



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

**INSPECTION OF
THE CITY OF LEEDS
LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

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Lead Inspector: Angela Mukhopadhyay HMI

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

2. A report of the previous inspection was published in February 2000. Since this inspection took place, the Secretary of State directed the Head of the Paid Service of Leeds City Council to secure the LEA's functions regarding the education of school-age children by entering into a contract for five years with Education Leeds, a non-profit making company wholly owned by Leeds City Council. This new company was directed to employ Capita to provide strategic capacity to assist in the provision of the services. This inspection, therefore, focussed primarily on the work of Education Leeds in discharging the LEA's functions regarding the provision of education to school aged children.

3. The inspection was partly based on data, some of which was provided by the LEA and Education Leeds, on school inspection information and audit reports, on documentation and discussions with LEA elected members, focus groups of headteachers, other staff and governors, staff in Education Leeds and in other council departments and representatives of the LEA's partners. Use was also made of the LEA and Education Leeds own self-evaluation. In addition, a questionnaire seeking views on aspects of the LEA's work was circulated to all its schools. The response rate was 74 per cent.

4. The inspection also involved studies of the effectiveness of particular aspects of the LEA and Education Leeds' work through visits to three primary schools and eight secondary schools. In addition, inspectors met the headteachers and chairs of governors of six schools, four secondary and two primary, which required special measures or were in serious weaknesses. The visits and meetings tested the views of headteachers and other staff on the key aspects of the LEA's strategy, particularly the effectiveness of support to schools causing concern. The inspection also took account of relevant evidence from Her Majesty's Inspectors' national monitoring work.

COMMENTARY

5. The City of Leeds has been successful in attracting significant economic growth over the last decade. However, the council is rightly concerned that this prosperity has not benefited all its residents. This is a feature of many major cities but in Leeds, ironically, the success in attracting economic development makes the disparity between the less affluent areas of the city even more pronounced. Leeds is aptly described as a "two speed city".

6. Overall, primary schools attain standards that are at least in line with the national averages and improvements in attainment have generally mirrored those nationally. However, in secondary schools attainment deteriorates starkly, until at GCSE the gap between national and local percentages of pupils attaining five or more passes at GCSE at grades A* - C is ten per cent and growing. These statistics hide both a considerable variation in schools' attainment and a systemic failure; many parents seek places for their children in schools outside the inner city, leaving some inner city schools facing an overwhelming combination of problems often made worse by the difficulties of attracting a stable teaching staff.

7. In the past the council has been too slow to tackle these problems. The previous inspection showed education services were largely ineffective. A lack of effective leadership over many years contributed to inertia. This particularly hampered the development of a modern LEA based on appropriate relationships with self-governing and self-improving schools. Radical change was necessary. At the Secretary of State's direction, a new non-profit making company Education Leeds was formed, working in partnership with Capita and holding the responsibility for managing services to schools. However, for about a year before this, uncertainty and confusion had eroded morale and many staff left as a result. In this period the effectiveness of services declined significantly. Moreover, there was fierce opposition to the new arrangements, borne out of intense civic pride and a wish to keep the provision within the control of the council.

8. Education Leeds' task, therefore, has been far from easy. It has had to achieve three broad objectives. Firstly, to form a new and effective organisation; secondly, to make up for lost time and improve services so that they are effective and thirdly to raise obdurately low standards of attainment, attendance and behaviour in some secondary schools.

9. The first task has largely been completed. In a relatively short time, Education Leeds has become an effective organisation. It has a clear vision which it has communicated to its partners, an effective structure, staff who have the necessary expertise and a culture of high expectations and accountability. It has successfully forged an appropriate relationship with the council. Above all, it has improved relationships with schools, by winning their confidence and consulting them effectively.

10. In the second task of improving services, progress has been made. There has been much ground to cover and until recently comparatively few people in post to do it. Strategic managers have made a clear assessment of what is required. Appropriate action has begun to be taken although inevitably, in view of the size of

the city, there is an interval between initial action and delivering consistent services to all schools. There are still aspects that are unsatisfactory and where improvements remain fragile. Much has been implemented over a relatively short period of time which now needs consolidation and monitoring by management to ensure consistency. Plans, too, need to improve if the improvements required are all to be delivered.

11. The third task of raising standards in secondary schools is the most difficult and rightly a corporate priority. There is recognition that education on its own cannot solve the problems and that services will need to work together. Many have been aligned to make co-ordinated work easier, although the mechanics of how this will work in practice still have to be developed. Education Leeds believes that good schools will inevitably make the difference and has made a start at shifting the inertia that has dogged the organisation of school places with the intention of forming attractive and effective secondary schools in the inner city. These developments are well researched. This is a long term strategy and the momentum for change must be maintained. In the meantime, strategies to raise the attainment of pupils of minority ethnic origin, make better provision for pupils with acute behavioural problems and develop a curriculum which tackles disaffection have not led to sufficient action.

12. The following functions are now judged to be good:

- the analysis and use made of performance data;
- financial support services;
- the clarity consistency coherence of corporate plans;
- the quality of advice given to elected members;
- leadership of Education Leeds; and
- support for Travellers.

13. The following have improved but are still not satisfactory:

- monitoring schools and challenging them to improve;
- identification and intervention in under-performing schools;
- information and communication technology for curriculum use;
- strategic planning to support school improvement;
- the effectiveness of services to support school improvement;
- aligning resources for SEN to pupils needs;
- provision and support for pupils with acute emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- asset management planning and property services; and
- strategies to combat racism.

14. In summary, in the one year since the formation of Education Leeds, the progress made overall is good. Much that was previously unsatisfactory has improved and has the prospect of further improvement. Nevertheless, overall, the schools still do not experience sufficiently consistent and satisfactory services. There are gaps and inconsistencies particularly in the area of school improvement and, therefore, the LEA is not satisfactory overall. However, most schools have seen sufficient signs of improvement to feel optimistic. They are right; the capacity for further improvement is good.

SECTION 1: THE LEA STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Context

15. Leeds is one of the largest cities in the United Kingdom. In recent years Leeds has been successfully transformed to a city at the forefront of commerce, finance and retailing. In many ways a microcosm of national diversity, Leeds has areas of considerable prosperity and others which experience great economic disadvantage. It is aptly portrayed as a "two speed city" as not all people in Leeds share in the success that has been achieved. The Department of Transport Local Government and the Regions statistics show the problem very graphically. Seven of Leeds' thirty-three wards are in the ten per cent of the most deprived wards nationally. However, the overall profile of the city shows that Leeds' position is much more favourable. The average rank of all wards on the index of local deprivation places Leeds at 114 of the 354 districts nationally compared with Liverpool at fifth, Manchester at seventh and Birmingham at 43rd. Almost 12 per cent of pupils are of minority ethnic origin and there is no predominant minority ethnic group.

16. Leeds maintains 244 primary schools, 43 secondary schools, ten special schools and four pupil referral units. Eleven schools are specialist schools. The effects of the decrease in the birth rate are exacerbated by the tendency for parents to seek school places outside of the inner city. Hence, 18 per cent of primary schools and 14 per cent of secondary schools have surplus places of over 25 per cent. Thirty-eight percent of pupils stay on in full-time education in school and 30 percent in colleges. Despite this low percentage, 38 of the 43 high schools have sixth forms. In addition, eight of the ten special schools have students post-16. Fifteen of the secondary schools have sixth forms of fewer than 150 students; six have fewer than 50. Nearly all these schools are in the inner city areas. In the past the council has been slow to tackle these systemic difficulties, which are not only matters of efficiency but have an impact on the standards and quality of education especially in the inner city.

17. The childcare and early development service provides an early education and childcare service to approximately 3000 children in 34 council owned early years centres and five integrated children's centres. The centres give priority to children in need, vulnerable families and parents seeking to access training and employment. This service is the responsibility of the office of the chief education officer and has not been included in the contractual arrangements with Education Leeds.

18. The percentages of pupils who have statements of special educational needs are in line with national averages in primary schools (2.9) and higher in secondary schools (4.7). A lower percentage (0.7) of pupils with statements at primary school age attend special schools than nationally (1.0).

Performance

19. National Curriculum attainment tests, GCSE results and inspection evidence show a consistent picture. Primary school standards, quality and management are

in line with the profile for similar authorities¹ and that nationally. However, secondary schools do less well than schools in similar authorities and nationally.

20. Standards at Key Stages 1 and 2 in English and mathematics are in line with those in similar authorities and nationally. At Key Stage 3 standards in English and mathematics are lower than those nationally but in line with similar authorities. At Key Stage 4 standards are significantly below those in similar authorities and nationally on every key indicator. In 2001, the percentages of pupils attaining five or more passes at grades A*-G and grades A*-C were 86.9 and 39.8 per cent respectively compared with national rates of 91 and 48.4 per cent nationally. Boys' attainment is low at Key Stage 4.

21. Attainment is improving in English and mathematics broadly in line with the trend nationally at Key Stage 1, 2 and 3. At GCSE the rate of improvement in pupils achieving 1 or more A*-G grade is above the national trend but there is too little improvement on the other key GCSE indicators. Targets have been set for improvement which are challenging but nevertheless, in the context of Leeds, should be achievable. However, the targets are not being met.

22. At Key Stage 1, the attainment of pupils of minority ethnic origin has rapidly improved and is broadly in line with the Leeds overall percentage. At Key Stage 2 and at GCSE pupils of Indian and Chinese heritage out-perform all groups. At Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, the attainment of pupils of Pakistani and Caribbean heritage is very low. In 2001 only 24 (18 per cent) out of 136 pupils of Caribbean heritage achieved five or more passes at grades A*-C. The attainment of pupils of Bangladeshi heritage has improved rapidly and at GCSE now marginally exceeds the Leeds average. At Key Stage 2 and at GCSE, children who have been in the care of the local authority for more than one year attain significantly lower than the Leeds averages for all pupils but comparatively better than those nationally.

23. The findings of the most recent OFSTED school inspections show that a higher percentage of primary schools were judged very good schools compared with the national profile and no school was judged to be in need of significant improvement. In contrast a significantly higher percentage of secondary schools were judged in need of significant improvement and a lower percentage were judged good schools than the national figure.

24. Sixteen schools have achieved Beacon status. At the time of the fieldwork for this inspection, four schools currently require special measures and a further seven schools have serious weaknesses². Five of the fourteen schools in challenging circumstances have recently been inspected and all these were judged at least satisfactory and improving.

25. Attendance in primary schools is satisfactory and rates are in line with those nationally. However, attendance is low in secondary schools. There have been no permanent exclusions from primary schools. Permanent exclusion is in line with the

¹ Leeds LEA similar authorities are Sheffield Kirklees Lancashire Bolton City of Bristol Stockton-on-Tees Rotherham Calderdale Wakefield Wigan.

² Shortly after the completion of the fieldwork for this inspection, two primary schools were inspected, one no longer required special measures and another no longer had serious weaknesses.

national rate in secondary schools. However, the percentage of pupils who face fixed-term exclusions of more than five days is high in both primary and secondary schools. Some minority ethnic groups, in particular boys of Caribbean heritage, are disproportionately represented in permanent and fixed term exclusions. A pilot study has indicated similar concerns about attendance. The attendance of Traveller pupils has improved, particularly at Key Stage 3, although the level of fixed-term exclusions has increased.

Funding

26. The LEA's standard spending assessment (SSA) for primary and secondary education is below the average for metropolitan districts. The LEA has had significant success, however, in attracting both revenue and capital grants. Revenue income from grants of various kinds is significantly above average. Key components include Excellence in Cities (EiC) and Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding. The LEA has also been particularly successful in applications for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding. Further major proposals for secondary and post-16 developments are currently being considered by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Consultation with schools on grant application and deployment has been significantly improved and is now good. Education Leeds has undertaken an excellent analysis of the key issues involved in maximising grant opportunities and ensuring that activity focuses on key priorities. Appropriate steps are being taken to improve the provision of information and support to individual schools and service managers, to develop partnership working with other organisations, and to strengthen the contribution of the education service to corporate activity.

Council structure

27. The last inspection reported that the council had been modernised in line with the government's proposals for democratic renewal. However, the scrutiny board that considered education had a huge brief. Sixteen community involvement teams had been formed to plan at the level of the neighbourhood. How far schools were expected to be involved in these teams was unclear.

28. The council modernised at an early stage and hence is very well placed to meet the new statutory requirements for local government. The systems in place are comparatively mature. The executive comprises nine members including the two leaders of the opposition groups. Since the last OFSTED inspection, and with the formation of Education Leeds, the leader has taken responsibility for Education Leeds, assisted by a non-executive lead member. This has helped to establish the priority for schools and to allay local suspicions about the involvement of the private sector in education. Lifelong learning continues to be a separate portfolio. Agendas for the executive board illustrate that an appropriate pattern that considers the major strategic issues for each portfolio has been established.

29. A separate scrutiny committee to consider educational issues has been formed. Procedures for scrutiny are well developed and the committee is functioning well. The committee has a clear and appropriate understanding of its work and has contributed to the development of Education Leeds by detailed investigation of the contractual obligations. It has recently completed an in-depth scrutiny of surplus

school budgets. The procedure of "call-in" has been used for the first time to look at consultation on school admissions.

30. Following the last OFSTED inspection, there was a period of uncertainty lasting about a year when services to schools deteriorated from an already low base. At the Secretary of State's direction, the head of paid services entered into a five year contract with a non-profit making company, Education Leeds, which is wholly owned by the council and which works in partnership with Capita. The new company has a board that is chaired by an influential and respected local person. The membership of the board is appropriate and draws expertise from Capita and senior officers of the local authority. While the council continues to be responsible for the discharge of statutory duties and strategic decisions, the board has responsibility for the management of the services and functions for school-aged children. Appropriate procedures govern the working arrangements and there is a suitable cycle of meetings between the board and the cabinet, the chairperson and the Leader.

31. Education Leeds has a chief executive, deputy and three assistant chief executives. Staff employed by Capita currently fill the deputy chief executive and two of the three assistant chief executive posts. Management has been restructured. Twelve strategic area managers are responsible for the major aspects of work, which are organised into 19 teams each led by a team leader. The school improvement service includes seven senior school improvement advisers who hold major responsibilities for aspects or phases in addition to leading a wedge³ area team. The majority of strategic managers and team leaders were appointed and took up post in October and November 2001. However, at the time of the inspection, five strategic managers and six team leaders had been in post for less than six months.

32. The council has maintained a small client unit led by the statutory chief education officer. This office of the chief education officer is charged with leadership of the childcare and early development service in addition to monitoring contractual obligations and ensuring that the council's statutory duties are met.

The LEA strategy for school improvement

33. Most aspects of the Education Development Plan (EDP) are satisfactory. The Secretary of State has approved the plan without any conditions.

34. The audit is satisfactory. The evaluation of EDP1 focuses more on monitoring the completion of activities than on identifying impact, but it is still systematic and helpful. A satisfactory range of data has been competently analysed including some useful local data on minority ethnic achievement and a comparison between inner and outer city attainment. The audit has been very useful in identifying the issues that need to be addressed. However, this has not entirely helped to make the improvement agenda more manageable, since the issues which need to be tackled are very wide ranging and have not been prioritised.

³ Wedges are sectors of the city which run from the inner to out city areas. These were adopted for EiC initiatives and have subsequently become the organisational principle for other services

35. Targets are challenging, realistic and compatible with aggregated schools' targets. At the level of defining overall priorities and major strands, the plan is cohesive and its organisation is helpful and manageable with a good match between the findings of the audit and national and local priorities. There is a helpful and necessary emphasis on raising standards through improving the structure and quality of provision. Support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), behaviour and attendance are well integrated into the work of different priorities. There is a creative response to some difficult issues through an emphasis on healthy staff and schools, although it is not easy to understand why ICT has also been included in this priority.

36. The council's education priorities are pertinent and helpful but how the EDP will help to deliver them is left to the reader to assess. The permeation of strategies to improve the attainment of minority ethnic groups and gender throughout all priorities is satisfactory. Activities are too numerous and there is a real risk of fragmentation of effort. Links with other plans are simply listed and how the activities interrelate between different plans is not developed in more detail. Overall costs, however, are realistic.

37. The summary statement of monitoring and evaluation is adequate and could lead to a useful approach, but it has not been developed in a systematic way into the detailed strategies that are employed in the action plans. In these plans, success criteria are numerous but too vague and words like "greater," "more" and "better" need to be defined if monitoring and evaluation are to be a reality.

Excellence in Cities

38. The Excellence in Cities (EiC) partnership plan is closely interwoven with the EDP, and fully embedded in the school improvement strategy. This has been given added impetus by Education Leeds. The EDP2 title "Closing the Gap" is also seen as describing the central objectives of the EiC partnership. Most EiC strands are operational in all secondary schools in the city, and three - learning mentors, gifted and talented pupils and learning support units (called pupil development centres) - have recently been extended to the primary phase.

The Implementation of the EDP

39. The last inspection judged EDP 1 to be poor. However, the priorities identified in the plan continue to be an accurate reflection of national and local issues, and most are continued as the priorities for the EDP 2. Hence there has been some continuity between the two plans, as well as links with other statutory plans and corporate policies of the council, many of which share the theme of "Closing the Gap" that links them together and indeed gives the EDP 2 its title.

40. Many activities planned in the EDP 1 were not completed, notably in supporting improvements in the attainment of minority ethnic groups and at Key Stages 3 and 4. The priorities for literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and schools causing concern led to action which undoubtedly benefited some schools but this has not been as focussed, consistent, timely and determined as that

which has been experienced in many LEAs nationally. As the following sections of this report show, Education Leeds has had to catch up on lost time.

41. The management of the implementation of EDP2 is still too vague. Staff who are responsible for managing implementation have been identified and a system of statistical monitoring is established within the EDP. How the ambitious programme of activities will be made available to schools, and linked to their needs has not been worked out in any detail. Similarly, the precise details of how the progress in implementation will be evaluated overall and the role of schools in this process are not sufficiently clear.

Recommendation

In order to improve standards particularly in secondary school:

- ensure that the implementation of the EDP 2 is well managed and focuses sufficiently on the need to improve standards in secondary schools by developing a detailed approach whereby the activities are rolled out in an appropriate sequence, are deployed on clear criteria and the intentions behind them are made clear to schools.

The allocation of resources to priorities

42. In the previous inspection, the LEA's targeting of resources to priorities was judged to be unsatisfactory. It is now satisfactory, although a significant amount of work is still required, in particular in reviewing the funding formula. The LEA's spending is currently 2.5 per cent above the education SSA level. Increases in the SSA have been fully passed on for each of the last three years and sometimes increases greater than that indicated by the rise in SSA have been awarded, reflecting the position of education as a key corporate priority. Within the education budget, spending in 2001-02 was below SSA for primary (99.2 per cent) and secondary 11-15 (96.5 per cent) but significantly above for sixth form, under fives and youth and community provision, the latter exceptionally so. Nevertheless, the total funding per pupil allocated to both primary and secondary schools has increased significantly overall since 2000-01 owing to the very substantial increases in grants. The comparatively favourable treatment of primary schools in this period has been heavily influenced by the required focus of these grants. Overall, revenue spending per pupil is above the average for metropolitan districts, particularly for primary schools, as indicated below:

	Leeds	Metropolitan Districts	All English LEAs
Primary Local Schools Budget (LSB) per pupil	£2,867	£2,672	£2,778
Secondary Local Schools Budget (LSB) per pupil	£3,493	£3,366	£3,478

Source: 2001-02 Section 52 returns

43. Growth in the LEA's spending in the last two years has been focused on a range of centrally held budgets, to the extent that schools' delegated budgets have not

been fully inflation protected. Nevertheless, the overall spending power of schools has also increased in real terms. Major increases have taken place in spending on special school placements outside the LEA from a very low base, in home to school transport provision, and on premature retirement costs. For the last of these, however, there has been compensating savings in expenditure on supernumerary staff in schools. Spending by the LEA on its strategic management functions, although somewhat high, remains within the government target level. However, special government grant to establish Education Leeds, which ends in September this year, has made a major contribution to enhancing its strategic management and school improvement capacity.

44. The previous inspection highlighted a lack of involvement of stakeholders in the debate about spending priorities. Consultation with schools on budgetary matters is satisfactory on the design of the funding formula and good on the deployment of grant income. It is unsatisfactory on the LEA's overall spending priorities. Recent changes to consultation structures should improve matters. Schools receive only a very general early indication of likely budget outcomes to inform their own financial planning. Budget presentations take place in January, but there is some way to go before schools feel fully involved in consultation on budget making at its formative stages.

45. The LEA delegates a higher proportion of total spending on schools than the average for comparable LEAs, and similarly devolves a higher proportion of Standards Fund grant. Age weightings within the formula are rather less favourable for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in relation to Key Stage 2 than the average for other LEAs. The LEA's funding formula is based on a thorough activity-led analysis undertaken in the mid 1990s. In recent years, changes have been made to formula values which have resulted in allocations diverging from the underlying model. Appropriately, Education Leeds intends to begin a full formula review in the year to come. This will quite properly include an assessment of the compatibility of funding differentials with EDP priorities. The current Best Value review ("Schools as Valued Customers") will rightly include a focus on the delegation of funding to schools for management support services as the current arrangements may not represent an appropriate division between LEA core responsibilities and traded provision for some services. Central recharges in certain areas are also a factor.

46. Spending on education overall has remained within budget for the last two years. Education Leeds takes appropriate steps to monitor spending by individual schools and has taken effective measures to reduce the number of schools either in deficit or with substantial surpluses. School surplus balances overall are lower than average but the percentage of schools in deficit remains higher, despite the progress made.

Promoting continuous improvement, including Best Value

47. Education Leeds inherited an organisation where systems for performance management were poorly developed and inconsistently operated. The last inspection judged that the council was making good progress overall in conducting Best Value pilot reviews but that this was not mirrored by satisfactory progress in the education department.

48. Structures for achieving continuous improvement including Best Value present a mixed picture but are overall satisfactory. The strategic use of a Best Value review to drive difficult but necessary cultural changes and to ensure that systems will support the changes in a coherent way is very good. A climate where awareness of the accountability for performance combined with an ambition and determination to achieve excellence has been effectively developed in a short period of time. A consistent system of performance management is in the very earliest stages of implementation. The capacity to make rapid improvement is very good. The understanding of what needs to be done is clear and there are members of staff who have the expertise to carry this out.

49. The External Auditor has given unqualified approval to the 2001-02 Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). An appropriate range of education performance indicators are included in the Plan, including some which are locally determined and reflect policy priorities in the area of minority ethnic achievement. Education Leeds took the sensible decision to use the methodology developed by the corporate centre for conducting Best Value reviews. Full and helpful written guidance is provided. This is supplemented by training and discussion group activities and by support from the corporate centre.

50. The LEA's choice of SEN as the focus for early review was entirely appropriate and in line with the identification of weaknesses in the first inspection. The review was completed and the findings have been followed up by Education Leeds. This has led to some service improvements. A Best Value review of the childcare and early years development service is planned. The project brief includes a rigorous approach to reviewing some complex issues and meets the requirements of Best Value.

51. On the formation of Education Leeds, other reviews which were planned were deferred for appropriate reasons. However, Education Leeds has continued to play its part in contributing to the cross cutting reviews which have been conducted by the corporate centre. Education Leeds is now embarking on a well-chosen review of traded service provision ("Schools as Valued Customers") which involves a fundamental and necessary reappraisal of the relationship between the LEA and its schools. This is intended to target a number of key issues in the organisation and funding of provision. Support for schools in being effective customers will rightly be a focus as only limited advice is provided schools on procurement, although specialist client support for the commissioning of some services is available on a traded basis. The programme of reviews thereafter is currently subject to reassessment. It is intended, quite reasonably, to take account of both LEA inspection and Comprehensive Performance Assessment in the scheduling of future activity.

52. Education Leeds is developing a framework for planning and reviewing performance. The initial guidance for business planning is unduly complex, but the framework for reviewing performance and linking this with a planning process is satisfactory and feasible. The training and discussions that have taken place have helped to establish a common purpose and a clearer focus on key priorities. Strategic area business and team plans are being developed for a three-year period. Although the performance monitoring, reporting and review cycle follows the financial

year, the plans were not complete at the time of the inspection. The plans although still in draft are very variable in quality and overall unsatisfactory. The relationships between strategic area and team plans are unclear. Education Leeds has not identified the resources that are required to implement activities. The identification of evidence that is required to self-review performance in a rigorous way, in particular to identify the outcomes and value added, is very weak. This has been recognised. Support is being provided to ensure that plans are functional for the current financial year and can be monitored and evaluated. Setting objectives and reviewing individual performance have started with the senior staff. The process will take a phased approach through the management tiers. The necessary training will support it.

Recommendations

In order to ensure that improvements are all implemented effectively and in a timely way:

- ensure that strategic area and team plans are working documents by simplifying the guidance on business planning and amending the plans so that they are clear, feasible, focussed and coherent and specifying the actions which are needed to implement objectives; and
- ensure that monitoring and self-evaluation procedures lead to the identification of weaknesses by identifying the evidence that should be taken into account and tightening the success criteria so that they are measurable and linked to assessing impact and outcomes.

SECTION 2: SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Summary of effectiveness of the LEA's support for school improvement

53. Support for school improvement deteriorated further after the previous inspection when it was judged unsatisfactory. Education Leeds has had to try to catch up quickly for the lost time. Progress is good in many areas. Although support has improved and many aspects are now satisfactory, it is not always of a consistent quality and it is too soon to have had an impact on standards. A good analysis has been made of the current position and the staff have a clear idea of the improvements that are required. Intentions for development are sensible and a start has been made in developing a more strategic and consistent approach to targeting support so that it tackles under achievement. Education Leeds has acted quickly and effectively with schools to develop relationships in line with those of a modern LEA. Expectations of the monitoring programme are very high. There is a long way to go before this becomes the reality although a suitable start has been made on enhancing school improvement advisers knowledge and skills and putting in place a management structure which will improve the quality and incisiveness of monitoring.

Monitoring, challenge and intervention

54. The last inspection judged as poor the extent to which monitoring, challenge and intervention had been defined and shared with schools. A vision had been developed, but had not had time to become a tangible influence. The LEA had not led schools to a clear understanding of the new relationship which government seeks to promote between local authorities and schools. It had done too little to steer away from a culture where schools were dependent on it, to one in which it supported their efforts to improve themselves.

55. Rapid progress has been made in tackling these cultural issues. The definition of monitoring, challenge and intervention and the extent to which this has been shared with schools has improved and is now satisfactory. Lead members and Education Leeds have a clear understanding of the role of a modern LEA. In the dialogue with schools, there has been a concerted effort, led by the Chief Executive of Education Leeds, to shake the culture of dependency and to emphasise the responsibility which schools have for their own improvement.

56. A very good framework for school improvement has been circulated to schools, which clearly and succinctly develops a coherent approach to monitoring, intervention and support and places the major improvement initiatives within this framework. Supporting this, procedures that guide intervention in schools have also been circulated for consultation. However, in documents and procedures challenge is much less well developed.

57. Education Leeds staff are clear about the approach and its implications for their work. The framework has been shared with schools and largely accepted by them. Nevertheless, in the school visits made for this inspection, there were still headteachers who had not fully accepted the practical implications for the responsibilities of school management. Most of the foundations for ensuring the

capacity to improve are in place except an effective brokerage system to help schools with the procurement of curriculum and management support.

Recommendation

In order to improve standards particularly at secondary schools:

- ensure that schools have access to a suitable range of support for improving the curriculum and management by developing schools' skills in effectively procuring services and by bringing forward the development of an effective brokerage service.

The focusing of LEA support on areas of greatest need

58. The last inspection judged this as unsatisfactory. Resources were not sufficiently well targeted to areas of greatest need. Schools received additional support but not all received the level of support that they needed.

59. Good progress has been made and focusing LEA support on areas of greatest need is generally appropriate. The school improvement service has clearly defined its core business through the programme of monitoring, intervention and implementing the EDP 2 although it is too soon to tell whether support from the latter will in practice be sufficiently well targeted.

60. Schools causing concern and especially those in special measures have access to extensive support. Procedures are in place to ensure that these schools are a priority for all services and that the support that they receive is well co-ordinated.

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

61. In the previous inspection too small a percentage of schools thought monitoring was useful. The collection and analysis of school performance data were well managed and a strength in the work of the LEA. Recently Education Leeds has made improvements in the procedures and organisation of the monitoring programme, although these have not had time to become embedded or to have had an impact. Monitoring is not consistently incisive and challenging. Hence, in practice, the work of monitoring and challenging schools remains unsatisfactory. Nevertheless the capacity for improvement is good. There is the promise of improvement through the development of a quality standards framework that has the potential to engage schools in a more differentiated and challenging approach.

62. Improvements have been made in categorising schools. All schools have been allocated to one of five categories on the basis of current evidence. A more objective identification of the category of causing concern has replaced the category of shared concerns. Although the categorisation has taken place without the consistent involvement of schools and their governing bodies, the schools in categories causing concern know that they are included and the reasons why.

63. The process of shared review that was in place at the time of the last inspection has ended. The revised monitoring programme is at a very early state of implementation. Visits on target setting have taken place and a further visit to monitor schools' implementation of either literacy, numeracy or ICT are scheduled. At the time of the inspection, the new arrangements were not entirely clear to schools. Schools, especially the more effective, are rightly concerned that the content is suitably differentiated and recognises the improvement needs of high performing schools. The visits made to date have been insufficiently evaluative, but measures to rectify this are in hand.

64. Improvements have also taken place in devising an infrastructure that will be capable of making best use of monitoring information and assuring its consistency and quality. A format has been devised to store data on school performance. An improved organisational structure has been implemented, whereby advisers work in wedge teams led by a senior school improvement adviser as a team leader. It has the potential to develop a structure for sharing and developing skills and improved methods of quality assurance.

65. An approach that will provide a mechanism for a sound engagement between the school improvement adviser and schools is currently being developed. This involves distilling a clear quality standards framework that can be applied in school self-evaluation and which will provide the basis of a debate between the school and the school improvement adviser to agree the current school performance. The development is complex. The development work is co-ordinated by a quality standards framework working group which consists of representatives from schools' representatives and Education Leeds which is chaired by a strategic manager who has a very good track record in managing initiatives in partnership with schools. Although there are several hurdles to cross, the prospect for improving the effectiveness of monitoring is good.

66. The quality and use of performance data is excellent. It has continued to improve and is currently the greatest strength in the strategy for school improvement. It rightly provides the basis for auditing need, distilling priorities and monitoring school performance. The development of performance data has benefited from a stable management with a long-term programme of incremental developments. All developments are undertaken and evaluated in partnership with schools. The data is accurate, timely and complements that circulated nationally, even though it has not benefited from the most sophisticated forms of collection and storage. This is now being tackled by establishing a comprehensive database that will enable greater interrogation of data across services. Target setting is a rigorous process and the clear analysis of data has supported the setting of challenging targets.

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

67. Education Leeds inherited a legacy where too many schools were causing concern. The LEA had a poor track record in supporting rapid improvement. Since 1993, five secondary, nine primary, one nursery and four special schools have required special measures. Nineteen schools have been identified as having serious weaknesses, of which two later required special measures and three others have been identified as having serious weaknesses following a second OFSTED

inspection. The effectiveness of Education Leeds' work with under-performing schools is overall unsatisfactory. However, weaknesses are being tackled and the range of strategies increased. There are recent indications of greater success in ensuring an acceptable standard of education in every school.

68. At the time of the inspection, four schools require special measures and seven schools⁴ have serious weaknesses. Two secondary schools have required special measures since 1999. However, in recent monitoring visits, both schools were judged by HMI to have made reasonable progress. Since the inception of Education Leeds, one secondary school has required special measures and three primary and one special school have been identified as having serious weaknesses, three schools for a second time. During this period two secondary schools have been inspected and no longer have serious weaknesses. In addition, the LEA has identified a further 27 schools which are causing concern at levels 3 and 4 on the LEA's categorisation. Five secondary schools, all in challenging circumstances, have been inspected recently and all found to be improving and offering a standard of education which is at least satisfactory.

69. Despite some successes, this is unsatisfactory. The time required to remove secondary schools from requiring special measures is too long, though primary schools have made more satisfactory progress. In addition, OFSTED inspection is continuing to identify schools with serious weaknesses. In part, this reflects the discontinuities and inefficiencies in the monitoring programme that Education Leeds inherited, but effectiveness will still depend on the ability to penetrate difficulties at a sufficiently early stage. The track record so far indicates that this is not consistently satisfactory.

70. Procedures for identifying and supporting under-performing schools have been improved and are currently circulated for consultation. They provide a structure which is too complex to ensure support is timely and co-ordinated. In addition to the school improvement adviser, an intervention manager is appointed usually who has experience in supporting the most challenging schools. A senior strategic manager will also be identified for each school to act as its champion and to ensure that it receives appropriate help from every service as a priority. A school improvement strategy group, which is a cross service group comprising senior officers, meets fortnightly to ensure that any problems that might impede the progress of schools' causing concern are resolved immediately. In addition, the necessary collaboration and co-ordination between the headteacher, governors and Education Leeds concerning action planning and the progress made against success criteria is effected through a joint review group. The schools' views of the effectiveness of support from Education Leeds are discussed with the Headteachers and chairs of governors through periodic school visits conducted by the assistant chief executives. The terms of reference of the groups and how they relate to one another require greater clarity to avoid duplication. For instance, the strategic group meets at fortnightly intervals. This is too frequent in view of its strategic role. In addition, the head and chair of governors do not attend that meeting and therefore the group has

⁴ Following the completion of the inspection, two primary schools were inspected and one no longer required special measures and another no longer had serious weaknesses

no real opportunity to hear at firsthand from the school report on the effectiveness of the support.

71. Appropriate action has been taken to increase the expertise that is available. A headteacher and chair of governors of a Beacon school provided considerable and effective onsite support to a secondary school with serious weaknesses. This has provided a model for further work in other schools and subsequently over thirty headteachers are either contributing or have expressed an interest in supporting this work. In a good initiative, secondary schools' difficulties with recruitment and retention are being tackled by the appointment of a team of 20 advanced skills teachers. Procedures to ensure the smooth transition of pupils to new schools after closure of a secondary school requiring special measures are very good, timely and planned in detail.

72. Visits to and meetings with eleven schools causing concern for this inspection showed that procedures and approaches are in transition and are not yet consistent. Support is generally sufficient and sometimes extensive, although more successful in primary⁵ than in those secondary schools where there is still evidence of some fragmentation of the work of different services. School improvement advisers are supportive but, especially in secondary schools, their support has not always challenged the outstanding problems. Monitoring visits are made and the notes provide useful information, but do not always clearly identify the next most appropriate steps for LEA intervention and action by the school.

Support for literacy

73. Support for literacy was considered unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The main concern was the quality of the initial training for the National Literacy Strategy. The inspection report recommended that target setting should be better developed and that the impact of the effectiveness of support should be evaluated. The first EDP 1 had six activities related to literacy; only three of these fully achieved their success criteria.

74. Support for literacy is now satisfactory, despite a very difficult and fluctuating context with a relatively high turnover of consultants. Furthermore, the strategy manager for literacy is temporarily also responsible for the numeracy strategy. New structures and systems are being established.

75. Significant gains have been made in some schools which have received intensive support. However, there are others in which the input has had little impact. Extra resources have been allocated to support the transition between primary and secondary schools, but there is insufficient strategic focus on underachieving groups such as boys and pupils of ethnic minority heritage.

76. The quality of training offered to schools has been on the whole good, with an estimated 3500 primary teachers and assistants receiving training every year. Leeds

⁵ Following the inspection, one primary school was removed from requiring special measures in the very short period of eleven months.

took part in an Early Literacy Support national pilot which involved 20 schools. The DfES has judged the implementation as very successful.

Support for numeracy

77. Support for numeracy was judged satisfactory in the last inspection. All performance indicators lead to the conclusion that it remains satisfactory. Targets were exceeded in 2000. In 2001, and in line with results nationally, attainment dipped slightly and is one percentage below the target in 2001. Numeracy was not inspected during this inspection. However, since the last inspection there have been considerable staffing changes. The literacy strategy manager has led the numeracy strategy on a temporary basis and until the formation of Education Leeds consultants were left to work in a disconnected way, with little support from managers. During this period, support was focused only on schools which are causing concern. After a long period of confusion, improvements are now being made.

Support for information and communication technology (ICT)

78. The last inspection found that developments in the curriculum uses of ICT were severely handicapped in most schools by low levels of provision, the backlog of low financial investment and growing stock of old equipment that schools could not afford to replace. Moreover, pupils' progress in ICT, particularly in secondary schools, was poor. In this context, the EDP 1 rightly included improvements in ICT as a local priority with an integral ICT development plan. To revise and update this plan forms part of a priority for EDP 2.

79. There is considerable variation in the quality of different aspects of the support to schools for standards in and curriculum use of ICT. Some are good, others are poor, and this inconsistency results in the overall quality being unsatisfactory. Support for all aspects of ICT in schools is now organised as an agency within the school improvement division. This is designed to bring the benefits of sharing expertise and resources directly to schools. The staffing of this is not yet complete, and the resources for curriculum support are currently insufficient for the work needed. The agency offers service level agreements covering professional development and training, a technical support service for maintenance and repair of hardware for both curriculum and management information systems and a "service desk" advisory and technical diagnostic service including software and resources revisions. Many schools find that these are insufficiently flexible to meet their needs, and that some are expensive. Some of the schools visited complained of delays in response, of help provided grudgingly and of a failure by the agency to observe proper customer – supplier conventions. The agency is included in a Best Value review of a sample of traded services to be completed by November.

80. The ICT agency has provided valuable advice to Excellence in Cities on the design and equipping of high quality city learning centres. Currently, three city learning centres are operational, with a fourth is at an advanced stage of planning. The excellent ICT facilities in each of the centres have been imaginatively extended by additional specialised provision to enable them to complement activities available in other centres and in specialist schools. Through significant additional funding by

the council from urban renewal allocations, further facilities are included to stimulate community use and a study support initiative.

81. Arrangements for monitoring school standards of achievement in ICT are insufficiently robust. Schools have twice been invited to complete a survey of standards based on teacher assessments, but 20 per cent fewer schools responded to the second invitation than to the first. Some advice has been provided to help schools assess pupils' work in terms of national curriculum levels. Standards in ICT have been identified as a focus for school improvement adviser visits to a proportion of primary schools in the current term, and training has been provided to school improvement advisers to support this.

82. The implementation of National Grid for Learning (NGfL) is now completed and all schools have sufficient resources to enable the national curriculum requirements to be met. Overall, there has been a dramatic improvement in levels of ICT resourcing in schools, and in primary, secondary and special schools the pupil-computer ratio exceed the average both nationally and in similar authorities, and is ahead of national targets. All schools were required, as part of the NGfL bid, to prepare an ICT development plan and to set achievement targets.

Recommendation

In order to improve the use of ICT in the curriculum:

- subject to the outcomes of the best value review, provide service levels agreements for various forms of ICT support that are more reflective of what schools want.

83. The Leeds Learning Network is also offered to schools as a service level agreement, which is substantially subsidised by the city council. This includes a core communications service together with access to a wide range of learning resources including internet sources, carefully indexed to match likely use in schools and with a high level set of protection filters to prevent unsuitable use. In addition to web resources, it contains a small but growing supply of teaching and learning material produced locally. It is an extremely well designed and comprehensive system and is one of a small number of systems nationally to have received BECTa accreditation. However, few schools are as yet utilising more than a small fraction of its potential, and many consider that in relation to what they gain at present, the cost of the network, even with the central subsidy, is very high.

Recommendation

In order to improve the use of ICT in the curriculum:

- enable schools to make fuller use of Leeds Learning Network to obtain better value to match the high cost of subscription by stepping up the training and support available to schools.

84. The agency is a provider of New Opportunities Fund training and about three quarters of schools have registered. Of the 2600 teachers registered, only just over 100 have so far completed the training, though another 1500 are expected to do so by the end of the current financial year. Several primary schools are reported to be deferring training until they have the literacy and numeracy strategies fully established. Target dates for completion have now been agreed with a proportion of the schools.

85. Support for schools in the use of ICT in the curriculum has improved in a number of important ways since the last inspection, though this is in an overall context of increasing requirements and expectations. There are clear indications of a capacity to continue to improve, particularly now that standards of equipment provision are high.

Support for raising standards at Key Stage 3

86. Support for raising standards in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. The Key Stage 3 strategy was launched in the summer of 2001 and since then a well-planned programme of support has been provided. Achieving improvement in Key Stage 3 is rightly identified as a priority in EDP 2 as the progress of pupils from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 is below that of similar authorities and nationally.

87. Continuity between the Key Stage 2 and 3 strategies has been identified as a priority. The consultant teams for the primary literacy and numeracy strategies have been increased by the addition of Key Stage 3 consultants, and further teams are being set up for science, ICT and thinking skills. The Key Stage 2 and 3 consultants work in partnerships within the wedges and share both methods and information. Bridging units of work have been developed, and "catch-up" programmes for targeted pupils are organised in some secondary schools. Twenty-four summer schools for literacy or numeracy were organised in summer 2000. Schools have been strongly urged to ensure that overall responsibility for the Key Stage 3 work should be that of a member of the senior management, and training is provided for them and for the subject teachers concerned. Visits to schools indicated that this has been of satisfactory quality. Work on the development of cross-curricular approaches is beginning.

88. Schools with the lowest standards of achievement have been identified and receive intensive support in this first year, initially in English and mathematics. All

other schools have been allocated a day and half of consultancy which most have used to help them undertake audits to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their work in English and mathematics. Work in science and teaching foreign languages is planned to start in the current term and in ICT in the autumn. Further groups of schools, including some in the first year cohorts, have been identified for intensive support in the second year. It is intended that support next year will be allocated more flexibly in proportion to the needs of the schools. The work of the strategy is also being supported by planned interaction with EiC strands, notably the study support, learning mentorship and gifted and talented strands, together with the University of the First Age.

89. Monitoring the progress made in the first year of the strategy is to be the focus of the school improvement adviser's visits to all secondary schools this term, based on an internal evaluation that the schools will be asked to complete. As the results of National Curriculum assessments become available, these will enable a more thorough monitoring of outcomes, including impact on the achievements of various groups of pupils. There are indications from some schools and from consultants' reports that there are small improvements in pupils' attitudes and attendance.

Support for minority ethnic groups including Travellers

90. The last inspection judged this support as unsatisfactory. Good progress has been made and it is now satisfactory. The restructuring which took place soon after the formation of Education Leeds took some key steps to ensure that raising minority ethnic responsibility is a mainstream issue central to the work of Education Leeds and all schools. It has given the minority ethnic achievement team a key role within the wider school improvement strategy and ensured that previously isolated expertise is available across the department. The promotion of racial harmony is no longer seen as the responsibility of this team only.

91. Despite initiatives and plans for improvement over several years, the long-standing underachievement of minority ethnic groups especially Caribbean and Pakistani children remains a serious concern. Education Leeds has made a clear analysis of the extent of underachievement of different minority ethnic groups. It is intending to develop further systems to collect data on, amongst other things, attendance, examination entries, options choices and numbers of ethnic minority children in gifted and talented cohorts and benefiting from other EiC initiatives.

92. Good quality data is provided to schools to inform target setting. However, there has been little in-depth evaluation of which activities have been more successful in order to inform future plans and developments. Informative reports, notably on attendance and exclusions of black young people, have been made both to the Board of Education Leeds and to the Race Equality Advisory Forum. As yet, plans for improvement are insufficiently focused.

93. The formula for the delegation of the ethnic minority achievement grant is based on appropriate and transparent criteria, agreed with schools. Schools also receive funding through a weighted element within the funding formula. Education Leeds has established satisfactory procedures for monitoring schools' use of this grant funding.

94. In 2000-01, over a thousand pupils with English as an additional language were supported by the equality language and learning agency. This included most of the two hundred children of refugees and asylum seekers. Evidence from assessments demonstrates that at least two thirds of primary age pupils, and one third of secondary age pupils, made significant improvements during the course of the year. However, the service is unable to support isolated bilingual learners in a large number of schools across the city. This is unsatisfactory despite the support of officers who are able to offer teachers valuable advice and suggest points of contact which are examples of effective practice.

95. Support for children of Travellers is good. The Travellers education service is well managed. It directs its resources towards all schools where Travellers arrive and to all Travellers, according to need. Schools are aware of the support available. There is early identification and support for newly arrived pupils. Service planning is good. It has benefited from a recent Best Value review and from improved management information. There are clear links to school improvement. Opportunities to access college courses have increased for pupils at Key Stage 4. There is effective multi-agency and outreach work. The number of children from unauthorised sites who are registered and supported at school has increased. Liaison with families is a strength, with the development of home-school distance learning packs. The use of grant funding is well monitored. Improvements are planned to ensure more effective monitoring of pupil attainment and provide further information with which to target resources.

96. Training has been provided for mainstream teachers which addresses the needs of minority ethnic groups, including Travellers. Education Leeds intends to ensure that equal opportunities and race relations are integral themes of all curriculum related training.

Support for gifted and talented pupils

97. Support provided by Education Leeds for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. There are a number of strengths and a wide range of activities, but as yet there is little evidence of this work having an impact on pupil performance. OFSTED school inspection reports have generally been more critical than positive. The uptake of higher education, at 24 per cent in 2000. Half of the enhanced EIC performance targets were achieved and this rate of success is in line with that in comparable authorities.

98. The EDP2 includes work with gifted and talented pupils as a priority. It recognises the importance of changing attitudes and aspirations to enable progress to occur. The development of support for these pupils utilises existing structures of support and links schools together through wedge co-ordinators. In 2001 Education Leeds successfully supported five summer schools for gifted and talented pupils. These offered a wide range of well-targeted activity, recruited fully and retained pupils' commitment. Although the resource and responsibility were devolved to schools, they received appropriate support and monitoring. A weakness in the current policy and practice are narrowly focussed on able pupils. The emphasis in the use of ICT for gifted and talented pupils has been on securing access to machines rather than in using technology creatively as an aid to learning.

Support for school management

99. The last inspection found that activities were at an early stage of development and that overall there was not a coherent programme for the improvement of school management. Since then, and particularly since Education Leeds took responsibility, significant steps have been taken to establish such a programme, though as yet there has been too little time for these to have a significant impact. Support for school leadership and management is now satisfactory. Improving the quality of leadership and management is a priority identified in both the EDP 1 and in its successor, where it is the first priority.

100. Education Leeds has strengthened its capacity to support leadership and management in schools. Officers have been appointed with experience of school management and headteachers from both primary and secondary schools have been identified who are willing to provide support. Leadership and management support is intended to be an integral part of the programme of monitoring, intervention and challenge. School improvement advisers, through their termly contact with schools, are expected to be the chief means of monitoring and identifying needs for support and intervention. However, there is not enough evidence of effective support or monitoring to demonstrate that there is the capacity to challenge and extend management and leadership expertise in all secondary schools.

101. Good use is made of national schemes, and good links are being developed with the National College for School Leadership. Management support resources have been extended by business links formed through the Education Leeds Business Alliance. The induction programme for newly appointed headteachers has been significantly improved by Education Leeds. Headteacher and deputy head take-up of the training programmes provided corresponds closely to the national figure for primary schools, while for secondary schools the uptake in Leeds has been almost four times as high as nationally. Middle management training, however, is not well developed but is a priority within EDP2.

102. Nearly all headteachers and deputy headteachers have completed the school self-evaluation training using the OFSTED materials, and a modified version of this is being provided for middle managers within the programme of continuing professional development. Take-up of this is reported as good. There are plans to extend self-evaluation and make it more systematic through the quality standards framework.

Support for governors

103. Support for governors has improved considerably since the last inspection, and is now satisfactory. Successful steps have been taken to remedy the weaknesses that were formerly identified. The governors' forum and governor wedge meetings are well attended and there is no indication of undue political influence on their work. These channels enable governors to play a significant part in deliberations about education policy matters, and many governors have a good understanding of issues facing Education Leeds such as the over-provision of primary places and the

restructuring of secondary schools. Information provision and training for school governors has improved, particularly in relation to the setting of performance targets.

104. Vacancies for local authority nominees on governing bodies are now considerably fewer than formerly, as a consequence of introducing the practice that the governors' forum can nominate without reference to political affiliations to vacancies of six months duration or more. Efforts to recruit have had reasonable success. Eight per cent of places on governing bodies in Leeds are currently not filled, which compares well with other authorities in West Yorkshire. Consistent attempts to increase the number of governors of minority ethnic origin have met with less success. Education Leeds has worked hard to build up the numbers of people willing to serve as co-opted governors, and maintains a list of volunteers.

105. The governor training programme managed by the governors' support unit is highly regarded and well supported. Care is taken to ensure a good match of need and provision. The induction courses for new governors together with the joint courses for headteachers and governors and the training provided for individual school governing bodies are especially valued. The support unit is encouraging governing bodies to undertake self-evaluation activities. Education Leeds is starting to draw on the work of effective governing bodies and experienced governors to help some schools where weaknesses have been identified. Eighty-three per cent of schools use the clerking service, which provides good value for money.

The effectiveness of services to support school management

106. The previous inspection judged the quality of service specifications for traded services were unsatisfactory. It also referred to unsatisfactory analyses of service costs, which hindered the development of effective trading relationships. Many of the weaknesses remain, although the performance of the services themselves is satisfactory overall. The content of marketing material is inconsistent and, while the descriptions of service range are generally satisfactory, clear performance criteria are relatively rare. Very little information is provided on schools' entitlement to centrally funded services and there is little advice on schools' responsibilities, should they decide not to purchase a traded service. Overall, the material does not provide schools with what they need to make a fully informed purchasing decision. Some services offer limited choice.

107. However, Education Leeds has recognised this and intends to address the weaknesses in the Best Value review "Schools as Valued Customers". It has already taken positive steps to strengthen arrangements for dialogue with schools on service performance and on the developments required to reflect changing needs. The support services play a full part in the monitoring of school performance and in the provision of assistance to schools with difficulties. They are appropriately involved in the development of Education Leeds quality standards framework.

108. The **Education Finance Service** was judged to be satisfactory in the first inspection. It is now good. The most significant improvement has been in reducing the number of schools with end of year deficits or high levels of surplus. Schools have retained their very positive opinions of the support provided for budget planning, monitoring and review. Arrangements for schools to make payments are

still on paper but work effectively and schools may opt for chequebook arrangements if they wish. The reconciliation of accounts is not unduly problematic. The traded offer to schools has usefully been supplemented by the option of a full bursarial service. There is a comprehensive guidance manual and a monthly newsletter. The establishment of a school bursar focus group has been a further positive development. Collaboration with school advisers in supporting the drawing together of the school development and budget planning processes is mainly concentrated on schools giving cause for concern. However, the finance service has also appropriately made a contribution to leadership and management training and to the development of the quality standards framework. Financial benchmarking data to schools and the Audit Commission financial benchmarking web site have not been provided or advertised. Information is being prepared but there is no target date for its issue.

109. The **Education Personnel Service** was found to be satisfactory at the time of the first inspection and remains so. The recommendation that the LEA clarify its approach to staff redundancy has been carried out satisfactorily. The guidance manual for schools has been substantially improved. A personnel database has been purchased. The lack of such a system has severely hampered the production of management information for both Education Leeds and for schools. Schools tend to associate difficulties with personnel support (which in Leeds includes the payroll service) more with poor systems than with the expertise or commitment of staff. A programme to deal with substantial numbers of supernumerary staff in schools has been completed and substantial savings made. Firm steps are being taken to address the over-use of temporary contracts in schools. Plans to establish a "preferred provider" in the private sector for teacher supply cover provision are well advanced. The prospects for significant service improvement overall are good.

110. **ICT Support for school administration** and the development of an information management strategy for Education Leeds is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the first inspection. As then, the principal source of dissatisfaction for schools is response time when support through a site visit is required. Education Leeds has, however, usefully reduced the need for such visits through enabling on-line working by helpdesk staff. These staff provide valued support but are too thinly stretched. Some posts have been left unfilled, pending the outcome of the current Best Value review, which will have a particular focus on ICT support. The great majority of schools use the same basic software, which is an asset. There are some concerns, however, about the LEA's willingness to support non-standard systems. Reasonable steps have been taken to survey school satisfaction with service provision.

111. Education Leeds has a number of component parts of a satisfactory ICT and information management strategy in place and has a good grasp in principle of what is required. However, it lacks a coherent overall plan to bring the various elements together and to address remaining deficiencies. On-line communication with schools is limited but the LEA provides helpful support for data transfer on disk. The LEA has been relatively slow in developing a comprehensive central ICT database but the major part of the data input is now close to completion. Work still needs to be done on establishing access rights for schools. The pupil census exercise this year went well and benefited from extensive trialling in the preceding months.

Recommendation

In order to improve access to management information to improve planning and monitoring:

- develop a comprehensive ICT and information management strategic plan in consultation with schools.

112. **Property services** support to schools was judged to be poor in the first inspection. With the exception of major new building projects, it is still a source of significant dissatisfaction for schools. The service remains poor, but Education Leeds took urgent action to review property services. It remains to be seen whether the relocation of professional support staff into the contracting services department, along with responsibility for the traded services for schools, will have the desired impact on performance. There has been improvement in responsiveness to customers but significant problems of poor communication, unreliability, and poor contract monitoring and supervision remain. Schools are particularly concerned about the repeated use of contractors whose performance is poor. However, they have not been made sufficiently aware of the opportunity to contribute to the performance assessment which contributes to qualification for the authority's approved contractor list.

113. Support for cleaning, grounds maintenance, and catering was not covered in the first inspection. **Cleaning services** are satisfactory and there are reasonable prospects for some improvement. They are offered as a directly managed service. There is no separate specialist client support service, although schools considering going out to tender or employing their own staff are offered advice free of charge. The future of such support, and that offered by the corporate procurement unit, will rightly be amongst the issues considered in the current Best Value review. Staff recruitment and retention are the key problem for the Service, particularly in providing cover for temporary absence. This is the weakest part of the service, but arises from a problem, which similarly affects the private sector locally. **Grounds maintenance** support is provided on a similar basis to cleaning. A client support service is offered but no schools have taken it up. A majority of schools purchase a service and the proportion is increasing. The service is satisfactory.

114. **School meals** provision is satisfactory. The take-up of free and paid meals is comparable to the average for other LEAs. Production costs are relatively low. A separate client support service is not offered to schools although, appropriately, this is under consideration. Useful measures are taken to publicise free school meal entitlement and encourage take-up. Consultation with pupils, parents, and schools on meal content and choice is good. Appropriate steps are taken to establish the needs of minority ethnic groups and to make provision accordingly. There is active promotion of healthy eating.

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

115. Support for schools in securing an adequate supply of teachers is satisfactory overall, with a mixture of stronger and weaker features. Leeds does not have a severe shortage of teachers and has not received Teacher Training Agency funding for the appointment of a recruitment and retention strategy manager. Nevertheless, there are problems of recruiting and retaining sufficient experienced teachers for many of the inner city schools. The loss of newly qualified teachers during or at the end of their first year is another problem. Of those appointed from initial training, only one in three continues in post into their second year of teaching. The use of temporary and short-term contracts contributes to this difficulty and Education Leeds is actively discouraging schools from using this practice. Some schools have employed teachers trained outside the United Kingdom, but the retention rate for these has been low: of 27 appointed last September, only 15 were still in post in the following January.

116. Education Leeds has inherited a context in which the central database is insufficient to provide an analysis of the patterns of vacancies in schools, though steps are in hand to improve this for the near future. In the meantime, the steps which are being taken are fragmented but nevertheless include elements that are likely to form important parts of a strategy in the future. Work is in hand to identify a single agency as the designated provider of supply teachers for Leeds schools, a move that has the support of schools. Induction programmes and processes for both newly appointed headteachers and for newly qualified teachers have been improved significantly by Education Leeds, and are now of good quality. Provision for headteachers offers mentors an individual consultancy through a headteacher support service. An induction programme is also provided for classroom assistants with encouragement and help to embark on teacher training. Discussions are planned with the initial teacher training institutions in the city to explore more flexible patterns of part-time teacher training. Education Leeds is seeking to appoint an additional 20 advanced skills teachers to work in inner city schools, in addition to the 80 currently employed. The proportion of minority ethnic teachers in Leeds schools is considerably lower than the proportion of pupils. Through Campaign 300, over 100 teachers from ethnic minority groups have been trained and of these 80 per cent have been classroom assistants and used this route to qualified status. However, Leeds has not had the full benefit of this, since many have preferred to work in other authorities nearby.

117. Developing healthy staff and healthy schools is a priority in the EDP 2, and embraces several initiatives that are highly valued by many schools. These include an Investors in Excellence programme, and an encouragement to schools to identify how working and living conditions in schools can be made more supportive to staff. To date, 146 schools have obtained the Investors in People award, and a further 53 are working towards this. Education Leeds is supporting the development of a Leeds Teachers' Charter, containing a career development pledge. It is also piloting a teacher sabbatical scheme.

The effectiveness of services to support school improvement

118. The previous inspection report judged that the inspection and advisory service did not provide value for money. The staffing structure needed further review as it was understaffed with secondary expertise. After a lengthy period of uncertainty before the formation of Education Leeds, steps are now being taken to set about the task of improving the effectiveness of services. The steps that have been taken are rational and right and show the promise of improvement. The climate, relationships and morale are better, leadership and the management structures form a strong foundation, expertise is enhanced, a framework for planning and performance review is developing and being implemented. At the point of delivery, services for school improvement are not consistently satisfactory. The capacity for improvement, however, is good given time to embed the procedures and with more attention to the focus and consistency.

119. The chief executive of Education Leeds, supported by the senior management team, provides good leadership for school improvement. A vision has been articulated and much has been done to improve morale and to instil in staff a belief in their ability to bring about change. Communication and consultation have improved considerably and there are good signs that this has been successful, especially in view of the size of the city, in developing a common understanding of the issues and a common sense of purpose between strategic areas, teams and schools.

120. The restructuring of responsibilities and services has been effectively undertaken. The resulting structure is very effective with a well-balanced and consistent framework of clear roles and responsibilities. It provides the capacity for the development of both strategy and management. All posts at tier 1 to 4 have been appointed, although a number of strategic managers and team leaders took up post very recently and this has undoubtedly effected the speed at which improvement in some areas has been possible.

121. Business planning has been initiated and has not yet been completed, but draft plans are currently unsatisfactory. Draft plans relate too loosely to the objectives set in the strategic plan and the actions are too general and stated more as objectives than a set of precise actions. The plans do not provide a clear enough assessment of whether the resources available are sufficient to conduct the work and do not provide sufficiently robust evidence of effectiveness. However, managers had generally made a good assessment of the existing strengths and weaknesses within the areas of their responsibility and were generally taking appropriate action but unless planning improves there is a real risk of an insufficient focus to see the new initiatives through. Good work is taking place to achieve better links and more joint working and planning between school improvement, social inclusion and SEN services.

122. Deployment of services is now appropriate and gives attention to the core business and especially the priority to support under-performing schools. There is a genuine intention to make best use of the resources which are available. A strong strand running through the improvements is the enhancement by various means of expertise for school improvement although there are remaining weaknesses in the

capacity to challenge, support and extend senior management and leadership of secondary schools. This includes a better match between the skills of existing staff and their posts, staff training, new appointments, partnership working with and secondments from school staff and the resources and consultancy provided by Capita. A system of performance management has been devised which has only just started.

SECTION 3: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Summary of effectiveness of LEA's Special Educational Needs provision

123. All aspects of special educational needs with the exception of provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are now satisfactory. Improvement has been driven by an effective Best Value review. A clear strategy is now in place and schools have confidence in the partnership with Education Leeds. Resources are low when compared with other authorities and provision for pupils with acute emotional and behavioural problems is not sufficient to meet needs. An attempt has been made to deploy resources using clear criteria, although Education Leeds has recognised that the structured audit is too complex and bureaucratic and there is an intention to introduce new procedures. Support services are generally effective. However, variations in schools' performance are insufficiently challenged.

The LEA's strategy for Special Educational Needs (SEN)

124. The previous inspection judged SEN as unsatisfactory. The LEA lacked a clear and comprehensive strategy and planning was inadequate. Considerable improvement has taken place and the special educational needs strategy is now satisfactory. The Best Value review has had an impact on practice. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation have improved through a targeted approach to attending the annual reviews of pupils with statements in Years 5 and 6.

125. Leeds has a clear special educational needs policy, developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, which links well with corporate priorities. Special educational needs are covered well in EDP 2 and there are clear action plans that align resources to secure change. Imaginative work supports the inclusion agenda, especially the "Inclusion Charter Mark" which is a structured programme of self-review that provides positive reinforcement for inclusive schools. In the main, schools feel well consulted. Proposals to deploy support services in line with wedges are currently being implemented. Wedge deployment also has implications for the role of special schools. It is intended that each wedge will benefit from a special school which will provide a resource and satellite provision to support pupils and schools within it. This has been accepted in principle, but the detail of its implementation is not clear.

126. Attempts have been made to align resources closely to need through a structured audit known as the matrix. The principles behind the audit were sound, but schools found this process over-elaborate and bureaucratic. Education Leeds has listened to schools, recognised that the model is not sustainable in its present form and intends to simplify it and reduce the paperwork required by 50 per cent. Schools have confidence that this will be achieved. Clear guidelines exist which set out the respective responsibilities of schools and Education Leeds although this is not well known in schools.

127. Resources and provision are very limited to meet some needs especially for pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is no specialist provision for girls and a significant waiting list for a place for boys at the special

school which has been identified by OFSTED as having serious weaknesses. Pupils with acute emotional and behavioural difficulties are often placed in the pupil referral unit. Schools are concerned that the criteria used in the audit do not adequately reflect need in this area and that need is under identified as well as under resourced. The strategy for meeting the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is too fragmented to be effective and there are too many different referral routes for pupils. There is insufficient understanding of which route may be the most beneficial for the pupil and this sometimes leads to a poor match between support and pupils' needs. The necessary co-ordinated approach which is required to improve provision between the three strategic areas of SEN, children and families and behaviour and attendance, has not been achieved at a strategic or operational level.

Recommendation

In order to improve the range of provision for pupils with emotional behavioural difficulties:

- take action to improve the range of provision which is available for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties by developing better co-ordination between the strategic areas within Education Leeds of SEN, children and families and behaviour and attendance and adopting a shared responsibility for the issue; as well as collaborating closely with other services such as health, social services and the child care and early development service in developing and implementing an agreed and feasible agenda for action.

Statutory obligations

128. The previous inspection found that most of the statutory obligations were met and performance was satisfactory. Education Leeds continues to meet its statutory obligations in a satisfactory way. Guidelines to help school in the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are very clear. Published criteria for all stages of assessment were produced for the structured audit and these are currently being refocused in partnership with schools with a view to using the criteria only when existing data does not reflect the level of need.

129. The rate of completion of statements has improved from 23.8 per cent in 2000-2001 to 95 per cent in 2001-02. This has largely been achieved through halving the number of statements issued. When exceptions are not taken into account only 45 per cent of all statements are issued within the expected 18 weeks. Largely this is attributed to the delays in the timely completion of medical advice. The number of SEN tribunals has doubled, although their level is not significantly high when compared to national figures. Statements do not specify the provision necessary to meet the needs of the child clearly enough.

Recommendation

In order to improve the standards of pupils with SEN:

- ensure that the provision necessary to meet the needs of the child is specified on the statement.

130. A targeted approach to attending annual reviews has been developed to ensure primary aged pupils with statements are well prepared for secondary schools. Pupils attending independent schools have access to appropriate support.

131. Leeds has a large parent partnership scheme, which is expected to provide independent support for parents. Some members of the partnership have reservations about whether the service is sufficiently independent. Parents are well informed of their rights and support material is available in minority languages.

Recommendation

In order to improve parents of pupils with special educational needs access to impartial advice:

- establish suitable management arrangements which ensure an appropriate degree of independence for the parent partnership

School improvement

132. In the previous inspection, the effectiveness of services in exercising their SEN functions to support school improvement was judged to be unsatisfactory. In particular, resources were not sufficiently aligned to support policies and there was a lack of clarity and objectivity in the allocation of support service time. Support for school improvement is now satisfactory.

133. There are clear criteria for the allocation of support, although these are not consistently delivered in practice and the schools visited for this inspection had had differing experiences. While continuing to provide an element of flexibility, monitoring has not been sufficient to ensure the new systems are being followed. Schools report that the provision of support services and educational psychological support are satisfactory. All the support services show progress through a co-ordinated development of performance management. The required level of competencies and skills required for posts has been identified and reviews of individual performance will appropriately be linked to the competencies.

134. An appropriate range of training has been offered in response to the new Code of Practice. The four-day induction course for new special educational needs co-ordinators is valuable and training on individual education plans is well focused. However, the uptake of these opportunities is variable and there is no systematic

attempt to challenge schools to address gaps in understanding or to develop consistency particularly in writing individual education plans.

Recommendation

In order to improve the standards of pupils with SEN:

- ensure that schools are challenged so that more consistent and better provision is made in schools for pupils with special educational needs.

Value for money

135. Special educational needs services were not considered to provide value for money in the last inspection. Improvements have taken place in consultation with schools and the services are now more tightly managed. The Best Value review had a positive impact on efficiency and effectiveness and in the evidence of a growing culture of performance management. However, while weaknesses remain in the monitoring of schools' expenditure, the allocation of resources using the structured audit and in the evaluation of the impact of resources on individual pupil's progress value for money is satisfactory. The weaknesses have been recognised and a management information system is being developed which will provide a better mechanism for tracking progress on statutory processes but also enable better access to measure quality and outcomes.

SECTION 4: PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION

Summary of effectiveness in promoting social inclusion

136. Improvements have been made in the percentage of pupils who leave school without one or more passes at GCSE (although this is still lower than the national rate); the attainment of children in public care and children of Bangladeshi heritage; the attendance of Traveller children and reducing the rate of permanent exclusion. However, too little improvement has taken place in raising standards at GCSE overall; raising the attainment of pupils of Pakistani and Caribbean heritage; improving attendance at secondary schools; meeting the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and reducing the number of fixed term exclusions. Bidding for additional resources has been successful, however, the impact on improving the educational attainment for disadvantaged children remains overall too slight. Education Leeds is appropriately focussing most effort on long term plans to develop good, effective and attractive schools in the inner city. However, in the shorter term the strategies for raising attainment in secondary schools, improving the attainment of some minority ethnic groups and effective provision for pupils with behaviour problems have not led to sufficient concerted action.

The strategy to promote social inclusion

137. The strategy to support social inclusion shows improvement. It is complex and currently at a stage of development where the components of the strategy have only just been defined. There is a good understanding of the issues and an intention to change, but the required actions have been broadly identified and not planned in detail.

138. The corporate intention is stated in the title of the corporate plan "Closing the Gap". Management structures across the council and within Education Leeds are being put in place to promote social inclusion. There is a recognition of the need for departments and agencies to work together and services are being deployed in a more co-ordinated way to wedges of the city. The city council has been effective in securing significant additional funding from external sources such as Sure start, Excellence in Cities (EiC) and Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) which have been targeted towards the wards with greatest need. Liaison with health, social services and the police is satisfactory. The children and young people's strategy partnership, created in 2000, brings together senior managers from all agencies and acts as the main co-ordinating body for inter-agency planning for vulnerable children.

139. The analysis of the issues is sound. After a long period of inertia, work is in its early stages to improve the provision of secondary schools in the inner city with a view to making inner city schools more attractive and effective. Services have been restructured with the intention of increasing the focus on school improvement, improving the coherence of services that support social inclusion and integrating related initiatives such as learning support units and learning mentors. The re-alignment of service delivery into five areas has an intention to improve co-ordination, engage schools more directly and support developments in multi-agency work. These developments are at a very early stage.

140. The most important issue is to tackle the high levels of disaffection in secondary schools. Planning is of a more variable quality. For instance, EDP 2 lists a range of methods and activities, all of them capable of being part of a strategy to contribute to the raising of standards, but they are not integrated into a clear strategic framework that has a unified and driving purpose. Important discussions are taking place in the 14-19 strategy group of the Learning Partnership to define an appropriate curriculum entitlement for 14-19, although consultation is proposed as yet these have not been disseminated sufficiently widely.

141. While there have been recent rapid improvements, the strategy for raising minority ethnic achievement and combating racism is unsatisfactory. Representatives from minority ethnic groups are rightly impatient for progress. Activities in EDP 1 were not implemented fully. Many of the activities included in EDP 2 are therefore long overdue. However, Education Leeds is currently drawing together an overarching strategy with explicit links to EiC and other regeneration initiatives but there is too little evaluation of what has already worked well. Education Leeds has also worked closely with the city council to achieve level 2 of the Commission for Racial Equality's standards for local government. There is a determination to remove any obstacles to learning brought about by racism.

The supply of school places

142. The first inspection judged the LEA's performance in this area of work as poor. It has since made significant progress and is now satisfactory. Progress thus far has been principally, but not solely, in beginning well researched and planned reviews of all secondary and primary provision. These reviews are rightly intended to encompass school improvement and building quality issues, as well as the removal of surplus places. The quality of analysis and planning of the reviews so far have been good. The larger part of the task is still before the LEA, however, and it will take skill, energy, and strong political commitment to carry it through effectively. The LEA, together with Education Leeds, has already had some significant success in securing the very large sums which will be needed to implement the review findings, most particularly through successful submissions for PFI funding. The nature of the issues in the primary and secondary sectors is different. In the former, there are substantial numbers of surplus places and steadily declining pupil rolls. In the latter, there is a narrow margin of surplus places and the forecast is for rolls to rise for a couple more years before beginning to mirror the current primary decline. However, there are also substantial school improvement issues to be addressed, not least a number of schools in challenging circumstances in the inner city and low post 16 participation rates. In both sectors there is a backlog of building condition and suitability needs.

143. Worthwhile progress has already been made in removing surplus places in the primary sector and four schools will close in July 2002. However, this has been sufficient only to keep the overall surplus place position broadly in check as rolls have continued to fall. Attention has rightly been focused on reducing the number of schools with high excess capacity and some worthwhile progress has been made in such respects. However, the position remains unsatisfactory. Education Leeds is currently undertaking a programme of preliminary discussions with schools in each

of the 58 local areas it uses for planning purposes. This is good practice. Although very expensive in terms of staff time, it has the potential for significant positive impact on the development of reorganisation proposals and the later stages of consultation and implementation. Pupil rolls are forecast to fall significantly for the foreseeable future and Education Leeds rightly plans a rolling programme of review once a major programme to address the worst of the current problems has been completed.

144. In the secondary sector one closure of an inner city school in special measures has been agreed, the Roman Catholic Diocese is currently undertaking a review of its provision with a view to reducing the number of its schools, and the Church of England Diocese is co-sponsoring a City Academy proposal which would also involve changes to existing provision in the inner city. The LEA together with Education Leeds has been supportive of the diocesan reviews. Consultation with all schools has taken place only on broad principles for the LEA's review of secondary and post-16 provision. It intends to proceed hereafter through the development of individual proposals for change. Given the diversity of needs and circumstances across the City, this approach has some merit. However, stakeholders will still need a clear overview of plans and how they may be affected by them. There is already some evidence of an effect on recruitment and retention in certain schools within the inner city. The LEA has yet to explain in useful detail how it intends to pursue its stated aims in respect of SEN provision and provision for minority faith groups through the secondary review.

145. A key feature of the LEA's plans to address the problems of low post-16 staying on rates and the significant number of schools with small sixth forms is the concept of the young people's academy. This essentially hinges on the development of collaborative arrangements between schools and further education providers and is expected to take different forms in different parts of the LEA. However, in the inner city it is intended to establish a new institution, catering largely for 16-19 year olds but also including some provision for 14-16 year olds attending local secondary schools. This could include, in particular, improved provision for gifted and talented pupils. PFI funding has been secured for this development. Good progress has been made more generally in establishing agreement between the key providers in the City and with the Learning Skills Council on the key principles for post-16 co-operation. There are already some examples of effective joint working which has extended the range and cost effectiveness of provision for young people.

146. Measures taken to ensure accurate forecasting of pupil rolls are appropriate in range but not in accuracy. At the more local level, there have been some significant variances between forecasts and actual rolls. However, these have in part been affected by the LEA's own actions in embarking, quite appropriately, on reorganisation consultations.

147. Education Leeds rightly acknowledges that the current school organisation plan has significant limitations as a vehicle for providing information to schools and other stakeholders and for consulting with them. It falls short of giving a clear indication of all the developments planned or being considered. It is regarded as a "transitional" document, pending completion of the programme of discussions at both LEA and local area level which are currently under way. This is an acceptable position to be in

at this stage of its primary and secondary review processes, given the fundamental rethink they represent and the scale of the action required. However, it will not be so for future years. The school organisation committee now works effectively. Relationships with the diocesan authorities primarily involved have improved and are good.

Recommendation

In order to ensure that the implications of the primary and secondary reviews are clear and understood by schools and parents:

- revise its school organisation plan as quickly as possible to give a more clear and precise indication of its forecasts and plans for each local area.

Admissions

148. The first inspection of the LEA found the performance in this area to be satisfactory. It was not looked at in depth in the current inspection but the indications are that it remains so. Some useful work has been undertaken by Education Leeds to assess the impact of the current arrangements on particular minority ethnic groups and to review the provision of information and support to parents. One member of staff has been appointed to ensure the rapid placement in schools of the children of refugees and asylum seekers.

Asset management

149. The previous inspection report judged the LEA's performance to be poor, with particular reference being made to inadequate data, unsatisfactory professional support services, poor performance management, and significant under-investment. Performance has improved but is still unsatisfactory. Education Leeds has, albeit only recently, implemented a fundamental restructuring which seems well designed to deliver further improvement. There is already evidence that these changes are having a positive effect and that the LEA's policies and practices are being set in much better order. The relocation of professional support staff previously within the Education Department into the Council's Contracting Services Department is too early to assess. The LEA's and Education Leeds' management of major projects such as the provision of new school buildings is good.

150. Various aspects of the asset management planning process has improved but some aspects of current performance are at a low level. However, the DfES has approved all the LEA's most recent submissions. Education Leeds has rightly commissioned a major programme of new surveys to address weaknesses in existing condition data. Appropriate steps are being taken to involve schools in this process and to ensure effective quality control. The format and content of the reports provided for schools, which are currently poor, are to be improved. The position on suitability assessments is very much better, although Education Leeds has had to negotiate some extension of the deadlines for the submission of data with the DfES. Good advice and support have been provided to schools in the completion of these assessments and appropriate moderation arrangements have been made. Education

Leeds is on schedule to submit all the required school capacity assessments by the June deadline this year. Education Leeds has now established sound arrangements to discuss asset management needs and plans at individual school level and to consult with school and diocesan representatives. Sensibly, the same representative group will consider both the school organisation and asset management planning processes, as well as priorities for the use of available funds.

151. The LEA has recently secured substantial PFI funding to address a combination of school place planning, school improvement, and building condition needs. There is clear evidence, however, that there is both a bigger pro rata backlog of work required in Leeds than in most other LEAs and that the provision of funding falls well short of that required to bring its overall building stock into acceptable condition and to maintain it so. Without such funding the significant improvements made to the asset management process will ultimately not bear sufficient fruit. The position regarding suitability needs is not yet clear, but the completed assessments seem likely to reveal a similar picture. Education is not represented on the corporate asset management planning group and this would seem to be the key forum at officer level in which the investment needs of the education service could be discussed. Until further progress is made in significantly increasing such investment, the overall performance must be judged unsatisfactory.

Recommendations

In order to improve the condition of school buildings:

- significantly enhance the budgetary provision for the maintenance and improvement of school buildings; and
- include representation with educational expertise for asset management planning on the corporate asset management planning group.

Provision of education for pupils who have no school place

152. Provision for the education of pupils who have no school place was judged satisfactory in the previous inspection and was not identified as an issue for inspection, as the performance indicators and self evaluation showed that the picture remained satisfactory. However, during the inspection two issues emerged which require attention. Improvements have been made to the procedures for ensuring that children are allocated a school place in a timely way but two spot checks showed that the procedures are not always consistently applied and the whereabouts of children is not always securely known.

153. Accommodation for pupil referral units has improved and 21 hours provision is now made for excluded pupils. Arrangements for the reintegration of permanently excluded pupils were, and continue to be a strength. Nevertheless proposals to provide 25 hours tuition are based on an intended reduction in the number of pupils who attend the units. Since many pupils have needs which are beyond the schools' ability to manage and are awaiting more specialist placements, a reduction in pupil numbers to enable 25 hours tuition may be difficult to achieve.

Recommendation

In order to provide twenty-five hours tuition for excluded pupils:

- in order to provide twenty five hours tuition for excluded pupils, review the current strategy to ensure that it is feasible and take appropriate steps to ensure that the requirement can be met.

Attendance

154. The previous inspection judged support for attendance to be poor. The weaknesses previously identified have been largely addressed. The support has improved and is satisfactory. Many appropriate developments have taken place recently. However, there has been too little time for these to have become embedded or have much impact. Low attendance in secondary schools remains a serious concern. The major difficulty is a high rate of authorised absence. Not enough has been done to raise awareness of the implications of poor attendance on standards of attainment with parents and communities.

Recommendation

In order to improve attendance particularly in secondary schools:

- develop strategies which engage more closely the parents and families and develop their appreciation of the links between attendance and achievement and challenge the high levels of authorised absence particularly in secondary schools.

155. The Education Welfare Service has been realigned to operate closely with EiC. It has an improved service specification and has been part of a service restructure, all following a Best Value review which has also led to improved attendance among Travellers. There is a sound strategy that addresses attendance within the context of inclusion and raising attainment. This has recently been the subject of extensive consultation with schools, as part of the behaviour support plan. Procedures have been put in place to improve the use of legal powers through a multi-agency attendance advisory panel. Training and guidance on good attendance practice have been provided. EDP 2 incorporates appropriate activities and attendance is now a priority found in other corporate plans. Targets are challenging but achievable.

156. Education welfare service support to secondary schools has been devolved as part of a recent DfES pilot. The relative responsibilities of Education Leeds and schools are clearly set out. The outcomes are valued both by Education Leeds and schools, who have allocated funds from their own budgets to increase education welfare officer numbers. Schools report reduced staff sickness and greater engagement of school based officers in school attendance strategies. Education welfare service resources are transparently allocated and targeted through a formula that includes a weighting for pupil performance, consistent with the core value of

raising standards. The service has worked closely with EiC, which adds learning mentors to the resources available to support attendance.

157. The range of activities undertaken to improve attendance has grown steadily. These include truancy sweeps in partnership with West Yorkshire Police, a pilot pass scheme with Leeds United Football Club, contact with parents on the first day of absence, improved support for reintegration of long term non-attenders and advice on the use of the pupil retention grant. Priority schools have also been identified. They have attendance action plans with challenging targets. Early monitoring suggests that this strategy is leading to some improvements in attendance and demonstrates a capacity to improve in future.

Recommendation

In order to improve attendance particularly in secondary school:

- evaluate the strategies which are currently in place to improve attendance and identify those which have had the most impact and disseminate these.

158. The cost of the education welfare service is higher than average. This investment properly reflects the priority associated with attendance, but weak performance management has meant a lack of evaluation. There is evidence from the spot checks which tracked the whereabouts of missing pupils and the recent OFSTED inspection report on a special school with serious weaknesses, that while procedures are in place, these are not always followed up by education welfare officers with sufficient rigour and determination.

Recommendation

In order to improve attendance particularly in secondary school:

- monitor the procedures which are in place to improve attendance to ensure that these are being followed up in a timely way; in particular clarify the procedures for tracking pupils who may be at risk of not being on the roll of the schools and set in place scrutiny checks to monitor that these are secure and being rigorously followed.

Behaviour support

159. Support for behaviour management has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. However, there are still weaknesses, notably in provision for pupils with acute emotional and behavioural difficulties, which have a 'knock-on' effect with other aspects of provision. Hence it remains unsatisfactory. Recent plans have recognised these weaknesses and identified the possibilities for action, but these are not sufficiently detailed and the timing for implementation is too late in relation to the size of the problem.

160. Permanent exclusions are below the national averages, but there has been a 50 per cent growth in fixed term exclusions over a four-year period. Targets set as part of the EiC initiative have been significantly exceeded. Education Leeds has recently put in place an action plan designed to address this issue. The previous report recommended that the LEA seek an agreement with secondary headteachers so excluded pupils could be reintegrated on an equitable basis. Voluntary arrangements proved unreliable and Education Leeds have now secured a more formal arrangement. The impact has yet to be seen. A good range of training is provided through the professional development programme, and a strategy is in place for further development.

161. The most recent behaviour support plan is a very good plan. It contains a range of sound strategies based upon extensive consultation and links with other plans and strategies are well shown. There is a sound analysis of good data. It addresses the findings of a Best Value review and responds to the previous OFSTED inspection. An action plan, which is still in its early stages of implementation, provides clear responsibilities and timescales.

162. The behaviour support plan identifies the need to restructure provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It includes a detailed and accurate audit of the current situation. It makes some proposals for new and interesting ways of tackling the problems. However, the proposals constitute a vision for development and, if this is to become a reality, it will need much more detailed plans showing how the required shifts can be made in the way in which the provision is organised, in working practices and the training that is required to ensure effectiveness. Progress has been made in deploying support services to work in wedges and in enabling early intervention in primary schools, but other actions are phased to start in 2003 which is far too late, given the level of schools' concerns.

163. Significant additional resources have been deployed through EiC, which include 15 learning support units, five pupil development centres and more than 300 learning mentors in areas of greatest need. In addition, most other secondary schools have responded by choosing to use their pupil retention grant to establish learning support units. The criteria for delegated funding are transparent and have enabled effective targeting of resources. Headteachers regard the impact of the additional resources from EiC as positive. Learning mentors are reported as being very effective in working with children, families and agencies to remove obstacles to learning such as behaviour and attendance. However, the impact on standards and exclusions has yet to be seen.

Recommendation

In order to improve the range of provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties:

- challenge schools and the Excellence in Cities partnership to account for the increase in fixed term exclusions and with respect to the findings take the necessary steps for improvement .

Health, safety, welfare and child protection

164. The previous inspection judged provision unsatisfactory. Delays in building work presented health and safety concerns, while child protection procedures were inadequate and did not reflect government policy. The support for health and safety, welfare and child protection is satisfactory with few areas of weakness. There has been good progress and weaknesses have been addressed. Schools have received improved health and safety procedures, support and guidance. There are now good systems, supported by effective multi-agency work, for child protection.

165. Education Leeds has ensured that the LEA meets its statutory obligations for child protection and pupil welfare and is active in the work of the area child protection committee (ACPC). Comprehensive training is provided for designated teachers, governors, and other services and agencies. Take-up of training has steadily increased and attendance is effectively monitored. There are up-to date, monitored, lists of designated teachers. Procedures are clear, understood by schools and supported by good guidance. A senior member of staff represents education services on the ACPC, and sound joint working relationships have been developed with social services and health. The role of different agencies is understood by schools, who comment favourably on the support they receive for child protection. There is good range of developmental work. A recent Home Office funded pilot project has addressed ways in which children at risk can manage and reduce the risk of abuse themselves. Good practice is being integrated into the work of more schools.

Children in public care

166. Support for raising the attainment of children in public care was not inspected. It was judged satisfactory in the previous inspection and there is no reason to have concerns that the provision has deteriorated. An audit of performance indicators shows that the attainment of children in public care is overall lower than the Leeds average, but the children on average attain better than those in public care nationally. No child in public care was permanently excluded from school during the last academic year.

Measures to combat racism

167. Measures to combat racism show signs of improving but are unsatisfactory. Although this was not a separate focus in the last inspection, a greater emphasis on opposing racism was recommended. Progress has been slow, but Education Leeds has recently made significant efforts to address this complex issue, working closely with the city council. However, minority ethnic communities have not yet been consulted about the planning and proposed action.

168. The council has made a clear corporate commitment to equality of opportunity and social inclusion. Each department has identified a race equality champion at senior officer level to co-ordinate strategic developments across the council. Within Education Leeds this is the deputy chief executive who chairs the recently formed race equality strategy group. This illustrates the importance which is accorded to

this issues. This group has the remit of ensuring that all education service plans reflect the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. Education Leeds, along with the City Council, is committed to the recommendations of the committee of enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. It sees achievement of the Commission for Racial Equality's local government standards, within the life of EDP 2, as central to its action plan. It has now achieved level 2 in which it sets out its intentions based on the outcomes of a thorough audit. The next planned stage in this process is to engage and consult more widely with communities. Clear, informative and helpful guidance, including a model school policy, has recently been issued to schools outlining their responsibilities under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. Senior and middle managers within Education Leeds have received training and training for schools is planned. Education Leeds intends to monitor schools' implementation of the Act during school improvement adviser visits.

169. The emerging strategy seeks to ensure that ethnic and racial considerations are integral to the work of Education Leeds and schools through, for example, plans, strategies, curriculum support and training. It is an ambitious strategy, which challenges current practice, but is still in the early stages of implementation. The new post of strategy manager with responsibility for equalities provides additional management capacity to co-ordinate the work of Education Leeds to promote race equality.

170. A long running campaign to recruit more teachers of ethnic minority heritage has had very limited success. Fewer than two per cent of teachers are from ethnic minorities, compared to over twelve per cent of pupils. Targets have been set for increased numbers of governors from minority ethnic groups, but progress has been slow. Education Leeds has recently issued a race equality policy statement with objectives which include a representative workforce at all levels and the elimination of discrimination. An action plan is being developed to support its implementation.

171. The monitoring of racial incidents is unsatisfactory and plans for improvement are in place. Incidents of racial harassment have been identified, monitored and analysed for a number of years. However, this analysis has not led to challenge within schools, the outcomes have been general and the proposed action limited to further training for governors and teachers and advice and support as the need arises. Currently, schools do not give consistently high priority to the process nor do they share a clear understanding of the procedures or outcomes.

Recommendation

In order to raise the standards of pupils from minority ethnic groups:

- increase and support schools' understanding of the need to monitor and record racial incidents and ensure that these are analysed carefully to inform future policies and actions directed at combating racism.

172. Education Leeds is working with groups of headteachers and officers to develop curriculum materials which take account of the traditions of cultural and faith groups. It has worked closely with and supported the Islamia girls' schools and the

Jewish community. It has continued to support, and plans to extend, the Stephen Lawrence Award scheme which recognises schools' efforts to promote awareness and involvement in race equality issues. Plans are in place to ensure that all future professional development courses, related for example to the national strategies for literacy, numeracy and Key Stage 3, include the promotion of racial harmony and need to improve ethnic minority achievement.

173. Consultation with local minority ethnic groups is unsatisfactory. Both Education Leeds and community leaders recognise that there is a lack of coherent structures and adequate opportunities to support consistent and effective consultation on educational issues. The Race Equality Advisory Forum is a city wide group which meets six times a year and on two of these occasions has education as its prime focus. Much of the time available is taken up with the presentation of reports as opposed to purposeful discussion and debate. Education Leeds is considering a range of alternatives, including working with communities and parents on a wedge basis.

Recommendation

- establish with local minority ethnic communities effective procedures to support meaningful consultation about the development and educational policies and practices.

SECTION 5: CORPORATE ISSUES

Introduction to corporate issues

174. Radical changes have all led to improvements. The political interface with Education Leeds, schools and officers is now more appropriate. The formation of Education Leeds has brought dividends. An improved culture has developed where vision and strategic direction are clearer and difficult decisions are beginning to be taken on an objective consideration of the evidence. A sound partnership with schools is developing and there are signs that schools, although they recognise that there is much that still requires improvement, are beginning to place their trust in the new organisation. Local democracy is well served by the new arrangements. Education Leeds Board and its senior staff have been scrupulous in providing objective advice to members and keeping them well briefed about developments. It has also been more willing than its predecessor to represent education services in discussions about the development of corporate priorities. The city council's strengths in high level strategic corporate planning, in particular the corporate priority to raise the standards in secondary schools, the intention to work across services to close the gap and the long standing track record in working with different partners are all features which provide the capacity to tackle some of the longstanding issues facing schools.

Corporate planning

175. The last inspection found that the clarity, coherence, consistency and feasibility of corporate plans and the procedures for implementing them in so far as they applied to education were unsatisfactory. At that time, planning for education was fragmented and variable. There were concerns that the priority for education went little further than the provision of a reasonable level of funding.

176. Corporate planning has improved and is now good; implementation is satisfactory. The first corporate plan (1999-2002) set nine targets for education and the annual review of 2001 showed that progress toward meeting these was generally slow although good progress had been made in reducing permanent exclusion from both secondary and primary schools. A second corporate plan has been drafted which is much improved on the first. It has major strengths in that it develops a coherent approach to improvement. It is firmly linked with the community plan and Best Value Performance Plan and its ambitions are incorporated into the Education Leeds strategic management plan and EDP 2. There is a better understanding of how schools contribute to meeting the council's priorities. This can be attributed to the more active voice and clearer vision of Education Leeds. Education is a clear priority with the paramount need to improve secondary education and the attainment of pupils of minority ethnic heritage.

177. The corporate plan entitled "Closing the Gap" recognises that if economic success is to be sustained, all communities should benefit from the economic growth. A corporate approach to closing the gap, if developed, will undoubtedly support the priority for education and support schools' efforts to raise standards. Ultimately, the problems that inhibit high standards, especially in the inner city, are

much greater than the school can hope to tackle on its own. The mechanisms for achieving this are still evolving although a neighbourhood renewal strategy has been formulated which maps out a process that will allow resources to be deployed to bring about local solutions. The council is committed to the delivery of services in wedge areas so that action can be planned and co-ordinated action at the local level.

178. On the formation of Education Leeds good interim plans were formulated which established a sensible list of priority tasks, while focusing on developing capacity and promoting partnership. These were carefully monitored and most were achieved. Those that were not were deferred because of staff vacancies. A long-term strategic plan recognises the priorities of the council and the intentions of the contract and makes sense of the spirit and requirements of national policy. At the level of setting aims and clear objectives to guide more detailed planning it presents a clear, feasible and succinct statement of what needs to be achieved. The detail of how the aims and objectives will be translated into a set of precise actions is the aspiration of strategic area business plans. As yet, the quality of the business plans inhibits this and as a result the strategic plan is too vague about how intended actions are to be achieved.

179. As in the first inspection, responsibility for education functions and services is still fragmented between several departments of the council and in addition the early years service continues to be managed by the local authority. However, the priority for Education Leeds has first and foremost been the development of an effective organisation which delivers good support services to schools and hence these boundaries have not detracted from this focus.

Recommendation

In order to ensure that improvements are all implemented effectively and in a timely way:

- complete Education Leeds Strategic Plan by identifying the strategic areas who will hold overall responsibility for implementing the objectives and mapping out a timeline for key developments.

Decision making

180. In the last inspection, the speed, openness and effectiveness of decision-making particularly financial decision-making were unsatisfactory. A very high and inappropriate level of political involvement in the management of education resulted in delays and a lack of transparency in decision making. The schemes whereby councillors could allocate additional funding undermined the principles of formula funding and equitable capital funding in education.

181. This has improved significantly. Strategic decisions are beginning to shift the inertia that existed at the time of the previous inspection. The partiality that schools strongly suspected informed some decisions is being tackled, although schools themselves are sometimes at fault in lobbying their elected members in the hope that they will secure preferential treatment. Members are now generally taking decisions

at a more appropriate level. The fears of those who have opposed the formation of Education Leeds have largely been allayed. Officers of Education Leeds have been scrupulous in keeping lead members briefed about developments.

182. There is a consensus among schools that consultation has rapidly improved. They recognise a healthier climate and more appropriate working arrangements, although it will take time to put suspicion to rest. Schools are being brought into partnership with Education Leeds to seek solutions to difficulties and they are willing partners. Consultation is defined in a clear framework of regular meetings. Five working groups have been formed to discuss and advise on core issues. The financial schemes that enabled members to allocate additional funding are now at a very small scale, and are informed by a clear legal definition and by clear criteria and procedures.

Leadership of officers and elected members

183. The last inspection found the leadership of elected members was very poor and the leadership of officers unsatisfactory following a long period when the post of chief education officer remained vacant.

184. The leadership of members has improved and is now satisfactory overall. The leader has displayed very able leadership. Establishing the arms length-company Education Leeds attracted much criticism and distress among elected members as it was perceived as an affront to their belief in public services and a blow to civic pride. Since the decisions have been taken, the leader has worked hard to support Education Leeds against this furore. While this has now subsided, there are still pockets of opposition. For instance, some representatives of unions and other residents criticised the council's decisions to close failing schools that had not provided an effective standard of education for some years. This illustrates how hard it is to develop a consensus in support of any issue in Leeds.

185. The interface between Education Leeds and the council is appropriate and governed by a clear protocol. Members are kept informed through seminars, briefings and meetings. The necessary strategic decisions are being taken appropriately on the advice of Education Leeds staff. Members have access to the information that they require to conduct their democratic roles in their wards.

186. The Board of Education Leeds has played its part in establishing the new company and steering its work. The chairperson, who brings considerable expertise from the private sector provides a very valuable objective approach to the management of educational services. The membership of the board has the expertise and credibility to ensure that the new company realises its objectives, develops a high credibility with schools and the local community, maintains an appropriate interface with the council and enables joint work with other services. The leadership of the chief executive and deputy chief executive of Education Leeds is very good. The improvements in the vision, ambition, morale and the relationships with schools and with members have relied much on the commitment of the chief executive of Education Leeds. The deputy chief executive of Education Leeds has sensitively led the careful procedures that are being used to conduct the secondary and primary school review. However, there are still weaknesses in planning and

performance management. The new structure of Education Leeds and the appointments that have been made to it, some very recently, have the capacity to develop an effective strategic leadership team which has already gained a good grasp of their roles and have begun the process of recovery. However, strategic capacity in relation to the tasks which require completion is low and at the current level will continue to be barely adequate for the foreseeable future.

187. The council took the decision when Education Leeds was formed to establish a small office of the chief education officer which includes a contract management and monitoring unit and the child care and early development service. Members took the sensible decision to reduce costs of monitoring the contract to a minimum and to make use of statistical monitoring, annual reports of Education Leeds, exception reports, checks on statutory and mandatory compliance standards and OFSTED LEA inspection. While monitoring at this level needs to continue, as Education Leeds has developed, its own links and communications with schools and members have grown, the work of this unit, notwithstanding the competence of its staff, duplicates some aspects of the work of Education Leeds. For instance, reports made to the executive board have to be cleared through the Chief Education Officer's office, are discussed with him and a covering report is attached from him to Executive Board. This can consume management capacity through the time that this requires and adds little of value to the process.

Recommendation

In order to facilitate timely decision-making and make most efficient use of management capacity:

- review the functions of the office of the chief education officer and, in particular, bring to an end the procedure whereby reports from Education Leeds to the Executive or to scrutiny committees receive a covering report from the chief education officer.

188. The advice provided to members by Education Leeds is good. Lead members recognise that they now have access to robust, high quality and objective advice. There is a regular and appropriate cycle of meetings between the board and the cabinet and briefings by officers for lead members. Suitable seminars have taken place and five other seminars are planned. Furthermore, Education Leeds has produced a series of information sheets on important strategic issues.

Partnership

189. The previous inspection found that the success of the council in co-ordinating action in the support of priorities between several agencies was satisfactory. The significance of partnerships has greatly increased since the first inspection. Partnerships and working between services in a co-ordinated way have improved and is satisfactory with few weaknesses. Education Leeds has strengthened links with some existing partnerships, and supported new ones as they develop. Stakeholders and partners note that education has a greater disposition to enter into

discussions about initiatives and developments than has been experienced previously.

190. The council's commitment to a local strategic partnership is longstanding and good. Since it was founded in 1990, the council has maintained a commitment to the Leeds Initiative. This is an arms-length organisation financed by the council to bring partners together to agree common objectives and plans for the development of Leeds. This initiative predates and is far in advance of national requirements and it has now been accredited as the local strategic partnership. It provides a mature framework for partnership with an over arching group of key partners which forms the Leeds Initiative Board. There are six strategy groups, including the learning partnership and allied to these are Leeds Initiative partnership groups who work separately and together on different aspects of city life.

191. The Leeds Initiative has been important in distilling the views and interests of stakeholders and partners in formulating a common vision. It has been, however, far more successful in promoting economic regeneration than in promoting opportunities, including educational achievement, for disadvantaged communities. Its work increasingly is turning to focus on issues of social inclusion and targeting disadvantaged areas through the development of the strategy for neighbourhood renewal. This has paramount importance for raising standards in schools. The challenge for the Leeds Initiative, its affiliated partners and the council will be to ensure that this good and sophisticated higher level strategic partnership planning stimulates better co-ordinated working arrangements which includes schools at the grass roots.

192. Education Leeds plays its part in the learning partnership, especially the 14 - 19 strategy group, whose remit is important given the under-performance of pupils in secondary schools, the secondary and post 16 review and in establishing a new curriculum for secondary schools.

193. The Early Years and Child Care Partnership is very large, operates in wedges and generally works well. Independent and voluntary providers have equal access to good quality training. Leeds City Council invests heavily in the early years services and early years services play their full role in the regeneration strategy.

194. Partnership work with schools has improved, with strong, effective and strategic working relationships developed through EiC. The creation of the children and young people's strategic forum has also lent a more strategic focus and structured approach to partnership work.

195. Health, police and social services all comment positively on the effective engagement and consultation leading to the recent behaviour support plan. Associated with this has been improved co-ordination of service delivery now achieved through a recent restructure and realignment of service delivery, which has brought together support from the quality protects team, child protection, children in public care and SEN.

APPENDIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

As this report demonstrates, Education Leeds has already identified many strategies for improvement, we expect these to continue to be implemented.

In order to ensure that improvements are all implemented effectively and in a timely way:

- complete Education Leeds Strategic Plan by identifying the strategic areas who will hold overall responsibility for implementing the objectives and mapping out a timeline for key developments;
- ensure that strategic area and team plans are working documents by simplifying the guidance on business planning and amending the plans so that they are clear, feasible, focused and coherent and which specify the actions which are needed to implement objectives; and
- ensure that monitoring and self evaluation procedures lead to the identification of weaknesses by identifying the evidence which should be taken into account and tightening the success criteria so that they are measurable and linked to assessing impact and outcomes.

In order to improve standards particularly in secondary schools:

- ensure that the implementation of the EDP is well managed and focuses sufficiently on the need to improve standards in secondary schools by developing a detailed approach whereby the activities are rolled out in an appropriate sequence, are deployed on clear criteria and the intentions are made clear to schools; and
- ensure that schools have access to a suitable range of support for improving the curriculum and management by developing schools' skills in effectively procuring services and by bringing forward the development of an effective brokerage service.

In order to improve the use of ICT in the curriculum:

- subject to the outcomes of the best value review, provide service levels agreements for various forms of ICT support that are more reflective of what schools want; and
- enable schools to make fuller use of Leeds Learning Network and to obtain better value to match the high cost of subscription by stepping up the training and support available to schools.

In order to improve access to management information to improve planning and monitoring:

- develop a comprehensive ICT and information management strategic plan in consultation with schools.

In order to improve parents of pupils with special educational needs access to impartial advice:

- establish suitable management arrangements which ensure an appropriate degree of independence for the parent partnership.

In order to improve the standards of pupils with SEN:

- ensure that the provision necessary to meet the needs of the child is specified on the statement; and
- ensure that schools are challenged so that more consistent and better provision is made in schools for pupils with special educational needs

In order to ensure that the implications of the primary and secondary reviews are clear and understood by schools and parents:

- revise the school organisation plan as quickly as possible to give a more clear and precise indication of its forecasts and plans for each local area.

In order to improve the condition of school buildings:

- significantly enhance the budgetary provision for the maintenance and improvement of school buildings; and
- include representation with educational expertise for asset management planning on the corporate asset management planning group.

In order to raise the standards of pupils from minority ethnic groups:

- establish with local minority ethnic communities effective procedures to support meaningful consultation about the development of educational policies and practices; and
- increase and support schools' understanding of the need to monitor and record racial incidents and ensure that these are analysed carefully to inform future policies and actions directed at combating racism.

In order to improve attendance particularly in secondary schools:

- monitor the procedures which are in place to improve attendance to ensure that these are being followed up in a timely way; in particular clarify the procedures for tracking pupils who may be at risk of not being on the roll of the schools and set in place scrutiny checks to monitor that these are secure and being rigorously followed;
- evaluate the strategies which are currently in place to improve attendance and identify those which have had the most impact and disseminate these; and
- develop strategies which engage more closely the parents and families and develop their appreciation of the links between attendance and achievement and challenge the high levels of authorised absence particularly in secondary schools.

In order to improve the range of provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties:

- take action to improve the range of provision which is available for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties by developing better co-ordination between the strategic areas within Education Leeds of SEN, children and families and behaviour and attendance and adopting shared responsibility for the issue; as well as collaborating closely with other services such as health, social services and the child care and early development services in developing and implementing an agreed and feasible agenda for action;
- challenge the schools and the Excellence in Cities partnership to account for the increase in fixed term exclusions in view of the significant increase in school provision and with respect to the findings take the necessary steps for improvement; and
- in order to provide twenty five hours tuition for excluded pupils review the current strategy to ensure that it is feasible and take appropriate steps to ensure that the requirement can be met.

In order to facilitate timely decision-making and make most efficient use of management capacity:

- review the functions of the office of the chief education officer and, in particular, bring to an end the procedures whereby reports from Education Leeds to the Executive or to scrutiny committees receive a covering report from the chief education officer.

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**Office for Standards in Education
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE**

Tel: 020 7421 6800

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**Leeds City Council
3rd Floor East
Civic Hall
Calverley Street
LEEDS
LS1 1UR**

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