



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS  
IN EDUCATION

**INSPECTION OF  
CITY OF KINGSTON-UPON-HULL  
LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

**JUNE 1999**

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

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Appendix 1: The Context of the LEA

Appendix 2: The Performance of Schools

## INTRODUCTION

1. The 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***<sup>1</sup>, which focuses on the effectiveness of LEA work to support school improvement.

2. The inspection was in two stages. An initial review established a picture of the LEA's context, the performance of its schools, its strategy and the management of services. The initial review was based on data, some of which was provided by the LEA, school inspection and audit reports, LEA documentation, and discussions with LEA members, staff in Education Services and in other Council departments and representatives of the LEA's partners. In addition, a questionnaire seeking views on aspects of the LEA's work was completed by 94 out of 104 schools.

3. The second stage of the inspection involved studies of the effectiveness of aspects of the LEA's work through visits to four secondary schools, seven primary schools, two special schools and a unit for hearing impaired pupils, and a nursery school. The visits tested the views of governors, headteachers and other staff on aspects of the LEA's strategy. The visits also considered whether the support provided by the LEA contributes to the discharge of the LEA's statutory duties, is effective in contributing to improvements in the school and provides value for money.

4. The report draws on material from the initial review, from the school survey and from the school visits, together with evidence relevant to the themes drawn from recent HMI visits to City of Kingston upon Hull schools.

June 1999

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<sup>1</sup> *LEA Support for School Improvement: A Framework for the Inspection of Local Education Authorities*, London, OFSTED,

## COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### COMMENTARY

5. The city of Kingston upon Hull has suffered, more than most major towns, from prolonged economic decline. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average, and far fewer of the population are in higher social classes than is the case nationally. Families move house frequently and this is reflected in the very high turnover of pupils in the city's schools. The school buildings are themselves often in a poor state, because of a history of inadequate resourcing for their maintenance. The LEA serves a largely white community, often with low educational aspirations, although many parents choose to send their children to secondary schools in a neighbouring authority. In these circumstances, the first task for the LEA, working with schools, is to raise sights: to engender optimism about what can be achieved and to rigorously implement strategies for improvement.

6. There are signs that this new LEA may be succeeding, though progress is not startling. The LEA's approach to raising standards is determined and unequivocal. It has made it clear that poor performance by schools will not be tolerated. It has been instrumental in rescuing several schools from severe difficulties and has given other weak schools the wherewithal to improve. With the LEA's support many of its schools are now becoming more adept at introducing measures to raise standards. Although hard pressed for resources the LEA generally uses them well to give schools the right amount of support. Most of its services are contributing effectively to school improvement.

7. The LEA has identified the key areas of weakness in the city's schools and has appropriate strategies in hand for remedying them. Support is well targeted and will be better targeted when the LEA, as it intends, discontinues its cycle of triennial reviews of schools. The LEA rightly intends to continue to commit a significant proportion of its resources to helping the weakest schools, and will sensibly put a major emphasis, amongst other priorities, on improving basic skills, securing better attendance, and raising standards at GCSE. The activities planned by the LEA to meet these priorities generally follow the patterns of work already established successfully. The work of link advisers is crucial.

8. This inspection shows that the LEA has succeeded in a very short time in establishing its mission for raising standards and winning overall support from schools. It is providing a particularly good service in the following areas:

- the link advisers are assiduous and generally expert in identifying schools' development needs and helping them to improve (paras 66, 100-101, 106, 113, 131);
- the pressure placed on very weak schools, and the support marshalled for them, is well judged and effective (paras 120-126);
- the strategy to improve literacy in primary schools is bearing fruit and should have a powerful influence on standards overall (paras 132-138);
- the behaviour management strategy is giving useful support to primary schools in particular and has reduced the number of permanent exclusions (paras 149-151);

- some of the management services are of good quality and responsive to needs (paras 82-87);
- the governors' support unit provides high quality guidance and information to governing bodies (paras 11 5-1 19).

9. There are weaknesses in the following areas:

- secondary schools are progressing more slowly than primary schools (para 24);
- under the previous authority insufficient funding was directed towards the maintenance of school premises and the condition of some school buildings continues to give cause for concern (paras 90-95);
- the authority has been slow to remove surplus places from schools and as a result has not been effective in securing funding for premises improvement (paras 52-54);
- although the city has benefited greatly from a recent influx of new headteachers, the LEA is not giving them enough support (para 114); nor is it giving enough support to newly qualified teachers (paras 128, 130);
- although the LEA's strategy for improving attendance is based on the right principles there is some lack of clarity about the respective responsibilities of the LEA and the schools (paras 144-148);
- the authority has not consistently made major commitments in working with other partners (paras 55-57).

10. Overall, the LEA has achieved a great deal. It has established systems for identifying the needs of schools, for driving improvement and for evaluating its own performance. It is well led, well managed, and delivers value for money. It is helping schools to establish a momentum of improvement, albeit one that remains in need of acceleration. Much of its work, understandably, has been inwardly focused. Inevitably, it has not had the time to work as extensively as it might with partners other than schools in the interest of raising educational standards across the city. It now needs to do so: to work more vigorously in partnership with other services and agencies, and not least with parents.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**A. In order to meet its statutory responsibilities regarding school premises the LEA should:**

- i. in partnership with schools continue to seek capital and grant funding urgently to remedy the most pressing problems of buildings maintenance;
- ii. provide sufficient revenue resources to prevent further deterioration of those elements of premises for which it remains responsible;

**B. In order to make the best use of advisers' time and expertise the LEA should:**

- i. cease to mount regular reviews of every school;

ii. continue to refine the present system of identifying the overall quality of each school using routine visiting and performance indicators to give early warning of schools in danger of developing weaknesses, and give reinforced support to those schools, particularly those in the secondary phase, at an earlier stage;

**C. In order to continue to reduce the number of surplus places the LEA should:**

i. undertake a further review of school places at an early date with a view to removing a substantial number;

**D. In order to continue to improve standards of literacy the LEA should:**

ii. give schools guidance on ways in which they can build on earlier literacy initiatives;

iii. devise a strategy for helping secondary schools as the National Literacy Strategy moves into Key Stage 3;

**E. In order to improve levels of attendance the LEA should:**

i. develop schools' awareness of strategies for combating irregular attendance, supporting schools in using strategies such as the use of attendance liaison assistants and first day response, and strengthening liaison between schools and youth service provision;

ii. seek to enrol the support of the city's parents in encouraging good attendance;

**F. In order to broaden the scope of its work in raising local expectations the LEA should:**

i. in so far as resources allow, make a greater contribution to working with external partners towards shared aims;

**G. In order to reduce the impact of pupil turnover the LEA should**

i. work with Community Services to analyse the effect on the city's schools of the current housing policies;

ii. develop advice and support for schools with high levels of pupil turnover;

**H In order to strengthen further the contribution to school improvement made by new headteachers and staff the LEA should:**

i. monitor the work of new headteachers and provide them with a more detailed evaluation of their work;

ii. provide new headteachers with a greater range of support and advice;

- iii. meet its existing commitments to the induction of newly qualified teachers;

**I In order to improve further its consultation with schools the LEA should:**

- i. re-evaluate its strategy of consulting through cluster meetings and provide greater opportunity for regular discussion of policy.

## **SECTION 1: THE CONTEXT OF THE LEA**

### **THE CITY**

11. The Local Education Authority of Kingston upon Hull was formally established on 1 April 1996. Kingston upon Hull is a maritime city on the Humber estuary in the north east of England. The population has fallen slightly since 1992, partly due to migration out of the city. Pupil turnover in the city's schools is high: about one in six pupils change school during the course of the school year. In 1997, 328 of the LEA's Year 6 pupils, 9 per cent of the cohort, transferred to secondary schools in the neighbouring East Riding of Yorkshire LEA. The number of pupils leaving the area at secondary transfer has increased steadily for at least five years and is now almost three times the 1992 figure.

12. The authority serves an area which has many inner city characteristics and the Index of Local Conditions, which measures the relative levels of deprivation, shows Kingston upon Hull to be the thirty-first most deprived local authority district out of three hundred and sixty-six in England. According to 1991 census data, fewer of Kingston upon Hull's population have higher education qualifications and far fewer are in higher social and economic classes than nationally. The proportion of pupils in its schools eligible for free school meals is also higher than the national average. Although unemployment rates have fallen over the last four years to 10.4 per cent, the 1991 census figures indicated that 30 per cent of all children in the authority were living in households with no income earner. More than three-quarters of the city's schools served areas where unemployment was at least twice the national average. Using figures available in 1997 the proportion of pupils looked after by the local authority was over twice the national average. A similar ratio pertains to pupils on the child protection register.

### **THE COUNCIL AND EDUCATION SERVICES**

13. At the time of the inspection the City Council comprised 60 members: 50 Labour, 5 Independent Labour, 4 Liberal Democrat and 1 Conservative. The Education Committee was one of ten council committees and had 19 members. It had two main sub-committees: the Schools Sub-Committee and the Community Education Services Sub-Committee. Other sub-committees had oversight of governor appointments, exclusions of pupils and awards. The Education Committee and the Schools Sub-Committee each met six-weekly.

14. Education Services were, at the time of the inspection, led by the Director of Education and an Executive Management Group, consisting of the Deputy Director and two Assistant Directors. The Executive Management Group meets weekly. The work of the department is organised into three management groupings: Education Services, Quality Assurance, and Finance, Information and Client Services. Nine lead officers form the Senior Management Group which meets with the Executive Management Group six-weekly. Overall service objectives are set annually, and each of the management groupings has an annual development plan.

15. In response to the 1998 White Paper on local government the City Council is currently moving towards a system of a cabinet, area committees, and scrutiny committees and task forces composed of backbench councillors. The council's services will be managed by a corporate group comprising a Chief Executive, two Assistants, and four Group Directors. The Director of Education at the time of the inspection has now become the Group Director responsible for Learning Services: essentially the work of the previous Education Services with the addition of Libraries.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

16. Although the Council is committed to funding education at the level of the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), the LEA's expenditure on education was slightly below the SSA in 1996/7 and 1997/8 but close to the SSA in 1998/9 (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1

	SSA for Education £m	Net expenditure on Education £m	Expenditure as % of SSA
1996/97	102.7	101.7	99.1 (-1.0%)
1997/98	101.5	100.0	98.5 (-1.5%)
1998/99	110.0	110.4	100.4 (+0.4%)

Source:LEA

17. The resources available to the LEA have increasingly been supplemented by government grant for a number of specific purposes. The total revenue grant for schools-related work in the 1998/99 financial year was £1,980,713. This was 40 per cent higher than the 1997/98 figure of £1,418,629.



18. Capital allocations for expenditure on schools have also increased steadily over the last two years from £368,400 in 1996/97, to £2,514,700 in 1998/99, though the allocations have often been substantially less than the bids (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2

	Annual Capital Guideline		Supplementary credit Programmes (earmarked)		Total	
	Bid (£ 000)	Allocation (£ 000)	Bid (£ 000)	Allocation (£ 000)	Bid (£ 000)	Allocation (£ 000)
1996/97	9,425.9	119.0	250.3	249.4	9,676.2	368.4 <sup>2</sup>
1997/98	128.3	96.0	3,233.0	1,228.0	3,361.3	1,350.9
1998/99	694.5	1,842.3 <sup>3</sup>	3,098.2	672.4	3,792.7	2,514.7
1999/00	2,544.3	1,507.3 <sup>4</sup>	10,747.1	N/k	13,291.4	N/k

Source: LEA

19. In 1997/98, Hull Lea's average expenditure per pupil was similar to that in its statistical neighbours and to national levels (Appendix 1). Secondary-aged pupils are better funded than primary pupils in Hull but the difference is less than in comparable LEAs. Spending per special school pupil was considerably lower than in Hull's statistical neighbours or nationally. Capital spending in 1997/98 was considerably below that of similar authorities and the national figure.

20. In 1997/98 the LEA delegated 90.7 per cent of the potential schools' budget (PSB) to its schools. This was slightly lower than the average level of delegation for the unitary authorities (91.6 per cent), but on a par with the average for all English LEAs (90.6 per cent). In 1998/99 only 90.2 per cent was delegated, mainly because of an increase in grant-related expenditure by the LEA.

## SECTION 2: THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS

21. The following summary refers to all maintained schools in Kingston upon Hull. The data used in this section is illustrative. Further details on the performance of Kingston upon Hull schools are contained in Appendix 2.

22. ***In OFSTED inspections, attainment on entry to infant and primary schools in Kingston upon Hull was judged to be poor in more than half the schools and good in only about one in ten.***

23. ***Attainment is below or well below national averages at all Key Stages and at GCSE. The comparison with similar LEAs gives a slightly better picture in some respects but results in English are below those in similar LEAs.***

<sup>2</sup>Excluding £54,000 allocated for reorganisation of building energy management systems not bid for by the LEA

<sup>3</sup>Includes ACG formula allocation of £259,980 and £887,900 allocated by Hull City Council

<sup>4</sup>Includes ACG formula allocation of £407,900 and £23,300 for minor works at VA/VS schools. Not yet approved by Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee. Additional capital of £2.8m was generated through the PFI scheme for Victoria Dock Primary School but this outside the accounting system for Public Sector Borrowing

- In 1997 Kingston upon Hull was ranked 126th out of 132 LEAs on the performance of schools in the Key Stage 2 English tests, 121st in the mathematics tests. Performance in the science tests was relatively better.
- Performance in the 1997 Key Stage 3 tests in English and mathematics was well below the national average.
- In 1997 Kingston upon Hull was ranked 132nd out of 132 LEAs on the performance of its schools in GCSE at the 5+ A\*~C indicator and 132nd on the 1 + A~G indicator.

**24. *Levels of attainment at Key Stage 2 have risen steadily in Kingston upon Hull in recent years. However, the improvements at GCSE level have been less secure. The overall rate of improvement in attainment is better than the national rate except at the higher grades of GCSE, where it is worse.***

- The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 English tests rose between 1996-8 from 42 per cent to 53 per cent. This is greater than the increase of 7 per cent nationally.
- The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 mathematics tests rose between 1996-8 from 41 per cent to 50 per cent, whereas it rose by 5 per cent nationally.
- The percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A\*~C grades at GCSE remained static from 1996-8 at 23 per cent, whereas it rose nationally by 2 per cent.
- The percentage of pupils gaining 1 + A\*~G grades at GCSE rose between 1996-8 from 84 per cent to 87 per cent, whereas it rose nationally by 2 per cent.
- Only four secondary schools show consistent improvement between 1996-8 in the percentage of pupils gaining an A\*~C GCSE grade in all the three core subjects.

**25. *The data from OFSTED inspections confirms that attainment and progress in the core subjects and IT are generally below national norms, though standards are relatively better in some foundation subjects. The quality of education in primary schools was judged to be slightly better than that found in similar areas, but the quality of secondary schools was generally below that of similar LEAs. The quality of teaching in both primary and secondary schools was similar to the national picture and to that in similar areas. Primary schools' climate and ethos were similar to those in similar LEAs but the climate and ethos of secondary schools were worse. Management, leadership and efficiency were similar to the picture in primary schools in comparable LEAs but, again, worse in secondary schools.***

26. ***Overall, the proportion of primary schools judged to be good or very good was broadly similar to that in comparable LEAs but the proportion of good or very good secondary schools was lower than in similar areas, and much lower than the national figure. One-third of primary schools, and almost two-thirds of secondaries required some improvement.***

- Since 1993 nine schools have been judged by HMCI to require special measures: five secondary schools, three primary schools and one special school; five of these have since improved to the extent that special measures are no longer required. Five primary schools and one secondary school have been found by OFSTED inspectors or HMI since September 1997 to have serious weaknesses.

27. ***Attendance in primary schools is consistently in line with the figures for similar LEAs. Attendance in secondary schools is consistently well below similar LEAs; authorised absence and unauthorised absence are both high. The number of pupils permanently excluded from primary schools was in line with (1997) or better than (1996) the figure for similar LEAs. There were fewer permanent exclusions from secondary schools than in similar LEAs in both years.***

## **SECTION 3: LEA STRATEGY**

### **ROLE AND PRIORITIES**

28. *The LEA has a very clear vision of its role, which is well understood in schools. It has a well-articulated school improvement strategy which is based on a clear awareness of schools' weaknesses. Its Education Development Plan is good. The LEA provides a good range of challenges, especially through the work of the link advisers, and special action taken regarding weak schools. However, although it provides a useful range of appropriate INSET, its ability to give schools the support they need is sometimes lacking. It does not have an effective strategy for reducing pupil turnover through corporate working or for minimising its effects on schools.*

29. The City Council established four overall corporate priorities in 1996. The first of these was education: "to ensure that strategies and as wide a range of Council resources as possible are focused on enabling the residents of Kingston upon Hull to achieve the highest standards of education and life skills".

30. The LEA's school improvement strategy originated in early discussions between the Director of Education and the Education Committee in 1996 and is enshrined in the 1997 booklet "Raising Achievement". Even at this early stage in its life the LEA had established as key principles:

- the need to establish an achievement culture in the city and its schools;
- the need to challenge schools, whilst giving them appropriate levels of support;
- the need to promote lifelong learning;
- the need to promote equality of opportunity.

Above all, the LEA is committed to challenging the low educational aspirations felt to be a characteristic of the city.

31. The LEA's school improvement strategy was originally based on:
- prioritisation of resources towards seriously weak schools and those in special measures;
  - a programme of School Reviews by advisers, with themes decided by the LEA management; every school was to be inspected by the LEA on a three-year cycle;
  - regular visits to schools by the Director and other senior managers, and by elected members, to maximise consultation and communication;
  - the securing of external grant funding where possible, where the aims of the funding source were consistent with the LEA's own objectives.

32. In general terms these principles still underlie the LEA strategy, although emphases have shifted as the LEA has matured: the programme of advisory review visits is now being modified, with officers currently considering that it is no longer necessary for the LEA to inspect each school every three years; visits to schools by senior managers and members are no longer so common as the LEA has got to know its schools. Most importantly, however, there is still a heavy concentration of resources on the weaker schools, and the Education Development Plan (EDP) shows that this policy is to be further reinforced next year.

33. The 1999 EDP continues the present initiatives and adds other dimensions. It draws on the LEA's own well founded analysis of strengths and weaknesses and sets nine priorities:

- literacy at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2;
- numeracy at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2;
- transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3;
- raising achievement at Key Stage 4;
- improving schools with specific reference to those with weaknesses;
- improving pupil behaviour;
- promoting good attendance;
- promoting school improvement through self-review and evaluation;
- development and improvement of information and communication technology (ICT).

The action plans designed to implement these priorities are well conceived and likely to bear fruit.

34. The central principles of the LEA's strategy, as expressed in its recent work and in its EDP, are entirely appropriate to the circumstances of Kingston upon Hull. They have been stated vigorously by the Director of Education and other officers throughout the last three years, particularly the commitment to challenge schools and to establish an achievement culture. Nobody in the city's schools is in any doubt about the LEA's determination to raise standards.

35. Overall, schools support the LEA's intention to address the big issues first. The EDP priorities are well known and are supported in the schools, and schools' own priorities line up well with the LEA's. The LEA has won considerable support from governors, headteachers and teachers for the forthrightness of its stance. While

every one of its policies does not necessarily meet with universal acceptance, the overall clarity and focus of its approach have caused schools to lend the LEA moral support, and practical adherence to its school improvement strategy even when this has sometimes drawn resources away from other areas.

36. The LEA has, rightly, deployed considerable resources as an urgent priority to improve weak schools. This resourcing has been well directed and well used. The costs of this work are a major constraint on the LEA's ability to fulfil other, less crucial aspects of its role. While the LEA has been successful in driving improvement in its weak or moderately performing schools it has been less successful in challenging or supporting developments in all of the higher performing schools. It is currently not giving new headteachers enough support, nor is it always monitoring their performance thoroughly enough. There is a risk that the family group system, essentially an excellent scheme which has led to benefits for some schools, may provide little value for those primary schools which perform relatively well by comparison with their group.

37. The LEA is well aware of the very high turnover of pupils from school to school within the city, and gives extra funding to schools with the highest turnover through the funding formula. However, it does not have a coherent strategy for reducing this turnover, which appears to be partly an expression of demographic change as parents seek different accommodation, and, according to some headteachers, partly an attempt by parents whose children have had difficulties at one school to give them a fresh start at another. The LEA has been slow to introduce a common record system, but this is now in hand, as is the development of a computerised tracking system which will enable the authority and the schools to monitor and evaluate all pupils' progress more reliably.

38. The LEA has in broad terms achieved the right balance of challenge and support. Officers now need to give greater attention to validating schools' successes, and to helping schools to find external help from elsewhere.

## **CONSULTATION**

39. *In a short space of time, LEA officers have generally established a reputation for being open, accessible and responsive. The LEA consulted widely over its EDP which has helped to secure a shared commitment to raising expectations about what schools and pupils can achieve. However, there is scope for improving the consultation machinery in order to reinforce the growing sense of partnership between LEA and schools.*

40. There is an extensive range of forums for consultation which involves governors, headteachers, teacher associations, trade unions and representatives from the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses. In broad terms the various groups appreciate the opportunities to advise the LEA on the appropriateness of its policies and to inform it of their particular needs. There is, however, some feeling that the LEA sometimes brings issues to consultation rather late in the day, though in fact the timing of initiatives is sometimes determined by external factors. Officers

are found to be open and accessible

41. The authority sets considerable store by its system of consulting all schools through cross-phase meetings of headteachers in three regional clusters. However, headteachers find these meetings to be dominated by the provision of information rather than by discussion, and the opportunity for the exchange of views therefore appears to underdeveloped. The cluster meetings are also rather large, a factor which is said by some headteachers to reduce their potential.

42. By contrast, the recent consultation by the LEA on specific major issues, such as the new funding regime (Fair Funding), the Infant Class Size Plan, the Behaviour Support Plan or the draft EDP, has been appreciated by headteachers and governors for its thoroughness. Nevertheless, although there is evidence that the LEA did alter some of its plans after discussion, some schools were uncertain of the extent to which the LEA had in fact responded to the views expressed, and would have valued post-consultation feedback.

43. The recent decision by the LEA management to meet regularly with the secondary headteachers' group is a step forward, as its previous reluctance to do so was a source of frustration. This is a welcome signal of officers' desire to reach outwards to all partners. It will be important for the LEA to be represented at a senior level at these meetings.

## **BUDGET PLANNING AND EXPENDITURE**

44. *Although it inherited some sources of high expenditure from Humberside, the LEA has carefully planned and monitored its spending and has taken appropriate steps to deal with excessive spending in areas such as premature retirement and sickness absence. Protection of schools' budgets has been a priority. However, the LEA should explore ways of issuing budget information to schools earlier than at present and should continue the practice of sending out indicative budgets before Christmas. The department should take advantage of the Best Value reviews to examine its Service Level Agreements with other City Council departments, especially Finance, Personnel and IT, to ensure it is obtaining good value for money.*

45. Since incorporation, resources have been tight in this small LEA with a high level of educational needs. Initial problems with the disaggregation of the previous LEA's budget meant that budget planning was difficult until 1997/98. The LEA also inherited a backlog of buildings maintenance, a large number of surplus places and high premature retirement costs. However, school spending was protected when cuts were imposed on Council services in 1997/98.

46. The LMS formula has been thoroughly revised by a working group under the Fair Funding arrangements. The changes maintain most of the previous factors but rightly base-funding allocations on more objectively based costs and direct measures of need. In line with LEA policy, the new factors are designed to be clear, to encourage schools to raise standards and not to reward failure.

47. The LEA is successful in its goal of informing schools of their delegated budgets by mid-March and provides clear and detailed supporting information, including a useful breakdown of special needs funding. However, this is too late for adequate planning in schools.

48. The LEA is currently developing a computerised Management Information System which is intended to link into school IT systems for the transfer of financial and pupil data. This should greatly improve the financial systems of both schools and the LEA.

49. The LEA has provided effective support to schools with significant deficits and has halved the number of these schools between 1996/7 and 1997/8 through the annual visits of the finance officer to help schools with their three-year planning. Although the number of schools in surplus has increased, the overall balances are not excessive. The LEA has wisely developed matched funding schemes to encourage schools to spend their surplus balances.

50. Appendix ig shows the findings of the Audit Commission cost survey. This demonstrates that the cost of the LEA's strategic management was high in 1998/9. This is partly due to the small size of the Authority and partly to high spending on contingencies and inherited high spending on premature retirement, together with recharges from other Council departments which comprised 31 per cent of strategic management costs. These recharges were not based on clearly articulated service agreements. In fact, CIPFA statistics for 1997/98 suggest that the cost of educational management and administration in the city are actually lower than in comparable LEAs.

51. Early comparisons of the 1999/2000 EDP resourcing with the draft budget in Fair Funding categories suggests that further review may be necessary to ensure a consistent approach to expenditure.

## **SCHOOL PLACES AND ADMISSIONS**

52. *The LEA has only recently taken action to reduce the large number of surplus places in primary and secondary schools. However the Education Committee decided not to approve the closure of primary schools in January 1999 and this means that there may be a need for further re-organisation if rolls continue to drop as forecast. The authority must continue to monitor carefully the surplus places in its schools and take prompt and decisive action where necessary.*

53. In comparison to national averages, the LEA had a high proportion of surplus places in 1998, particularly in primary schools (see Appendix le). Forty-seven percent of primary schools and 56% of secondary schools had more than 10% surplus places and these surpluses are projected to increase. The high number of schools with surplus places is an unnecessary drain on resources and also facilitates the high level of mobility of pupils between schools in the authority. Although the LEA was aware of the surplus from its inception as a unitary authority it did not take action to reduce the number of places until the publication of a District Audit report

in January 1998. The report also noted a steady increase in appeals for secondary school admissions, concentrated at particular schools.

54. The LEA has now consulted on a phased school re-organisation plan targeting the areas where schools had less than 75 per cent occupancy, whilst also taking account of the need to reduce infant class sizes. The aim is to remove 2,400 primary places by the year 2000. In January 1999 the Education Committee decided to approve options which led to a reduction of about 1,200 primary school places by reducing capacity instead of closing schools, although a month later it did approve the closure of one primary school. Proposals are also under consideration to reduce the capacity of some undersubscribed secondary schools by re-arrangement of accommodation. However, without further school closures these are unlikely to meet the District Audit recommendation to remove 2,750 primary and 1,500 secondary places. The LEA has responded to most of the other issues identified in the audit report by improving liaison with the East Riding of Yorkshire LEA over admissions and improving the pupil-forecasting system. The LEA has made good progress on setting up a School Organisation Committee.

#### **LIAISON WITH OTHER SERVICES AND AGENCIES**

55. *The LEA has established links with a range of partners but now needs to commit more resourcing to this work.*

56. Education Services takes seriously the need to liaise with Social Services, and a good working partnership is now developing. The two departments have developed systems to ensure that there is appropriate co-ordination between them. This inspection suggested that the quality of arrangements for children looked after by the authority has sometimes been variable, but there are indications that it is now improving. The LEA is a major partner in the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, which is usefully targeting local developments. A wide range of training opportunities in early years work is offered, with an emphasis on cross-agency working. There is scope for further liaison with Community Services regarding pupil turnover, in particular, the need to discuss the effect of housing policies on school admissions.

57. In its short existence the LEA has focused on developing its own policies for service provision and school improvement. It has also played a major role in initiating the Education Action Zone, and in working with certain business partners. However, it has devoted less time than it might otherwise have done to liaison with some external agencies with a stake in education and training, or health promotion. It has co-operated with the Training and Education Council and with City Learning to introduce potentially valuable developments associated with local regeneration, but has not consistently made major commitments of time and expertise. Now that the LEA is maturing it needs to strengthen its commitment to such partnerships in the interests of achieving the change in local culture to which it and they aspire, a change which can only be achieved through reaching out to the wider community, and particularly to parents.



## **STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

58. *The LEA fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities well.*

59. The LEA has, from the moment of its establishment, taken its statutory responsibilities very seriously. Senior officers have kept up to date with changing legislative requirements. The authority is taking reasonable steps to meet most of its responsibilities. However, its reactive approach to premises maintenance means there is now a major backlog of work to be undertaken. The authority has also been slow to deal with its large number of surplus places. Health and welfare matters are normally addressed well but there is a need to ensure that travel arrangements for pupils with physical disabilities respect statutory safeguards. The LEA's track record in making timely assessment of pupils' special educational needs has been poor but is now improving. The monitoring of the progress of children looked after by the local authority has had weaknesses but is also now improving.

## **EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS**

60. *The LEA has good systems for evaluating its work and takes proper account of the evidence of its analysis.*

61. The LEA gives serious attention to monitoring its own performance and has made an early start on a series of cross-service Best Value reviews. Many services are provided to schools under Service Level Agreements which incorporate performance indicators and surveys of user views. Cluster meetings are used to consult with headteachers on new initiatives and services. A good array of financial and performance-related benchmarking information is provided to schools, comparing their spending and pupils' achievement with that of similar schools. These are well used by schools. Education Services also uses the Audit Commission performance indicators and specially collected information on particular services to compare themselves to other LEAs with regard to cost effectiveness. Each of the management groups within the LEA has its own annual development plan. These set realistic and detailed targets with appropriate success criteria. The LEA is responsive to changing needs and circumstances, as is demonstrated by its current consideration of changes to the School Review programme and of local provision of in-service training.

## **SECTION 4: THE MANAGEMENT OF SERVICES**

### **ADVISORY AND CURRICULUM SUPPORT SERVICES**

62. *The LEA provides high quality advisory support to schools. The link adviser system generally works very well. The LEA now needs to cease its previous commitment to inspecting schools regularly and give greater attention to using other means of identifying weaknesses before they become serious. The service needs to challenge successful schools to improve further.*

63. The Quality Assurance Group (QAG) comprises 18 advisers or consultants,

13.4 curriculum support teachers and school improvement teachers, and 9 administrative staff. There have been some changes of personnel during the short existence of the service and there are currently two vacancies including the English adviser post.

64. The major commitments of QAG are: the work of school link advisers; the triennial review of each school, broadly following a model of inspection similar to that of OFSTED inspections; the support of schools requiring special measures or those with serious weaknesses; the professional development of teachers; and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and basic skills initiatives. Additionally, there are commitments to particular school improvement projects, such as assessment work and the provision of performance data, and to governor training. Every school receives at least a termly visit by its link adviser, usually including classroom observation and focusing on development planning, literacy initiatives or another fundamental issue. The success of the work of link advisers is described elsewhere in this report. In addition, specific initiatives include:

- a Basic Skills initiative; the LEA is accredited as a Quality Mark assessor;
- four school improvement teachers work in secondary schools in special measures supporting weak departments;
- a school improvement team of four seconded headteachers and a statistician advise primary schools on target setting; the schools are organised into “family groups” of similar schools to promote discussion about benchmarked standards;
- the LEA has developed accreditation schemes for schools which show good practice in behaviour support, or in assessment.

65. This is a well managed service. Its aims are very clear and are, almost without exception, appropriate to the needs of the schools. The service sets targets for every aspect of its work in its annual development plan and maintains good quality assurance measures. Every visit to a school is recorded on a proforma which is copied to the school, and issues causing concern are drawn to the attention of the LEA management. These proformas are monitored by senior QAG staff regularly as an internal quality measure. Those scrutinised during this inspection were clear and informative, businesslike and appropriately evaluative. QAG surveys schools’ responses to its provision, and the results are very favourable: 98 per cent describe it as satisfactory or better. Ninety-five per cent of schools subscribe to the QAG’s service level agreement for in-service training and consultancy, in addition to receiving regular monitoring or intervention by the service.

66. The service has developed a system of evaluating the overall quality of each school every half-term, through a desk exercise using appropriate performance indicators and inspection evidence, and this has enabled it to identify those causing concern. A further development of the system is now being discussed with schools and will be a useful stimulus to self-review. The kernel of the work of QAG, however, is the termly visit to each school by its link adviser, covering analysis of results and progress on the action plan, and discussion of development planning and target setting. Additionally, these visits cover a range of specific matters of interest to the LEA, such as Key Stages 2/3 transition or basic skills. In the main these visits represent good value for money and are the means by which the LEA gains its good

knowledge of the schools. Almost all schools visited during this inspection feel they have gained greatly from the link adviser's expertise and advice, and there is evidence that these advisers have provided challenge on many issues. The link adviser role has clearly become a considerable strength of the LEA. Nevertheless link advisers are hard pressed to achieve all they are expected to. In one case, for example, a significant weakness was still apparent at the time of the school's second OFSTED inspection despite the regular visits of the link adviser.

67. QAG is hard pressed to meet all its commitments and its work with weak schools has been a heavy drain on its resources. It has therefore not given as much attention to challenging the more successful schools as it might, and now needs to develop a role in offering suitable support so that such schools achieve excellence in national, not just local, terms.

68. QAG also has a programme for inspecting each school every three years leading to production of a Review report. The Reviews are rated highly by schools, but no longer represent good value for money. Attention is given to these issues elsewhere in this report (para 102).

69. The LEA is strongly committed to fostering schools' self-confidence and reducing any residual dependency. QAG's strategy of accrediting individual schools' developments in certain areas, ~ as assessment or behaviour management, is working well and should be extended into more areas. It gives schools confidence in what they are doing, and provides the LEA with a valuable role as a validator of good practice.

70. QAG does not have the resources to provide a full system of support for every curriculum subject, and it is hard pressed even to maintain its current programme of work for link advisers and major initiatives such as the literacy strategy. Headteachers speak highly of advisers' ability to arrange specialist support when they request it, despite the pressures on the service. However, this is not sufficiently extensive and schools do not have enough advice on the effectiveness of other providers. The LEA now needs to extend its brokerage role, identifying schools' detailed needs, sometimes before they have done so themselves, and suggesting how these might be met by engaging support from other external agencies. It will be important that QAG helps schools to identify their needs early, particularly in the secondary phase: the tendency has been for QAG to focus on the outstanding problems, with which it usually deals well, and to trust schools themselves to raise the lesser issues. The LEA's EDP priority on school self review is likely to be beneficial.

## **OTHER SERVICES TO PROMOTE ACCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

71. *The LEA firmly believes that support services for special educational needs should permeate many aspects of its work. Consequently the various aspects of provision are integrated into a number of the department's services, mainly in the group of services managed by the deputy director. The services provide good support for schools and pupils. The LEA's policies are clear and appropriate and its*

*practices are developing quickly to create a unified service which supports schools in the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. Fewer pupils are being statemented, and the process of statementing is being accelerated. However, greater attention needs to be paid to ensuring that special schools and units are fully involved in consultation and development alongside their mainstream counterparts.*

### **Education Welfare Service**

72. The pattern of deployment of education welfare officers (EWOs) to all secondary and their associated primary schools on the basis of their attendance levels is appropriate. However, the EWOs are unable to undertake all the work that schools would like them to do and need to support schools more in their own development of strategies (see paras 144-148). The main targets set for the service are to raise the levels of attendance, monitor the keeping of registers and attendance figures, provide support at Key Stages 2/3 transition for targeted pupils, and assist schools in the construction of attendance and punctuality policies. At present 10 per cent of the time of the service is given to prosecution of parents who appear to condone the non-attendance of their children.

### **Special Educational Needs Support Service**

73. The Special Educational Needs Support Service (SENSS) aims to raise the quality of teaching and rate of progress made by pupils with special educational needs by providing advice and guidance on appropriate provision, assisting schools in identifying pupils' precise special educational needs, and working with individual pupils to meet these. The service also co-ordinates continuity of education for pupils educated otherwise than at school and provides advice on statutory assessment. Peripatetic services are organised on a cluster basis and offer support to pupils in mainstream schools who are at Stage 3 of the assessment procedure. The LEA is aiming to move the service away from the concentration on teaching pupils who need additional help to working with teachers to help them develop their skills, but senior staff in two schools were unaware of the plans to change the service.

74. All the functions of the Special Educational Needs (Assessment) Service relate to the LEA's performance of its statutory duties including: assessment at Stage 4 of the Code of Practice, statementing, annual reviews and placements of pupils. The overall proportion of pupils with statements in 1996/7 was 2.9 per cent which was already below the national average of 3.2 per cent. The number of pupils with statements has fallen from 1,241 in 1996 to 1,172 in 1998. The aims are to reduce the time taken to statement pupils and the service has improved its performance in this respect considerably. In 1996/7, fewer than 13 per cent of statements were issued within the recommended eighteen-week period, which was well below the average of unitary authorities. During 1997/8 52 per cent of statements were completed within the same timescale.

75. Schools understand and support the LEA policies on inclusion.. The recent closure of a special school resulted in pupils being transferred. This was felt by the headteacher of the main school involved to have been managed effectively by the

LEA: the school received appropriate guidance and the displaced pupils were absorbed well. The LEA is phasing out Band 5 statements for pupils with the least severe learning difficulties, and instead is devolving earmarked funding for such pupils to schools. This policy is generally understood well but two schools needed more guidance from the LEA about the best use of such funding and some headteachers felt that the Band 5 funding did not always sufficiently meet the costs of meeting pupils' needs.

76. The survey indicates that schools are satisfied with the LEA's arrangements for the assessment of pupils with special educational needs and the provision and review of statements. Senior managers in schools acknowledge the considerable improvements being made to reduce the time taken to assess and issue statements for pupils. However, two schools judged that the SENSS provision in the past had been variable in quality and felt that pupils had suffered because of discontinuity of staff. One of these felt that the SENSS service has now improved and become much more efficient and accountable. Statements scrutinised during this inspection are appropriately detailed, set clear objectives and provide useful guidance for staff who work with pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinators are knowledgeable and benefit from good quality LEA training and professional development opportunities.

77. Evidence from the two special schools and the unit for hearing impaired pupils indicates that their staff are kept fully informed of policy and processes.

### **Educational Psychology Service**

78. The educational psychology service is allocated to schools on the basis of perceived need as determined by the level of compensatory funding which each school receives. It responds to requests from schools to assess pupils, provides advice on the education of pupils with special educational needs and carries out staff training. The service works closely with advisers, other support services and agencies.

### **Hearing Impaired Service**

79. The service oversees the work of the area peripatetic teachers and the units and aims to provide teaching support for, and advice to, schools. Of the mainstream schools visited, three had sought and received help from the service which had better enabled them to meet pupils' needs. The hearing impaired unit which was visited works closely with the school to which it is attached and provides appropriate support for pupils. Schools with units would benefit from the development of a management model that would better enable the process of inclusion.

### **Behaviour Support**

80. The work of the behaviour support services is addressed in paragraphs 149-151.

## **Bilingual Support Service**

81. This service is provided in conjunction with a neighbouring LEA, with Kingston upon Hull taking the lead role. The service assesses the needs of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), gives direct support to those at the early stages of language acquisition, and provides consultancy support for mainstream staff where pupils' needs are less acute. Pupils' progress in English is monitored, and the service has set itself demanding targets. The LEA has recently begun work on monitoring EAL pupils' progress in the National Curriculum.

## **MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

82. *In general, schools place a high level of confidence in most of the LEA'S management services and intend to continue to buy into the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) offered for 1999/00. Strategic planning is generally very good but the quality of service to schools is sometimes compromised by over-stretched or poorly-trained staff. The finance service represents particularly good value for money. However, the repairs and maintenance service provided through the local authority's direct services is not efficient and schools are likely to monitor its quality and value for money closely in future. The LEA should carefully consider whether it has the resources to continue to offer a full range of management services in future.*

83. The LEA currently offers schools SLAs for financial advice, IT support, and repairs and maintenance. Take-up of the SLAs is high. Grounds maintenance, cleaning and school meals are provided on a contract basis through Kingston upon Hull City Services. At present schools do not receive enough advice from the LEA on the availability of services from alternative providers.

## **Financial services**

84. The net cost per pupil of financial support services was below the median for all LEAs surveyed. The finance officer and his deputy work closely with schools and give sound advice. All the schools visited judged the service to give very good value for money and to be responsive to their needs.

85. Schools receive clearly presented information on their budgets in mid-March but this arrives too late for planning purposes. Headteachers found useful the indicative information provided, for the first time, in November 1998, and the LEA should continue this practice. The LEA provides a good range of financial benchmarking information for schools. This is well used by headteachers and governors to compare themselves with other schools and to improve their budgeting.

## **Personnel services**

86. The net cost per pupil of personnel services in 1998/99 was close to the median for all LEAs surveyed. Good systems and procedures have been developed, including a sickness monitoring system which the DfEE has cited as a model of good practice. The service rightly aims to encourage schools to manage their staff well,

including taking prompt action to tackle sickness absence and capability issues. Premature retirement and competence proceedings have been judiciously used to improve school management and spending is now carefully controlled.

87. Personnel support and advice were judged to be good in 6 out of 9 schools visited, and generally satisfactory in three. Most headteachers thought the systems and procedures put in place by the LEA were very effective. However, views in the school survey were quite polarised about the quality of support and advice, suggesting undue variations in the quality of work of individual officers. The team should continue the good practice evident in their revised systems and procedures, but should review the training of more junior staff.

### **Information Technology**

88. Even after an increase in 1998, expenditure on information technology (IT) support for school administration was only £1.00 per pupil compared to a median of £9.30 in all LEAs surveyed. The education IT service has a very clear and comprehensive ICT strategy covering 1998-2000. However, the under-resourcing of the service makes it particularly vulnerable to the staff turnover which has adversely affected its service to schools.

89. Six out of nine schools visited felt that support for administrative IT was generally satisfactory, and training for school staff was reported to be good. However, schools complained of an uneven service, changes in personnel, and long waits for on-site visits. The helpline was found to be effective but understaffed, making it difficult to obtain support on occasions. Schools agreed that the service was very over-stretched and that staff were always hard pressed.

### **Property services**

90. There is a substantial backlog of maintenance in the city's schools which is a result of under investment by the previous authority and of severely limited resources since 1996. In several schools visited the lack of maintenance of the exterior of buildings had a detrimental effect on schools' efficiency and effectiveness. The restricted capital resources available for major maintenance projects had often led the LEA to take short term measures, such as patching a leaking roof, leading to a recurrence of problems. Most maintenance under the LEA's landlord responsibility is reactive. Schools, particularly in the secondary sector, were concerned that under Fair Funding they would, with insufficient funding, be taking on additional responsibility for buildings which were already in a parlous state. Schools also have to deal with high levels of vandalism and burglary, a further drain on their repairs budget but the recent installation of Standards Funded security fences was reported by several schools visited to have had a significant impact on reducing levels of such damage.

91. The LEA commissioned condition surveys of all schools in 1998, revealing a repairs backlog of £35 million. Each school now has a copy of its own condition survey which identifies repairs and the priorities, and the LEA has set up a property

database in order to update the information as the basis for its Asset Management Plan.

92. Owing to the limited capital funding available within the LEA budget, the LEA has focused on raising funding externally. However, until 1998/99 the LEA was unsuccessful in bidding for substantial capital allocations partly owing to the high level of surplus places. In 1998/9, however, the LEA was able to spend £63.74 of revenue per pupil on building maintenance compared to a median of £47.97 for the other LEAs surveyed. The availability of up-to-date condition information and a decision to link New Deal for Schools to the LEA's strategy for raising standards should result in more successful capital bids in future which will be vital in beginning to address the outstanding repair and maintenance needs. The LEA is also actively developing further Public Private Partnership initiatives having already obtained PFI funding to build one new primary school in an area of major housing development.

93. The LEA is retaining responsibility under Fair Funding for those structural elements of its school buildings falling into the CIPFA definition of "capital items". It should ensure that it provides sufficient recurrent funding to prevent further deterioration of those building elements for which it remains responsible.

94. The repairs and maintenance service was the lowest rated of all the LEA services and, together with grounds maintenance, the service which schools are most likely to consider buying from outside. Most schools visited felt the DSO offered poor value for money. Three schools found that when work had been contracted out by the authority, contractors had charged the local authority more than individual schools for similar work. Schools reported variable service from their cluster surveyor who was often difficult to contact, and poor co-ordination and supervision of repair work, especially when several contractors were involved. However, all the schools agreed that the service's response to emergencies was excellent and many bought into the SLA for that reason.

95. Despite their reservations about its quality, the schools visited were all intending to buy into the repairs and maintenance SLA next year but will monitor the service closely. Further improvements in the management of surveyors' work and in the management of maintenance contracts will be necessary in order to convince schools of the value of continuing to buy into the service.

## **SECTION 5: SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN STANDARDS, QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS**

### **IMPROVEMENT IN THE SCHOOLS VISITED**

96. Visits made during this inspection to two special schools and one unit showed that the overall strengths in their provision were being maintained securely, and that there had been improvements in certain aspects such as literacy development. The secondary schools visited all showed signs of improvement in several aspects but there was a general need to speed up the improvements. The primary schools visited were almost all improving across a broader range of fronts, and presented an



overall picture of coherent movement forward. One primary school had made very considerable progress indeed from a previously very weak position. The most progress tended to be being made by well led schools.

97. The weaker schools in the sample were all making some progress, though in the case of one secondary it was slow. There was some evidence that the higher performing schools were not improving as much as they might, and would have benefited from further challenge or leadership by the LEA.

98. In general the LEA is giving schools an amount of support which is proportionate to their need, although one already successful school needed a greater degree of attention in order to identify its needs more precisely. This inspection revealed very few instances of the LEA providing support where it was not needed. The overall impact of the improvement work of the LEA has been effective in nearly every school visited, and in four schools it has been very effective.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION PLANNING**

99. *The link adviser system gives useful support for development planning and action planning, and advisers' monitoring of progress is helpful to schools though not always comprehensive. The programme of School Reviews does not represent the best use of funds.*

100. The school survey indicated that: schools were clear about the LEA's approach to school improvement; they felt the LEA had a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the schools and satisfactorily monitored their work; it provided valuable information and guidance before OFSTED inspection and at least satisfactory support for school self-evaluation and development/action planning. The quality of improvement planning was good in five schools visited during this inspection. It was generally satisfactory in 10 schools. However, one school had produced an over-complex action plan after its OFSTED inspection, despite the involvement of the link adviser, and another had a long term development plan which did not give it a clear strategic direction. The LEA's support for planning had been effective in the other schools visited.

101. The link advisers' routine visits to all schools include monitoring of progress on the school's post-OFSTED action plan. This work is generally carried out effectively, but there are some instances where a weakness has been allowed to continue despite this support. The main value of the link advisers' work is in their guidance on the analysis and interpretation of data. In certain cases helpful feedback from a limited amount of classroom observation has helped headteachers identify areas for school self-improvement. In some cases the schools' capacity to conduct self-review has been boosted significantly by the influence of their link adviser.

102. The LEA attached considerable importance from its earliest days to inspecting all schools three-yearly, partly in order to establish a database for its own purposes, having been shaken by the number of schools being identified by OFSTED as requiring special measures. The School Reviews are carried out by small teams of advisers. They focus on attainment,

teaching and learning, and result in informative reports which are intended to provide the schools with priorities for development and also to provide evidence for the LEA on its overall progress in school improvement. Thirteen schools visited had experienced a Review: five had found the experience very useful and six had found it useful; only two felt that the experience had not helped in the school's development. However, across the LEA, 70 per cent of the Reviews had occurred in the six months prior to the school's OFSTED inspection, which has been a poor use of funds as it has led to duplication of OFSTED's work. The LEA now intends to modify the process: it proposes that Reviews will take place only of the weaker schools, and will be designed to promote their self-review. These Reviews would be detached from the OFSTED cycle. Only if these conditions are applied very rigorously indeed could the programme represent value for money. The concept of regular inspections by the LEA should be abandoned.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF PERFORMANCE DATA AND TARGET SETTING**

*103. The LEA provides schools with a range of relevant data on pupils' attainment and helpful guidance on target setting, and this has enabled schools to evaluate their own performance and, in the main, to set appropriate targets. The usefulness of the LEA's provision is limited by the current lack of a computerised pupil-level database.*

104. The LEA aims to meet the national literacy and numeracy targets for primary age pupils in 2002, aiming for about a 25-point rise over four years. This is a very ambitious aspiration indeed. The process for school target setting is well conceived and has generally worked effectively. All schools have now set their own targets, sometimes after discussions in which their first suggestions were questioned by the LEA. The LEA has approved all school's targets although, not surprisingly, there is currently a small shortfall between the aggregation of the schools' literacy targets and the LEA's overall target for 2002. The secondaries tend to be moving forward more slowly than the primaries - or in some cases not improving at all - and the LEA is less ambitious for GCSE, choosing instead a target approximate to current achievement by its statistical neighbours. This target still represents a significant improvement on present standards. The LEA rightly expects schools within the Education Action Zone or with additional funding through the Single Regeneration Budget to make faster progress than others.

105. The use of performance data was examined in 13 schools. There were signs of improvement in the use of data in half of the primary or special schools and in all of the secondary schools. Overall, schools are now making at least satisfactory use of what data is available; one secondary and one special school make very good use of it. Primary schools are increasingly using their analyses of pupils' attainment to plan curricular improvements or to focus extra support on particular individuals. Several primaries visited, however, have set overall targets which they may possibly find beyond their reach. Secondary schools are generally confident in tracking pupils' progress across the key stages and in identifying those who need additional support. They base their target setting usefully on a broad range of data.

106 The LEA provides each primary school with an analysis of the performance of

each cohort, after the reception year and at the end of each key stage, measured against national figures and those for the city. It has promoted the use of an assessment scheme which will eventually track pupils' progress from reception to Year 4. In addition, primary schools are given an analysis of their performance compared with their own family group of like schools. Link advisers discuss each cohort's performance with headteachers and use it beneficially as a basis for discussing the school's draft targets. Overall, the LEA is providing useful data and guiding schools effectively in its usage; the data is well understood in schools. The family group system, whereby similar schools are linked for discussion and analysis, has excellent potential and several schools visited have already benefited. However, it is not yet sufficiently long established for trends in school performance to be clear and for the data to become a reliable measure of quality. There is a danger that, being based on contextual similarity, the family group system might suggest an artificial ceiling for some relatively high performing schools.

107. The LEA funds secondary schools' use of standardised testing for the purpose of judging pupils' potential. This is well used in the schools visited and gives staff useful benchmarks for evaluating departmental performance. The LEA also supplies the schools with a detailed analysis of their performance in each subject, and trends over several years, judged against local and national figures. Potentially useful though this is, it arrives rather too late to be of full value to senior managers. The authority also supplies schools with a range of possible GCSE targets, based on historical performance in the LEA at Key Stage 3, and encourages each school to set targets which represent a significant degree of challenge. This has been introduced with considerable effect and has led to the schools basing their target setting on good data. The negotiation of targets between schools and their advisers appears to be conducted productively, though higher performing schools would benefit from the use of comparisons with schools beyond the city.

108. Currently lacking a computerised pupil-level database, the LEA is not yet able to track the progress made by all individual pupils, so there is a risk that the current analyses do not take proper account of the prior attainment of each cohort. This is a particularly unfortunate problem because of the high pupil turnover across the city. However, plans are in hand to establish an improved database in the immediate future. Similarly, the LEA is currently working towards instituting a common pupil record system, a much needed step to improving the quality of transition between schools.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN MANAGEMENT**

109. *The LEA provides a generally satisfactory programme of support for senior managers with whom it consults well. It takes account of managers' expressed needs when drawing up its training and development programme. Support for newly appointed headteachers, however, is weak.*

110. Data from OFSTED inspections indicate that the overall quality of management and leadership in primary schools has been similar to that in other LEAs but in secondary schools it has been poorer. Notably, 12 of the 16 secondary and a

significant number of primary schools have appointed new headteachers during the last two years.

111. LEA support for management was a theme in all 15 schools visited during this inspection. In six of these, all primary schools, improvements had occurred in management since their OFSTED inspections. In the remainder the quality of management had remained static, albeit it was good in several cases. The amount of support given to school managers by the LEA was reasonable in all but one of the schools, but it was not universally effective in raising the quality of management.

112. The LEA intends that the regular work of link advisers will give support to senior managers. It also makes wide-ranging INSET provision which includes courses on: preparation for deputy headship, the role of the development co-ordinator, monitoring quality in the classroom, developing the role of the senior manager and managing the improvement of teacher performance. Additionally, it supports cluster and primary school family group meetings.

113. The link advisers' visits challenge, yet support headteachers (see paragraph 106): schools have a high regard for their assiduity and expertise. The LEA also gives useful specific support to senior managers when particular issues arise: when the closure of a special school was planned the LEA provided helpful guidance to the management of the school which was to receive displaced pupils. Experienced headteachers are used well: they are involved in joint working parties, and in professional development through the primary family groups of schools. The in-service training which middle and senior managers in all phases had attended has been useful. The LEA, rightly, has played a major role in advising and guiding governing bodies on the recruitment and selection of headteachers in order to enable them to make the best appointments. The school survey revealed that support for senior management was judged to be at least satisfactory. An LEA survey revealed that 84 per cent of schools rated the impact of the QAG on management as at least satisfactory; 54 per cent rated it good or better.

114. In three schools there was evidence that the LEA's support had not been as effective as it might have been because it was insufficiently focused on the needs of new headteachers. Additionally, three of the primary headteachers indicated that they found using HEADLAMP funding difficult because the LEA was not a HEADLAMP provider, which resulted in them seeking support from elsewhere, although little had yet been obtained.

## **SUPPORT FOR GOVERNING BODIES**

*115. The LEA 's support for governors is very professional, is of high quality, and is highly regarded in the schools. It is very effective in keeping governors confident and well informed, and providing them with guidance about their role. The LEA successfully provides both immediate services for governors and long term developmental support. Its menu of training opportunities is very appropriate and is well received, generally being responsive to governors' needs. Whilst giving appropriate support to governing bodies, the LEA has not shrunk from withdrawing their powers when it considers this necessary.*

116. The LEA supports governors by providing a clerking service, a range of training opportunities, a newsletter, a Governors' Forum, and access to a resource library. These services are used very extensively by schools: 99 per cent of governing bodies use an LEA clerk, and 75 per cent of governors received some LEA-organised training last year. Overall, nearly 300 training courses were provided during the year, usually in the form of a one hour session preceding a governing body's termly meeting. In addition, the LEA gave professional advice to governors at the appointment of every new headteacher and deputy headteacher last year. The governors' support service has recently been awarded a Charter Mark for the quality of its work.

117. Improvement in governance had taken place in 10 of the 15 schools visited, including the three schools where it had previously been unsatisfactory or poor. In only one case was the governing body managing the school less well than it had done previously. In general, governing bodies were taking an increasingly knowledgeable interest in particular aspects of their school, for instance by individual governors reporting to the whole governing body on the success of policies for particular subjects or by the generation of useful links with local businesses. One governing body was becoming more proactive in asking searching questions of the school's senior managers, and another had become more vigorous in querying certain LEA policies. In one school where the improvement has been marked, governors now monitor the literacy hour and are fully involved in discussions about target setting.

118. Much of the credit for this improvement is due to the LEA. Governors and headteachers are generally very appreciative of the LEA's clerking service, which clearly gives good value for money. They describe the clerks as well briefed, expert in procedural matters, and ready to respond to requests for help and advice. Governors also have a high regard for the LEA's training courses, which also provide good value for money, generally finding them informative and relevant to their needs. Training sessions which bring governors up to date on new topics, such as the literacy strategy, are particularly valued. One school, however, where the governors were already well versed in strategic management would have preferred courses pitched at a higher level than some of those they had experienced.

119. In the 10 schools where the work of the governing body shows improvement, the governing bodies are tending to become more closely involved in development planning than they had done previously, though this, and other aspects of strategic management, such as promoting improvement, are still an area of weakness for three governing bodies. Several of those in the sample are still very dependent either on the school's senior managers or on the LEA itself. The LEA has exercised its authority to withdraw powers from four governing bodies (none of which were visited during this inspection) where it had concerns about governors' capacities to manage school improvement.

## **SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS REQUIRING SPECIAL MEASURES, WITH SERIOUS WEAKNESSES OR CAUSING CONCERN**

120. *The LEA has a good policy regarding weak schools and implements it thoroughly and effectively. It provides appropriate levels of support to address particular weaknesses in these schools, and monitors their progress carefully. Some of the support provided is imaginative and well suited to the schools' needs. The LEA, though, is a robust taskmaster and makes it clear to schools that it will not tolerate slow progress. It does not shrink from closing schools which fail to improve. Overall, it has achieved a good balance of support and intervention, but this work is proving to be very expensive.*

121. When the LEA was established in 1996 three of its schools were already identified by OFSTED or HMI inspections as requiring special measures. Since then a further five schools have required special measures, and since September 1997 a further six schools have been shown to have serious weaknesses. In addition, the LEA itself has identified another six schools as causing concern. Overall, therefore, about one-fifth of the LEA's schools have been identified in one of these categories in the past three years.

122. Remedial action taken by schools (often under new leadership) and LEA have led to significant improvements: four schools ceased to require special measures after periods ranging from twenty months to two and a half years. One school found to require special measures was closed almost two years later. Another school still continues to require special measures after three years, and the LEA now proposes to close this school too.

123. During this inspection visits were made to one school with serious weaknesses, to two which had previously had such weaknesses or required special measures, and to one identified by the LEA as causing concern. Discussions were held with headteachers of three schools which required or had required special measures, and other evidence was drawn from previous HMI monitoring of schools in special measures.

124. The LEA has committed significant resources to improving its weaker schools: 15 per cent of QAG time was devoted to these schools last year, and the EDP envisages that this work will cost about £800,000 next year (of which half will derive from specific grants from DfEE). The authority has a clear policy for monitoring the schools' progress, providing support where appropriate, and intervening where necessary. This policy has been updated to take account of new legislation. The LEA's action is sensibly graduated, with the greatest attention being paid to those schools whose needs are most severe. Officers keep elected members well informed of the progress or otherwise of each of these schools.

125. The LEA's programme of support for each of these schools is founded on the work of the link adviser who monitors the school's progress on its action plan frequently and carefully. These advisers, whose work is supervised by senior colleagues, also broker specialist support from other advisers or officers and arrange

for the deployment of school improvement teachers or specialist professional staff to areas of particular weakness. In some cases this has led to major investments in a school - as when a senior adviser was seconded part-time to one school to work with the senior management team for a term. Plentiful evidence shows that the support work is not only much appreciated within the school but is also generally very effective indeed in leading to improvement, although one instance was noted during this inspection of a weakness which had not been addressed early enough.

126. Senior officers make it very clear to school managers and governors that a lack of urgency in improvement will not be tolerated, and that firm corrective measures may have to be taken. The LEA has withdrawn budgetary powers from four governing bodies, has supported governors with advice on capability proceedings regarding weak staff, has appointed additional governors to schools requiring special measures (including some found by headteachers to have been particularly effective), has closed one school and is proposing to close another. Its judgement has generally been proved to be right, and in the interests of the pupils.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN TEACHING**

127. *The quality of teaching in primary and secondary schools, confirmed by data from OFS TED inspections, is in line with that found nationally and in similar LEAs. It is strongest for children under 5 and weakest at Key Stage 4. The LEA has developed a well-judged programme to maintain and improve the quality of teaching. It supports and monitors weak teachers well but its policy for supporting newly qualified teachers (NQTs) is not yet satisfactorily implemented. A full programme of in-service training is offered but courses are cancelled too frequently. The LEA provides good guidance on monitoring the quality of teaching and, in most cases, this is implemented well by advisers and the senior staff of schools.*

128. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching run through all the EDP priorities. They are informed by a programme of School Reviews which provides the LEA with detailed information including the overall quality of teaching, its strengths and areas for development. A significant initiative is the review of teaching in Year 7, as part of the strategy to improve transition between Key Stages 2 and 3. The relative weakness of teaching at Key Stage 4 merits particular attention and the LEA has identified the raising of achievement at this key stage as an EDP priority. The LEA's advisers, curriculum support teachers, and literacy and numeracy consultants are effectively engaged in improving the quality of teaching. Link advisers increasingly observe and evaluate lessons and involve senior staff in the process, so developing school self-review. Targeted support for, and monitoring of, weak teachers is effective. The policy for supporting NGTs includes provision of courses on classroom and behaviour management and observation of their teaching by advisers at least three times in their first year but the policy is not yet fully or consistently implemented.

129. Through its Education Centre and Basic Skills Centre, the LEA offers a wide range of in-service training courses, the majority of which have a clear focus on teaching and assessment. However, too many courses are cancelled because of

weak recruitment and the LEA is now considering targeting provision more clearly on local needs. It does not provide schools with information about other training providers. The LEA's in-service training programme includes a course on classroom observation and monitoring the quality of teaching which aims to develop the observational and monitoring skills of primary and special school headteachers. The Community (Adult) Education Service organises the training of classroom support assistants.

130. The LEA's support for teaching was an inspection theme in one nursery, two special, eight primary and three secondary schools. In all but one of these 14 schools, the degree of support provided by the LEA was appropriate to the school's needs and effective. The exception was a secondary school in which support for subject teaching had been patchy and insubstantial and that for the NQT inadequate. In the main, schools have found subject support to be beneficial, as in a secondary school where a substantial input from the LEA on a variety of fronts resulted in a greatly improved faculty of modern foreign languages. Support for NQTs is well intended but often insufficiently targeted to the needs of individual NQTs, for example with regard to literacy and numeracy, though it is highly regarded in special schools.

131. Some features of the LEA's support for teaching are having very positive impacts in schools. Link advisers' visits are helpful in a variety of ways, for example in co-ordinating the various types of support which a school needs and in organising classroom observation. Although there are examples where headteachers have not grasped the opportunity provided by link advisers to develop monitoring and observation, many have taken advantage of the LEA's helpful guidance and have worked alongside advisers in classrooms. Judgements following LEA reviews have also been useful to schools as they have been closely focused on teaching and have reported incisively on strengths and weaknesses. Although cancellation of courses has been resented by teachers, much of the LEA's training for teachers, classroom support assistants and nursery nurses has been very beneficial. Schools with weak teachers have benefited from the LEA's support and monitoring; its advice on capability and staff selection is of high quality.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN LITERACY**

*132. Improving levels of attainment in literacy is one of the LEA 's priorities. A good literacy team has worked with primary schools to set demanding targets; training of teachers for the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) has been effective: and the Literacy Hour is well established. Levels of attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2 have risen significantly over the last few years but much remains to be done if the 2002 target is to be achieved. Progress at Key Stage 3 and in GCSE has been relatively slow and work on literacy in secondary schools is at an early stage of development.*

133. The National Curriculum test results for English were low in 1998, when compared with national averages and those for similar LEAs. At Key Stage 1, 73 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 or above for reading and 72 per cent for writing. This represents a substantial improvement over the last few years. At Key Stage 2, there



has been an improvement of 11 per cent from 1996 to 1998, but in 1998 still only 53.4 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 or above. There has been slower progress at Key Stage 3, where only 45 per cent of pupils reached at least Level 5, and in GCSE.

134. The LEA's support for literacy was inspected in a nursery, three primary schools, two secondary schools, two special schools and a hearing impaired unit. In addition, evidence came from HMI's monitoring of the NLS in seven other primary schools and a visit to a literacy training session in the summer of 1998. In five of the schools visited in this inspection there have been improvements since the last inspection and in the others standards were being maintained and strategies being developed to tackle shortcomings.

135. The Literacy Hour has now been introduced and the LEA's support for the NLS itself is resulting in many improvements, including the development of more challenging targets for pupils; teachers have a better understanding of word level work, especially the teaching of phonic skills; better use is made of performance data; there is good direct teaching, especially of shared texts; more attention is given to speaking and listening skills; a wider range of writing is expected; and better use is made of libraries and other resources. Further work is needed on some parts of the Literacy Hour, especially group reading and writing, and schools will have to ensure that important aspects of the Programmes of Study for English, including extended writing and drama, are given sufficient attention.

136. Many pupils enter secondary schools with inadequate levels of literacy: poor reading and writing skills impede their progress in many subjects. Literacy is seen as mainly the responsibility of English and special needs departments; developments in other subjects are piecemeal. In one school a literacy co-ordinator has been appointed, a staff conference has helped to raise awareness, literacy lessons have been introduced in Years 7 and 8 and several departments have begun to use specific techniques, including writing frames, to improve standards of literacy. The other school is at an earlier stage of development but a number of departments have begun to see the improvement of literacy as the key to raising attainment. The special schools have adapted the Literacy Framework well to meet the needs of their pupils.

137. The LEA's focus on "challenge and support" means that the Key Stage 2 target for 2002 has been set at an ambitious 80 per cent and that careful attention has been given to the training and guidance of primary teachers in connection with the NLS. An earlier initiative, based on THRASS (Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills), helped to focus attention on the need to improve pupils' phonemic awareness but schools need further help in aligning it with the Literacy Framework. The NLS training has been effective at all levels, especially the intensive training provided for 20 schools. Here, teachers benefited from watching demonstration lessons. More generally, the literacy team's distribution of model schemes of work, reading lists, proformas for observing Literacy Hours; its training of governors and classroom assistants; and its support for schools needing to enhance their resources have all helped to improve practice and levels of attainment. The work of link

advisers in monitoring work and giving advice has been welcomed by schools, and local meetings have provided a good opportunity for schools to discuss strategies.

138. Secondary schools were invited to send representatives of subjects other than English to a conference on literacy last year and the LEA is giving attention to Key Stage 2 to 3 transition but any significant developments have come from the schools themselves and much remains to be done in Key Stage 3. One of the special schools visited has been well supported by the LEA, with the result that a literacy strategy for the full 3 to 19 age range has begun to raise levels of achievement. The other school has drawn largely on its own and external sources to improve practice and attainment in literacy. With the exception of the latter, the LEA has provided at least satisfactory value for money, and it has been good in four schools.

### **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN NUMERACY**

*139. The LEA's support for improving numeracy, although not yet consistently implemented, is having positive effects in both primary and secondary phases. Preparations for the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) are well advanced. The primary schools are making effective use of the LEA's performance data and target setting information to improve the curriculum and quality of teaching in numeracy. Results in National Curriculum tests in mathematics are getting better and are set to improve further.*

140. National Curriculum results in mathematics at Key Stages 1 to 3 are below or well below national figures but are improving faster than the national rate. The LEA's targets for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 in 2000 (69 per cent) and 2002 (75 per cent) are set well above current performance. Schools are therefore being challenged to build significantly on recent improvement, with LEA support. Major strides will need to be made to achieve these targets but the LEA's strategies are appropriate.

141. Numeracy at Key Stages 1 and 2 is one of the EDP's nine priorities. Advisory and support staff for the implementation of the NNS in primary schools and for the development of numeracy across the secondary phase are in post ahead of schedule. Every primary school has already undertaken in-service training to extend teachers' professional knowledge. Advisers disseminate good practice in the planning, teaching and resourcing of mathematics, and strategies for extending higher-attaining pupils and for improving transition between key stages are being implemented. Other strategies to raise attainment in numeracy include: the government-funded Basic Skills Project, comprising the Children's University and the training of classroom support assistants in numeracy; family numeracy; City mathematics, focusing on higher-attaining pupils; homework clubs; and summer schools. A good range of strategies are being developed to raise attainment in numeracy.

142. Support to improve numeracy was an inspection theme in four primary and three secondary schools. In all four primary schools, standards of numeracy were improving, and in three of them the LEA's training and support for the mathematics co-ordinator had made a significant impact, even when, as in one example, the

school had taken major responsibility for its own improvement. However, in a school where all staff were confident and trained, there had been some over-provision and insufficient targeting of consultancy time with consequent negative effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of the LEA's contribution. Another school had made very good progress in numeracy but has been wrongly identified by the LEA as needing maximum training support under the NNS. The degree of LEA involvement in this school had been too little to validate and confirm the school's progress or to enable the LEA accurately to assess its needs.

143. Standards of numeracy were also rising in all three secondary schools, although one reported virtually no LEA support. An adviser had made a major contribution to drawing up a school's very good numeracy policy, notably by providing a course which the teachers thought was excellent. Although much of the improvement in another school was due to the efforts of the mathematics department, the school valued the work of the LEA's support teacher. The LEA had also provided useful assessment data but the school had not received sufficient guidance on its use.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN ATTENDANCE**

*144. The LEA is aware that it has a considerable way to go to improve attendance rates in secondary schools and has adopted a number of strategies to target vulnerable pupils and support schools. These strategies are resulting in improvements. However, much still needs to be done to encourage parental participation and secure good attendance. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will need to maintain at least the present level of support to schools whilst giving further training to schools in developing well targeted initiatives.*

145. Attendance in primary schools is in line with similar LEAs, but in secondary schools is consistently well below those levels. Authorised and unauthorised absence are both high in the secondary schools. Attendance is improving in the primary schools: in 1996 19 out of 80 primary schools had attendance rates of less than 90 per cent; in 1998 just one failed to attain this benchmark. However, attendance in the secondary sector remains low in spite of the LEA's appropriate and concerted efforts: only two of the 16 secondary schools reached levels of attendance over 90 per cent in 1997/8. LEA support to improve attendance was scrutinised in 14 schools during this inspection: one nursery, seven primary, two special and four secondary schools. In three primary and three secondary schools attendance had been considered unsatisfactory at the time of the school's OFSTED inspection. In all but one of these schools levels of attendance have improved, though the amount of improvement in the secondaries is still insufficient.

146. Promoting good attendance is an EDP priority and is a high profile activity within the LEA. The pattern of deployment of education welfare officers to secondary and their associated primary schools is appropriate. A thorough programme of initiatives has recently been introduced such as spot checks of registers, published guidance for schools, rewarding good attendance through the award of certificates and Active Lifestyle participation, tracking pupils whose attendance is erratic, funding school-based liaison assistants, computerisation of registration, following up absences on the first day and a sizeable increase in the number of

parental prosecutions: 301 last year compared to 68 in the previous year. The school survey indicated that schools felt that the LEA's action to improve attendance was satisfactory to good.

147. In two secondaries where improvements have been made, the daily work of the attendance liaison assistant, mainly devoted to immediate and persistent enquiries to parents about their children's absences, and joint work with the youth service or further education college targeting particularly poor attenders have been effective. In another secondary school similar initiatives have not yet had significant effect, and merely maintaining satisfactory attendance rates had required considerable and sustained efforts by the fourth secondary school and its EWO. In one primary school, although attendance levels are currently unsatisfactory, there had been a period during which attendance improved as a result of concentrated LEA support. However, it then fell when, as a result of the improvements which had occurred, support was reduced to its former level. In all the other schools visited attendance had remained satisfactory.

148. The diligent and well co-ordinated approaches being adopted by the LEA and its schools are having positive effects on improving attendance but the problems are intransigent: the EWS will need to devote more attention to training schools to implement well targeted initiatives if successes are to be more widespread.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN BEHAVIOUR**

*149. The LEA 's identification of improving pupils' behaviour as an EDP priority reflects its well-founded judgement that success in this aspect is central to the achievement of its other priorities. The LEA applies consistent policies and procedures for behaviour management which are having positive effects. The LEA's strategies for improving behaviour and for the exclusion and re-integration of pupils are well considered and effective. The number of excluded pupils has reduced and re-entry procedures are appropriate.*

150. Headteachers and governors have agreed with the LEA that behaviour is an area for improvement, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. The LEA's Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) sets out the strategies for improving behaviour and the services which are available to schools and parents for behaviour management. The strategies are based upon the principle of inclusion in the Government's Green Paper "Excellence for all children". The BSP rightly acknowledges that good behaviour can best be achieved by a challenging and relevant curriculum. The LEA aims to provide appropriate and co-ordinated support for schools in prevention and early intervention when behaviour problems are predicted or arise. The plan also stresses the importance of: applying the SEN Code of Practice when applicable; fulfilling the LEA's responsibilities for looked-after children; and negotiating exclusion targets with schools. In recent years, the proportion of pupils permanently excluded from the LEA's primary schools has been in line with or lower than that for similar LEAs and there have been fewer permanent exclusions from secondary schools than in similar LEAs. Nevertheless, a further significant reduction has been achieved: in 1997/98, 62 pupils were permanently excluded whereas in the current academic year only 16, who continue to be monitored by the LEA, have been excluded so far. The LEA is, therefore, well on course to achieve a year early its 1999/2000 target of a maximum of 41 permanent exclusions.

151. Support to improve behaviour was an inspection theme in seven primary, three secondary and two special schools. In all but one of the twelve schools, a secondary to which the LEA had made little contribution to improving behaviour, the degree of support in relation to the school's needs was appropriate and the support had been effective. The LEA's policies and strategies for improving behaviour have a number of strengths. Schools feel that they were genuinely consulted about the BSP. The plan is particularly appreciated by the schools which are most in need of support. The LEA provides individual schools with good advice, for instance on exclusions, and with effective training, for example on establishing assertive behaviour policies. Schools' links with the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) are largely beneficial and re-entry is usually well managed, although one school felt that a pupil was unsettled by spending time at the PRU. Links with Social Services are generally good. Some primary schools, with varying degrees of behavioural problems, seek the LEA's Behaviour Accreditation and value the recognition of their practice which this scheme gives them. The negotiation of exclusion targets with schools is helping to reduce the number of permanent exclusions although one school commented that it would prefer the targets to be set after greater consideration of individual pupils and their needs. The LEA is supporting behaviour management well on a number of fronts, including improvements to buildings and facilities and the establishment of in-school teams and centres.

## APPENDIX I CONTEXT OF THE LEA

### (a) Characteristics of the pupil population

Indicator	Date	Source	LEA	National
1. Number of pupils in LEA area of 1997 compulsory school age	1999	LEA	37,073	
2. Percentage of pupils entitled to 1997 DEE free school meals	1997	DfEE		
i. primary			32.4	22.8
ii. secondary			29.0	18.2
3. Percentage of pupils living in households with parents/carers	1991	ONS Census		
(i) with Higher Educational qualifications			6.8	13.5
(ii) in Social Class 1 and 2			14.7	31.0
4. Ethnic Minorities in population aged 5-15. Percentage of ethnicgroup:	1991	ONS Census		
Asian			0.1	0.5
Bangladesh			0.2	0.8
Black African			0.2	0.6
Black Caribbean			0.0	1.1
Black Other			0.3	0.8
Chinese			0.2	0.4
Indian			0.1	2.7
Other			0.5	1.1
Pakistani			0.2	2.1
5. Percentage of pupils:				
(i) with a statement of SEN	1997	DfEE		
primary			2.2	2.6
secondary			3.9	3.9
(ii) attending special school				
primary			0.9	1.1
secondary			1.6	1.6
6. Participation in education:				
(i) % pupils under 5 on the roll of a maintained school	1996/97	LEA	83	60.0
(ii) % pupils aged 16 remaining in full time education.	1996/97	Careers and Guidance Service	50.5	69.3

## (b) Organisation of schools

### Types of school

Nursery schools	3
Infant schools	0
Junior schools	0
Primary schools	81
Middle schools	0
Secondary schools 11-16	14
11-18	2
Special schools	4
Pupil Referral Units	4

### Surplus places

% Surplus	Year	LEA	National
Primary	1998	17.4	9.5
Secondary	1998	18.1	11.5

Source: Audit Commission

### Pupil/teacher ratio

	Year	LEA	National
Primary	1997	25.4	23.4
Secondary	1997	18.2	16.7

Source: DfEE

### Class size Rate per 1000 classes

Size of class	Year	LEA	National
31 or more KS1	1997	334.3	289.6
KS2	1997	411.7	379.0
36 or more KS2	1997	25.3	22.9
32 or more KS2	1997	44.2	35.0

Source: DfEE

## c) Finance

Indicator	Source	Year	LEA	Statistical neighbours <sup>5</sup>	National
% expenditure in relation to standard spending assessment	LEA	1997/98	98.5%		-
Funding per pupil: £ per pupil Primary 4-6 7-10	CIPFA	1997/98	1,208 1,185	1,286 1,169	1,282 1,215
£ per pupil Secondary 11-13 14-15 16+	CIPFA	1997/98	1,459 2,050 1,322	1,683 2,006 1,407	1,649 1,996 1,744
Aggregated schools budget: £ per pupil Primary Secondary Special	CIPFA	1997/98	1,519 2,095 6,572	1,504 2,144 8,284	1,548 2,148 8,057
General schools budget: £ per pupil Primary Secondary Special	CIPFA	1997/98	1,970 2,624 10,488	2,016 2,726 12,477	2,090 2,801 12,757
Capital expenditure: (£ per pupil)	CIPFA	1997/98	11	106	116

## Audit Commission cost survey

Expenditure category	Net expenditure (£ per pupil)	
	LEA	Median for all LEAs surveyed (n=35)
Strategic management and contingencies	42.7	25.6
Advice and inspection	16.2	10.9
Curriculum support (advisory teachers and training)	57.7	48.2
Central support services (finance, IT, personnel, accommodation, supply teachers, governors support)	59.6	61.8
Premises (building and grounds maintenance, cleaning, school meals)	162.5	99.9
Services to promote access (education welfare, transport, admissions, grants)	112.9	81.7
Special educational needs	127.0	121.6

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<sup>5</sup>Salford, Sandwell, Barking and Dagenham, Coventry, Sunderland, Middlesborough, Oldham, Rochdale.  
 Data for Halton and City of Nottingham not available



## APPENDIX 2: THE PERFORMANCE OF MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

### PUPILS' ATTAINMENT

#### Attainment at age 7 (Key Stage I)

	Year	% of pupils achieving Level 2 or above					
		Teacher Assessment			Tasks/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1997	72.0	80.4	-8.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
	1998	72.8	81.4	-8.6	N/A	N/A	N/A
English (reading)	1997	71.2	80.1	-8.9	70.0	80.1	-10.1
	1998	72.5	80.8	-8.3	73.0	80.0	-7.0
English (writing)	1997	67.8	77.5	-9.7	70.9	80.4	-9.5
	1998	69.2	78.9	-9.7	72.0	81.4	-9.4
Mathematics	1997	77.4	84.2	-6.8	76.0	83.7	-7.8
	1998	80.7	85.5	-4.8	80.3	84.8	-4.5
Science	1997	78.0	85.5	-7.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
	1998	79.6	86.5	-6.9	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: DfEE

#### 2. Attainment at age 11 (KEY STAGE 2)

	Year	% Pupils achieving Level 4 or above					
		Teacher assessment			Task/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1997	50.7	62.6	-11.9	50.1	62.5	-12.4
	1998	53.2	64.2	-11.0	53.4	64.1	-10.7
Mathematics	1997	53.1	63.3	-10.2	51.9	61.3	-9.3
	1998	55.4	64.2	-8.8	49.5	57.9	-8.4
Science	1997	58.4	68.6	-10.2	60.5	68.1	-7.6
	1998	62.9	70.4	-7.5	62.5	68.6	-6.1

Source: DfEE

#### Attainment at age 14 (KEY STAGE 3)

Source: DfEE

	Year	% Pupils achieving Level 5 or above					
		Teacher assessment			Task/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1997	38.6	60.2	-21.6	40.1	56.6	-16.5
	1998	N/A			44.7	65.1	-20.4
Mathematics	1997	46.0	64.0	-18.1	42.6	60.7	-18.1
	1998	N/A			42.3	59.9	-17.6
Science	1997	40.7	62.2	-21.5	39.4	60.8	-21.4
	1998	N/A			38.4	56.5	-18.1

### Attainment at age 16 GCSE results in maintained schools

Level achieved	Year	LEA	National	Difference
1 A*-G	1996	83.7	92.1	-8.4
	1997	81.7	92.3	-10.6
	1998	86.6	93.4	-6.8
5 A*-C	1996	22.8	44.5	-21.7
	1997	21.4	45.1	-23.7
	1998	22.8	46.3	-23.5
5 A*-G	1996	73.3	86.0	-12.7
	1997	72.6	86.4	-13.8
	1998	77.2	87.5	-10.3
Average point score	1996	25.6	35.0	-9.4
	1997	24.8	35.6	-10.8

Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the school year and on the roll in January of that year Source: DfEE

### Vocational qualifications in maintained schools

Level achieved	Year	LEA	National	Difference
Pass entries	1996	72.9	79.2	-6.3
Pass entries	1997	68.8	80.1	-11.3

Source: DfEE

### Attendance

	Year	LEA	National
Attendance in Primary schools	1996	92.9	93.4
	1997	93.0	93.9
	1998	92.9	93.8
Attendance in Secondary schools	1996	85.0	90.5
	1997	83.5	90.9
	1998	85.1	91.0
Authorised absence in primary schools	1996	6.2	6.0
	1997	6.2	5.6
	1998	6.2	5.7
Authorised absence in secondary schools	1996	11.7	8.4
	1997	12.4	8.1
	1998	11.1	7.9
Unauthorised absence in primary schools	1996	0.9	0.5
	1997	0.8	0.5
	1998	0.9	0.5
Unauthorised absence in secondary schools	1996	3.2	1.0
	1997	4.1	1.0
	1998	3.8	1.1

Source: DfEE

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

**Tel: 0171 421 6800**

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Manor Street  
Kingston Upon Hull  
HU1 1YD