raise attainment at the higher levels. There has been other collaboration with special needs and minority ethnic support staff. Officers are aware of the need to improve transition from primary to secondary schools and are working with the Education Action Zones to develop better transition arrangements.

66. The evaluation of the work is strong. Although there has been a general rise in attainment, it has not been consistent across the schools. The school development officers have been used to examine the reasons for this. The strategy consultants themselves also work with teachers to develop schools' self-evaluation. The weakness of the work has been that its planning and the deployment of its staff, until recently, have been driven more by changing the provision made in the schools for the key stage than by a clear programme to raise attainment. Officers are aware of this weakness and plan to deal with it.

### **Support for minority ethnic groups including Travellers**

67. This support was satisfactory in the last inspection and no fieldwork was carried out. The support continues to be satisfactory. Since the last inspection there has been an increasing need for support for the children of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly for English as an additional language. The generally improving attainment of minority ethnic groups suggests that this need is being met.

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

68. This work was not covered by the first inspection. Support for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. The work in secondary schools began in 1999 as part of the Excellence in Cities programme and was extended to a trial group of primary schools in April 2000.

69. In secondary schools the work is well established. Schools have appointed co-ordinators and training has been provided. All of the secondary schools and the trial primary schools have produced useful policies on gifted and talented pupils. There have also been some special curriculum projects, for example in design and technology. There have been three summer schools for able pupils.

70. There is some encouraging evidence that the work is becoming more embedded in the mainstream of schools' activities. It is a required part of schools' self-reviews, and target setting for gifted pupils is required as part of the LEA's monitoring and challenge work. Schools not meeting their targets are provided with intensive support from the LEA's support staff for the gifted and talented initiative.

71. The success of the initiative in raising attainment has been mixed. Most of the pilot primary schools showed improved performance at the higher levels in the end of Key Stage 2 tests; others did not. Officers are seeking to establish the reasons behind this in order to identify and disseminate good practice. There is also a pilot project with literacy and numeracy support staff in Key Stage 2 to seek ways of raising attainment at level five in the tests. In view of the comparatively low attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2, it is a weakness that work to support gifted and talented pupils is not yet established throughout all the primary schools in the authority. The LEA is aware of the weakness and plans to act on it.

#### ***Recommendation***

<b>In order to improve support for gifted and talented pupils:</b>
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- extend and implement the support programme in all the primary schools.

### **Support for school management**

72. This function was weak in the first inspection. It has now improved and is highly satisfactory.

73. Improving the effectiveness of school management is a major priority within EDP2. The need for improvement has been clear from school inspections which until recently showed the management of schools in the LEA to be considerably weaker than that of schools nationally. Not only is management in some schools weak, but managers have to deal with the intense level of demand on them posed by the context of the area.

74. The LEA has sought to deal with these difficulties systematically and energetically and through procedures that build effectively on school self-evaluation. Support is being extended to involve middle as well as senior managers. All new headteachers, and those who are acting temporarily in that role, are provided with mentors. The authority's eight Beacon Schools are used to support management in schools causing concern. Links with a rural LEA

have been established to spread good practice between headteachers dealing with very different situations. There is a thorough management training plan offering courses for all levels of school management. Finally, there is good guidance for schools on seeking best value from suppliers of services.

75. The weakness in the support lies in the lack of primary school management expertise in the school improvement service, although the LEA has brokered external support where necessary and has plans to increase this area of expertise in its services. This well-planned support has yet to have an effect on the schools as measured by inspection.

### **Support to governors**

76. Support for governors was good at the time of the first inspection. The LEA's self evaluation, the views of schools and other documentary evidence confirm that support continues to be good and no detailed fieldwork was carried out.

### **The effectiveness of services to support school management**

77. The previous inspection did not make a judgement on the effectiveness of services to support school management but reported on the considerable care taken to evaluate services' performance and act on the findings. The LEA performs satisfactorily. Although aspects of the co-ordination of services are good, significant weaknesses remain. The LEA continues to have effective arrangements to consult with school representatives on service performance and development. Despite this, individual services continue to undertake exercises to survey customer satisfaction in more detail; these are unco-ordinated and make more demands than necessary on the time of school staff. The LEA's marketing of services to schools is poorly co-ordinated and the information provided to schools is weak in a number of respects. Although the descriptions of service range are satisfactory, there are too few performance criteria. Very little information is provided on schools' entitlement to centrally funded services and there is little specific advice on schools' responsibilities should they decide not to purchase a traded service. The material does not provide schools with what they need to make fully informed purchasing decisions. The choice offered is, however, reasonable and meets the needs of most schools. Pricing information is reasonably clear.

78. Support services are currently highly satisfactory. Each individual service performs at least at that level. Where the LEA offers a traded service, only limited specialist client support is available for schools wishing to purchase from an alternative supplier. However, there is no significant demand from schools for such services. There are satisfactory arrangements for ensuring that the support services play a part in monitoring school performance.

79. The **education personnel service** was good at the time of the last inspection. It is now very good and in a number of respects has provided a model for service improvements elsewhere in the LEA. The manual of guidance issued to schools is up-to-date, comprehensive and easy to use. Casework support from personnel advisers is very good. Model policies and procedures are subject to full consultation with schools and trades unions and are well regarded. Significant progress has been made in ensuring that the composition of the workforce reflects the local community. New roles and conditions of service have

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been negotiated for classroom support staff to enhance the scope for flexible deployment within schools. Evaluations of governor training are very positive.

80. The **education finance service and ICT support for school administration** were highly satisfactory in the last inspection, and remain so. They were not investigated in depth..

81. **Property services** support to schools was satisfactory in the last inspection. It has improved since then and is now highly satisfactory. The great majority of schools purchase one or more of the comprehensive range of services offered. There has been a significant improvement in recent years in the service's approach to schools as customers. All aspects of the support provided are at least satisfactory. The delivery of major projects is good. Consideration is currently being given, with schools and at their request, to the development of a broadly based facilities management service. This is part of a PFI/PPP options analysis for the improvement of school buildings.

82. Support for cleaning and caretaking and for grounds maintenance was not covered in the first inspection. Support for **cleaning and caretaking** is highly satisfactory. The LEA principally offers a directly managed cleaning service. It has also extended its offer in recent years, in response to requests from schools, to include separate window cleaning and relief site supervision services. The great majority of schools purchase all or some of these services. Satisfaction rates are good. **Grounds maintenance** support is similarly highly satisfactory. It is provided on a similar basis to cleaning and a substantial majority of schools purchase the service

83. Support for **catering** was not covered in the first inspection. Provision is highly satisfactory. Virtually all primary and secondary schools purchase the directly managed service offered by the LEA. Client support is available free of charge from two officers whose posts are centrally funded. The funding for this aspect of the officers' work is required to be delegated to schools but this has not been done. The take-up of free school meals is similar to the average for outer London boroughs and has improved significantly in the secondary sector in recent years. This reflects both the LEA's efforts to publicise entitlement and major improvements to the provision. The take-up of paid meals in secondary schools has also risen significantly. Production costs are close to the average. Reasonable steps are taken to canvass the views of pupils and schools and there is active promotion of healthy eating. Appropriate measures are taken to meet the needs of minority ethnic groups. Speed of service is the main area of dissatisfaction. This is in part, however, a by-product of increased take-up.

#### *Recommendations*

**In order to improve the cohesion between the LEA service to support school management and schools:**

- co-ordinate the marketing of services and evaluation of schools' views; and
- delegate funding for the client support aspects of the LEA's two centrally funded catering posts.

**The LEA's work in assuring the supply and quality of teachers**

84. This function was not inspected previously. Between 1998/99 and 2001/02, the proportion of the teaching force leaving the schools fluctuated between 16 per cent and 22 per cent. At the same time the size of the school roll increased and funding per pupil increased in real terms. This enabled more posts to be created but put even more pressure on recruitment. Against this difficult background, the authority has had success in implementing its recruitment strategy. In 2002 vacant teaching posts stood at 1.5 per cent in secondary schools and 2.3 per cent in primary schools. These figures compare with 1.4 per cent and 3.6 per cent in 2000. The LEA's performance is good.

85. The LEA's success in this area has been due to its pursuit of a combination of initiatives which has comprised support for housing teachers, interest free loans for the repayment of students' debts and, recently, providing child care vouchers for teachers. In addition, the authority has schemes to encourage local people to train as qualified teachers, and actively recruits teachers from overseas.

86. The scheme to support newly qualified teachers is good, and is planned effectively so that it leads into a programme of early professional development. The LEA can show success in retaining newly qualified teachers beyond their first year. More generally support for the professional development of teachers is good, based on analysis of need and views of teachers. There are opportunities for local people to train and progress in the profession from early years support staff to qualified teachers status.

87. The professional development programme is managed well. It takes account of the views of the school development officers and the needs identified from schools' self-evaluations. The programme is also thoroughly evaluated through course members' judgements, the views of the school co-ordinators responsible for professional development and evidence from Ofsted school inspection reports.

**The effectiveness of services to support school improvement**

88. The leadership of the school improvement services was satisfactory. It has improved and is now highly satisfactory. The work of the service is both better led and better managed than it was at the time of the first inspection.

89. The deployment of the services, which was weak in the first inspection, is now highly satisfactory. This is because of the improved systems for monitoring, challenge, support and intervention, and because the deployment of support is better co-ordinated and matched closely to schools' needs. Improved monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the service as a whole are allowing more focused attention on areas for development, such as support for gifted and talented pupils.

90. Along with this improved deployment, and contributing to it, has come more effective strategic planning of the services. This part of the work is good. It has enabled the formulation of a draft strategy document which shows how the work of the various sections of the division are planned as part of a whole. Thus support provided through the Education Development Plan is being deployed to deal with problems of low achievement being identified by the school development officers.

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91. The performance management of the services was weak in the last inspection. It is now highly satisfactory. The report recommended the introduction of performance management in order to secure an evenly high standard of work from the then equivalent of the school development officers. The new systems of working have succeeded in this. Improvements in the work of school development officers can be directly traced to performance management. The remaining weakness of the system is that it makes too little use of pupils' attainment as a criterion for measuring the success of the work of the officers.

92. In the last inspection, the expertise of the school improvement staff was satisfactory. It is now good. The size of the service is comparatively large. Among the staff, most necessary areas of expertise are covered, the clear exception being modern foreign languages. There are adequate arrangements for schools to purchase extra expertise as necessary. Officers have good experience in the management of secondary schools. The weakness lies in the team's lack of experience in primary school management but the LEA is aware of this shortage and has plans to remedy it.

93. The effectiveness of the school improvement services was satisfactory at the time of the first inspection; it is now good. Attainment has improved and, except for this year in Key Stage 2, targets have been met. The management, deployment and expertise of the services have contributed to the improvements that schools have brought about in pupils' attainment.

94. The last inspection showed the value for money of these services to be satisfactory. The services are large and expensive but, in view of their effectiveness, the value for money they provide is satisfactory.

***Recommendation***

**In order to improve the performance management of school improvement services:**

- make more use of measurable indicators of success, including pupils' attainment.

### **Section 3: Special educational needs**

#### **Summary**

95. The last inspection found that the LEA had implemented successfully a policy for the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. It continues in its strong commitment to this policy and has made further progress towards integration in mainstream schools and, whenever possible, mainstream classes within the schools.

96. The LEA has continued to provide suitable specialised support while placing more of the control over funding in the hands of the schools. The investment is such that the quality of provision is appropriate, even when needs result from severe needs. Procedures have been developed for evaluating the effectiveness of support. In keeping with the new Code of Practice for special educational needs, there has been a rapid shift towards funding pupils' special needs earlier, often without recourse to time consuming statutory assessment and statementing. In general, the LEA has managed to win the support of schools and parents.

#### **Strategy**

97. The strategy was highly satisfactory at the last inspection. With further development the strategy is now very good and defined fully in a publication covering the period from 2001 to 2004. The strategy is supported well by a clear logistical plan and sound financial planning. It reflects the LEA's good understanding of needs across the borough. In keeping with national policy the LEA seeks to provide for a greater range of needs within mainstream education than was normal in the past, and than is currently the case in the majority of LEAs. The LEA maintains only two special schools of its own for pupils unable to benefit from mainstream education. However, it does not place any more pupils than usual in special schools outside the authority. This is achieved by making "resourced provision" in mainstream primary and secondary schools. The provision is of good quality, with suitably specialised equipment and staffing to cover virtually the whole range of needs. The last inspection found that it had not always been possible to provide successfully for pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, particularly at Key Stage 3. This shortcoming has been satisfactorily addressed by extending the age range of one of the special schools to meet the needs of this older group.

98. The strategy reflects fully the new Code of Practice. Much of the funding has been shifted to school control, enabling them to respond quickly and meet the great majority of needs from their own resources. The financial incentive to seek statutory assessment has been largely removed, with a consequent saving in time and resources. As recommended at the last inspection, the criteria for moving through the stages of the Code of Practice have been sharpened. There has been extensive review of the inclusion policy, including its effects on pupils' achievement. Nearly all the schools, both special and mainstream have introduced useful individual attainment measures for pupils with special educational needs and these are contributing to the performance management of the support services.

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99. Schools are given great responsibility for implementing the strategy. They have been consulted extensively at each stage. Schools and, particularly, their special educational needs co-ordinators, are fully involved in new structures established to allocate resources and moderate practice. The LEA's careful preparation is reflected in the high level of support for the strategy from schools. Councillors also support it strongly as a key element in the broader drive towards social inclusion. The radical policy is well justified by the findings of Ofsted school inspections. During 2000 and 20001 some 25 primary schools and two secondary schools were inspected. In most of the primary schools and both the secondary schools, the learning of pupils with special educational needs and the provision made for them were rated as good.

### **Statutory obligations**

100. The LEA is rigorous in the steps it takes to meet its statutory obligations. It has improved its practice since the last inspection and its procedures are now good. The escalation in the number of statements issued has been halted and the number of applications for statutory assessment reduced from 360 to 39 over the last two years, creating a much more manageable situation. This has been achieved without discernible loss of quality in the provision made, since many pupils who might previously have been statemented are now supported appropriately at earlier stages within the schools' enhanced funding.

101. Many of those pupils requiring external support or the facilities of the special schools and resourced provision in the mainstream are able to receive it without the need for statements. The streamlined processes of the exceptional resources panel and the special needs allocation panels are used to determine suitable provision and whether or not statutory assessment is necessary. To ensure that these panels can work efficiently, there is initial screening of referrals by meetings of school clusters. Helpful guidance has been published, with criteria for determining levels of support.

102. Recent reviews have indicated some concerns among governors and headteachers, especially in the secondary phase, about the operation of the arrangements. However, the special educational needs co-ordinators, who play a leading role in the clusters and panels along with officers, are generally satisfied with the arrangements. The evidence is that the system is working well at this early stage and the LEA is properly keeping it under scrutiny.

103. Where statutory assessment is agreed, progress is carefully tracked so as to avoid undue delay. Some 80 per cent of statements were issued within the target 18 weeks last year and the rate continues to improve. When the target cannot be met it is generally because of delays caused by the need for medical reports. However, the primary care trust is working closely with the LEA to refine procedures. There is effective co-operation between the child development clinic, other health workers, the LEA's pre-school home visiting team, the educational psychology service and the portage staff in identifying special needs at an early stage. Most pupils with more serious needs receive attention long before school age.

104. The LEA takes full account of parents' wishes. There is an effective parent partnership service which is operated by an independent trust. Parents are put in touch with it as soon as their children are referred, whether or not statutory assessment is contemplated. They are given useful guidance and are supported when they have concerns about the

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provision offered. Most disagreements when the LEA has refused to carry out a statutory assessment of special educational needs are resolved without a parental appeal and virtually all appeals are withdrawn.

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

105. The support to schools is highly satisfactory. At the last inspection it was satisfactory but with significant weakness. These have since been addressed. The LEA was maintaining centrally a very large learning support service which was effective in enabling schools to cope with a range of needs. However, it was expensive and contributed to the bureaucratic cycle of referrals on which schools depended for support. The report recommended that the service should be delegated to schools in a planned manner. The LEA has done so with skill and courage. The funding has been delegated and the majority of the former support teachers and assistants have been re-deployed successfully to schools. The schools now have the financial capacity to meet, in-house, all but the most exceptional needs. They can respond quickly and deploy resources flexibly and efficiently.

106. The LEA has retained a much smaller set of central services, mainly advisory in function, with specialists offering expertise in the full range of special needs. These services are of good quality and are important in helping schools to assess needs accurately and make the right provision. The services are the key to meeting special needs inclusively in the mainstream. It still constitutes a substantial workforce and in the future, as the schools' expertise continues to grow, it will be possible to gradually continue the process of delegation.

107. The work of the educational psychology service in statutory assessment has reduced in line with the number of assessments. This has enabled it to increase its involvement in other useful projects in particular areas. The allocations of time to mainstream schools have been reduced in proportion, although schools may buy in extra time if they wish. Although there are examples to the contrary, not all schools and educational psychologists have appreciated the increased potential for helping schools solve learning problems, supporting parents' understanding and bringing credibility and authority to the system as a whole. The service has not fully worked out its opportunities for work in schools under the new Code of Practice, a weakness identified in a recent external report commissioned by the LEA and which this inspection endorses.

### ***Recommendation***

#### **In order to support schools better in dealing with special educational needs:**

- more fully and clearly define the future role of the educational psychology service in mainstream schools and establish the staffing needed to meet both statutory obligations and other support required by schools.

108. The quality of training for staff, and special educational needs co-ordinators in particular, is good. The school clusters which the co-ordinators attend are generally well supported by the special educational needs officers and other LEA personnel. They provide an opportunity to share ideas and moderate the operation of the Code of Practice. At present

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there is a danger that proceedings may be dominated by the task of agreeing action on proposals for referrals at the cost of reviewing the whole spectrum of needs. Co-ordinators are undoubtedly learning a great deal from the range of work they are doing willingly beyond the school but it may not all be sustainable in the long term.

109. There is good support for schools in preparing individual education plans. They are able to involve special educational needs officers, learning support staff and educational psychologists. They have also been well supported by the inclusion adviser in developing their use of p-scales<sup>2</sup> to assist in target setting.

### **Value for money**

110. With the effective implementation of the inclusion strategy and new Code of Practice and with the curbing of runaway statutory assessment, costs have been brought well under control. Compared to other authorities, more is spent in mainstream schools and less in special schools. Expenditure on placements outside the LEA has remained steady and is not unusual by comparison with other LEAs. The proportion of total expenditure deployed for special educational needs support is comparable to that found elsewhere in similar authorities. The financial management is sound and, given the good quality of the provision, it represents good value for money.

111. Funds are distributed to schools equitably and transparently. The formula is soundly based on proxy indicators of need negotiated with the schools. While they do not command total support from headteachers, most accept them in principle. Furthermore, the LEA has demonstrated its readiness to modify them in the light of experience.

112. It is too soon to say to what extent the present arrangements will ensure consistency in the way the Code of Practice is implemented. The moderation across schools, through clusters and panels, is skewed towards the later stages of the Code of Practice. The moderation at school level depends on the broad review conducted with the school development officers and the annual reviews of resource deployment by the special educational needs officers. Neither of these is likely to provide enough in-depth case review and the LEA is already aware that its capacity is strained in this regard. Many of the schools have existing review groups to which the LEA might bring a moderating influence through its officers, not forgetting the educational psychologists, whose role is susceptible to further development.

113. Since the last inspection, performance management has been developed in all of the services related to special educational needs. The new attainment measures for SEN, adopted by nearly all the special and mainstream schools, are beginning to provide additional indicators of service and individual pupil performance.

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<sup>2</sup> p'scales refers to pre and interim levels of attainment.

## **Section 4: Promoting social inclusion**

### **Summary of effectiveness in promoting social inclusion**

114. The LEA promotes social inclusion in the educational context by concentrating resources on particular groups of vulnerable children. Its own services collaborate effectively and work closely with its partners in other agencies. There are many tangible benefits from the strategy. For instance, exclusion rates are relatively low and there has been considerable success in reintegrating excluded pupils in Key Stage 3. Attendance is improving. There are strong signs of rising attainment among looked after children in the younger age groups. Pupils with special educational needs are usually identified and supported well before they start school. The great majority of pupils with special educational needs are in mainstream schools. The attainment of bilingual pupils is improving faster than those whose first language is English. Not surprisingly, the LEA does not always meet its ambitious targets but this inspection has not revealed any areas in which the socially inclusive approach has been weak.

### **The strategy to promote social inclusion**

115. There is a good strategy for promoting social inclusion. The LEA takes pride in setting all its work within this context. The council's priorities, in collaboration with the local strategic partnership, are strongly focussed on social inclusion. These include ameliorating the effects of poverty, neighbourhood renewal, improving the environment, improving transport, and developing community facilities. It is intended to tackle a range of health issues and to raise attainment through lifelong learning. Plans, such as those for children's services, inclusive education and behaviour support, are wholly consistent with, and central to, the corporate strategy. Despite the complexity of the liaison required, the extent of common understanding and sense of purpose at all levels, including among school-based staff, is notable. The education department produces useful practical guidance to this end.

116. The LEA has a good record of attracting funding from national initiatives. Among many examples are Sure Start programmes, Early Excellence Centres, Healthy Schools, Excellence in Cities, and Education Action Zones. In all cases there is strong planning with clear objectives. Disadvantaged, at-risk and underachieving groups are clearly identified and the monitoring of their progress is outstanding in its detail and precision. The very high quality of the data analysis lends direction to the work of all the services. Helpful targets are set for all the identified groups, including pupils with special needs, looked after children and minority ethnic pupils.

### **The supply of school places**

117. In the last inspection the LEA's effectiveness was judged to be highly satisfactory. It remains so. The task the LEA faces is a particularly difficult one. Rolls in both primary and secondary schools are rising and there is high mobility, both across and within the borough's boundaries. The LEA's effectiveness in forecasting pupil rolls is satisfactory. Where forecasts have erred, they have generally done so on the side of caution. Timely applications

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have been made to the Department for Education and Skills for funding to provide additional places and Private Finance Initiative credits have been obtained for a number of new schools. The LEA has been operating with narrow margins of places over pupil numbers for some time. If existing forecasts are correct, these will narrow further over the next few years. The provision planned will be sufficient to meet needs, but only barely so in the secondary sector. The LEA liaises effectively with schools and an appropriate range of other stakeholders. This includes both projections of need and the development of specific proposals for change. The School Organisation Committee has thus far been able to reach unanimous decisions on the proposals before it. Educational performance and parental preference have been key criteria in developing proposals for the closure or reorganisation of existing schools.

118. The School Organisation Plan itself has limitations, both in providing information to stakeholders and enabling them to scrutinise and challenge the LEA's plans. In particular, primary school planning is displayed only at LEA local level, rather than the more meaningful one of the 13 local planning areas. The plan also lacks worthwhile coverage of possible developments in SEN provision. In an LEA with such a strong emphasis on meeting SEN within mainstream schools, and with a low margin of surplus places in such schools, there is a particular need to show that planning for SEN dovetails closely with that for other needs. Having registered these reservations about the plan, however, it is fair to point out that the LEA relies principally on local discussions to communicate with schools on such issues and to seek their views. These are effective and schools have confidence in the LEA's open and collaborative approach.

### **Admissions**

119. In the last inspection the LEA's effectiveness in admissions of pupils was highly satisfactory. It remains so. The high mobility and low margins of places over pupil numbers make the administration of admissions problematic. A difficult balance often needs to be drawn between the perceived needs of families and those of schools. The LEA now manages this much better than it did. The LEA has acted in anticipation of new statutory requirements. It has a long-established and effective admissions forum. It co-ordinates primary to secondary transfer for all local schools so that multiple offers to the same child are avoided. It is proposing to operate fully co-ordinated arrangements for secondary transfer a year ahead of the required date. This is a very positive step. Agreement in principle has also been reached to extending the LEA's role in the management of primary admissions.

120. The provision of information and support for parents is effective. Good support is available to families who need it, particularly new arrivals with limited English. The administration of the secondary transfer process is good. Information is provided to schools to meet their needs, and deadlines are met. The timescales for each stage of the main primary and secondary reception exercises meet at least minimum guideline standards and in some instances best practice. Reasonable steps are taken to ensure that new arrivals are allocated places in local schools without undue delay. The take-up of those places is checked. Councillors monitor this closely. Steps are being taken to improve liaison with other LEAs on the cross border movement of families. The placement of pupils following permanent exclusion is effective.

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**Asset management**

121. The previous inspection, although not making a judgement on the effectiveness of asset management, drew attention to problems with the condition of school buildings and with access for pupils with special needs. The performance of the LEA is now satisfactory. However, two very different judgements underlie this. The first relates to the quality of the planning processes and the management of building projects. These are good. The second relates to the level of investment in maintaining and improving the LEA's building stock which, whilst comparatively high, is failing to reduce the major backlog of need.

122. The LEA has met all the deadlines set by government for the submission of building condition, suitability, and capacity data. The quality of that data is satisfactory and schools have confidence in the assessments. Good opportunity has been provided for comment on and discussion of the detailed findings. Satisfactory arrangements have been made for updating the data, including an annual discussion with every school. Such discussions are appreciated and include a review of and support for the school's own asset management work. A helpful manual of guidance is also provided. The condition assessment reports themselves are not designed well to assist schools but the provision of back-up explanation and advice is good. Good opportunities are provided for schools to be involved in the development of policy. Similarly, headteachers' representatives are involved at an early stage of the planning of programmes of work. All schools are subsequently invited to comment. The management of building projects is good and involves schools fully. The LEA has a good record of ensuring that all the available funds are spent.

123. The LEA has a good record of securing grant funding for capital works and expenditure is currently high by comparison with other LEAs. However, the nature of many of the grants is that they must be used for improvement work, rather than addressing the backlog of condition needs which is the LEA's main problem. The LEA has managed to prevent this backlog from increasing over the last few years but that is all. It has supplemented the capital funding available from other sources by significant sums drawn from its revenue budget. These have been well above the supplements made by other LEAs. However, expenditure fails by a substantial degree to cover all the works identified as needing to be completed within one year. Quite apart from the poor conditions provided for pupils and staff as a consequence, leaving remedial works until this late stage is not a cost-effective use of resources. To address the legacy of past under-investment, significantly higher levels of funding will be needed for several more years. The LEA is in the early stages of investigating further options for securing improvement through private finance schemes.

***Recommendation*****In order to improve the quality of school buildings:**

- significantly improve their condition and suitability.



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**Provision of education for pupils who have no school place**

124. The provision for pupils taught other than in an ordinary school place has improved since the last inspection. At that time it was satisfactory; now it is good. All pupils permanently excluded from school at the secondary stage are allocated places at the pupil referral unit (PRU) and now receive full time education. The government target for this was achieved ahead of time. A sufficiently broad range of academic courses is provided for pupils excluded from secondary schools. The premises have been improved, with additional teaching space and better facilities for physical education. Funding from the Excellence in Cities initiative has provided two learning mentors to support pupils.

125. Concerns of headteachers regarding provision for Key Stage 3 pupils have been addressed. An interdisciplinary panel determines the programme for each one on entry and all are immediately allocated a mainstream school to which they are intended to be reintegrated when possible. As suggested by headteachers, places in the PRU are reserved for pupils for whom there is an urgent, unforeseen need for a place. Twenty-eight Key Stage 3 pupils were placed in the PRU during last year. Of these, 12 were reintegrated successfully in schools; 12 others had firm reintegration plans by the end of the year and only four had remained in place for more than two terms.

126. Key Stage 4 students follow exam courses and are given work experience. The proportion of GCSE entries resulting in grades A to C is relatively low but the proportion gaining grades A to G is high. Those students likely to benefit receive an alternative curriculum in a further education college. In all cases attendance is monitored closely by an educational welfare officer. All of the twelve Year 11 students leaving the pupil referral unit last year took up a college placement, an apprenticeship or employment.

127. Although not strictly without a school place, there are pupils with persistent attendance problems for whom the PRU makes useful temporary provision. Similarly, pupils at serious risk of exclusion are given a six-week course aimed at increasing confidence in the core curriculum subjects and improving behaviour. The staff have the capacity to work closely with the home schools in preparing for the course and following up after reintegration. There is good co-operation with school learning support units where appropriate.

128. The PRU manages well the tuition service for pupils unable to attend school for medical reasons. The pupils receive a minimum of five hours individual tuition but are gathered for group tuition whenever possible. The PRU also manages well hospital tuition at Newham general hospital and the teachers share in the same career development opportunities offered by the LEA.

129. The good support offered to schoolgirl mothers is particularly valued by headteachers. An integration officer liaises with the school to ensure that they remain within the mainstream. When this is not possible, tuition is arranged for short periods and when the pregnancy spans the transfer stage support is given in negotiating a subsequent college place.

130. Similar proportions of parents opt to educate pupils at home as are found nationally. There is a well-managed system for identifying them and monitoring the provision made. A consultant visits pupils initially and at least annually thereafter. A detailed report is made to

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the LEA on each occasion and summarised for parents in writing. Helpful advice is given on curriculum requirements.

131. The LEA has good computer records for tracking all its pupils educated otherwise than in schools and for monitoring their progress. The educational welfare service provides an effective means of communicating between the parties involved. There are measures to ensure that no pupil slips through the net.

### **Attendance**

132. The last report praised the work of the education welfare service in improving levels of attendance as a result of carefully targeting its efforts towards schools and groups of pupils where the need was greatest. Imaginative recruitment and training, and tailor-made solutions to particular problems were developed collaboratively with schools. No fieldwork was done on this inspection but the documentary evidence and performance figures show that the strengths continue. Attendance in primary schools continues to improve at a modest rate, although it remains lower than the national average. Unauthorised absences continue to be high in primary schools.

133. The improvement in attendance in the secondary schools is the greatest achievement. Attendance exceeded the national average for the first time in the year 2000/2001 and rose further last year. This is attributable, not only to the work of the education welfare service, but to the schools themselves, some of which have developed productive projects drawing upon additional government funding schemes.

### **Behaviour support**

134. Support for behaviour is good. It was satisfactory at the last inspection and even then there were major strengths, particularly in the excellent success in reducing permanent exclusions as a result of careful targeting of resources towards high-risk groups in schools. This continues to be the case. Primary school exclusion rates are in line with national average and secondary rates are below the national average. This is a remarkable achievement which runs counter to the usual correlation between high exclusion rates and high levels of disadvantage. A minor weakness in the last report was the data gathered on fixed term exclusions. This has been remedied and the figures show that in both primary and secondary schools, smaller proportions of pupils are excluded than in LEAs nationally. The behaviour support plan continues to set ambitious targets for further reduction. Useful guidance is issued on school behaviour and anti-bullying policies and comprehensive guidelines have been developed on drugs education in collaboration with other LEAs.

135. There is close correspondence between the priorities of the behaviour support plan, the Educational Development Plan and Excellence in Cities initiatives. These include, for instance, establishing learning mentors in all primary and secondary schools and learning support units in all secondary schools. Only one secondary school is now without one. The educational welfare service is concentrating support on groups of pupils with the worst attendance and at risk of permanent exclusion.

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136. The behaviour support team is still valued for the quality of its support to schools. It is a small, cost effective group of well-qualified advisory teachers. The reservations noted formerly about the availability of the service are now mainly confined to the primary phase, but this is attributable to uncertainty over the incorporation of the well regarded outreach service from Eleanor Smith special school into the central team. The reasons for the transfer, however, are sound. The team is meticulous in auditing its own performance. Both Eleanor Smith special school and the behaviour support team offer training to the mainstream schools. The behaviour support team also runs a network for managers of the learning support units to disseminate models of good practice. There are examples in schools of complementary roles played by the educational psychology and behaviour support services in behaviour management but these are, as yet, not sufficiently formalised to be shared as good practice.

137. The PRU offers a range of graduated support for pupils at risk. There is suitable provision for pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties at Eleanor Smith special school, now extended from Keys Stages 1 and 2 to Key Stage 3 in response to a criticism in the last report. There are special projects for pupils with problematic behaviour, such as Reframe, supported by the Children's Fund and another run in conjunction with Barnardo's. These projects make valuable contribution to behaviour support in schools.

### **Health, safety, welfare and child protection**

138. The procedures for child protection compare favourably with those in the majority of LEAs. In many respects they are good and there has been steady progress since the last inspection. However, the persistent recruitment problems in social services, in the face of the very high level and complexity of welfare demand in the borough, impede the best efforts of school staff and officers in the services involved. The reports of the Social Services Inspectorate indicate marked improvements in the management and organisation of Social Services in recent times. Nevertheless, the situation is unsatisfactory and calls for an unusual degree of creative thinking to make the best of the resources available.

139. The chief educational welfare officer is the LEA's child protection officer and makes a valuable contribution to its work. There is effective communication with schools. There is good training for school designated officers, and for officers across the services, often conducted jointly with social services. There is equal commitment to partnership working from the leadership of social services. There are already strong links between services at a senior level, from the chief executive's new senior officers group and the children and young persons planning group to the area child protection committee. The education department makes a good contribution to all of these groups and to the plans and very good guidance they generate.

140. The difficulties arise at grass root level. Vacancies for social workers are in the order of 20 per cent which means that some cases are not allocated in the short term, despite reasonable cover arrangements. Occasionally middle management supervision has to account for this shortfall. The effect on schools is that communication is sometimes discontinuous and that accurate, up-to-date information is sometimes hard to obtain. Schools find it difficult to get assistance in these matters, as there is an apparent reluctance on the part of social workers to become involved, despite the new, and better eligibility criteria for

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assessment. Nevertheless, schools understand the causes of the problems and relationships are good. There are many examples of effective co-operation on the ground.

141. In one Beacon secondary school visited, there is an excellent model of teamwork dedicated to social inclusion and the welfare and education of vulnerable pupils. It is co-ordinated by school senior managers and includes an attendance officer, learning mentors, a school police officer, and a social inclusion officer who was formerly an education welfare officer. A learning support assistant represents social services for looked after children. The family support officer is qualified in social work. Each member of the team benefits from the collective enthusiasm and mutual support. The shared intelligence network, embracing home as well as school, has the potential for more efficient working within each discipline than if they worked separately.

#### *Recommendation*

#### **In order to improve provision for child protection:**

- establish further inter-agency working to make the most efficient use of the available social worker staffing.

142. There is comprehensive and well-regarded guidance to schools on health and safety matters. Schools are regularly up-dated on legal requirements and risk management in all areas, including education off the premises. Checks are made that schools have designated health and safety officers and that they have been duly trained in the role. Governors, too, receive training and their risk assessments are monitored centrally. There is good communication with health services and the fire brigade. The support is well managed.

#### **Looked after children**

143. The LEA's arrangements to meet its statutory obligations towards looked after children are highly satisfactory. The planning and structures designed in conjunction with social services are good, but the shortage of social workers is a handicap at times. The very detailed Quality Protects Management Action Plan reflects the effective joint working between the principal partners and a wide range of other agencies. The education welfare services and the schools are closely involved and there is a broad awareness of the implications of raising the attainments of looked after children. Training has been extensive across the services and is well regarded. Challenging but reasonable targets are set and are monitored by an interdisciplinary planning and working group. They have been met and, occasionally, exceeded at the earlier key stages, but fall short at Key Stage 4.

144. The education support team, located with social services, is the central mechanism. It is very well designed and managed. It is a strength that it includes qualified teachers as the main link officers and learning support staff able to work directly with pupils. An officer is designated to co-ordinate the collection and communication of data. There is a nurse. The team represents good value and it is justifiable that the budget is set to increase as more needs are identified. For instance, there will be a further education link worker for unaccompanied minors who are asylum seekers. The number of looked after children, around 670, has increased by some 25 per cent over the last year.

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145. The problems associated with the shortage of social workers, referred to above, apply equally to looked after children. To a lesser extent there is regular tracking of the pupils by the education support team. The schools are generally aware of their looked after children and nearly all personal education plans are up to date. Attainment information is complete and systems for recording it are being further improved.

146. Councillors, with strong leadership by the mayor and a mayoral adviser for social services, are supportive of looked after children. They are well represented at functions that provide social entertainment and celebrate achievement. The chief executive chairs a corporate parenting group.

### **Measures to combat racism**

147. The LEA's leadership to schools in combating racism is satisfactory. There is acceptance of, and great pride in, the ethnic diversity of the borough. This pervades all the documents scrutinised and was readily apparent in interviews with officers, and the contacts with school staff. The council responded fully to the report of the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence and it has produced consistent policies over a period for equality of opportunity across its services. However, it is acknowledged that progress has not been sufficiently monitored. The Mayor has given high priority to promoting equality. A project team of senior officers has been set up under the chief executive. The renewed emphasis is reflected in the work of the education department.

148. Schools have been issued with a range of helpful guidance, including a model for their own equalities policies, material aimed at multicultural understanding, a very good training pack for their own use and a document on responding to racial harassment, revised in the light of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. The newly issued agreed syllabus for religious education is well designed to celebrate cultural diversity. The schools, the Newham Council for Race Equality and other relevant agencies have been properly consulted. There has been extensive training for governors and senior managers. The guidance takes account of the Council for Race Equality standards. The LEA funds an independent body to investigate complaints at school level.

149. Although the procedures for recording racist incidents in schools are well defined, they are not fully embedded. Schools have been reluctant, despite reminders, to submit incident forms. This is mainly because the feedback from the LEA has been insufficient. The statistical analysis probably does not reflect the reality. There is no qualitative analysis to illustrate what constitutes an incident, and a positive response to it. The forms do not record parental involvement, an aspect which schools elsewhere have often found particularly important in promoting good understanding.

### ***Recommendation***

#### **In order to promote the combating of racism in school:**

- disseminate regularly to schools a more detailed analysis of racist incidents and schools' responses to them.

## **Section 5: Corporate issues**

### **Summary**

150. The first inspection, in 1999, indicated that strengths outweighed weaknesses in the strategic management of the LEA. The priorities within the EDP were agreed in consultation with headteachers and reflected local as well as national priorities. The LEA's strategy for fulfilling its role was explicit, well set out and coherent. As a Best Value pilot authority it was well placed to evaluate its own success. Progress has been made in working with local communities and the strengths identified at the time of the last report have remained. The political will to change the environment reflects the aspirations and expectations of the community. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (December 2002) said, "the council was in a good position to sustain its improvement and impact on the area. It has well-developed financial systems and is in a good position to resource its future plans". Officers and council members have established a sense of direction and vision for the borough that is fully understood and subscribed to by the community.

### **Corporate planning**

151. Corporate planning and its implementation remain good as they were at the time of the last inspection. They are well linked to financial planning. As is appropriate, corporate planning continues to evolve in response to the changes in constitution, council membership and officer structure. Following the election of the Mayor and the change in political arrangements, an interim community plan has been formulated. Good use has been made of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2002 (CPA) to develop an action plan which will form the core of the corporate plan for 2003/2004. There is a shared vision of school improvement. The vision includes the raising of standards to nearer the national averages, which is one of the Mayor's seven key priorities, and improved policies for inclusive education and special educational need. There are good lines of communication with other council departments. They all recognise that education is a significant priority.

152. The LEA has an effective strategic partnership with schools to raise educational standards and promote social inclusion. The director and the senior staff recognise the important role headteachers play in school improvement and their views are sought and valued. Support and professional development are high on the agenda and schools receive good information from the authority. There is a high level of commitment across agencies working together to change things for the better. Examples of this have been the work with the police to tackle truancy and to improve behaviour management in schools.

153. Morale among staff in the education directorate is good and they feel included in decision making, which has not always been the case. The council's well-established performance management systems have continued to develop. There are programmes of monitoring by both officers and councillors in education. Monitoring, evaluation and implementation of the EDP are rigorous and regular reports on progress are planned for the school improvement strategy group. An example of this is the work of a designated councillor who monitors pupils without a school place.

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**Decision making**

154. Corporate decision-making procedures, including those for finance, are good although still evolving. They were satisfactory at the last inspection but the process has become faster and more efficient, providing a sound structure for scrutiny that challenges and questions decisions. The new constitution has only been in place since May 2002, but there are good levels of consultation and a rigorous and open process of examination, often in the public domain. All councillors are automatically invited to proceedings conducted by the Mayor and to cabinet meetings. Before and after the periods designated for scrutiny, the Mayor operates an open invitation to any council member to ask questions about decisions or concerns. Council members appreciate the Mayor's approachability, openness to questions and readiness to be accountable. Good records are kept and significant decisions are being taken quickly as a result of the open and transparent policy. Elected members and headteachers welcome the speed which major decisions are taken and are subject to scrutiny arrangements. Corporate financial planning is thorough and engages a wide range of stakeholders. There is widespread support for the new cabinet structure and mayoral advisors as a means of improving decision-making.

**The leadership provided by officers and elected members**

155. The quality of leadership provided by councillors is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There is strong leadership from the Mayor, who was previously leader of the council.

156. The cabinet member for education is very experienced in educational matters both locally and nationally. He has a clear view of priorities and works closely with the new director and her staff, meeting her weekly. The cabinet member for education has been very supportive of the director's aim to re-structure the department and encourage officers to work with each other and across different sections. Council members also take a key role in developing policy and good practice through reviews by the scrutiny committee and commission. The chair of the education scrutiny commission, the cabinet member for education and the director meet once every two weeks. This ensures that the mayor is able to respond speedily to the deliberations of the commission.

157. The leadership of senior officers is very good. It was judged good at the last inspection. The director, with the close support from the chief executive and the mayor, has made a strong personal commitment to the successful programme for change in the past two years. There have been several very appropriate changes for senior officers, such as more delegation of decision-making and a stronger emphasis on inter-departmental working. There has been some redefining of key roles and responsibilities and more is planned to enable better communications across the department. Good levels of initiative are displayed and bold decisions have been taken, such as those regarding the policies on inclusive education and support for special educational needs. The director has focused on school improvement and developing relationships with schools. They welcome the improvements in consultation. There are good levels of mutual trust and respect

158. The quality of advice given by officers to elected members is good. It was not inspected last time. Councillors confirm that they are well informed. Long term policies are

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based on good quality information and comprehensive performance data. Information is provided well in advance of meetings to non-executive members and the scrutiny committee. The mayor receives frequent briefings from the director of education and community learning.

### **Partnership**

159. There is good partnership working between the LEA and other stakeholders. It has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. The local strategic partnership was launched in 2001, evolving from a former partnership forum set up to develop a shared vision for the borough and to guide community planning. The council is a key player in the co-ordination of work of the health partnership, the children and young persons strategic planning group.

160. Relationships with other agencies are positive, and meetings are well structured, leading to improvement in the co-ordination of services at local level for children and their families. There has been increased coherence in the work with the two Education Action Zones. The Excellence in Cities partnership is strong and now linked more closely to school improvement.

161. There are good relationships with the diocesan authorities. The dioceses' views, about the EDP2, the need to accommodate asylum seekers and refugees and the expansion of schools, have been actively sought. They play an active part in raising pupils' achievements. The LEA supports the standing area committee for religious education (SACRE) well. This now meets regularly and has addressed the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. The SACRE has been instrumental in advising schools on collective worship, religious holidays and the teaching of religious education.

162. The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) is strong and well established. Nearly a third of Newham's 0-4 year olds are in the areas prescribed for one of the eight Sure Start projects that co-ordinate work across health, education and social services very effectively.

163. The LEA has a strong link with higher education. Various institutions provide courses for classroom assistants and initial teacher training. Connexions which is new to the borough is developing as a partnership and the LEA works closely with the Council for Race Equality.

### **Support to schools for early years**

164. The LEA's support for early years is very good and meets the needs of local communities across all areas of the borough. There has been a high investment in and commitment to early years education. Of the 14 schools inspected in 2002 for early years provision over half of these were found to be good or very good. The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) is managed effectively with strong leadership.

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165. The EYDCP is well established and there are strong links between education and social services. The strategy for early years has been successful. Choice for local parents for both childcare and early years education is wide and of good quality.

166. There are good links between the partnership plans and the EDP2. All partnership providers work closely together to allocate resources appropriately and improve quality of provision and training, including an accredited SEN course. There is an increasing range of services available through the development of community nursery schools, nursery units, an early excellence centre and eight Sure Start programmes across the borough. The EDP2 target to provide universal education for all three and four year olds has been met.

167. The number and quality of qualified teachers, nursery assistants, teacher assistants, play group workers and early years' co-ordinators continues to improve. There is a structured training programme for all people living or working in Newham with children under the age of five. The programme allows participants to progress through early child care qualifications to qualified teacher status if they wish. This supports the supply and professional development of staff working with young children and benefits local families.

168. There are strong links between the early years strategy and the borough's aim to raise educational standards. The LEA is developing a set of rigorous assessment procedures for use by all providers that identify the stages of progression through the early years, take account of early childhood development and make use of National Curriculum level statements to link between Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. There is good tracking of pupil progress from an early age. The co-ordination of assessment data right across the borough means that early identification of special educational needs are known to schools and can be addressed as soon as a child starts full time education.

### **Support for the 14-19 curriculum**

169. This area was not covered in the first inspection. However, that inspection did report disaffection among 14 to 16 year old pupils. The alternative curricula provided for this group have continued to develop through co-operation between the LEA, schools, the voluntary sector and further education colleges. Varied vocational programmes are offered in addition to a key skills programme. Some students attend full-time at a college. Other divide their time between school, college or other education providers. All the students involved have personal advisers. The educational welfare service monitors students' attendance and a school development officer is designated to liaise between the parties regarding the course provision. Social inclusion is a major aim of the current developments made and planned. In developing the new 14-19 curriculum, the LEA has made a highly satisfactory start.

170. In 2001, Ofsted, in collaboration with the Adult Learning Inspectorate, inspected 16-19 education in the area. The provision made was generally well managed by the institutions, and collaboration between them and the LEA was productive. The LEA is acting on the recommendations in the report. The report noted strengths in the provision of vocational and pre-vocational courses in the colleges and the shared school sixth form. Collaboration between the providers has developed further since then. The work in the 16-19 age range offers the LEA a sound basis on which to move forward on its planned developments. The

provision of prevocational courses in schools in Key Stage 4 is also becoming soundly established.

171. The LEA's plans for the age range have now, with the award of "pathfinder" status from the DfES, begun to plan a more co-ordinated approach to the 14-19 curriculum across the borough. The creation of a "Young People's College" is the main thrust of the development. In essence, this is planned as a systematic and centrally managed collaboration between the secondary schools, the Further Education College and the Sixth Form College. It is aimed at providing a curriculum broadened by more vocational and alternative provision and at providing learning support to meet the complex and varied needs of the age group. In many respects the developments have been well planned. The intended provision appears well matched to the needs of the age group. There is a clear, sequenced programme leading to the setting up of the college. The plan also sets out a series of targets which include quantified gains in attainment. The weakness of the planning lies in the lack of an action plan to connect the planned changes in provision with the targets for improved attainment.

## **Appendix 1: Recommendations**

The report makes a number of recommendations.

The following recommendation should be acted upon as a matter of urgency.

### **In order to improve provision for child protection:**

- establish further inter-agency working to make the most efficient use of the available social worker staffing.

The following recommendations are also fundamental in that they affect the LEA's capacity for improvement.

### **In order to improve support for ICT in secondary schools:**

- identify the specific curriculum needs of each school and implement a plan which provides greater support to raise standards of attainment.

### **In order to improve support for gifted and talented pupils:**

- extend and implement the support programme in all the primary schools.

### **In order to support schools better in dealing with special educational needs:**

- more fully and clearly define the future role of the educational psychology service in mainstream schools and establish the staffing needed to meet both statutory obligations and other support required by schools.

The report also makes the following recommendations.

### **In order to improve the cohesion between the LEA service to support school management and schools:**

- co-ordinate the marketing of services and the evaluation of schools' views; and
- delegate funding for the client support aspects of its two centrally funded catering posts.

### **In order to improve the performance management of school improvement services:**

- make more use of measurable indicators of success, including pupils' attainment.

### **In order to promote the combating of racism in schools:**

- disseminate regularly to schools a more detailed analysis of racist incidents and schools' responses to them.

### **In order to improve the quality of school building:**

- significantly improve their condition and suitability.
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**Appendix 2: Record of Judgement Recording Statements for the inspection**

No	Required Inspection Judgement	
<b>SECTION 1 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY</b>		
1.	The socio-economic context of the LEA	7
2.	The performance of schools	5
3.	Funding, including the co-ordination of external funding;	1
4.	The LEA's strategy for school improvement including the EDP and EiC	3
5.	The progress on implementing the LEA's strategy for school improvement including the EDP;	3
6.	The extent to which the LEA targets its resources to priorities	3
7.	The extent to which the LEA has in place effective strategies to promote continuous improvement including Best Value	3

<b>SECTION 2 : SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</b>		
8.	The extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge and intervention and shared those understandings with schools	2
9.	The extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need	3
10.	The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve, including the use of made of performance data	3
11.	The effectiveness of LEA identification of and intervention in under-performing schools	3
12.	Support to schools for raising standards in Literacy;	2
13.	Support to schools for raising standards in Numeracy	2
14.	Support to schools for raising standards in and the curriculum use of information and communications technology	4
15.	Support to schools for raising standards at Key Stage 3	3
16.	Support to schools in raising standards of ethnic minority and Traveller children including the effective deployment of the ethnic minority and Traveller achievement grants	4

	effective deployment of the ethnic minority and Traveller achievement grants	
17.	Support to schools for gifted and talented pupils	4
18.	Support for school leadership and management including support for schools efforts to achieve Best Value	3
19.	Support to school governors'	2
20.	The effectiveness of its services to support school management	4
a	Financial services	3
b	Human resources	1
c	Property services	3
d	Services for ICT in school administration	3
e	Cleaning and caretaking	3
f	Grounds maintenance	3
g	Catering	3
21.	The extent to which the LEA is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers	2
22.	The effectiveness of the leadership of services to support school improvement	3
23.	The effectiveness of the deployment of staff to support school improvement;	3
24.	The effectiveness of strategic planning of services to support school improvement	2
25.	The effectiveness of the performance management of services to support school improvement;	3
26.	The standard of expertise of staff to support school improvement;	2
27	The effectiveness of services to support school improvement	2
28	Value for money of services to support school improvement	4

<b>SECTION 3 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS</b>		
29	The effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for SEN;	1
30	The effectiveness of the LEA in taking steps to meet its statutory obligations in respect of SEN;	2
31	The effectiveness of the LEA in exercising its SEN functions to support school improvement;	3
32	The extent to which the LEA has exercised its SEN functions to meet the requirements of value for money.	2

<b>SECTION 4 PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION</b>		
33	The overall effectiveness of the LEA in promoting social inclusion	2
34	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to the provision of school places.	3
35	The effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning;	4
36	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools;	3
37	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to provision for pupils who have no school place;	2
38	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to school attendance	2
39	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to behaviour at school	2
40	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to Health and safety, welfare and child protection	5
41	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to children in public care;	3
42	The effectiveness of the LEA in combating racism;	4

<b>SECTION 5 CORPORATE ISSUES</b>		
43	The clarity, consistency, coherence and feasibility of corporate plans;	2
44	The effectiveness of the procedures for implementing and evaluating corporate plans	2
45	The speed, transparency and effectiveness of decision-making (particularly financial decision-making);	2
46	The quality of the leadership provided by elected members;	2
47	The quality of the leadership provided by senior officers	1
48	The quality of the advice given to elected members	2
49	The effectiveness of the co-ordination of actions in support of priorities involving collaboration between several agencies	3

<b>OVERALL JUDGEMENTS</b>		
50	The progress made by the LEA overall	2
51	The LEA'S capacity for further improvement and to address the recommendations of the inspection	2
52	The overall effectiveness of the LEA	2

In addition we inspected:-

Support for 14-19	N/A
Support for early years-	1
Support for Asylum seekers	N/A

JRS numerical judgements are allocated on a 1 to 7 point scale:

Grade 1 – Very good

Grade 2 – Good

Grade 3 – Highly satisfactory

Grade 4 – Satisfactory

Grade 5 – Unsatisfactory

Grade 6 – Poor, significant weaknesses

Grade 7 – Very poor, fails to provide effective support to schools