



Office for Standards
in Education

Lambeth

Local Education Authority

Inspection Report

Date of Inspection: May 2004

Reporting Inspector: David Halligan HMI



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Basic information

Name of LEA:	Lambeth Local Education Authority
LEA number:	208
Address of LEA:	International House Canterbury Crescent Brixton London
Reporting Inspector:	David Halligan HMI
Date of Inspection:	May 2004

Summary

Introduction

Lambeth is a highly diverse London borough. Its ethnic make-up is complex. The largest groups among its 28,500 pupils are African, Caribbean and white British, each with about a fifth of the total. About 150 languages are spoken by the pupils. The social and economic make-up of the borough is also diverse. A larger proportion of its population is from higher social classes than is the case nationally, but the proportion of its pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. Response to this diversity, and to the differing needs of the schools for support is a major issue confronting the LEA.

Pupils' attainment at 7, 11, 14 and 16 is below the national average but, except at the end of Key Stage 1, it is either in line with or above that in similar authorities¹. Pupils make good progress, especially in secondary schools, except for that, relatively high proportion of the pupils which changes school in the middle of key stages.

¹ Lambeth LEA's statistical neighbours are: Southwark, Haringey, Islington, Lewisham, Hammersmith and Fulham, Wandsworth, Hackney, City of Westminster and Camden.

Main findings

Summary: Lambeth local education authority (LEA) is improving. It has made highly satisfactory progress with acting on the recommendations of the previous inspections and in its response to the recent critical assessment of the overall performance of the council. The corporate governance of the LEA and its strategy for school improvement are strong. There are areas where the implementation of policy lags behind the quality of the policy itself, but the overall effectiveness of the LEA has improved and is highly satisfactory, as is its capacity for further improvement, under its effective leadership.

Areas of strength	Areas of weakness/for development
Corporate leadership of education	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved planning and financial management The leadership of the council and its officers Support for early years education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of recently introduced changes The 14-19 strategy
Strategy for education and its implementation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An approach to school improvement which is securely based on accurately assessed local needs A coherent strategy which provides an integrated approach to national and local initiatives Improved standards and reductions in schools causing concern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School place planning which does not take adequate account of the complexity of the situation it confronts Asset management planning
Support to improve education in schools	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An approach to schools which, in most respects, carries their trust and is seen to be meeting their needs Good progress made by the schools as a result of the LEA's targeted support The recruitment and retention of teachers The leadership and quality of school improvement services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for information and communication technology (ICT), particularly in support of school management
Support for special educational needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A coherent strategy which has the support of the schools Information and support for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustaining recent improvements in the completion of statements within the required time
Support for social inclusion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A broad-ranging and coherent strategy Reductions in exclusion Improved attendance Child protection Improved staying-on rates and reduced youth crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate information about, contact with, and provision for children without a suitable educational placement The implementation of policies for supporting the education of looked after children

Recommendations

Key recommendation

Performance management: improve the implementation of plans by more rigorous performance management.

Other recommendations

Corporate leadership of education

14-19 education: collaborate with the learning and skills council to develop a clearer plan for the provision of post-16 education in schools.

Strategy for education and its implementation

Relationship with schools: actively promote the autonomy of the schools.

Asset management planning

- Publish guidance for schools on asset management planning and train headteachers and governors in its use in school development planning and school self-evaluation.
- Improve consultation with schools on the planning of capital projects and ensure that they, together with the diocesan authorities and other partners have up-to-date information on priorities, spending decisions and the basis for these decisions.
- Improve the programming and project management of capital works.

School place planning

- Improve collaboration with neighbouring LEAs in planning secondary school places.
- Improve school place planning by taking explicit account of the relationships between actual numbers in schools, projections for the future and admissions arrangements.

Support to improve education in schools

Information management

- Standardise requests for information from schools and remove duplication.
- Produce a plan for information management which sets a clear timetable for action, and which costs its proposals.

Support for special educational needs

Statutory duties: publish on the LEA website details of the kinds of support arrangements maintained schools might normally be expected to provide from their budgets for school-based provision at the stages of School Action and School Action Plus.

Support for social inclusion

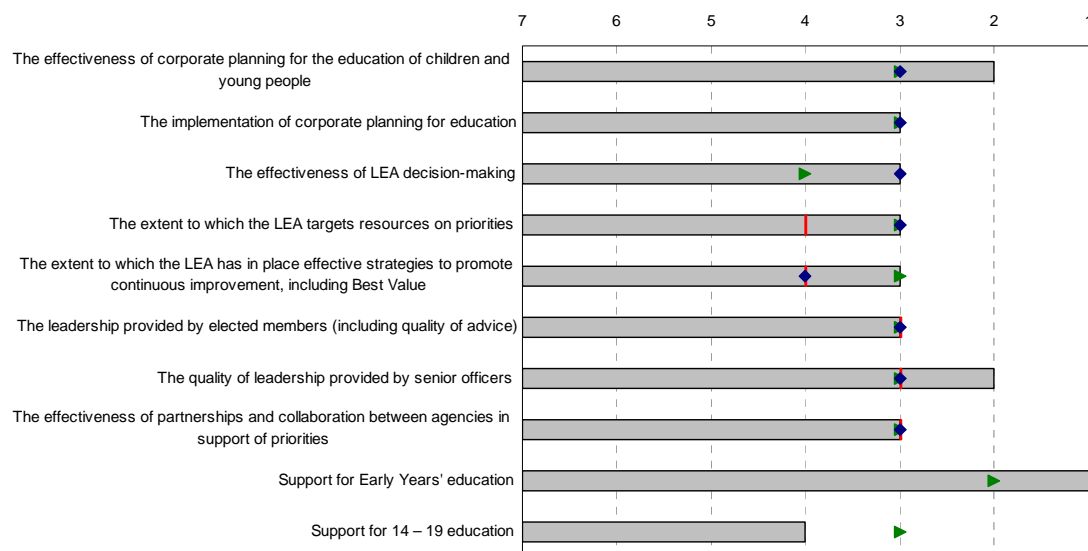
Pupils educated other than at school

- Ensure that the LEA knows precisely why children are without a school place or acceptable alternative provision.
- Ensure that early contact is made with the families involved.
- Ensure that suitable educational provision is made while school placements are arranged.
- Agree a protocol with the local Admissions Forum for the early placement of pupils out of school, including those permanently excluded or needing to reintegrate from alternative educational provision.
- Ensure that all local schools comply with that protocol and increase the proportion of pupils reintegrated into a mainstream school from the Key Stage 3 pupil referral unit (PRU).

Race equality: take urgent action to ensure that schools complete racist incident monitoring returns, and bring the race equality action plan up to date.

Section 1: Corporate leadership of education

Summary table of judgements



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

Corporate planning for education and its implementation

1. Corporate planning is good and its implementation is highly satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, much has changed in the corporate governance of the London Borough of Lambeth and in the performance of its education functions. The most powerful force behind that change was the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in 2002 which found the council to be poor. In response to that judgement, a plan for recovery was formulated. The plan, building on improvement which had already begun, has been followed energetically and rigorously. It has brought a new strength to the governance of the borough and, with it, a strong and mutually supportive relationship between education and the corporate centre of the council.

2. The most dramatic effect is the improvement in financial management. The budget is now under control; the council no longer overspends. The budget of the education service now directs spending to priorities more effectively. Along with this has come improved decision-making.

3. The education department's planning has shown improvement over the last two years. This has culminated in the provision of a service plan, which brings planning for all aspects of the work of the department into a single document. In this, it follows corporate

policy but it is also good preparation for the forthcoming national requirement for all LEAs to bring their plans together into a single education plan. In producing the new plan, the department has built on an existing strategic plan and on more detailed business plans. These already show how the education service fits into the borough's corporate priorities and how the various parts of the service contribute to the whole.

4. The LEA has had some success in implementing its plans. This is evident in the transformed relationships with the schools. Nearly all of them have a new confidence in the leadership of the LEA and the services it provides. Improved relationships are one sign of growing success in the implementation of plans and of improved communications. Improvement in performance is the other, and more important, sign. It is evident in pupils' attainment, in their attendance at school, in declining exclusion and, most striking of all, in the reduction of the number of schools causing concern. Slow progress with the 14-19 strategy is really the only evidence of weakness.

5. The rate of change is impressive but many of the most important improvements in planning, albeit building on past improvement, have happened too recently to be implemented fully. This is most evident at an operational level, for example in the project management of capital investment and in the high number of children without suitable educational places. At the top level, there is a strong performance management system which has the potential to deal with the remaining difficulties. It has yet to become fully effective throughout the education service. It has the potential to become so, not least because of the strong leadership of education by both officers and councillors. The LEA is capable of continuing its established record of improvement.

Recommendation

- Improve the implementation of plans by more rigorous performance management.

Decision-making

6. This is highly satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. Increased delegation to officers and increased involvement of schools have accompanied the improvement, but financial management has been key to it. A medium-term financial plan was introduced in 2002-03, as part of the response to the CPA. It has created a climate of confidence that was missing before. It has been further strengthened by a new, council-wide, decision-making process which has been used to set the budget for 2004-05. This system subjects budget proposals to rigorous and open scrutiny before final decisions are made. The result is that those decisions carry political and administrative support and commitment. The process is a strong one, with potential to further improve decision-making.

Targeting of resources

7. This has improved and is highly satisfactory. Councillors have been prepared to take difficult decisions to secure the council's financial stability and give high priority to funding schools. The budget is now based more effectively on actual and forecast needs. Capital funding is less well managed and some projects have been delayed.

8. Schools now get more accurate and timely financial information. This enables them in turn to set budgets better aligned to their needs and enables officers to monitor schools' spending more effectively.

9. Schools are fully consulted about the LEA's spending plans. The Schools Forum is able to influence its priorities and a school revenue funding working group is reviewing the school funding formula. The number of schools in deficit has reduced as a result of more effective planning and action in working with schools.

Strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value

10. Improvement is promoted in a highly satisfactory way, as the council pursues its recovery from the negative CPA judgement.

11. Self-evaluation is used well and Best Value procedures have been used rigorously to appraise services and to improve them. The schools have been actively and effectively involved in influencing the outcomes of reviews of the services they use. With financial and service planning now better linked in the performance management framework, there is a stronger culture of continuous improvement. The self-evaluation provided for this inspection showed a sound knowledge of the LEA's strengths and weaknesses.

Leadership by elected members and advice given to them

12. Political leadership in the borough has been weak, historically. Since the formation of the current joint administration in May 2002, it has gained in strength and is now highly satisfactory. It is based on councillors' close involvement in planning and in monitoring the performance of the education service. Through their work as governors and by frequent visits, councillors know the schools well and use that knowledge in forming policy. Their leadership has been further strengthened by the improved decision-making process. There is, however, some weakness in scrutiny. The results of scrutinies of admissions arrangements and parental involvement have had positive effects on the education service, but too little of that type of work has been done to date.

Leadership by senior officers

13. Senior officers' leadership is good. After a period of staffing instability, officers with a good range of talent and experience are now in post. The pursuit of improvement is a major strength of their work. Priorities are now set effectively. The strength of the leadership is clearly evident in the changes which have followed the CPA judgement, even though there is more to be done before those changes can produce their full potential. It is also evident in the improved relationships with schools. The chief executive and the chief education officer are good leaders.

Strategic partnerships

14. This part of the LEA's work was not subject to specific fieldwork. It is, as the LEA's self-evaluation contended, highly satisfactory. In the course of the inspection of other matters, further evidence to confirm the judgement was encountered. Collaboration has

gained greater priority for the council because the CPA had found it weak. It is strong in support of early years and in work with the police. It is improving with the social services department as the council prepares for integrated services for children. There is further strength in the relationship with the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, but until recently, relations with the health services have been weak.

Support for Early Years

15. Support for early years is very good. It contributes to raising standards and promotes social inclusion. All government childcare targets have been met or exceeded and the Sure Start Unit has approved an innovative children's centre plan. The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) is highly effective and has established good collaborative working in all settings and between all providers and other agencies. All settings have access to good training and expertise, including support for bilingual children and for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). This has improved the quality of provision. Officers make good use of the LEA's nursery schools as a source of good practice.

Support for 14-19 education

16. The support is satisfactory. Attainment in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) has risen over the last four years at a rate more than double the national increase and, in the three community schools, more flexible curricula in Key Stage 4 have been introduced with some success. They provide a range of vocational initiatives in collaboration with the further education college.

17. Post-16 work is less impressive. The staying-on rate is low, despite recent improvement. Most schools' sixth forms are small, although two groups of schools collaborate on some aspects of the provision. Attainment in the GCE A-level is significantly below the national average and that in similar authorities. Class sizes are small and the curriculum offered is restricted. The LEA has been slow to tackle these issues.

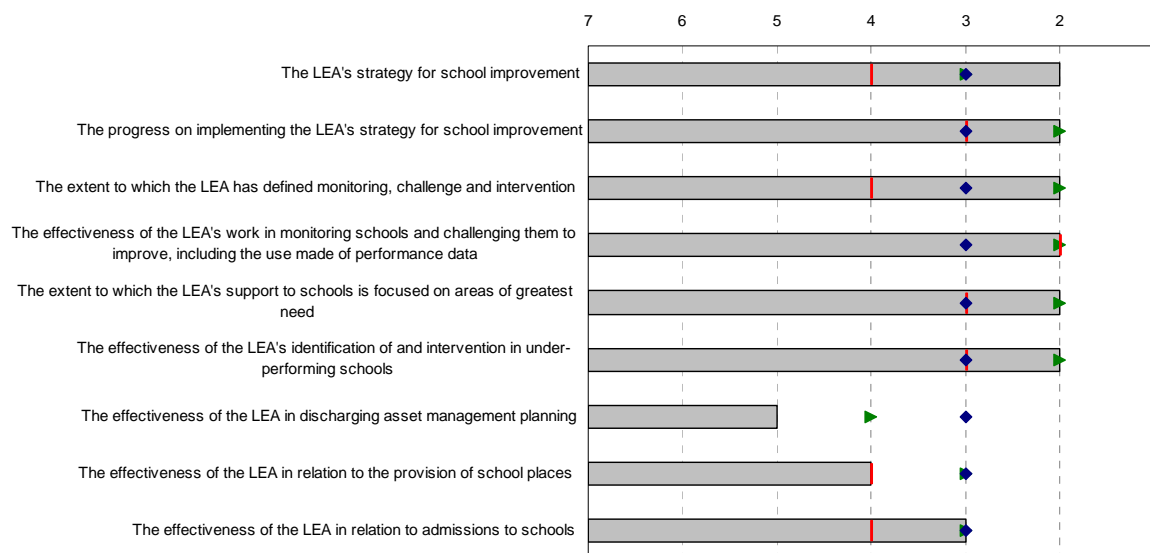
18. With new sixth forms being opened in schools, there is a need for improved strategic planning. This has now begun following the establishment, in 2002, of a strategic forum for 14-19 education. Collaboration between the LEA, the local Learning and Skills Council, the further education college, the Connexions service and other agencies is now good. There is a determination shared by all partners, to collaborate in increasing the quantity of sixth-form education. However, the recent 14-19 strategic plan does not deal adequately with either the complexity of developing coherent 16-19 provision for all students or with improving the quality of that provision. Nevertheless, the collective commitment of all parties to improve 14-19 education suggests a capacity to resolve these problems.

Recommendation

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with the Learning and Skills Council to develop a clearer plan for the provision of post-16 education in schools. |
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Section 2: Strategy for education and its implementation

Summary table of judgements



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

The strategy for school improvement and its implementation

19. The strategy and its implementation have both improved. The strategy is good and it is implemented well.

20. The strategy has benefited from the more general improvement in the LEA's planning. Its various elements make a coherent whole and direct support where it is most needed. The second Educational Development Plan (EDP) is an improvement on its predecessor. It is securely based on an assessment of what needs to be done and shows in clear and measurable ways how officers will know when the necessary improvements have been made. However, the connection between action and outcome is not always clear enough. In practice, this does not cause a problem because officers know their schools very well and accurately match the support provided to the needs of the schools. This knowledge comes from the advisers' visits to schools, from effective collection and analysis of data, and from the judicious use of research projects carried out by external consultants commissioned by the education department. Recent work on Black Caribbean pupils' attainment and on the effects of pupils' mobility between schools has further improved the advice available to teachers.

21. Work carried out under the EDP is complemented by initiatives deriving from the Excellence in Cities (EiC) and Education Action Zones programmes. The Beacon schools

are used well and there is also a useful register of good practice in the schools. This serves as an index of sources of support for schools which want to improve some particular part of their provision.

22. The gains in attainment and attendance, and the reduction in the rate of exclusions, show the effectiveness of the implementation of the strategy. The reduction in the number of schools causing concern and the dissemination of good practice demonstrate that support is being provided where it is needed.

23. In implementing the strategy, the small, but expert school improvement team has been successful in developing schools' capacity to manage themselves. Management support services also make a valuable contribution to this. There is a strong potential to develop schools' autonomy much further but this potential is a neglected element within the strategy as it stands at present.

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

24. This work has improved and is good. There is a simple system for defining categories of need and it is well understood by the schools.

25. There are four categories of concern, covering schools ranging from those where there are specific, limited concerns to those found by inspections to require special measures. Only eight schools fall within these four categories. The remainder are designated as requiring only 'light touch' support. All of the headteachers met during the inspection knew and agreed with the category in which their schools had been placed.

26. The disadvantage of the system is that it does not, of itself, distinguish the different levels of need in the schools that do not fall into one of the categories of concern. In practice, this does not cause problems because each of these schools receives a termly visit by its designated adviser. Given the speed with which new intakes of pupils and staffing mobility can change the nature of schools, this level of visiting is not excessive and must necessarily continue. One outcome of the visits is that heads and governors are told about the schools' needs for development and the support available to meet those needs. The recently introduced self-evaluation system for schools is also used by the advisers, in collaboration with the schools, to identify matters for improvement.

27. The self-evaluation system has, when it is fully in use in all schools, the potential to promote the schools' autonomy. This will be a necessary development. The high dependency of the schools on the education department reported by the previous inspection has gone, but few of the schools have yet asserted their independence fully. Inevitably, the readiness of schools that are capable to become more autonomous is varied, but many are able to begin the process. The LEA places no barriers in the way of schools' developing independence but neither does it actively promote it.

Recommendation

- Actively promote the autonomy of schools.

Effectiveness of the LEA's identification of, and intervention in, underperforming schools

28. The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve is good. It lies at the root of its knowledge of its schools and so of the effective differentiation of support. The monitoring of the schools is well supported by the use of data. This use goes well beyond target setting. Its strength lies in the connections drawn between data analysis and school improvement. For example, each year a group of about 12 schools is identified through statistical analysis as underachieving. These schools are then provided with advice which identifies the areas needing improvement and the necessary support to make the improvement. In other cases, schools in most need take part in programmes of intensive support. Early evidence indicates a faster rate of improvement in attainment in these schools.

29. The extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need is good. The support is well deployed because of the advisers' knowledge of the schools. Discussion with officers provided illustrations of the work in practice. In one school, scrutiny of self-evaluation revealed limited understanding of classroom observation which was dealt with by extra consultancy time. In another, teachers took part in training in the teaching of English as an additional language after weakness in that subject was identified by the adviser.

30. The effectiveness of the LEA's identification of and intervention in underperforming schools is good. Discussion with heads and governors of schools causing concern showed how much it has improved. The education department has become more effective in preventing small problems becoming serious ones. Weaknesses are now identified sooner and acted upon more quickly. In particular, officers have dealt well with awkward personnel issues and in appointing and supporting new governors. Action groups are set up to plan improvement when a school is placed in one of the categories of concern. They are effective in devising intervention and support programmes.

Asset management planning

31. Asset management planning is unsatisfactory, despite recent improvements.

32. The LEA now has a proper knowledge of the condition and suitability of schools' buildings. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has recently approved the LEA's list of major capital projects and the LEA no longer needs DfES approval to spend its capital allocation. There is an ambitious plan to improve the secondary school provision. Two new primary schools have been built recently and special school provision has been rationalised.

33. Nevertheless, there is no strategic plan for capital investment and proposals are concerned with managing school places, rather than contributing to school improvement. It is by no means certain when the LEA will get the money it needs from the DfES for its secondary school plans. Project management is weak and several projects have been delayed as a result. An external review of asset management planning identified ways to improve service planning and delivery, but important weaknesses have yet to be tackled.

34. Schools are not making the contribution they should to asset management planning. They are not consulted about it and have not been properly trained in integrating asset management planning into school development planning. Neither they nor the diocesan authorities are adequately consulted about spending plans.

Recommendations

- Publish guidance for schools on asset management planning and train headteachers and governors in its use in school development planning and school self-evaluation.
- Improve consultation with schools on the planning of capital projects and ensure that they, together with the diocesan authorities and other partners, have up-to-date information on priorities, spending decisions and the basis for these decisions.
- Improve the programming and project management of capital works.

Providing school places

35. The LEA's work is satisfactory. It has sound systems for monitoring trends in the number of pupils. The numbers are increasing in the primary phase and the number of secondary pupils being educated outside the borough is reducing. The projected shortage of secondary places and the changes in neighbouring boroughs' secondary provision requires increasing cross-authority planning and co-ordination.

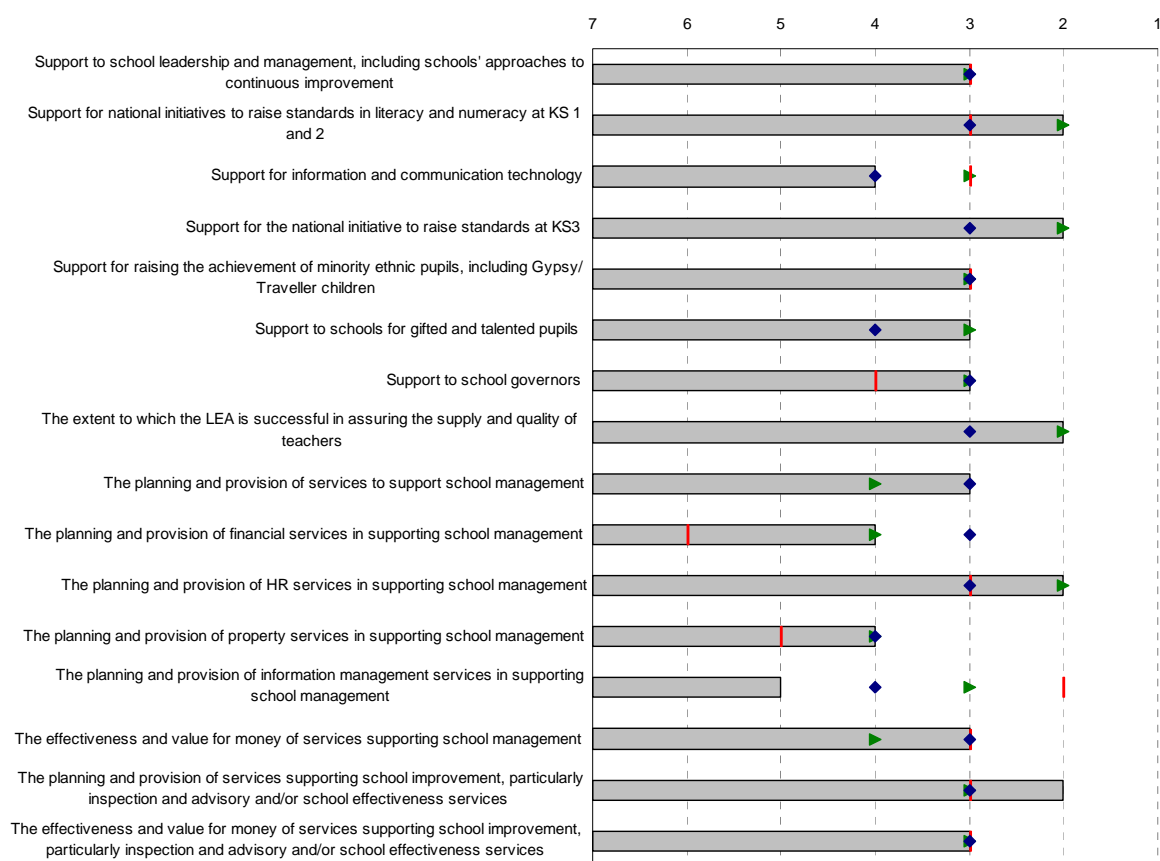
36. The LEA has recently reorganised some primary and special schools in order to rationalise provision and promote inclusion. It has reduced surplus places. The school organisation committee works well but its plan does not show clearly how predictions of changes in the school population are related to admissions arrangements and to the planning of places. It is not clear how projected and actual numbers can be used by schools to identify emerging local trends. There are also weaknesses in planning for pupils arriving at times other than the normal admissions dates.

Recommendations

- Improve collaboration with neighbouring LEAs in planning secondary school places.
- Improve school place planning by taking explicit account of the relationships between actual numbers in schools, projections for the future and admissions arrangements.

Section 3: Support to improve education in schools

Summary table of judgements



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

Support for school leadership, management and continuous improvement

37. The LEA's support to improve education in schools continues to be highly satisfactory. Schools value the advice and guidance of the LEA.

38. Improving leadership and management has high priority. Governing bodies are well briefed on strategic matters and receive termly progress reports on their school from its assigned adviser. Officers encourage headteachers and middle managers to use the national training programmes. They also make good use of the expertise of headteachers to support others by facilitating networking and setting up more formal collaboration. There has been decisive action to attract, develop and retain teachers. Inspections show that the quality of teaching and learning in schools is above the national average and rising.

39. The various improvement services are well co-ordinated, and schools are confident that the LEA listens to their views about the quality and deployment of those services. There has been a significant improvement in financial support for schools but information management is weak and ICT support for schools requires improvement.

40. The support which is now in place has the potential to provide a secure framework within which pupils can progress. It is strong in its attention to local needs, for example to improve support for the growing number of pupils who are not yet fluent in English, and to meet the needs of pupils frequently moving between schools. The LEA recognises the difficulties which these problems pose for schools and there is a genuine partnership developing with schools to deal with the issues.

Support for the national initiatives at Key Stages 1 and 2

41. This support is good. Recent appointments of new consultants and the emphasis on working with schools to support mobile pupils and those at early stages of learning English as an additional language are meeting identified needs. The support staff are skilled and schools value their expertise and their commitment to meeting the specific needs of particular institutions.

42. In 2003, performance at the end of Key Stage 1 fell below that in 2000, after a continuous improvement since 1998. Through its own analysis, the education department has identified that the increase in the proportion of bilingual learners was a crucial factor contributing to this situation. It has acted to deploy the necessary support to schools to deal with this as well as, more generally, to improve assessment and the match of teaching to pupils' needs.

43. Improvement at Key Stage 2 has been better than the national average since 2000, even though it still falls below the targets for English and mathematics. Officers' support is contributing to the improvement. For example, in mathematics, those schools receiving four or more days of consultants' support improved at a rate well above the national trend.

44. The Intensifying Support Programme was introduced in January 2003 and has involved 16 schools. In addition to support for school leadership, an accelerated target-setting programme has enabled very effective tracking of progress made by mobile pupils arriving in Years 5 and 6. There is a valuable, comprehensive but flexible range of support for other schools, especially access to training, resources and networking for school subject leaders.

Support for information and communication technology (ICT)

45. The support is satisfactory. It has declined since the previous inspection but is now improving as a result of the new emphasis on integrating curriculum and management systems and planning work against specific and measurable targets. Arrangements in the education service have been integrated with corporate ones. Targets for computer ratios have been met but progress in providing broadband connections has been slower than planned, partly owing to the high costs for smaller schools.

46. The education department is effective in consulting schools about their needs and ICT co-ordinators are becoming better at providing guidance on curriculum, teaching methods and whole school planning for the subject. Further gains are likely to follow when the delayed Private Finance Initiative, to provide a managed ICT service for secondary schools and the primary services, is fully in place.

47. Information and communication technology work in Key Stage 3 is leading to improved teaching and learning. The weaknesses identified by analysis of pupils' performance are being tackled. Collaboration between schools has improved and there are planned arrangements to improve transition from primary to secondary schools.

Support for the national initiative at Key Stage 3

48. This is good. There is a particular emphasis on raising the attainment of Black Caribbean, Portuguese and transient pupils. Attainment and attendance have improved. The work of the consultancy team is effective and schools rate the team highly.

49. The work is well managed and, as a result, it has a mutually supportive relationship with other initiatives such as the 14-19 programme and the leadership incentive grant. Performance in the weaker schools has improved. Those receiving intensified support in 2002/03 improved at average rates 2% faster in English, mathematics and science than the rates in other schools. The support is differentiated very effectively.

Support for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsy and Traveller children

50. This service continues to be highly satisfactory. Black African, Black Caribbean and Portuguese pupils made up 48.9% of the total school population in 2003 and 27.8% of bi-lingual learners are non-fluent in English. The EDP has a strong focus on raising the attainment of black and minority ethnic pupils. Since 2000, the improvements in attainment achieved by Black African and Black Caribbean pupils have been slower than for all pupils in both primary key stages. However, in Key Stages 3 and 4 the rate of improvement has been significantly better. Improvement in attainment for Portuguese pupils has been better in all key stages.

51. The LEA has used its own research and that of external experts to identify factors influencing the performance of minority ethnic pupils. Pilot projects, such as a Black Caribbean Achievement initiative, are beginning to have an effect. There is also support for bi-lingual learners in all 5 nursery schools and there are bilingual assistants in 25 primary schools where there are many mid-term arrivals. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Team's support is highly regarded by schools.

52. Over the last three years, the European Refugee Fund Induction Programme has successfully supported the integration of over 200 Year 7-11 pupils into mainstream secondary schools and local colleges. The Traveller Education Service supports on average 158 pupils a year. However, improved attendance has yet to be matched by improved attainment.

Support for gifted and talented pupils

53. This is highly satisfactory. Excellence in Cities activities have been well co-ordinated with other initiatives, through the integrated programmes clearly set out in the EDP. Targets for gifted and talented pupils have been achieved for the last three years.

54. Good practice in schools is disseminated effectively. Black and minority ethnic pupils are equitably represented in registers of gifted and talented pupils. Guidance for schools is good and summer schools are well run and attended. The weakness is that the subsequent tracking of progress made by Year 6 pupils is not rigorous enough to evaluate the longer-term benefits of the provision.

55. The LEA and its partners are providing an excellent range of activities to support talented young people. These include the Lambeth music festival, projects delivered by learning mentors with the message that it is 'cool to achieve', South Bank's Arts projects and initiatives to support family learning.

The supply and quality of teachers

56. The LEA's work in these matters is good. More newly-qualified teachers are being recruited and they are staying in post longer. Officers are now dealing with the shortage of experienced teachers through a management development programme run in collaboration with higher education. The continuous professional development programme is well subscribed and judged favourably by those who attend. The evidence supports the LEA's contention that, increasingly, teachers view the borough as a good place in which to work.

57. Headship training is used well and supported by effective use of experienced headteachers as mentors, headteacher consultants and associate headteachers. Headteachers feel valued by this acknowledgment of their expertise.

58. Despite some initial concerns over funding to implement the changes, workforce reform is now progressing well.

Effectiveness and value for money of services to support school management

59. These areas are highly satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the LEA has improved the planning and provision of these services and secured more effective services providing better value for money, with the exception of weakness in information management. The recommendations to attend more to schools' needs have been met. Schools now have a better choice of providers and are well supported in making the choices which will offer them the best value for their money.

60. Schools understand which services they receive without charge from the LEA and which ones they must pay for. Prices are clear and ordering is easy. The complaints procedure is straightforward and problems are resolved promptly. The LEA is introducing a well-planned brokerage service to offer schools a broader range of services from external providers, which have been checked for quality. At the same time, choice of providers for traded services will be increased.

61. At the time of the previous inspection the planning and provision of financial services were poor and there were a number of recommendations for improvement. Action to deal with these has led to clear improvements. The information provided for schools is now accurate, reliable and up to date. The finance team is well regarded by schools. The service is now satisfactory and there are good prospects for its further improvement. Fewer schools have budget deficits.

62. The advice and support for schools from the finance team for budget setting and management have improved schools' ability to manage their money. Most use the same school financial management system. They were well supported when it was recently upgraded. They have also benefited from receiving indicative budgets well in time for planning their next year's spending.

63. The planning and provision of information management services have deteriorated since the previous inspection and are unsatisfactory.

64. The council is only beginning to develop a comprehensive information management strategy. In the education service, a number of different systems are used. This is inefficient and schools find themselves presented with many requests for information, in a variety of formats, from different sections of the department. There is often also no clarity about why the information is needed.

65. There is a plan to improve matters across the council as a whole, and specifically in education, but it is not fully developed. In education, it fails to offer a coherent proposal and shows neither clear deadlines nor committed funding.

Recommendations

- Standardise requests for information from schools and remove duplication.
- Produce a plan for information management which sets a clear timetable for action, and which costs its proposals.

Effectiveness and value for money of services to support school improvement

66. The planning and provision of services supporting school improvement are now good. It is coherent, purposeful and connected with other departmental and corporate plans. An annual report analyses progress in school improvement. Individual service teams monitor and evaluate their performance annually. Performance management is now well established for individual staff who have measurable targets, linked to the EDP or team business plan.

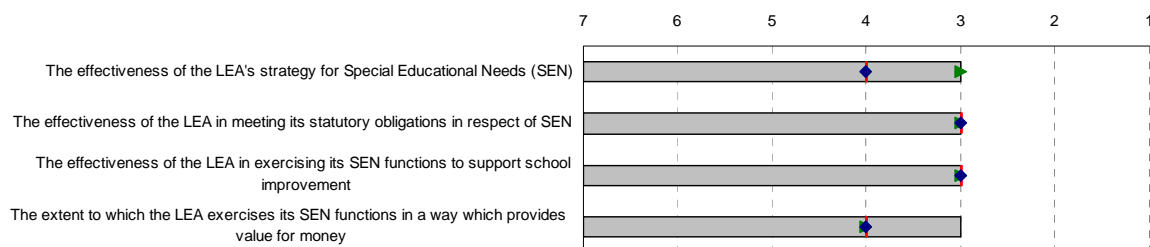
67. The education department has succeeded in retaining high quality staff who are committed to implementing agreed strategies. Recent recruitment has strengthened expertise, and good use is made of heads and other teachers to extend the range and quantity of expertise available.

68. The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school improvement are highly satisfactory. Overall, expenditure on school improvement services is broadly comparable to that in similar LEAs. Councillors and the chief executive are actively

interested in scrutinising the impact of LEA services on raising school performance and achievement.

Section 4: Support for special educational needs (SEN)

Summary table of judgements



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

The strategy for SEN

69. The LEA has developed and improved its strategy for SEN since the previous inspection. It is highly satisfactory. It now has a clearly articulated vision which is firmly embedded in a broader strategy for social inclusion. There is strong support from schools, both for the key principles involved and the broad programme of action planned. There have been some difficulties with implementation but these have largely been short term and overcome satisfactorily. The number of children with statements has fallen significantly, albeit from a comparatively very high level, and the proportion placed in mainstream schools has increased substantially.

70. These improvements have been achieved primarily by providing better early support for children's needs and by moving provision from special school to mainstream settings. Councillors and senior officers have given clear leadership in this and have taken difficult decisions. Schools have been closely involved in developing the strategy and reviewing progress. Current and future roles and responsibilities have been clearly defined and agreed. The LEA has worked effectively with the EYDCP and other key partners and has consulted widely and effectively with parents. It has been less successful, however, in developing its partnership with the health service.

71. Good support is provided to schools to develop their own strategies to support children with SEN. The emphasis, as elsewhere, is on self-evaluation, combined with robust monitoring and challenge by officers. The programme of support for SEN is well linked to the LEA's other school improvement plans. Good use is being made of the skills and knowledge of the LEA's special schools. Nursery schools similarly provide valuable support to early years providers in the voluntary and private sectors. The authority's strategy is underpinned by sound financial planning and control. The emphasis has increasingly been on supporting school autonomy through the delegation of funding, which now exceeds that found in most LEAs.

72. The weakest aspect of the strategy is its action planning. This is contained in the inclusion action plan, as part of the LEA's strategy to ensure that its plans are coherent. The action plan is insufficiently detailed and precise to provide either a clear account of all that needs to happen or a basis for monitoring progress. The buildings and equipment elements of the development programme have, in particular, not always been completed on time. The continuity of health service support for individual pupils has mainly been maintained, but not without significant difficulties having to be overcome in the restructuring of provision.

Statutory obligations

73. The LEA meets its statutory duties for SEN with one exception. It has not published details of the kinds of support arrangements maintained schools might normally be expected to provide from their delegated budgets for pupils at the stages of School Action and School Action Plus. Because of this omission, which should be relatively easy to remedy, overall performance is only satisfactory. In other respects it is better than this. Considerable improvement has very recently been made in the completion of statutory assessments within the expected timescale. Performance in this has been poor in the past, almost always because the Health Service had not met the deadline for submitting its reports. This was a problem highlighted by the previous inspection. The improvement followed the matter being addressed at the highest level by officers within the LEA and Primary Care Trust. That such a dramatic improvement could be achieved in such a short time suggests that the same action could have been taken earlier.

74. The quality of statements is highly satisfactory, but insufficiently precise in some parts. Annual reviews take place when they should and officers' attendance at them is properly prioritised. The LEA responded effectively to the recommendation from the previous inspection that it improve its guidance to schools on assessing pupils' needs. It has worked closely with schools to establish and review the criteria for assessment. These are now well understood and much less time is wasted on unsuccessful applications for full assessment. However, guidance for schools does not fully comply with requirements. There is good information and support for parents. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of appeals lodged with the SEN Tribunal and a much improved record of resolving such matters without an appeal hearing eventually being necessary.

Recommendation

- Publish on the LEA website details of the kinds of support arrangements maintained schools might normally be expected to provide from their budgets for school-based provision at the stages of School Action and School Action Plus.

SEN functions to support school improvement

75. Services to support schools are highly satisfactory. The quality of some specialist provision is variable, but there are also some real strengths. School SEN co-ordinators are well supported and the educational psychology service is effective. The delegation of some of the funding for this service has been a success. Provision in the early years generally is good. The new SEN moderation exercise, developed with schools, extends well beyond the

verification of data submitted for funding purposes and embraces all key aspects of school planning and resource deployment for SEN. This is a very positive development.

76. Good use is made of the expertise of the LEA's remaining special schools in supporting inclusion. This is formally part of their role and resources have been provided accordingly. Special schools have been effectively supported in the use of P scales² to improve their monitoring of pupils' progress and target setting. This is being extended to some mainstream schools, with special school support. This is also a positive development.

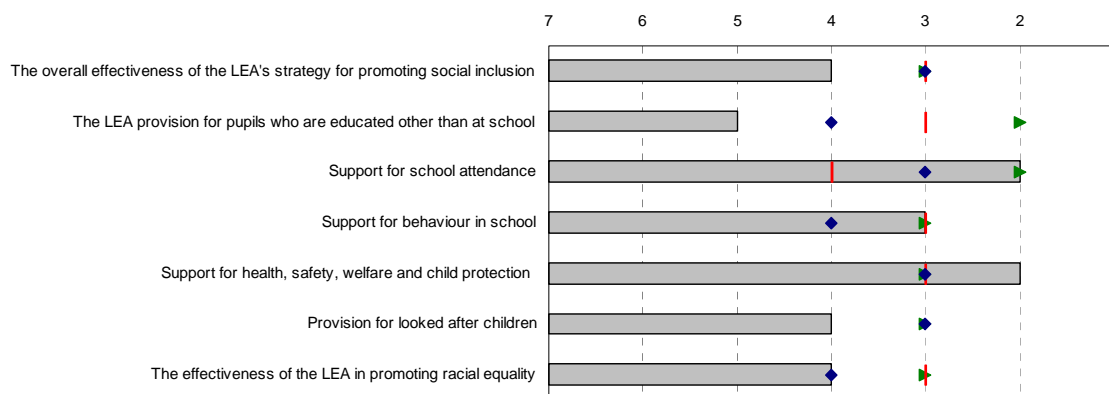
Value for money

77. The LEA provides highly satisfactory value for money. Spending is comparatively high, but not unduly so given the levels of need locally. Budgetary needs are accurately forecast and expenditure is under control. Most funding for SEN is delegated to schools. The level of funding involved and the formulae for its distribution are soundly based on an analysis of schools' actual spending needs. School representatives have been closely involved throughout in the design and review of funding formulae but the LEA has not presented a clear explanation of the rationale for the changes to the wider audience of the schools. Another weakness is that consultation documents have not exemplified the consequences of formula change at individual school level. The LEA has taken reasonable steps to compare costs and performance with other authorities and its criteria for resource allocation are clear and consistently applied. It has successfully rationalised provision and secured significant savings without adversely affecting the quality of support.

² P scales are a means of measuring attainment below National Curriculum Level 1

Section 5: Support for social inclusion

Summary table of judgements



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

The strategy for social inclusion

78. The LEA's performance overall in this area of work is satisfactory. However, this comprises a mix of strengths and weaknesses.

79. Provision for children without a school place, or a suitable alternative, is a serious weakness. The LEA's clear vision and coherent strategy are being let down by inconsistent and insufficiently rigorous implementation. This indicates also that systems for monitoring and evaluation by senior officers and councillors are ineffective.

80. The LEA has a clearly articulated, broad-ranging and coherent vision for social inclusion. Elected members and senior officers have given clear leadership in this area. Social inclusion is a major corporate priority and promoting inclusion is firmly embedded in the LEA's school improvement programme. Partnership working with schools has been extensive and there is strong support in principle for the LEA's aims. Joint working between education and other council departments, particularly social services, has improved and real efforts have been made, with some success, to address the concerns of schools in such respects. Partnership work with other agencies is effective in most cases and there has been a positive collective response to the implications of the Children Bill. Structures for partnership working in the future are well designed and there is strong commitment from all concerned to making them work. The LEA communicates and consults well with parents, carers and the young people themselves.

81. There have been some notable successes in recent years. School attendance has improved significantly and is now good. Permanent exclusions remain comparatively high

but have gone down recently at a much faster rate than nationally. Staying-on rates in full-time education have improved and youth crime has fallen. There has been a big reduction in the number of children without a school place or suitable alternative provision. However, there are still too many such children and the LEA is weak both in identifying causal factors and ensuring that appropriate provision is made. It has also had almost no success in reintegrating secondary-aged pupils into mainstream schools once alternative provision has been made.

82. Support for child protection is good, as are aspects of support for looked after children. However, there are also some weaknesses. Again, the main problem is one of action failing consistently to match policy. Aspects of the promotion of racial equality are good but here, too, there are also some weaknesses. The LEA is right to have high aspirations for the people of the borough. At present, however, its ambition is not always being matched by its capacity to deliver.

Provision for pupils educated other than at school

83. Provision for pupils educated other than at school is unsatisfactory, despite a rapid reduction in the number registered as having no school place or acceptable alternative provision since September 2003. The total currently stands at 173. Of these, 139 pupils in Years 8-10 have been out of school for more than a year. Over 88% are of Black or other minority ethnic origin. The LEA does not know the precise reasons why many of them are out of school. Some are new to the country and/or the borough. High mobility certainly presents the LEA with extra difficulties and many families also fail to respond to letters or attend interviews arranged at schools. However, there remain significant delays in contacting families of pupils out of school and in arranging appropriate provision for them. In the great majority of cases, no provision at all is being made for these pupils.

84. The LEA undoubtedly faces significant difficulties in ensuring that proper provision is made for these pupils. However, it has not taken enough action using its powers in respect of school place planning and/or admissions to expand the number of places available and allocate pupils to them. Nor has it taken the stop-gap measure of making proper alternative provision otherwise than at school.

85. The LEA has been successful in placing all primary and Year 7 pupils and makes good use of European Refugee Funding to induct new arrivals before placing them in schools. There are no Year 11 pupils out of school now, a clear improvement on November 2003 when the total was 96. Placements have been made with a voluntary provider. The LEA has reorganised and expanded its own provision of alternative education places in recent years and also makes use of a range of other organisations offering such provision. This has clearly helped the authority to meet its statutory obligations but other problems remain. Reintegration from the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 PRUs is very poor. Since the former opened in September 2002, no pupil has returned to a Lambeth mainstream school. Attendance at the two secondary PRUs is also well below that for mainstream schools. Reintegration into mainstream schools from the primary PRU is very good. The Behaviour Improvement Programme has been used to improve provision for school-aged mothers.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the LEA knows precisely why children are without a school place or acceptable alternative provision.
- Ensure that early contact is made with the families involved.
- Ensure that suitable educational provision is made while school placements are arranged.
- Agree a protocol with the local Admissions Forum for the early placement of pupils out of school, including those permanently excluded or needing to reintegrate from alternative educational provision.
- Ensure that all local schools comply with that protocol.
- Increase the proportion of pupils reintegrated into a mainstream school from the Key Stage 3 PRU.

Support for attendance

86. Support for attendance has improved and is now good. At secondary level it is now better than the national average and unauthorised absence is well below average.

87. Support is provided according to need. Court action is used effectively. There is a strong relationship with the police, manifest in effective joint working on truancy sweeps. The Behaviour Improvement Programme and other initiatives within the EiC programme have had a positive effect. The LEA links these various initiatives well, within the framework of its overall school improvement programme. The education welfare service was restructured in August 2002 and some funding was delegated to schools. This has generally been a positive step, allowing schools to commission support from the service which fits in well with their overall strategy for securing good attendance.

Support for behaviour

88. Support for behaviour is highly satisfactory. The proportion of pupils permanently excluded remains high in primary schools in comparison with statistical neighbours, although the numbers in absolute terms are low. Permanent exclusions from secondary schools have been reduced at a rate faster than nationally but few of the excluded pupils are successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools. Fixed-term exclusions are comparatively high in both primary and secondary schools.

89. There are good arrangements to ensure a cohesive, multi-agency approach to behaviour support. Schools and parents are now being better informed, both about provision and best practice. Strategies to support behaviour are well integrated within the LEA's overall school improvement programme. Support from the educational psychology service and the primary pupil referral unit outreach service is good. A social and emotional learning programme which encourages children to manage their own behaviour has been effectively piloted in 12 primary schools. The programme, which has national recognition, is now being

extended to half of the schools. The Behaviour Improvement Programme has been effective in reducing permanent exclusions in the secondary schools involved by 38%.

Support for health, safety, welfare and child protection

90. The LEA's support for child protection is now good. All schools have designated teachers for child protection who are properly trained. There is good quality advice and guidance for schools, as well as clear and precise protocols for joint working with social services. A senior officer within the education department is designated as the contact point for schools to raise any concerns. School practice is closely monitored and any issues emerging are dealt with. Referrals to social services are fully justified in the great majority of cases. There have been major concerns about the speed and nature of the response to these referrals. The education service has worked closely with social services to improve matters, with some success. The education department plays a full part in the work of the Area Child Protection Committee.

Provision for looked after children

91. The LEA's performance is satisfactory. It has policies and support structures which are well designed to ensure that good support is provided. They have yet to be fully implemented. Significant progress was made between 2000/01 and 2001/02 in improving the educational achievement of looked after children. In the latter year, it was significantly above the national average. However, performance has since dropped below this level. School attendance by looked after children is poor, although it improved in 2002/03. Their participation in post-16 education, training and employment is comparatively low.

92. The LEA restructured its support and monitoring arrangements in 2003. There have been improvements, for example, in the proportion of looked after children who have a current personal education plan. However, the quality of these plans is very variable. Further structural changes are planned, designed to improve the management of cases within social services. A corporate parenting board has also been established. This has elected member and officer membership at the most senior level. Ambitious targets for improving the educational performance of looked after children have been set. There are also welcome signs of a greater focus on educational outcomes in commissioning care placements. All these developments have the potential to ensure both closer monitoring of provision and improved outcomes. At the very least, these developments indicate that the highest priority is being given to securing improvements in both speed and quality of action. Such improvements are necessary

93. The LEA has a good record of seeking the views of looked after children and of responding positively to them. All looked after children in schools have a designated teacher and good advice has been provided on the production of personal education plans. Additional educational support is sensibly targeted at the age of primary to secondary transfer and at the build up to GCSEs. Such support can also be commissioned by the corporate parenting board at other ages where necessary.

Promoting racial equality

94. The LEA's performance in this area of work is satisfactory. It has achieved Commission for Race Equality (CRE) level 2 and is working towards achieving level 3. Race equality impact assessments are now routinely carried out on all departmental reports, plans and policies. Clear advice and guidance have been provided to schools on the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the CRE Code of Practice. This includes good examples of race equality action plans and policies. Good quality training has also been provided to both schools and departmental managers. All schools now have race equality policies. These are regularly monitored by the LEA. Headteachers and governors are regularly briefed on their responsibilities. The LEA recognised that its guidance needed to be improved and has just published comprehensive advice about challenging racism and promoting race equality. Further training is planned.

95. There are, however, some specific weaknesses. The LEA has, for some years, failed to follow up effectively the very poor response from schools in completing racist incident monitoring returns. Returns for the autumn term 2003 were completed by only 22% of schools. The LEA has yet to convince schools that the completion of returns will help in the development of strategies to combat racism. In addition to this weakness, links with community groups are weak and the education department's current race equality scheme action plan is now out of date.

Recommendations

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take urgent action to ensure that schools complete racist incident monitoring returns.• Bring the race equality action plan up to date. |
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Appendix A

Record of Judgement Recording Statements

Name of LEA :	Lambeth Local Education Authority
LEA number:	208
Reporting Inspector:	David Halligan HMI
Date of Inspection:	May 2004

No	Required Inspection Judgement	Grade	Fieldwork*
	Context of the LEA		
1	The socio-economic context of the LEA	6	
	Overall judgements		
0.1	The progress made by the LEA overall	3	
0.2	Overall effectiveness of the LEA	3	
0.3	The LEA's capacity for further improvement and to address the recommendations of the inspection	3	
	Section 1: Corporate strategy and LEA leadership		
1.1	The effectiveness of corporate planning for the education of children and young people	2	
1.2	The implementation of corporate planning for education	3	
1.3	The effectiveness of LEA decision-making	3	
1.4	The extent to which the LEA targets resources on priorities	3	
1.5	The extent to which the LEA has in place effective strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value	3	
1.6	The leadership provided by elected members (including quality of advice)	3	
1.7	The quality of leadership provided by senior officers	2	

1.8	The effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration between agencies in support of priorities	3	NF
1.9	Support for Early Years education	1	
1.10	Support for 14 – 19 education	4	
Section 2: Strategy for education and its implementation			
2.1	The LEA's strategy for school improvement	2	
2.2	The progress on implementing the LEA's strategy for school improvement	2	
2.3	The performance of schools	4	NF
2.4	The extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge and intervention	2	
2.5	The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve, including the use made of performance data	2	
2.6	The extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need	2	
2.7	The effectiveness of the LEA's identification of and intervention in underperforming schools	2	
2.8	The effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning	5	
2.9	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to the provision of school places	4	
2.10	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools	3	NF
Section 3: Support to school leadership and management, including schools' efforts to support continuous improvement			
3.1	Support to school leadership and management, including support for schools' approaches to continuous improvement	3	
3.2	Support for national initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy at KS 1 and 2	2	

3.3	Support for information and communication technology	4	
3.4	Support for the national initiative to raise standards at KS3	2	
3.5	Support for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsy/ Traveller children	3	
3.6	Support to schools for gifted and talented pupils	3	
3.7	Support for school governors	3	NF
3.8	The extent to which the LEA is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers	2	
3.9	The planning and provision of services to support school management	3	
3.9a	The planning and provision of financial services in supporting school management	4	
3.9b	The planning and provision of HR services in supporting school management	2	NF
3.9c	The planning and provision of property services in supporting school management	4	NF
3.9d	The planning and provision of information management services in supporting school management	5	
3.10	The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school management	3	
3.11	The planning and provision of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services	2	
3.12	The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services	3	
Section 4: Support for special educational needs			
4.1	The effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for special educational needs	3	
4.2	The effectiveness of the LEA in meeting its statutory obligations in respect of SEN	4	

4.3	The effectiveness of the LEA in exercising its SEN functions to support school improvement	3	
4.4	The extent to which the LEA exercises its SEN functions in a way which provides value for money	3	
Section 5: Support for social inclusion			
5.1	The overall effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for promoting social inclusion	4	
5.2	The LEA provision for pupils who have no school place	5	
5.3	Support for school attendance	2	
5.4	Support for behaviour in schools	3	
5.5	Support for health, safety, welfare and child protection	2	
5.6	Provision for looked after children	4	
5.7	The effectiveness of the LEA in promoting racial equality	4	

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

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

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

[**Note:** in the case of JRS 1: socio-economic context of the LEA and JRS 2.3: performance of schools, grades relate to comparisons against national averages: Grades 1-2: Well above; Grade 3: Above; Grade 4: In line; Grade 5: Below; Grades 6-7: Well below]

Appendix B

Context of the inspection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration;• admissions to schools;• support for governors;• personnel support;• property services. |
|--|

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

of the grades are used in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment profile for the education service.

Context of the LEA

Lambeth is a highly diverse borough both in its ethnicity and its socio-economic character. Its total population is about 266,000, and there are about 28,500 pupils in its schools. The LEA maintains 5 nursery, 59 primary, 10 secondary and 6 special schools. The largest ethnic groups in its schools are African, 22.6%, Caribbean, 21.6%, and white British, 20.2%. Around 150 languages are spoken, Yoruba and Portuguese being the most common after English. The proportions of pupils with statements of special educational need and in special schools are well above those in similar authorities and nationally.

In some respects the borough is prosperous. The proportion of its population with higher educational qualifications is 41%. That is in line with similar areas, but well above the national proportion. The proportion in higher social classes is 38%, again in line with similar areas but well above the national figure. The school-aged population is less prosperous. In primary schools, 37% of pupils are entitled to free school meals and in secondary schools 38% are so entitled. These proportions are well above the national levels.

The council has 63 members, of whom 29 are Labour, 27 are Liberal Democrat and 7 are Conservative.

The performance of schools

Pupils' attainment at 7, 11, 14 and 16 is below the national average but, except at the end of Key Stage 1, it is either in line with or above that in similar authorities. When the rate of progress between key stages is taken into account, the comparison between the LEA and schools nationally is favourable. The LEA's figures show that pupils' mobility between schools is an important factor in their performance; those moving school within a key stage perform significantly less well than those whose schooling is more consistent.

The National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2003 declined from those in 2002. Data supplied by the LEA suggest that an increase in the number of children at an early stage in acquiring English as an additional language contributed to this. In reading, 75% of pupils reached Level 2, compared with 84.5% nationally. In writing and mathematics, the equivalent figures were 72% compared with 81.6% and 81.4% compared with 90.7%.

At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2003, 71.7% reached the required level in English; the national figure was 75.5%. In mathematics, the LEA's 64.9% compared with the national 71.4%. The LEA's targets were not met but in both subjects the gap between the attainment in the LEA and that nationally has narrowed since 1997.

In the Key Stage 3 tests, at Level 5, the LEA's 62.9% compared with the national 69.8%. The figures for mathematics were 64.9% compared with 71.6%, and for science, 61%

compared with 69.3%. The target for English was missed but those for science and mathematics were achieved.

In the GCSE, 41.7% of the LEA's pupils gained five or more passes at A* to C compared to 51.9%, nationally. The LEA's Key Stage 4 targets were met.

School attendance has some strong features. In 2003, it stood at 93.4% in primary schools compared with 94.2% nationally. In secondary schools, the national level, 91.7% was exceeded by the LEA's 92.2%. Between 2002 and 2003, exclusions from primary schools remained constant at 14, but fell from 31 to 21 in secondary schools.

Funding data for the LEA

SCHOOLS BUDGET	Lambeth	Statistical neighbours average	Inner London Average	ENGLAND AVERAGE
	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil
Individual schools budget	3,461	3,336	3,426	2,708
Standards fund delegated	38	99	99	61
Education for under fives	215	240	227	96
Strategic management	53	27	30	29
Special educational needs	183	158	150	120
Grants	135	124	139	53
Access	164	85	93	55
Capital expenditure from revenue	32	51	50	24
TOTAL SCHOOLS BUDGET	4,280	4,120	4,213	3,145
Schools formula spending share	4,224	3,812	3,908	2,904

Source: DfES Comparative Tables 2003-04

LEA BUDGET	Lambeth	Statistical neighbours average	Inner London Average	ENGLAND AVERAGE
	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil
Strategic management	119	117	113	95
Specific Grants	21	24	25	16
Special educational needs	24	53	53	32
School improvement	61	48	54	36
Access	74	159	154	133
Capital expenditure from revenue	2	3	3	2
Youth and Community	448	129	184	74
TOTAL LEA BUDGET	749	534	585	388

Source: DfES Comparative Tables 2003-04

Notes:

All figures are net

Averages quoted are mean averages; the original DfES Comparative Tables quote median average figures, not the mean average.

Notes