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OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

INSPECTION OF NEWHAM LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

JANUARY 1999

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

2. The inspection was in two stages. An initial review carried out in September 1998 established a picture of the LEA's context, the performance of its schools, its strategy and the management of services. The initial review was based on data, some of which has been provided by the LEA, on school inspection and audit reports, on documentation and on discussions with LEA members, staff in the Education Department and in other Council departments and representatives of the LEA's partners. In addition, a questionnaire seeking views on aspects of the LEA's work was circulated to 87 schools.

3. The second stage of the inspection carried out in November 1998 involved studies of the effectiveness of particular aspects of the LEA's work through visits to four secondary, one special, one nursery and thirteen primary schools. The visits tested the views of governors, headteachers and other staff on key aspects of the LEA's strategy. The visits also considered whether the support which is provided by the LEA contributes where appropriate to the discharge of the LEA's statutory duties is effective in contributing to improvements in the school and provides value for money. In addition to the standard themes the visits to different schools covered:

- Early Years Education.
- The LEA's Inclusive Education Strategy.
- Support to Schools on Attendance and Behaviour

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

REVIEW OF NEWHAM LEA

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Newham LEA serves the people of Newham well. It also serves the country well in demonstrating, in common with a very small number of the authorities inspected so far, that it is possible successfully to challenge the assumption that poverty and ethnic diversity must necessarily lead to failure at school. The LEA, with the schools, is beginning unequivocally to offer to its community the present reality of improvement and hope of further progress.

6. Standards of achievement in Newham schools are, by national norms, for the most part low, but they are improving at a rate which is, in some ways, the fastest in the country. The schools deserve credit for this, and the LEA deserves to share the credit. The factors that have done most to contribute to this success are: the determination of the Council not to tolerate failure; the dynamic and imaginative professional leadership of the LEA; the steady rise in the education budget, albeit from a previous position generally conceded to have been inadequate, and the careful targeting of that increase to changing priorities.

7. The Council's willingness to invest in education has not been a simple matter of pouring in resources. The intention - and the reality - is to invest in success, and to demand value for money. Elected members rightly demand a return on their investment, and are prepared to take action if it fails to materialise.

8. The LEA has a clear, coherent strategy for school improvement, which is understood and accepted by the schools. It consults well with its schools and enjoys good relationships with them. Some headteachers complain of an excess of initiatives, and this report refers to one or two instances of hasty, ill-considered implementation of policies for which there was, in principle, much to be said. However, the LEA has a deliberate policy of being as much at the leading edge of development as possible. It seeks, quite explicitly, to make Newham an exciting place in which to teach. This strategy is beginning to work.

9. Much of what the LEA does is well done, and in some respects a model for others to follow. In respect of attendance at school and school exclusions, it defies national trends by virtue of provision of outstanding quality. It has successfully implemented a policy of inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. Support for literacy and numeracy is very good. An effective infrastructure of management support services enables headteachers to concentrate on running their schools.

10. Where it is less successful, it is not because of any absence either of goodwill or strategic sense. Rather, it is because the detailed implementation does not match the quality of the strategy. There are two critical examples.

11. First, the LEA proposes to amalgamate provision for the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) with that for bilingual pupils - the English Language Service (ELS). In an LEA like Newham, this is obviously of crucial importance. The rationale for this change is set out in this report. The LEA makes a strong case, but has given insufficient attention to the legitimate concerns raised by the staff of the English

Language Service, among others. Too much has been left for later consideration that should have been the subject of deliberate prior planning.

12. Secondly, the LEA takes the view that the onus for school improvement, particularly so far as the quality of teaching is concerned, rests with the schools. It is right to do so. It is also perfectly reasonable for it to take the view that the LEA's role is to intervene where necessary and otherwise to seek to enhance the schools' capacity to manage their own improvement. Again, however, the implementation of that strategy is flawed, firstly because of an over-estimate of the need for direct intervention in schools on the part of the LEA, and secondly because the performance management of the Monitoring and Standards Unit (MSU) is insufficient to ensure that the key role of the monitoring officer is carried out with consistent effectiveness. As a result, the LEA obtains less than satisfactory value for money from its investment in intervention and support.

13. These are major concerns, which arise from the fact that the LEA is, in some respects, in a period of transition. At present, the LEA has many schools in difficulties. It is unduly pessimistic to suppose that that will continue indefinitely to be the case. The LEA should, and can with some confidence, predicate its future policies on the assumption of success and regard it as its role to free its schools from a dependency which is still sometimes apparent. This report contains much more praise than criticism - and relatively few recommendations, other than that the LEA should continue on its present path. The recommendations are important, but should not be seen as carping. Their intention is to make the good better.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. *In order to ensure the success of the proposed merger of the ELS with the NLS and to safeguard the provision of EAL teaching, the LEA should:*

- i. set out in detail how it proposes to monitor the use of funding allocated for the support of bilingual pupils;
- ii. provide guidance for headteachers on the management of EAL staff and on appropriate procedures for liaison and joint planning for EAL staff and class and subject teachers;
- iii. define and publish to headteachers and governors an entitlement for EAL teachers to training and staff development.

B. *In order to obtain better value for money and more consistent performance from the MSU and the Curriculum Support and Professional Development Service (CSPDS) the LEA should:*

- i. institute more formal line-management procedures for Monitoring and Standards Officers (MSO), incorporate regular performance reviews, linked to training opportunities and clearly defined individual objectives, derived from the service development plan;
- ii. set and communicate to schools clear quality standards defining the level of performance expected from their MSO, and collect evidence from schools to

assess that performance. Link assessment of the performance of MSO with schools' success in meeting targets;

C. *In order to assist it in its stated purpose of reinforcing the autonomy of schools, the LEA should:*

- i. take note of the view expressed in the review of Inspection and Advisory Service that the amount of support directed to weaker schools is excessive and actually reinforces dependency;
- ii. redefine its notion of "monitoring", placing more emphasis on the analysis of data, and reassess the proportion of the budget for inspection and advice that it needs to retain centrally.

D. *In order to control the rapid growth in central expenditure on pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools and extend the success of its Inclusive Education Strategy, the LEA should:*

- i. review its criteria for the progression of pupils through the stages of the special educational need Code of Practice and refine its allocation of provision to match needs more accurately;
- ii. increase the levels of delegation of peripatetic pupil services on a planned basis;
- iii. evaluate the impact of its Inclusive Education Strategy on the attainment and progress of all pupils;
- iv. ensure that appropriate education is provided for the small cohort of pupils with Educational and Behavioural Difficulties in Key Stage 3.

SECTION 1: THE CONTEXT OF THE LEA

Socio-economic Context

14. Further data on the context of the LEA is given in Appendix 1. The London Borough of Newham serves a largely disadvantaged community in the East End of London. The population fell during the 1960s and 70s, but has grown significantly in recent years and now stands at 234,000. Newham and Tower Hamlets have the greatest rate of projected population growth of any area of the country over the next five years. It is a predominantly young population (with the highest proportion of children under ten in the 1991 census), and it is ethnically very diverse. In 1991 people of African, Caribbean and Asian heritage constituted 42 per cent of the Borough's population, a proportion which has increased subsequently. More than 60 languages are spoken in the Borough.

15. Newham has high levels of economic and social deprivation. The Department of the Environment's Local Conditions Index, based on the 1991 census, ranked Newham as the most deprived borough in the country. For example, only 13.4 per cent of adults were placed in social classes 1 and 2 in the 1991 census (nationally, the figure was 31 per cent). Higher education qualifications were held by only 8.7 per cent of adults (nationally 13.5 per cent). Unemployment is above the London average, as are mortality rates. The 1991 census showed that 21 per cent of children were cared for in lone-parent households: the tenth highest in England. In 1997, 44.5 per cent of pupils of primary age (national figure: 22.8 per cent) and 41.4 per cent of pupils of secondary age (national figure: 18.2 per cent) were eligible for free school meals.

16. In such a context, schools and children face problems of poor health, indifferent housing with poor or no facilities for study, frequent disturbances to schooling as parents move between rented houses or flats and, often, little or no English when they enter school (57 per cent of adult pupils in Newham schools in 1997 were from minority ethnic groups). As for many other inner urban areas, the challenge for the LEA and the schools is not to allow a proper awareness of this context to translate itself into low expectations.

Characteristics of the Pupil Population

17. The total mainstream school population in December 1997 was 45,702. There are 15,538 pupils in the secondary schools, 27,153 pupils in primary schools and 4,752 pupils attending nursery provision. At 66 per cent, the proportion of three-four year olds in education is high, compared with other LEAs. There are three special schools providing for 111 pupils, and the LEA places a further 107 pupils in special schools outside the Borough. The great majority of statemented pupils, however, are included within mainstream schools. Thus, the proportion of pupils in special schools at 0.3 per cent (nationally 1.6 per cent) is very low, whereas the proportion of pupils with statements (4.0 per cent) is not significantly different from the national average (3.9 per cent). The Grant Maintained secondary school has 780 pupils.

18. Approximately 53 per cent of pupils are bilingual, four-fifths of whom (42 per cent of the whole school population) require support with English. The main ethnic groups, other than white (41 per cent), represented in the population are: Indian (18.7 per cent), Pakistani (10.6 per cent), Bangladeshi (8.3 per cent), Black Caribbean (6.9 per cent) and

Black African (5.0 per cent). There are over 400 refugee children in Newham schools. The percentage of ethnic minority pupils is much higher in some schools than others. In the secondary phase, for example, it ranges from 18 per cent to 94.6 per cent.

The Organisation of Schools

19. Pre-school provision is made up of eight nursery schools, 49 primary schools with nursery units, six council nursery centres, eight private nurseries, and 20 voluntary provided children's centres, playgroups or nurseries. Of the 63 maintained primary schools, six are infant schools, five juniors and the rest are infant and junior. Ten primary schools are voluntary aided or controlled.

20. One of the 14 secondary schools is grant-maintained. It has a small sixth-form of about 40. The two voluntary aided secondary schools, which have Technology College status, are single-sex up to age 15, but thereafter run a joint sixth-form of some 420 students. Of the 11 county 11-16 schools, two are for girls, one for boys and the rest are co-educational. Newham Sixth Form College and Newham College of Further Education provide the majority of post-16 provision.

21. The majority of pupils with special educational need, about 90 per cent, are placed in mainstream schools. Two of the three special schools cater for pupils with severe learning difficulties, profound physical difficulties and severe medical conditions. Both have pupils aged 2-19, and are reducing in size as more pupils are placed in mainstream schools. The third school caters for primary school pupils with behavioural difficulties. All pupils are dual-registered and either supported through outreach or taught for two or four days a week in the special school.

22. Three new schools are being built and are planned to open in the 1999/2000 school year. One of these, The Royal Docks Community School, is an 11-16 secondary school for 1200 pupils. Woodside Secondary School will be closed in August 1999 and most of its pupils and staff transferred to the new school. The other new schools are primary schools with nursery units, one on the Wiqdsor Park estate and the other in West Silvertown. Both will serve new housing estates.

23. Pupil teacher ratios are not significantly different from national averages in either phase, though the proportion of primary school pupils taught in classes of over 30 is below national figures. Apart from levels of disadvantage, there are two striking features of Newham schools: the size of some primary schools (three have over 800 on roll, with 927 on roll in the largest) and the extent to which school rolls are under pressure. The number of surplus places is very low in both phases (figures given in Section 3) and the LEA is currently building one new secondary school and two new primary schools.

Education Otherwise Than At School

24. The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provides 42 places for pupils who have been permanently excluded from schools and for a separate cohort of 20 pupils who are serious non-attenders with additional problems. Permanent exclusions represented 0.02 per cent of the population in primary schools in 1997 and 0.24 per cent in secondary schools. Both these figures are below national averages and, against national trends, have fallen from the previous year.

25. All pupils in the PRU are attached to a named school and pupils below Year 10 are re-integrated into the school within two half terms. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 progress towards alternative vocational education programmes, some on a part-time basis.

26. The Year 11 Project provides vocational education for up to 180 pupils who are referred from mainstream secondary schools in the autumn term of Year 11. If they are accepted on to the programme, they are removed from the roll of their school by Christmas. The department works with a number of education/vocational providers to deliver individual learning programmes which may include NVQs.

27. Hospital or home tuition is provided to children in Newham General Hospital and for those who are at home suffering from illness, injury or who are pregnant: there were 20 pupils in this cohort at the time of the inspection. In addition, 36 families have chosen to educate their children at home. There is a policy to monitor education at home although it is difficult to fulfil.

The Structure of the LEA and the Education Department

28. The Education Committee is one of seven main committees of the Council, the others being Social Services, Environment, Leisure, Housing, Policy and Resources, and Development Control and Licensing.

29. The membership of the Council consists exclusively of representatives of the Labour Party. There are four sub-committees of the Education Committee, Awards; Exclusion Panel; Council and Teachers Joint Negotiating Committee; Curriculum Complaints Panel.

30. A Director of Education heads the department with two Deputy Directors (School Management, Advice and Support, and Strategic and Corporate Services). In addition there is a Head of Client and Community Services and a Chief Monitoring and Standards Officer, the latter being a new post.

SECTION 2: THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS

The following summary refers to all maintained schools in Newham. The information given is illustrative. Further details on pupils' attainment are given in Appendix 2.

31. *Attainment on entry to Newham schools is generally below or well below national expectations.*

This is confirmed by the judgements of OFSTED inspectors, the evidence of the LEA's own baseline assessments and the contextual data referred to in Section 1, which shows that many pupils enter school with little or no English.

32. *Attainment remains low at all the stages of compulsory education. For example:*

- In 1997, Newham ranked 129 out of 132 LEAs for the performance of its schools in the Key Stage 2 English tests and 131 in the mathematics tests.
- In 1997, Newham ranked 105 out of 131 LEAs on the performance of its schools in GCSE at the 5+ A*~C indicator and 22 on the 5+ A*~G indicator.

33. *Levels of attainment have risen in most schools in both the primary and secondary phases. For example:*

- The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 in the Key Stage 2 English tests rose from 31.6 per cent in 1995 to 48.2 per cent in 1997.
- The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 in the Key Stage 2 mathematics tests rose from 37.3 per cent in 1995 to 47.3 per cent in 1997.
- The percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A*~C at GCSE rose between 1994 and 1997 from 23.2 per cent to 33.6 per cent.
- The percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A*~G at GCSE rose between 1994 and 1997 from 74 per cent to 86.7 per cent.

34. *The overall rate of improvement in attainment is in many respects above or well above the national rate. In GCSE at 5+ A*~C it is the highest in the country, while at 5+ A-G the LEA's schools now perform at the national average. However, not all aspects of performance rose at this high rate. For example:*

The percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 tests in mathematics rose by 10.0 per cent between 1995 and 1997. It rose nationally by 17.1 percent

35. OFSTED inspection data confirms that attainment is generally below national norms and that Newham schools have many weaknesses:

Twelve per cent of Newham primary schools were rated good or very good in relation to standards of achievement, compared with 52 per cent nationally. Thirty-one per cent of secondary schools were rated good or very good in this respect compared with 60 per cent nationally. Fourteen per cent of Newham primary schools (seven per cent nationally) and 38 per cent of secondary schools (nine per cent nationally) needed to make substantial improvements in this regard. With regard to the quality of education provided, ethos and efficiency, inspectors judged Newham schools to be substantially less good than schools nationally.

There are now seven schools requiring, special measures and ten with serious weaknesses. According to OFSTED, three of the 14 secondary schools (20%) require significant improvement (5% nationally). A further 6 (42%) require some improvement (27% nationally). Twelve of the 64 primary schools (18%) require significant improvement (3.7% nationally) and a further 34 (53%) require some improvement (29% nationally).

SECTION 3: THE LEA STRATEGY

The LEA has a clear view of its role in support of schools, arrived at through appropriate consultation. Its priorities for school improvement reflect national and local priorities and were arrived at on the basis of a systematic analysis of needs. The LEA's strategy for fulfilling its role is explicit, well set-out, coherent and known to all concerned. Schools are well aware of the LEA's priorities and consider them in their own development planning. As a pilot Best Value authority, the LEA is particularly well placed to evaluate its own success.

ROLE AND PRIORITIES

36. The Council's vision is "to make Newham a place where people choose to live, work and stay". In order to achieve this, it aims specifically at giving residents access to jobs and producing a diverse and strong community within an attractive environment. The development of social inclusion, which entails attempts to promote equality and reduce poverty, is seen as essential.

37. The Council seeks to promote "a learning community" within the Borough, whereby expectations about levels of educational achievement are raised. The aim is to produce a better climate for learning within schools and in the wider community. Improved school attendance, educational attainment and wider adult involvement in education will be used as indicators of success.

38. The aims and objectives of the LEA are consistent with those of the Council as a whole in that they stress "Best Value" and service quality, emphasise the provision of a sound environment and attach importance to the "learning community". The Service Strategy for 1997-2000 defines the following as the main priorities of the LEA:

- to provide a quality education service in all schools;
- to provide inclusive and comprehensive education for all in an environment that is secure and of sound quality;
- to develop a learning community which values education for children and young people and as a lifelong process for all;
- to maximise the financial resources available for education and to ensure resources are managed efficiently and effectively and that services are "best in class" and "best value";
- to put education at the heart of urban regeneration in Newham and to develop partnerships to help to raise achievement and employability of young people and adults who live in Newham.

39. The LEA is keen to ensure that current and future developments support and complement the plan for the Education Action Zone (EAZ) in the south-west of the borough. This is an approach to school improvement centred on Eastlea Secondary School and 16 primary and two nursery schools in a particularly deprived area. The Secondary School is currently in special measures. The purpose of the Education Action Zone is to bring about educational improvement by harnessing the enterprise of professional educationalists and that of a wide range of public and private sector partners. The intent is to achieve excellence by developing new approaches and disseminating good practice, both in the schools involved and in other schools across the LEA.

40. Specifically, this initiative involves the employment of Advanced Skills Teachers, competency-related career development (including recognition by appropriate remuneration) for teachers who perform well, a review of the curriculum and the establishment of a pastoral care team addressing the difficulties faced and presented by dysfunctional families, the introduction of home-school agreements, homework schools, Saturday schools, funding for work-related learning and a zone improvement team. All these priorities signify, not a change in what the LEA does, but an intensification of its current school improvement practice.

Service Planning

41. The process of drawing up the Education Development Plan involves: self-review by the LEA; an analysis of strengths, weaknesses and needs; the identification of priorities and of the action to be taken, and budgeting. The Education Development Plan for 1999-2002 outlines the priorities for the improvement of schools. These are:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning;
- developing curriculum guidelines and strategies, particularly in the early years, information and communication technology (ICT), literacy, numeracy, special educational needs, the transition from primary to secondary school, the 14-19 curriculum and education otherwise than at school;
- reviewing and improving school performance by developing quality assurance
- methods;
- improving support for headteachers and senior managers;
- improving the quality, efficiency and co-ordination of central support services;
- developing a learning community - to promote a learning culture among local communities.

42. The draft Education Development Plan analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the current position. Each priority is underpinned by action to be taken by specified personnel and timescales. The priorities are mapped across the three key areas and seven aspects defined in the official guidance.

43. The LEA priorities for children with special educational needs are set out in the draft Education Development Plan. They reflect one of the aims of the Education Service Annual Development Plan 1998/99, which is:

“To provide inclusive and comprehensive education for all in an environment that is secure and of sound quality”

with the specific objective:

“To ensure every child is able to attend a mainstream school and receive appropriate support in respect of any special educational needs they may have”

44. The LEA has made a strong contribution to the “Children’s Plan” which draws upon a wide range of views, including those of schools, parents and children. This a first class analysis which has the potential to provide a sound basis for the setting of future priorities across departments and agencies.

Consultation and Communication

45. The priorities within the EDP have been agreed in consultation with local headteachers, governing bodies and others, and also through the work in schools of the Monitoring and Standards Officers. They reflect local as well as national priorities. Consultation with schools operates on a variety of levels in the LEA: with the teacher and headteacher unions and associations; with the Newham association for secondary and primary heads (NASH and NAPH), the Governors’ Forum, the Joint Consultative Committee, which deals with strategic issues, such as the budget, and the Joint Negotiating Committee which deals primarily with pay and conditions. The relationship with heads in particular involves more than consultation, in that discussion of an intended policy usually develops into detailed implementation, through an operational group. Over major issues, such as the EDP, the scope of consultation is very wide, involving a large number of interested parties. The schools visited knew the LEA’s priorities, and felt consulted over them. Headteachers and governors felt that their voice was heard. The LEA was not infinitely malleable, but it responded to rational argument, and was open to persuasion.

Evaluation

46. The LEA gives considerable attention to evaluation, not only in relation to school improvement. Its main strategies are:

- consultation with schools and others six-monthly reviews
- committee reports
- service standards and performance indicators monthly performance reviews conducted by members Best Value reviews
- audit reports
- an annual survey of residents
- external reviews, by the NFER and others.

These strategies, together with members’ insistence on strict accountability, enable the LEA to assess its own performance with unusual rigour and to take action on the basis of that assessment.

47. Targets are set for end of Key Stage tests and GCSE results for each school, and these are aggregated for the LEA as a whole. These are to be monitored through the work of the Monitoring and Standards Officers through reports to the Director of Education. Regular reports on progress made in the priorities of the development plan are to be used in raising achievement.

48. The LEA produces, for each school governing body, an annual School Achievement Review (SAR) where the school’s targets are defined, together with other comparative data on performance across the LEA. In future, the Monitoring and

Standards Officer will review actual performance against these targets in dialogue with the school.

Statutory Responsibilities

49. The LEA takes reasonable steps to meet the great majority of its statutory responsibilities. However arrangements for appraisal are not currently in place, and the SACRE does not meet sufficiently frequently fully to address all the compliance issues arising in schools.

FUNDING

50. Newham's expenditure on education has been below its standard spending assessment (SSA) for many years. However, over the last five years, and in particular since the three year budget strategy adopted in 1996, the percentage of the total Council budget spent on education has increased every year. This steady increase enables the LEA to target money to new initiatives without diverting resources from other continuing priorities. Newham now spends 94.4 per cent of its education SSA on education and is planning to increase this in the future. The education budget also receives specific grant-related expenditure totalling £7.284 million in 1998/9 of which £3.5 million is funding for English language support.

Year	SSA for education (000)	Net expenditure on education (excludes capital)	Expenditure as a % of of education SSA
1993/4	120,318	103,083	85.7
1994/5	124,425	110,079	88.5
1995/6	123,810	112,761	91.1
1996/7	130,381	119,786	91.9
1997/8	133,797	123,562	92.1
1998/9	146,890	138,647	94.4

51. The authority has been successful in attracting additional resources for education through a variety of special grants and partnership funding. A bid for one of the first Education Action Zones, to commence in September 1998, was successful.

52. The expenditure per pupil in Newham primary schools and for post-16 pupils is comparable to that of other outer London boroughs, but higher for secondary pupils. The LEA has moved additional money into the primary sector in the past three years, but expenditure is still relatively low. Expenditure on under fives was similar to that in other outer London boroughs and may now be above average, given the resources put into reception classes in 1998.

Expenditure per pupil in schools	1996/7			PSB per pupil 1998/9	
	Newham	Outer London average	Inner London excluding city	Newham	Outer London
Pupils under 5	2297	2301	2795		
Primary pupils aged 5 and over	1803	1864	2276	1945	1993
Secondary pupils under 16	2860	2539	2974	2844	2690
Secondary pupils 16 and over	3654	3514	3840		

Source: Audit Commission Pis for 1996/7

Source: CIPFA PSB per pupil 1998/9

53. In 1997/8 the LEA delegated 85.8 per cent of the potential schools budget (PSB). This rose to 87.2 per cent in 1 998/9. This is lower than the average level for Outer London. A comparison of the aggregated schools budget (ASB) as a percentage of the total education budget again shows that Newham delegates less than the average Outer London borough.

	ASB (including GM) as a % total net education budget
Inner London average	63%
Outer London average	73%
England average	71 %
Newham	65%

54. The two main reasons for this low level of delegation are the LEA's policy on special education needs and the relatively high revenue budget for structural repairs and maintenance. Newham has the lowest percentage of children in special schools of any authority in the country. instead, it maintains many children with statements of special educational need in mainstream schools. While some money to support children with statements is delegated, a significant amount is kept centrally to fund the special needs support services. In other LEAs more of these pupils would be in special schools and hence some of this money would normally be delegated through LMSS.

Resources for Special Education

55. Newham's policy of inclusive education is not particularly expensive in terms of annual revenue cost. It is, for example, lower than that of a sample of eight other

London Boroughs, principally because Newham's additional expenditure on support for pupils with statements is more than offset by much lower expenditure on special school places, both in and out of the borough. Costs are higher than for the sample of 22 non-London authorities.

£ net per pupil - all LEA pupils	Newham	London average	Mets average	Counties average
ASB special schools	£53.54	£145.37	£106.13	£97.07
Out-borough placements	£44.53	£87.43	£23.44	£23.77
Statement support in central budgets	£106.30	£60.98	£37.53	£45.01
SEN School transport	£34.00	£44.75	£26.19	£28.85
Education otherwise	£36.31	£40.41	£14.73	£25.24
Education Psychology	£10.91	£14.46	£9.66	£8.41
Statement administration	£8.03	£11.90	£4.30	£5.19
Total	£302.33	£418.99	£235.61	£239.87

Source: Audit Commission analysis of 30 authorities plus CIPFA 1 997/8 estimates for special school ASB per pupil. (Note: this does not include a comparison of money delegated directly to schools).

Resources for all schools

56. In 1995/6, the Council had a projected deficit for the next three years. Members agreed to a fundamental review and a subsequent three year medium-term budget strategy. The fundamental budget review identified efficiency and other savings to both remove the deficit and allow for planned spending in priority areas. The subsequent medium-term budget strategy has been successfully followed, and education has been the major service beneficiary with net growth of 4.17 per cent and 3.35 per cent in 1997/8 and 1998/9 on top of that required to meet inflation and increased numbers of pupils.

57. The schools' budget was protected within the education budget, with the department's savings mainly coming from improved efficiency. Cuts were made in the youth service and spending on adult education has remained relatively low. Since 1993/4, all schools have received additional money every year for 'unavoidable growth' due to increased pupil numbers, pay settlements for teachers and ancillary staff and inflation. This policy has created a relatively stable and predictable base against which schools can plan their own budgets.

58. Minor changes have been made to the local scheme of delegation over the past three years to reflect concerns from schools and evidence about actual spending compared to notional allocations and council priorities. These changes have been discussed with representatives of headteachers at the regular LMS planning group.

Delegation of money for special educational need was increased in 1 9 97/8 when money for pupils at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice was delegated.

59. Where central services are delegated to schools, there is currently a high level of buy-back. For example, only one school does not buy the authority's clerking service. All county schools have chosen to remain in the centrally negotiated cleaning and grounds maintenance contracts. Headteacher representatives were included in the group that wrote the service specification and in looking at the tenders, and are involved in regular meetings to monitor these contracts. The cleaning contract in particular is held in high regard by schools.

60. The Council's procedure for allocating resources includes extensive consultation with schools and other stakeholders. The Strategic Planning Advisory Group includes headteachers. A major conference is held in October every year where members of the Education Committee discuss alternatives and recommend their priorities to the policy and resources committee and the full Council. Once the details of the grant settlement is known, Policy and Resources Committee agree an initial Council-wide budget strategy in January. Indications of likely budgets are available for schools by January. Schools received individual information about their 1998/9 budgets by 1 5th March.

61. Detailed arrangements have been put in place for monitoring school budgets and no school has carried over a serious deficit over three years. All schools use the same SIMS budget module. A standard core budget plan is produced, with termly up-dates for governing bodies; these are also collected centrally via the governors' clerks and reviewed by the education department. School balances reached 7.4 per cent of budget allocation on 31/3/94 but have been steadily reduced over the past four years and currently stand at 3.57 per cent. An LEA "loan scheme", liked by heads, allows schools to go into deficit to pay for agreed schemes and reduces the need to build up balances. Where deficits are not agreed a plan has to be agreed to remove them.

62. As part of the Council's aim to raise standards in schools the resources allocated to education have been increased year by year, generally ear-marked for specific services that match priorities agreed by the Education Committee. For example, in 1 997/8 one third of the growth money in education was directed towards activities placed under the heading of 'a learning community', one of the Council's major policy priorities. Other growth has been generally targeted at reception or primary-aged pupils and at structural repairs and modifications to buildings to meet science and ICT requirements.

63. The Council is a "Best Value" pilot authority and has set up a local performance review process which scrutinises, in turn, selected services within education. The school meals service, home-to-school transport and the advisory and inspectorate service have just been reviewed and the special needs services will follow. This process includes officers from other sections and departments and follows an agreed framework to ensure that cost and other comparisons are made.

SCHOOL PLACES AND ADMISSIONS

64. Despite the challenges presented by a rapidly rising population, the LEA meets its statutory obligations in relation to the supply of school places. Three new schools

are planned in the next three years, one secondary and two primary: two special schools are in the process of being amalgamated into one.

65. The LEA provides good information on admissions, including the opportunity for parents to express a preference and guidance notes regarding appeals procedures. The number of appeals has risen significantly in 1998 to 307 in the primary phase and 97 in the secondary. Appeals are heard on a monthly basis in order to minimise any delay for pupils seeking admission during the year.

LIAISON WITH OTHER SERVICES AND AGENCIES

66. Both the Council and the LEA stress the importance of partnership, and the EAZ is an example of a wide range of partnerships across the public and private sectors.

67. Relations with the Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) refer mostly to the operation of the Education Business Partnership, which has fostered some cooperation with the other six LEAs that constitute TEC, and given rise to a large number of initiatives in school, involving work-placements for pupils and teachers, mentoring of African-Caribbean boys, primary reading schemes, and new approaches to the work-related curriculum and careers guidance. Another example of joint work is in adult education where the service delivers an increasing number of courses, funded by FEFC, directly for Newham College.

68. Liaison with the Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses is broader than issues of admissions, school places and the operation of the SACRE. Both dioceses are extensively consulted on major issues, such as the EDP and on particular crises in aided or controlled schools. The LEA convenes a SACRE, though it meets only rarely, leaving some compliance issues unattended to, and has published an agreed syllabus.

69. The Education Department contributes to the Children's Service Plan, which includes an analysis of needs directly related to the priorities set. Some of those priorities, such as reducing the number of pupils who are excluded, directly relate to educational provision. The Newham strategy for pupils under five is the result of joint work with Social Services and the voluntary sector. This includes the transfer of some responsibilities from Social Services to Education, who are developing the expanded nursery centres. However, schools reported some difficulties in cooperating effectively with Social Services at local level.

70. The LEA is represented on the Area Children Protection Committee and some of its sub-groups and has produced child protection procedures for schools. Monitoring by members is reported to be extremely tight.

71. The LEA has produced a draft behaviour support plan. In its introduction it articulates some of the difficulties relating to liaison with other services and agencies:

“there is a wide range of support for schools However, it is clear from the consultation process that the full range of services is not always fully appreciated ... many differing perceptions ... a lack of information about roles and responsibilities. Links with other agencies are not always viewed positively.....there needed to be a cross-departmental review to examine the responsibilities of individual services.”

The LEA would acknowledge that these difficulties, which are not unique to Newham, have not been overcome.

SECTION 4: THE MANAGEMENT OF LEA SERVICES

The LEA services are generally well-managed. Service planning is consistent with the overall strategy of the LEA and the Council and with an analysis of the needs of the schools and of Newham. With few exceptions, services ensure that reasonable steps are taken to meet the statutory duties of the LEA. Most, but not all, of the work is well managed. Some is outstanding in its expertise and in the use it makes of funding. The LEA gives considerable attention to monitoring quality and effectiveness, and acts upon the results of any evaluation undertaken. It has only informal procedures for advising schools on the availability and quality of services which they use, but which the LEA does not provide.

INSPECTION AND ADVICE

72. The inspection and advisory services in Newham have a strategic approach which is broadly convincing and in many ways fully in line with recent statutory changes. At the heart of it is the Newham Quality Assurance Model, the thrust of which is the improvement of school management through supported self-review. If it is indeed the case (and there is much evidence that it is) that school improvement depends fundamentally on the school's own capacity to improve, support for school management is a self-evidently reasonable approach for an LEA to adopt. However, it is an ambitious strategy, which demands highly expert implementation. The LEA is not consistently achieving this; the effectiveness of inspection and advice (analysed in sections 5-7) is too variable.

73. Partly in response to a review by the NFER, but also in response to government policy, the LEA has recently undertaken a Best Value review of its provision of inspection and advice. That review recommended a separation between those elements of the service that were principally concerned with monitoring schools and those which provided support for teaching the curriculum, with the funding for the latter delegated to schools. The LEA broadly accepted this advice, and was implementing it as the inspection proceeded. A Monitoring and Standards Unit (MSU), headed by a Chief Monitoring and Standards Officer (CMSO), is to be responsible for monitoring and, where necessary, intervene in schools. The CMSO reports directly to the Director of Education. In addition, a new Curriculum Support and Professional Development Section (CSPDS), responsible to an Assistant Director, will provide curriculum support and include the new Language and Literacy Support Service.

74. Again, the rationale is clear, but there are some difficulties. The first is cost: these are large, expensive services. The MSU alone will have 15 officers, an Achievement and Assessment Officer and a Senior Data Analysis Officer, heading a team of three others. The CSPDS is similarly generously staffed. That degree of resource is based on the assumption that monitoring schools necessarily entails regular visiting, and an entitlement of five days is proposed. That assumption needs to be reexamined. It is not obviously consistent with the principle of "intervention in inverse proportion to success", and it is certainly not the case at present that the MSU is carrying out its task with consistent quality.

75. The LEA would quite properly say that it needs to devote considerable resources to monitoring and intervention, because it has a large number of schools with serious weaknesses or in special measures. We agree, but the LEA should consider whether

regard the current heavy emphasis on monitoring as a transitional stage. To be fair, in principle it does so.

76. The second difficulty is the strong possibility of overlap between the services. Both services include among their priorities improving the quality of teaching and learning, developing curriculum strategies, and improving support for headteachers and senior managers. All are worthwhile, but the danger is that in effect the same work is double-funded.

77. The CSPDS was not fully in operation at the time of the inspection, but the MSU was rather closer to that stage; link inspectors (now renamed Monitoring and Standards Officers) had been in post for rather more than a year. The MSOs are tightly programmed, but the monitoring and management of their performance are informal. Improvement in performance is said to come through the experience of team working and the sharing of practice. Reliance on improvement by osmosis is, however, rarely sufficient, and this is also the case here. HMI views on the effectiveness of the MSOs are set out in the later sections of this report. They coincide with the views of schools. The headteacher who referred to the MSU as the "Achilles heel" of the LEA was not typical, but neither was the concern unique to her. The LEA should be more concerned that its provision of performance data, guidance on its use for target-setting, support to senior management, development planning and self-evaluation are thought by schools to be no more than adequate. All these aspects are critical to the LEA's overall strategy. In the context of Newham, adequate performance is not good enough.

PUPILS' SUPPORT SERVICES

Behaviour Support

78. In the school survey, the two services which support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream schools are, in contrast to many LEAs regarded as adequate by schools. The service to secondary schools is more highly regarded than that in any other LEA surveyed. The services are primarily designed to fulfil the statutory duties of the department by meeting the needs defined in pupils' statements. The teams have expanded over time in order to cope with increased levels of demand. If any additional staff time remains, this is used to meet the needs of other children in the school where the teacher is based. School visits showed that the team meets statutorily defined needs well, and also the needs of other individual pupils. Good advice and training are provided to teachers in mainstream education.

79. In the secondary phase, teachers are allocated to a particular school, their deployment being worked out on a half-termly basis. Teachers are specifically recruited to these posts, usually from the mainstream sector, and are relatively highly paid. In the primary phase, in addition to fulfilling the statutory duties of the LEA, staff are deployed towards earlier identification and assessment of pupils' needs. Staff are well deployed, resources are allocated to need and good use is made of staff time. The progress of individual pupils is carefully monitored but there is no evaluation of the overall impact of the service on the attainment and progress of all pupils who are supported.

Educational Psychology Service

80. In the school survey, the Educational Psychology Service is rated significantly more highly than in other LEAs surveyed, particularly by secondary schools.

81. The Educational Psychology Service analyses need by prioritising statutory work at Stages 3, 4 and 5 of the Code of Practice; any additional time that remains is devoted to preventative or project work, particularly related to new work taking place in the Education Action Zone. The priority is to meet the LEA's statutory duties by providing psychological advice as part of the assessment of children. Over the last seven terms the service has met its target that 90 per cent of advice should be provided within the advisory timescale. This target is to be increased to 100 per cent. The demand for assessments has grown by about 100 a year over the last two years reaching 313 in 1997/8, with further increases anticipated. Staff are expert, highly motivated, well managed and appropriately deployed.

Education Welfare Service

82. In the schools' survey, the Education Welfare Service is rated as good by primary schools and adequate by secondary schools, but generally higher than the average of other LEAs surveyed. The service is effectively led and managed.

83. The predominant aim is to improve levels of school attendance. For this purpose there is a thorough analysis of attendance rates and patterns in each school. Staff are deployed accordingly, targeting their efforts on those schools in most need and towards specific groups of children who are "at risk". The service has sophisticated targeting and reporting mechanisms, and levels of attendance have improved consistently over the last four years. In addition to its work on improving attendance, the service provides the education department's child protection and child employment services, thus fulfilling the department's statutory duties in all three areas.

84. The service has deliberately and successfully recruited local personnel with a variety of language skills. Apart from the senior levels, staff have been appointed on lower pay scales and provided with training, supervision and a competency framework to assure quality. Staff are deployed in three decentralised teams and designated to groups of secondary schools and their associated primary schools. Officers have detailed service level agreements with schools, including a half-day schedule with secondary schools and a weekly visit to primary schools. The quality and effectiveness of the service are meticulously monitored through the analysis of attendance patterns and other data. Regular and thorough reports are made to the Education Committee.

Learning Support Service

85. In the schools' survey the learning support service is rated as adequate by both primary and secondary schools and average in comparison with other authorities.

86. The service is led by a head of service with an establishment of 77.5 teachers, 19 nursery nurses and 144 classroom assistants. This very large service costs the LEA £4,139,616 - the equivalent of £90 for every Newham pupil and nearly £7,000 per pupil for the 600 pupils who receive support. It is argued, with some justice, that this service is so large, and the cost per pupil so high, because more children with statements require support in mainstream schools, in line with the LEA's inclusion strategy.

87. The service supports statemented children with general and specific learning difficulties in mainstream primary and secondary schools, and gives some support to children with special educational needs in pre-school services. The provision to meet those needs is defined in each child's statement. Provision is banded in terms of teacher support (2.8 hours or 3.8 hours) or learning support assistance (5, 10, 16.5 or 32.5 hours). It is not clear what criteria are used to define the match of provision to needs.

88. The work is well managed with the minimum of administrative support. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified and skilled and a comprehensive training programme is provided for Learning Support Assistants. Planning and priorities are determined by needs and staff are rationally deployed. Procedures have recently been put in place for monitoring performance. These include monitoring staff performance through observation and the collection of relevant documentation. Pupils' progress is monitored against their individual education plans and through annual reviews in addition to the monitoring of key stage test and examination results. However, as with the Behaviour Support Services, there is no evaluation of the overall impact of the service on the attainment and progress of all pupils supported.

89. The service, by and large, meets the current needs. However, the number of statements in the LEA has grown very rapidly and is predicted to continue to do so. Either the service must expand greatly, to the point where it will become difficult to manage, or some elements within it should be delegated to schools. The latter is preferable, but the LEA also needs to review its criteria for progression between stages of the Code of Practice and for matching provision to needs and consider whether its banding arrangements are sufficiently refined and accurate.

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

90. It is an important function of an LEA to provide a management infrastructure, so that headteachers and others can be free to attend to the improvement of standards and quality. Newham does this effectively. The school survey indicated above average levels of satisfaction with the services provided, and all but one of the primary schools visited and all the secondary schools were at least reasonably content with the support provided. The primary headteacher who commented that schools get "a very good deal from the LEA and other council departments" was typical. HMI and the Audit Commission saw no reason to demur.

91. **The financial and administrative support services** are relatively low cost and highly rated by schools. Budgetary control is tight and the services are subject to strict accountability, not least to elected members. The aim of these tightly managed services is to enable schools to run their own budgets effectively. This aim is achieved, and constitutes a notable contribution to the overall aim of underpinning

school autonomy. Most day-to-day support for schools is provided - again, effectively by the Information Technology and Advisory Support Service.

92. **Property related services**, as in other inspected LEAs, attract a somewhat lower level of approval from schools. As usual, this relates as much to the condition of the buildings and to the particular circumstances of Newham as the state of the services. School buildings are under pressure because of rising numbers or because of inadequate access for special needs pupils. Significant additional funds have, during the past two years, been allocated to those needs, according to priorities rationally and sensibly defined. The capital budget includes £15 million for three new schools. The Education Department has a contract with Environmental Services for the repair and maintenance of buildings. In 1997, 98 per cent of urgent repairs were dealt with within one working day.

93. **Personnel services**, though costly, are again highly rated and crucial where schools face both difficulties of retention and recruitment and issues of competence and discipline. The SLA sets out clearly what schools can expect of the service, and buy back is 100 per cent. The service has been particularly effective in supporting necessary staff turnover in schools with weaknesses, and attempts to recruit staff who reflect the make-up of the Borough's population have had some success. The EAZ will pilot new initiatives aimed at recruiting and retaining good staff.

94. **Governor services** are highly regarded by governors and staff in schools; in the schools' survey, governor training and support for the governing body are rated as good by both primary and secondary schools and rated very highly compared to other local authorities.

95. The service provides comprehensive, timely and helpful advice leaving schools room to adapt to meet their own needs. The service is responsive to the demands from schools. It analyses the needs of governing bodies through a variety of methods, including feedback from the Governors' Forum, termly meetings of governing body training representatives and a two-year analysis of the relevant sections of OFSTED reports. Thus, for example, governors' training needs are identified and courses targeted at those needs. The clerking of governing bodies is efficient.

96. The work of the governor services section is well managed, with appropriate and sensible priorities established either through consultation or government directive. Progress against priorities is evaluated through surveys, feedback from training and relevant performance indicators. Feedback regarding training is very positive with attendance at training having increased by 20 per cent over the last academic year.

SECTION 5: LEA SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING STANDARDS

All the schools visited except one had made appreciable improvements in one or more of the aspects inspected. In every school, the LEA had made some positive contribution, often to several aspects. LEA support was always effective in relation to support for literacy, numeracy, pupils' attendance and behaviour, but much less consistent in relation to the use of performance data, support for early years education and schools in difficulties.

SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF PERFORMANCE DATA

97. The systematic use of performance data as a management tool is a relatively recent development in Newham. The extent to which it is understood, both by schools and by all those responsible for explaining it to them remains inconsistent. However, the LEA has responded vigorously to the national target-setting agenda and has made considerable progress in a relatively short time. The main impediment to further progress is lack of consistency in the performance of the link MSOs in regard to this and other aspects of their task.

98. Data is provided to individual schools, largely through the school profile. For example, GCSE and key stage tests results are analysed by gender, ethnicity and a wide range of contextual factors, set against Newham and national norms. This is sufficient to inform school management, though it in some respects duplicates nationally provided information. It is, however, largely raw data, without supporting text, and this reduces its usefulness. It is part of the role of the MSO to discuss the data with schools, and to assist them to set targets. To date, they do this better in primary than in secondary schools. LEA support for this aspect was satisfactory or good in two thirds of the primary schools visited, but in only half the secondary schools. In the case of one secondary school, the school had made considerable progress on its own initiative and demonstrated an understanding of the use of data that was in some respects superior to that of the LEA. The special school visited had made no progress in target-setting, and had received minimal help from the LEA.

99. More than most others, the LEA has thought seriously about what it means to set "challenging" targets. It asks schools to make predictions, using performance data and then makes the assumption that any target set above the level of prediction has an additional price tag: "schools can begin to set targets above the predicted level if they are able to devote additional resources and strategies to a particular cohort". This is not a standing invitation to bid for resources. Quite the contrary: it is an explicit assertion of accountability. Where extra resources are put in, it is assumed that targets will be set ~ met. If they are not met, that is cause for serious enquiry as to the reasons why not, conducted with the school by the MSO.

100. Newham at present possesses performance data for cohorts of pupils, but not for individuals. It rightly sees this as a limiting factor. The LEA is seeking to move towards a position where individual pupils can be tracked, as they move through the system. The LEA is also seeking to improve the quality and usefulness of the data available. It has, for example, recently introduced baseline assessment for both mainstream and SEN pupils. The introduction of the scheme, though positively received by schools, has not been free from problems; some work remains to be done to arrive at consistent judgements.

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING STANDARDS OF LITERACY

101. Improving standards of literacy is an obvious and major priority for Newham. The LEA has set a target of 71 per cent of all pupils reaching Level 4 in the Key Stage 2 tests by 2002. This is at the lower end of the indicative range, but is nevertheless challenging in view of the 1997 figure (48%) and particularly given the large number of early bilingual learners who do well at Key Stage 1 but do not acquire sufficiently rapidly the more sophisticated language needed for success at Key Stage 2.

102. Overall direction of provision for literacy in Newham is undertaken at an appropriately senior level, by the Literacy Strategy Steering Group, chaired by the Chief MSO. This brings together the Head of CSPDS, the English Adviser, the Head of Youth and Community, the line managers of the ELS, LSS, the ICT line manager, the Director of the Education Business Partnership and the Head of the Schools' Library Services.

103. This group has helped to bring coherence to what might otherwise be a confusing set of initiatives. The LEA was a pilot authority for the NLP, for which it was generously resourced. The level of resourcing was influential in inducing schools to work collaboratively with the LEA, and to be frank about their needs. These included a considerable enhancement of subject knowledge, as well as training in the management of the literacy hour and of guided reading. The literacy consultants, managed by the English adviser, have had considerable success in meeting those needs.

104. The LEA has been particularly successful in achieving fruitful co-operation with the Schools Library Service (and, indeed, with the Public Libraries generally), to the extent that the Service has become something of a beacon for others in London, to which it provides advice, support and consultancy. The Service provided a loan service and workshops for all 14 literacy summer schools held in Newham, not as one-off activities, but as an integral part of provision that has been wholly remodelled to support the NLS.

105. The LEA is seeking to achieve even closer collaboration between the NLS and support for bilingual pupils. The English Language Service in Newham is well-managed, and well regarded by schools. Large though it is, it has not been able to expand fast enough to enable it to cope with needs that have increased faster than the provision. The LEA now takes the view that all aspects of language development ought to be seen, and managed, as attempts to address the same issue. It therefore proposes to amalgamate the ELS with the NLS, and to devolve management of the ELS staff to schools, for four reasons:

- to locate all aspects of language development within the CSPDS; to achieve greater co-ordination over aspects of the NLS, such as the literacy hour;
- to give schools "ownership" and therefore greater understanding of the nature and purposes of EAL work;
- to ensure compatibility of advice between the two services.

106. This is a major change, not yet implemented, and therefore nothing can yet be said about its effectiveness. It is, however, clear that it is based on a strong rationale.

The pre-eminent objective is to ensure that all children have the literacy they need to tackle the school curriculum successfully at all levels. Beyond that, it was not possible to be certain that the LEA had fully thought through all aspects of this proposal. It may be that this is symptomatic of a certain tendency to rush into developments with insufficient forethought. Too much has been left for the head of the combined service (not yet in post) to sort out. Among the unresolved questions are:

- how are the specialist needs of EAL teachers to be attended to?
- how is the use of the EAL funding to be monitored?

It should be added that the LEA's willingness to delegate funding for this aspect of provision contrasts rather oddly with its general stance. It is not immediately obvious why the arguments adduced here do not apply with equal force elsewhere.

107. What can be said with some certainty at present is that support for literacy ranks as one of Newham's strengths. In all the primary schools visited for this inspection, some improvement had been effected, at least in provision, and frequently in standards too. The LEA had made at least a satisfactory contribution to that improvement in every school, and in all but two its contribution was good or very good. The quality of the work of the consultants and the English adviser is highly regarded by schools. Both their work in schools and the training provided for the NLS have been effective in supporting planning, the use of resources and the management of lesson time to provide a range of work combining teaching at the level of text, sentence and word, appropriately informed by adequate subject knowledge.

SUPPORT TO IMPROVE NUMERACY

108. Overall, the LEA support for improving numeracy is very good. Most schools are improving the performance of their pupils in mathematics. Teachers have had good in-service training in preparation for their work in the National Numeracy Project.

109. There is much to be done. The LEA results in key stage tests are below national norms at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. They are comparable to other similar LEAs at Key Stage 1, but lower at Key Stages 2 and 3. However, in most of the primary schools visited, there was a discernible trend of improvement in the standards of pupils' performance in mathematics.

110. The main thrust of the work on improving numeracy is through the National Numeracy Project. The LEA joined the Project in 1997 with a cohort of 12 schools; a second cohort of 18 schools commenced in September 1998. The then mathematics adviser and the numeracy consultant had appropriate training, although a new adviser was appointed in January 1998 and a second numeracy consultant will be in post by January 1 999. Funding of £88,300 from the Single Regeneration Budget has allowed the appointment of a numeracy consultant, one part-time clerical assistant and some extra resourcing. The LEA will evaluate the project to determine pupils' progress by the use of tests devised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

111. Much work has been done in training teachers and mathematics co-ordinators to allow them to participate in the National Numeracy Project. Heads and governors have also been released for training. Co-ordinators spoke highly of their attendance on the

DfEE ten day courses and all training has been positively received. The LEA numeracy centre provides a useful place for teachers to meet to discuss the project informally and to see interactive displays and materials.

112. Some schools have had visits from LEA staff to advise them on their policies, or issues such as the rewriting of their schemes of work, or the introduction of mental mathematics. In all cases the help they have been given has been highly valued. School visits to support the introduction of the NNP have included audits of current practice, including class observations, and assistance with planning the project. Other schools have not requested help from the LEA and this situation needs to be monitored closely; whilst some of these schools are coping well by using their own expertise, others are in need of help and in these latter schools the development of mathematics has been slow.

113. The LEA believes that the work has already had a positive impact in the classroom. Certainly, there is clear evidence that it has improved teaching by giving structure to lessons and improving teachers' planning. Some schools have thought carefully about the way in which pupils are grouped in classes. The teaching seen encouraged pupils to consider a variety of approaches and helped them to retain an open and enquiring spirit.

114. The emphasis on mental arithmetic, combined with some effective teaching, has helped to give stimulus to pupils and improved their learning. Pupils were seen to be given good assistance in developing strategies for mental arithmetic and in seeking patterns with number.

SUPPORT FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

115. The LEA admits pupils to full-time reception classes in the term in which they are five. Pre-school education is now available for more than two thirds of all 3 and 4 year olds. At least 95 per cent of all four year olds are in nursery or primary schools, although this take-up varies across the Borough because of the uneven spread of provision.

116. The LEA regard this aspect of education as important and in 1998/9 allocated £712,000 to early years developments, mainly to expand the number of pre-school places, but also to develop a suitable curriculum. Called "Foundations for our Future" it was developed in 1995, but has been updated to include general guidance on setting up the class, the QCA "areas of experience", assessment and recording, and planning. Funding has also been allocated to increase the administrative support to nursery schools, to provide revenue funding for a further nursery centre, and for a development officer for early years education.

117. The first of the LEA's nursery education centres was proposed as an "Early Excellence Centre" and it is intended that the other seven nursery schools will develop into integrated Early Years Centres over the next ten years. During the implementation of the period of this project a small project team will oversee developments. The team will have responsibility for producing a project plan and monitoring progress against an agreed schedule. The LEA are also involved in the wider area of pre-school learning and support for child care. Relationships with the local voluntary sector in the Early Years Development Forum are good. The new

nursery centres will take over from Social Services as providers for some children in need, while also increasing the good local child-care available.

118. Following concerns in OFSTED reports about teaching in reception classes, the LEA spent £808,000 to recruit permanent teachers of reception classes. Most of the money is held centrally and released on condition schools agree to: quality assurance measures, including self-review; the setting of targets; classroom monitoring; improving teaching; and supporting teaching assistants.

119. Work has begun on training teachers to make assessments of pupils as they enter school. Other priorities for development are the use of outside play facilities to improve children's physical development and developing the Early Years Centres of excellence.

120. Six schools, including the nursery centre, were visited as part of the inspection. At the time of their OFSTED inspections, three were judged to have had satisfactory provision, two were good and one unsatisfactory. Five of the six have improved though only two to a marked extent. However, the LEA contribution to improvement has been disappointing in four of the schools and only sound in the remaining two. In the school which has made little improvement, changes in staffing have been unhelpful, and although planning is now more detailed it is still weak. Here the LEA contribution has not been effective, apart from assistance given to making baseline assessments on pupils. More positively, those schools using the LEA documentation find this helpful, although the HMI view is that it is now in need of further up-dating. The introduction of extra classroom assistants is very welcomed by schools and should be beneficial. It is too early to assess their impact as yet, but good systems for monitoring are being put in place. In one of the schools making good progress much was due to a new teacher in the nursery, additional staffing, and better planning based on the QCA curriculum model. In the nursery centre improvements are largely due to the expertise of staff, but the LEA has provided training in specific areas, such as science, which have been helpful. The centre has also had support in their DfEE bid for Early Years excellence centre status and funding for an early years consultant to advise on the development of this project. There is a view in some schools that the LEA does not provide enough in-service training for nursery teachers and that there needs to be more specific provision for such staff, including newly qualified teachers. Some schools clearly value the early years meetings which take place in some nursery schools, so providing a network of support. The schools have welcomed the changes in admission policy. The provision seen in one school for nursery pupils with hearing impairment is sound.

121. In summary, the LEA has been influential in establishing an Early Years Centre and the spreading of good practice from this to other schools will be beneficial. However, in most of the schools visited the support for improvement in Early Years Education was disappointing. Schools would value, and need, more in-service training and explicit specialist support in this area.

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS IN SPECIAL MEASURES AND WITH SERIOUS WEAKNESSES

122. The LEA meets its statutory obligations to schools in special measures (of which there are currently seven) and provides intensive support to schools which have

serious weaknesses, a category which includes schools so identified by the LEA itself, as well as those designated as such by OFSTED. The LEA has clear procedures for dealing with all such schools, but its ability to identify need is in question. HMI visited one of the three schools which had been removed from special measures, to find that the LEA had done little to address the remaining serious weaknesses. HMI also visited a special school with weaknesses the seriousness of which was not known to the LEA.

123. As a matter of policy, the LEA removes budget delegation and appoints additional governors whenever special measures are introduced. An MSO supports the headteacher in drawing up the action plan, which is, in effect, agreed with the LEA. A consultant, usually a former headteacher, may be appointed to the school in an advisory capacity. Termly reviews of progress are conducted, by teams drawn from the MSU.

124. These measures have, to date, proved effective, but expensive. The LEA has not yet been in the position of finding itself unable to bring about improvement. Were that to occur, its repertoire of measures of last resort would be limited. It is denied the use of removal of delegation for this purpose, because that is an automatic consequence of special measures. Moreover, it is not in a position to contemplate closures, because of pressures on school rolls.

125. The support provided for schools in difficulties is very intensive. The consultant who advised the LEA on the inspection and advisory service raised the pertinent question whether it was too intensive. The LEA's stated presumption is in favour of school autonomy, but it is questionable whether the quantity of support provided supports, or undermines, that autonomy.

SUPPORT FOR BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE

126. LEA support to improving attendance was inspected in nine schools. In six of these, attendance had been considered unsatisfactory at the time when the schools were last inspected by OFSTED but in all of them, levels of attendance have improved. In one school, levels of unauthorised absence had been halved. Nevertheless, levels of attendance remain below, and levels of unauthorised absence above, the national average.

127. The LEA has employed sound strategies to support schools in improving attendance. It has made good use of IT systems to monitor attendance leading to the targeting of services at schools, pupils and families who are most in need.

128. A wide variety of methods are then used to improve attendance including:

- the use of school attendance orders;
- frequent and consistent contact between the LEA's education welfare service and school staff;
- home visit to families when a child is absent for more than four days;

- stringent guidelines to deter parents from taking their children on extended holidays abroad;
- the active involvement of other agencies in providing an alternative curriculum for older disaffected pupils;
- frequent use of the Magistrates Court to prosecute parents

The diligent use of combinations of these methods has been very successful in improving levels of attendance in schools over four years, against significant odds

129. The LEA support to schools in improving pupil behaviour was inspected in a sample of nine schools: in two of these schools, pupil behaviour had been an issue of concern when the schools had been inspected by OFSTED. Centrally managed services are effective and supportive to schools is highly valued. Any criticism relates to the amount of such support and previous experience of waiting for provision. Training provided by the LEA for mainstream teachers is also effective. It has improved the capability of teachers to manage disruptive pupils' behaviour in schools. Nevertheless, pockets of poor behaviour remain. In one secondary school, behaviour around the school remained unsatisfactory; in one primary school, behaviour during lunchtime and breaktime was poor and badly managed. Otherwise, pupils' behaviour in school is good, as is their response in lessons. There are some notable successes; for example, two children with emotional and behavioural difficulties in one secondary school are continuing their studies in the sixth form.

130. Also successful is the LEA's support for reducing the number of pupils who are permanently excluded. Until this year, when the number moved up to 58, permanent exclusions had reduced from 99 to 39 in the previous four years. This is an excellent performance characterised by pre-exclusion intervention targeted at high risk groups and schools. The work is enhanced by the positive influence of a panel of members which thoroughly considers all exclusions. The LEA's efforts continually to improve its performance are set out in its action plan which was presented to the Education Committee on 3 November 1 998. Consistent and comprehensive reporting to members is a positive feature. In contrast, information regarding fixed term exclusions is poor.

131. Arrangements for the provision of alternative curriculum arrangements for disaffected pupils in Key Stage 4 are well advanced in Newham. An increasingly comprehensive range of partners from the further education, voluntary and employment sectors support the LEA and schools in providing placements for pupils. Although such provision is rigorously monitored internally, external evaluation of these arrangements is unusually weak.

SECTION 6: LEA SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The support for the improvement of teaching has been provided through a range of services and been effective in three quarters of schools visited. The support given to senior management to improve its effectiveness in monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not consistent; in half of schools such support has led to significant improvement in the teaching overall but in the remainder support frequently lacks a clear focus and is not sufficiently used by headteachers to achieve the improvement necessary. The support for the NLS and NNP has been welcomed by all primary schools and contributed significantly to improved teaching of literacy and numeracy. The support for the improvement of teaching of National Curriculum subjects varies widely but significant success has been achieved in some. Very good support is provided for newly qualified teachers and their mentors. The appraisal procedures for teachers and headteachers have been suspended. The LEA 's policy of inclusive education has been well managed and resourced. It is securely embedded in schools, but its impact on pupils' attainment and progress is unclear.

SUPPORT FOR TEACHING

132. The data from OFSTED inspections shows that one in five of both primary and secondary schools in Newham need to make significant improvements, and a further half some improvement, in the overall quality of education they provide. In three quarters of the schools visited the LEA's contribution has been effective in ensuring some or marked improvement in the standard of teaching required, but in the remainder no significant improvement is evident. There is monitoring by the LEA of schools with weaknesses which, in turn, has led to some staff either being dismissed or leaving. In some cases, the appointment of new head-teachers and systematic support to tackle weak teaching has led to the required improvement.

133. The LEA believe that the onus is on the schools, not the LEA, to improve teaching. Its role is to try to ensure that the senior management of schools has in place a rigorous procedure for monitoring classroom practice and for taking action based on that monitoring. The development of the policy is at an early stage but there is evidence of its effectiveness in only about half the schools visited. Again, inconsistent performance by the MSO was a cause of its variability.

134. Selective use is made of LEA courses and school-based support to up-date teachers' knowledge and improve their skills. Where the LEA is unable to provide adequate training or advice, schools have been appropriately directed to other sources of support from other LEAs or consultants. The introduction of the NLP, and more recently the NNP, has been a major focus for improving teaching in primary schools. These initiatives have been well supported by the consultants through courses and more directly within schools; the support has led to marked improvement in the quality of teaching in the schools visited, where some outstandingly good teaching of literacy was seen. The LEA has supported some primary and secondary schools to improve schemes of work and curriculum planning. Specialist subject advisers have worked with heads of departments in secondary schools to improve their management role as well as to support consistency of teaching within the subject. The quality of advice by subject advisers varies, but both primary and secondary schools were consistent in

their views about which subjects were well or less well supported. Examples of good support for science, humanities, art and physical education were highlighted by schools. Technical support for the use of ICT by teachers is good, but the support and advice needed to facilitate its effective use across the curriculum are weak. Advisory support in some schools has led to the identification of 'good practice' which is disseminated to other schools. In more schools visited, the LEAs contribution through advisory support and training has had minimal impact and weaknesses in teaching and management had not been adequately addressed.

135. The LEA appraisal scheme was in operation for a number of years and a high percentage of staff have completed at least one appraisal cycle. Suitable arrangements for the appraisal of headteachers have also been established and involve appraisal by a serving headteacher and an appointee of the LEA - usually an inspector or officer. However, the appraisal scheme is in abeyance while the LEA await further guidance from the government.

136. The LEA gives a high priority to the recruitment, support and development of new teachers to the profession; there was almost universal praise from NQTs and senior management in schools for the support given. The programme for induction of NQTs is comprehensive and effective in meeting the needs of those involved. The LEA operates an informal probationary year for newly qualified staff, and there is a low rate of newly qualified teachers leaving the profession in their first year. A detailed handbook, which has been extended and adapted to the differing needs of primary and secondary schools, assists the work of mentors of NQTs.

THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION STRATEGY

137. The implementation of the LEA's Inclusive Education Strategy and its effects on pupils and schools were inspected in ten schools. One of the LEA's special schools was visited.

138. At the time when these schools received their OFSTED inspection, the performance of schools in meeting the needs of these pupils was variable. In one school it was described as a major strength, in another as unsatisfactory. In all of the schools visited there has been improvement over time. Specific trends include a reduced use of withdrawal, increased involvement of staff, better documentation and better teaching and classroom management.

139. The LEA has allocated significant resources to the implementation of the strategy. The Learning Support Service supports the needs of pupils in mainstream schools with learning difficulties, assisted by separate specialist services for children with visual, hearing, speech and language and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The work of these services ensures that the LEA meets its statutory responsibilities to pupils with special educational needs and contributes effectively to the improvements identified in schools, although half of the schools visited claimed some elements of support were insufficient.

140. If time allows, centrally provided teachers work beyond their statutory duties by supporting pupils at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice and providing learning resources for the whole school - a very good example of this was seen where the LSS teacher, who had specialist skills in art, supported specific pupils but also provided excellent

worksheets in different subjects for a variety of levels of pupils' needs for the whole school.

141. One feature of the Inclusive Education Strategy is the identification of mainstream "resourced schools" where additional financial resources are delegated to provide education for a specified number of pupils who have specific difficulties. In two of the schools visited this resourced provision is being phased out as pupils are fully included in the mainstream curriculum. This is working successfully. In another school, where specialist resourced provision remains for deaf children, the inclusion policy works well.

142. In what is generally a favourable picture, specific weaknesses were seen. For example, pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties and some with autism, do not easily fit into the strategy. Their behaviour in mainstream classes is often disruptive. For this group of pupils the part-time support seen in classrooms was ineffective and full-time support extremely costly. The support by withdrawal seen was also ineffective. The LEA acknowledges this by continuing to provide specialist, non-mainstream provision in the primary phase and at Key Stage 4. No such provision exists for this small cohort of pupils in Years 7 to 9.

143. Overall, the LEA knows too little about the impact of the strategy on pupils' attainment. It has managed placement and the provision of support well, but is not in a position to answer the key question: whether the attainment and progress of pupils has or has not risen as a result of this strategy.

SECTION 7: LEA SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF SCHOOLS

LEA support for governors is highly effective. Support for school management and planning is based on a well-considered strategy, but is not sufficiently well-implemented to permit it to be consistently effective.

SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

144. At the heart of the LEA's support for the management of schools is the Newham Quality Assurance Model. It is a scheme of self-review, which commits all schools to rigorous self-evaluation supported by the LEA through:

- the provision of information support with data analysis
- advice to senior management on conducting the review
- external moderation
- support for staff development and school improvement strategies.

This model depends for its effectiveness on consistently good performance by the MSOs attached to individual schools. The NFER report on the LEA indicated that not all schools felt that the support they received from their link inspector was of sufficiently high quality. They were right. The performance of the MSOs is too variable. The effectiveness of the quality assurance model depends almost wholly on the particular MSO. Performance management of the service is insufficiently rigorous to ensure that the role is consistently exercised in such a way as to have the desired effect.

145. Support for school management was effective in only five out of eleven primary schools visited, and it ranged in those schools from very effective to almost negligible. That range was not related to the quality of the school, nor to the quality of its planning. In addition to the school visits, HMI read the commentaries written by MSOs on every school in the LEA. Some of these were detailed and rigorous; the majority were neither. Similarly, in the schools, there was clear evidence that some MSOs were not up to the job. Poor planning, or insufficient implementation of plans were not always challenged, though the best MSOs gave support which was, in the words of one head, "systematic, responsive and timely". By contrast, another primary head referred to "a chat" with the MSO as the sum of support received for target-setting.

146. Of course, not all schools needed support. Some had achieved improvements in planning, with no more assistance from the LEA than the proposal of a model. However, whether they needed the support or not, all schools got it, and in view of the LEA's insistence on the universality of provision, the onus on it to achieve much greater uniformity of effectiveness is abundantly clear.

147. In secondary schools, the range of performance was less wide, but it was satisfactory in only two of the four schools visited. In general - and not inappropriately - the headteachers took the lead, and relied little on the LEA. Even in

the case of a school which had emerged from special measures, there was little sign of rigorous or consistent joint working with the LEA on the very serious weaknesses which remained. In the case of another school visited, the LEA had failed to detect or remediate emerging and very serious weaknesses in planning and management.

148. So far, then, as detailed qualitative advice, support and reasoned intervention in school management are concerned, the LEA is not well-equipped in either phase. The introduction of the School Achievement Review may at some stage give helpful focus to the role of the MSO, but at present, the LEA is trying to do too much, and is requiring some personnel to operate beyond their competence.

149. Nevertheless, the LEA is well-informed about its schools, and is undoubtedly right to insist that support for heads is important, and needs to be provided in a differentiated way. The support provided by management services is highly regarded by heads, and a feature of Newham's response to schools in difficulties is the speed with which any necessary staff changes are made. The mentoring of new head-teachers is a new development, and as yet one of inconsistent quality. In-service training, including 17 places on NPQH courses, is provided for heads and other senior managers, but overall, in the light of the uncertain functioning of the Quality Assurance Model, support for senior management must be accounted less than satisfactory.

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS

150. The support to governors is valued by and generally effective in schools visited. Governors are appropriately consulted and kept informed through presentations and the distribution of extensive papers; the LEA has already responded to governor requests for shorter briefing notes. The training provided for governors has generally been of good quality, well targeted, and in response to requests from some schools, provided at times most convenient to governors to ensure the best attendance. The response to requests for advice and support from governors on a wide range of issues is usually handled promptly and expertly, for example, in ensuring appropriate help in making key appointments. The approachability of LEA officers is welcomed by governors. Overall, governing bodies feel well informed and confident to fulfil their role. The service gives good value for money.

SECTION 8: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: THE CONTEXT OF THE LEA

STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL PROVISION

TABLE 1

Number of nursery schools	8
Total Number of Maintained Primary Schools	63
Infant Schools	6
Junior Schools	5
Junior and Infant Schools	52
Primary Schools with Nursery Units	49
County Primary Schools	53
Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools	2
Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary Schools	1
Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary Schools	7
Total Number of Maintained Secondary Schools	13
County 11-16 Secondary Schools (2 Girls; 1 Boys; 8 Co-educational)	11
Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided 11-18 Technology Colleges (1 Girls; 1 Boys; joint sixth form)	2
Grant Maintained 11-18 Secondary School	1
Percentage of primary school classes with fewer than 30 pupils	51.34%

PERCENTAGE OF STATEMENTED PUPILS WHO ARE PLACED IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

TABLE 2

	1996		1997		1998	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Primary	465	92.1%	469	92.7%	524	93.7%
Secondary	537	90.1%	569	90.5%	609	90.6%

Number of pupils with statements in special schools: 111 (1998 figures)

**FREE SCHOOL MEAL ELIGIBILITY
(1997 FIGURES)**

TABLE 3

Primary Schools	40.7%
Secondary Schools	44.1%
Grant Maintained Secondary School	44.4%

PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS 1996/97

TABLE 4

	Number	Percentage
Primary Schools	7	0.03%
Secondary Schools	32	0.23%

PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS BY GENDER 1996/97

TABLE 5

	Number	Percentage of all exclusions
Male	5	12.8%
Female	34	87.2%

PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

TABLE 6

Primary	50.9%
Secondary	49.3%

OVERALL ATTENDANCE RATES 1996/7

TABLE 7

Nursery	89%
Primary	93%
Secondary	89.5%

APPENDIX 2: PUPILS' ATTAINMENT

Attainment at age 7 (Key Stage I)

	Year	% of pupils achieving Level 2 or above					
		Teacher Assessment			Tasks/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1996	66.6	79.3	-12.7			
	1997	67.8	80.4	-12.6			
	1998	69					
English (reading)	1996	65.5	78.6	-13.1	64.0	80.3	-14.0
	1997	66.8	80.1	-13.3	67.7	82.3	-12.4
	1998	70			69		
English (writing)	1996	64.4	76.6	-12.2	69.3	82.0	-10.4
	1997	64.7	77.5	-12.8	68.3	82.4	-12.1
	1998	67			70		
Mathematics	1996	73.4	82.2	-8.8	74.3	86.1	-7.8
	1997	74.7	84.2	-9.5	77.7	86.9	-6.0
	1998	78			78		
Science	1996	72.9	84.1	-11.2			
	1997	75.3	85.5	-10.2			
	1998	75					

2. Attainment at age 11 (KEY STAGE 2)

	Year	% Pupils achieving Level 4 or above					
		Teacher assessment			Task/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1996	46.4	60.1	-13.7	37.6	57.1	-19.5
	1997	47.5	63.4	-15.9	48.2	63.2	-15.0
	1998	63			51		
Mathematics	1996	45.0	59.9	-14.9	36.3	53.9	-17.6
	1997	48.7	64.1	-15.4	47.3	62.0	-14.7
	1998	64			45		
Science	1996	48.7	65.1	-16.4	43.0	62.0	-19.0
	1997	52.3	69.5	-17.2	53.4	68.8	-15.4
	1998	69			55		

Attainment at age 14 (KEY STAGE 3)

	Year	% Pupils achieving Level 4 or above					
		Teacher assessment			Task/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1996	45.3	60.3	-15.0	36.0	56.6	-20.6
	1997	45.8	60.2	-14.4	34.5	56.6	-22.1
	1998	NA	NA		47	NA	
Mathematics	1996	41.4	61.5	-20.1	23.6	56.7	-24.1
	1997	43.3	64.0	-20.7	37.2	60.7	-23.5
	1998	NA	NA		34	NA	
Science	1996	37.3	59.7	-22.4	33.1	56.4	-23.3
	1997	36.6	62.2	-25.6	33.7	60.8	-27.1
	1998	NA	NA		33	NA	

Attainment at age 16 GCSE results in maintained schools

Level achieved	Year	LEA	National	Difference
1 A*-G	1995	89.2	93.5	-4.3
	1996	92.9	93.9	-1.0
	1997	94.9	94.0	0.9
	1998	96.3	NA	
5 A*-C	1995	23.8	41.2	-17.4
	1996	28.0	42.6	-14.6
	1997	33.6	43.3	-9.7
	1998	33.7	NA	
5 A*-G	1995	76.4	87.5	-11.1
	1996	82.1	88.1	-6.0
	1997	86.7	88.5	-1.8
	1998	88.8	NA	

Attainment at age 18

A level results

Average point score per pupil

Number entered	Year	LEA	National	Difference
2 or more	1994	10.2	15.1	-4.9
	1995	11.1	15.9	-4.8
	1996	12.0	16.8	-4.8
	1997	13.9	17.1	-3.2
Less than 2	1994	3.5	2.7	0.8
	1995	4.2	2.7	1.5
	1996	5.9	2.7	3.2
	1997	7.7	2.7	5.0

Vocational qualifications of 16 to 18 year olds in maintained schools

Level achieved	Year	LEA	National	Difference
Pass entries	1994	90	84.8	5.2
	1995	91.8	80.2	11.6
Pass entries (Advanced)	1996	90	92.2	10.7
	1997	85.2	67.8	9.8
Pass entries (Intermediate)	1996	70.5	78.9	1.4
	1997	75.2	77.1	6.3

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

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