

**Inspection report**  
**ISLES OF SCILLY**  
**Local Education Authority**

Date of inspection: September 2003

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## **Basic information about the LEA**

Name of LEA:	Isles of Scilly Local Education Authority
Address of LEA:	Town Hall St Mary's Isles of Scilly TR21 OLW
Lead inspector:	Linda Kelsey HMI
Date of inspection:	September 2003

## Introduction

1. This inspection of Isles of Scilly local education authority (LEA) was carried out by Ofsted in conjunction with the Audit Commission under section 38 of the Education Act 1997. The inspection used the *Framework for the Inspection of Local Education Authorities* (December 2001). The inspection focused on the effectiveness of the LEA's work to support school improvement. The inspection also took account of the Local Government Act 1999, insofar as it relates to work undertaken by the LEA on Best Value.

2. The inspection was based on a range of material, which included self-evaluation undertaken by the LEA, and data provided by the LEA and the school. That material also included school inspection information, HMI monitoring reports, audit reports, a report from the National Care Standards Commission, documentation from, and discussions with, the LEA's officers; focus groups of governors and members; staff in other departments and at the school, and diocesan representatives. In addition, the inspection team considered the earlier Ofsted/Audit Commission report on this LEA (January 2002). A questionnaire, seeking views on aspects of the work of the LEA, was circulated but its results were considered invalid by the inspection team as there is only one school.

3. The inspection also involved studies of particular aspects of the LEA's work through focused interviews and documentation provided by consultants from Wokingham LEA (the consultant authority) on key aspects of the LEA's strategy for school improvement. Other documentation was made available by the school and other LEAs (Cornwall and Devon) that have offered consultancy services in the past and continue to do so in specific areas such as special educational needs (SEN). The interviews also considered whether the support that is provided is effective in contributing to improvements in the school and provides value for money.

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

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

## Commentary

6. The Isles of Scilly are a small group of islands, 28 miles from Land's End, serving a community dependent on tourism. There is no significant unemployment or social deprivation. Many households run successful businesses to support the main industry of the islands. There are a significant number of able children and good family support for them.

7. Its position as the second smallest LEA in England, with one federated school covering education from 4-16, gives it distinctive features. The school is currently subject to special measures and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), in partnership with the LEA, has established a School Improvement Partnership Board to forge stronger links between school management and the LEA. This is a new initiative and the Board has met only once.

8. The overall effectiveness of the LEA is poor. Progress since the last inspection is very poor; all but one of the LEA's functions have deteriorated or have made no progress since the last inspection. Many functions supported by the LEA remain difficult to manage and so bring about improvement. There is still no secure capacity within the LEA to support the school or deal with many of the issues raised in this report. Central services which, at the time of the first inspection in 2002, were limited in capacity, are now in a very precarious state. The LEA has not implemented most of the action plan written as a result of the recommendations last time. Without high levels of support it will not be able to address the recommendations of this inspection.

9. The weaknesses are considerable, especially in areas of school improvement and social inclusion. The LEA fails to meet statutory responsibility in relation to school attendance, provision for pupils without a school place, support for behaviour management, health and safety, and for looked after children. It is without policy in a number of key areas and, as a consequence, is vulnerable to legal challenge. The ability of the education department to evaluate its own strengths and weaknesses is very poor and the senior staff are unable to deal alone with its current weaknesses that are present in all key functions. With the exception of English at Key Stage 2, pupils' standards in test and examination results are gradually rising, but at a rate slower than that nationally. With deteriorating services, standards falling against national trends, relatively large amounts of funding per pupil, and high spending on education, the LEA represents very poor value for money.

10. There are few strengths, but where they occur they are in:

- steps taken to meet statutory obligations for SEN;
- the effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to the school; and
- the effectiveness of co-ordination to support partnership working.

11. The LEA has awarded recently a contract to Wokingham LEA as a consultant authority to provide many of the Isles of Scilly's education functions. Some minor improvements are already evident, such as several helpful audits of need under the direction

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of the consultant authority. Stakeholders are now much more involved in council and education decision-making, which is becoming better informed.

Some services are satisfactory and these include:

- financial services and the targeting of resources to priorities;
- corporate planning and decision-making;
- the value for money and effectiveness of support for school improvement in relation to SEN; and
- the provision of school places, property services and asset management, and support to governors.

12. The CPA for education, published in December 2002, gave the education service three stars (a high category) for current performance and capacity for improvement. At that time the statistical data did not take account of the progress that pupils made, although it did take account of the high attainment of pupils. Other significant data was not available because the school was designated a Fresh Start school. In addition, the CPA cannot reflect the details that a full inspection of the LEA reveals.

13. The lack of any progress in key areas and insufficient attention to continuing problems has demonstrated the inability of the education department, as currently organised, to operate effectively. There needs to be innovative and radical re-thinking so that the potential of all the island's children and young people can be fully realised.



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

### **Context**

14. The Isles of Scilly's total population has not changed significantly since the last inspection. The population is 2154 of which three-quarters live on the main island St Mary's. Four other populated islands are known as the off-islands. The main sources of income are tourism, flower farming and fishing. Unemployment is very low. Most households have at least two adults working. The council for the Isles of Scilly has sole responsibility for local government. It is the second smallest LEA in England.

15. In April 2002, the four voluntary controlled primary schools and one community secondary school were federated into one voluntary controlled school with one headteacher, located at the main base on St Mary's. In May 2002, a new governing body was elected and the school was designated a Fresh Start school. The three off-island schools have maintained their sites for primary children and the former headteachers are the site leaders.

16. The number of pupils is declining overall, although numbers at the different bases fluctuate. Currently the base at St Agnes has three children, and the base at Tresco has 22 children. The base on St Martin's has nine children and the remaining 111 primary-aged children attend the primary base on St Mary's. One hundred and thirteen children between 11 and 16 years of age attend the secondary base. Secondary-aged children from the off-islands are weekly boarders and at 16 years of age the majority of children transfer to schools and colleges on the mainland (there was 100% transfer in 2003).

17. Less than 1% of primary and secondary children are eligible for free school meals. This is well below the national average. Six children have statements of special educational needs and there are currently no children identified with English as an additional language or from minority ethnic backgrounds, refugee status or Travellers.

### **Performance**

18. The overall performance of the school is below the national average. The rate of improvement in pupils' attainment, in the last three years, has fluctuated at Key Stages 2 and 4. It has fallen sharply this year for English at Key Stage 2, although there is a rise in attainment at Key Stage 4. The continued problems in teaching and management of the school and its categorisation, this July, as requiring special measures demonstrate that the authority is failing to improve and maintain the performance of the school overall.

19. Evidence from Ofsted inspections of the school show that pupils' attainment on entry to full-time education is above the national average. While this profile has been constant for many years, the school has not made use of baseline assessment for the last two years.

20. The pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2002 was below the national average. The provisional results for 2003 indicate that standards in reading and mathematics have risen, but there has been no improvement in writing.

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21. In 2002, at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in all core subjects was well above the national averages. However, the rate of improvement in all three subjects against the national average has steadily fallen from a very high score in 1999. Cohorts of pupils are small and fluctuate from year to year. However, the 2003 targets for English, mathematics and science were challenging and while these were achieved in mathematics and science they were not in English. Results in English fell by 28% between 2002 and 2003. The targets for 2004 are again challenging and unlikely to be achieved on present performance.

22. In 2002, at the end of Key Stage 3, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in all three core subjects was above the national average. The average points score was above the national average and pupils made good progress between Key Stages 2 and 3. In 2003, in science and mathematics, the school has achieved record results and in English, results are above average.

23. In 2002, at the end of Key Stage 4, 63% of pupils achieved five or more GCSE's at grades A\* - C, which is above the national average of 52%. However, this represents a fall of 14% since 2000, while national results had risen by 2%. Results rose again in 2003 so that 87% of pupils achieved five or more GCSE's at grade A\* - C. In all years since 1998 all pupils achieved at least one GCSE at grade A\* - G, which is above the national average

24. The recent Ofsted school inspection and monitoring report has designated the school as requiring special measures. There are weaknesses in leadership and management, the quality of teaching and the performance of pupils. This situation has not improved since the school was federated over a year ago. In some cases it has deteriorated as the authority continues to seek new methods to improve the quality of education in the school, while maintaining the good quality of the primary school bases on the off-islands.

25. Attendance is above the national average in both the primary and secondary phases. Unauthorised absence is well above the national figure for primary and secondary schools. There are no permanent exclusions.

### **Council structure**

26. The council is made up of 21 independent councillors; 13 are elected from St Mary's and eight from the off-islands. There are currently 19 elected members and two vacancies; the procedures for filling these are under-way. The authority is exempt from Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. As a consequence, it has continued with the existing education committee.

### **Funding**

27. The LEA receives a relatively large amount of funding per pupil. However, the unique situation and major diseconomies of small scale on the Isles of Scilly present financial burdens not faced elsewhere. The 2002-03 education Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) for primary pupils in the Isles of Scilly, at £4,775 per pupil, was considerably higher than

unitary authorities (£2,670) and the English average (£2,797).<sup>1</sup> Similarly it was higher for secondary pupils at £6,164 per pupil compared with unitary authorities (£3,425) and the English average (£3,582). The relevance of these comparisons is limited because of the unique features on the Isles of Scilly where the LEA delivers education to 250 pupils, aged 4-16, located at five school sites. On top of this, the council has consistently spent above the education SSA. The total education budget in 2002-03 was £1.5 million; 7.6% higher than the SSA. The percentage spend above government guidelines dropped in this current financial year and at £1.6 million now stands at 2.5% above the Formula Spending Share (FSS).

28. The three off-island sites within the federated system presents an additional financial burden that affects the successful delivery of education services. Despite continuing high costs, the area cost adjustment element of the FSS was reduced this year from 78% higher than the national average to 0.5%.

29. Centrally retained funding in 2002-03, at £746 per pupil, was above the unitary average of £394 per pupil and the national average of £421. The main areas of central spending were:

2002-03	Isles of Scilly £ per pupil	Unitary authorities £ per pupil	England £ per pupil
<b>Strategic management</b>	492	93	101
<b>School improvement</b>	20	26	30
<b>Access</b>	141	124	130
<b>SEN</b>	93	151	160

(Source: CIPFA education budget statistics 2002/03)

30. The funding per pupil delegated to the school was also well above comparator groups:

2002-03	Isles of Scilly £ per pupil	Unitary authorities £ per pupil	England £ per pupil
<b>Primary individual schools budget (ISB)</b>	3,041	2,153	2,223
<b>Secondary ISB</b>	6,179	2,852	2,929

(Source: CIPFA Section 52 data 2002/3))

<sup>1</sup> No data for statistical neighbours are available for this local education authority.

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31. The capital programme for 2003-04 is £485,000 and is funded mainly through capital grants.

32. The council took up all its Standards Fund allowance in 2002-03 and has taken advantage of some opportunities for external funding. It has been successful in attracting funding for education and lifelong learning from such sources as European Social Fund Objective 1, New Opportunities Fund and Sport England.

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

33. The strategy for school improvement and its implementation are unsatisfactory and have deteriorated since the last inspection. Its actions at the time of the last inspection, although appropriate and broad, were over-ambitious because of the limited resources available to the LEA. The success criteria also varied in quality. The updated Education Development Plan (EDP2) for 2003 to 2007 is similarly ambitious and the LEA is unable to implement it because of the limited resources available. Few of the proposals in the previous EDP1 have been carried out and the recommendations in the last report (2002) to sequence activities more clearly, identify timescales and set success criteria have not been acted upon. Monitoring and challenging the performance of the school as well as providing support and advice to service managers and governors have been poor.

34. The EDP2 is based on an audit that took account of the key issues identified for action within the last Ofsted inspection of the LEA in January 2002. The priorities are stated clearly and reflect those nationally and locally, including the setting up of the newly federated school. The timescale and setting up of the federated school were largely met. Communications between the school and the education department had become weak and this has resulted in a lack of understanding and trust in relevant roles. However, in the new school and the education department and in particular over the last six months, there have been changes to key personnel.

35. The LEA acted too late to prevent deterioration in support to the school and governors. It has now appointed a temporary headteacher, a known consultant to the school. This small LEA has always had to seek advice and support for its schools from other LEAs and independent consultants. In July 2003, the authority signed a one-year service level agreement with the consultant authority to oversee the majority of their functions in school improvement, SEN and social inclusion. Senior managers at the school express concern about the lack of clarity in this most recent contract and the council's intentions for future support, challenge and intervention.

36. The DfES, in partnership with the LEA, has recently set up a School Improvement Partnership Board to oversee the work of the school and improve its relationships with the education department. This has met once. The Board consists of representatives from the DfES, outside consultants, governors, the headteacher and officers from the LEA. This board, and the new arrangements at the school, have the potential to bring about improvements in the quality of education at the school.

37. Pupils' performance for 2003 was not monitored or challenged by the LEA. Targets were not achieved in all key stages. Cohorts of pupils are small and fluctuate from year to year, making monitoring performance more difficult. At the end of Key Stage 2, targets for

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2003 were set at 13% above the 2001 results. National average levels were achieved in mathematics and science, but were not for the higher attainers at Level 5 in mathematics. They were not achieved at all in English and have now fallen to well below the national average. Conversely, the 2003 targets for Key Stage 3 and 4 were exceeded. Targets were judged in the last report to be based on an aggregation of pupil data. While this is completed at school level, it is not collected, analysed or monitored by the LEA. This makes it impossible for the LEA to monitor progress in standards or to set realistic targets for the future. These targets, agreed by the DfES, were not based on reliable, monitored and analysed data. The necessary acceleration needed in the rate of improvement to meet 2004 targets, at both primary and secondary phases, is far too ambitious.

### ***Recommendations***

#### **In order to improve strategic planning:**

- ensure that plans for education contain measurable indicators of success and demonstrable improvement criteria;
- establish and implement an effective school improvement strategy to remove the need for special measures;
- sequence activities and timescales for completion, and agree success criteria so that future plans can be realistically met;
- make better use of performance indicators and reports from external sources to monitor and evaluate the success of actions taken; and
- thoroughly monitor and evaluate the provision and support from outside agencies to ensure high quality.

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

38. At the time of the previous inspection, the council's allocation of resources to priorities was highly satisfactory. It is now satisfactory. Although priorities are set out in the council's strategic plans there is no medium-term financial plan linked to them.

39. The priority accorded to education has been reflected in the funding of the service above the SSA. The LEA delegates 85% of its local schools budget to the school. Similarly, it devolves a significant amount of the Standards Fund to the school (84% in 2001-02 compared with the national average of 77%).

40. Although there are only a small number of pupils, the comparative costs for most centrally provided services in 2002-03 were not excessive. The major exception was the very high strategic management costs but these included mostly staffing costs and the price of an outsourced monitoring and evaluation contract with Cornwall, which has been incorrectly coded to this area rather than under school improvement. Despite this, the limited funding remaining at the centre results in low capacity and consequently wide-ranging workloads for individual staff. The LEA's central services are currently under-resourced to meet its educational needs.

41. Nevertheless, there is some excessive spending, for example:

- the cost of providing free boarding accommodation on St Mary's to all secondary-age pupils from the off-islands - currently about £90,000 a year for 28 pupils;
- the high subsidy given to the music service - about £16,000 a year plus Standards Fund contribution; and
- the cost of the authority's post-16 transport policy that pays for student transport to any post-16 provision on the mainland - currently about £17,000 a year.

42. The budget process includes a review, by the various committees, of current and future spending needs. For example, the high cost of the music service was recognised and a recent review has been undertaken. Additional money and service savings are targeted to priority areas such as education and social services. The recent contract with the consultant LEA, to provide the majority of education functions to the Isles of Scilly, reflects satisfactory use of resources to address these priorities. Similarly, bringing the five sites under the management of a single headteacher and governing body through federation has, as intended, led to economies of scale. Although both budget-planning processes and budget monitoring are currently satisfactory, they are too informal and supported by insufficient staff resources. The budget is monitored through monthly reports by the budget holders and the core finance team, and councillors receive accurate quarterly reports and projections.

43. Consultation with the school over budget matters is effective and the funding formula is simple. It is currently based on the historic pattern of expenditure of the previous five separate schools, distributed through a simple figure per pupil. This is a transitional arrangement for the federated school.

44. The authority has been successful in obtaining some external funding, despite the education department having very limited arrangements to co-ordinate, prioritise and support grant bidding.

### ***Recommendation***

#### **In order to increase funding for priorities within the education service:**

- reduce costs elsewhere within the service. For example in:
  - the provision for the free boarding of secondary-age pupils from the off-islands;
  - the post-16 transport support; and
  - the amount devolved to the school from the Standards Fund.

### **Strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value**

45. The LEA's strategies to promote continuous improvement were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and they continue to be so. The authority's ability to evaluate its own performance against criteria is weak. Limited action has been taken on the last report's

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recommendation that officers' objectives should be linked to plans and monitored regularly. Structured performance management is in place only at chief officer level. Other staff have no formal appraisal system. Similarly, much reliance is placed on an informal process of identifying weak service provision and comparative data are little used for performance management.

46. The Best Value Performance Plan of 2002/03 received qualified approval from the external auditor with a recommendation to strengthen the collection and use of performance indicators and to report on performance against targets. The authority has been in negotiation with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Audit Commission to agree a list of relevant performance indicators. The targets within the current Best Value Performance Plan (2003/04) are incomplete and more work on this is planned.

47. Corporate Best Value guidance is well developed and reviews have been targeted according to clear risk-based criteria such as the importance to the community, cost, and concerns raised by auditors and inspectors. Elected members are involved in various stages of Best Value but the authority acknowledges more work is required to develop the scrutiny function of councillors.

48. Overall the reviews have had an impact on services. Following a major review of school organisation, the authority has successfully established the recommended federated school in difficult circumstances. The review was suitably rigorous and included widespread consultation.

#### *Recommendation*

**In order to support continuous improvement:**

- introduce, as soon as possible, performance management for all education department staff.

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

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

49. Support for school improvement is poor. It has deteriorated since the last inspection. Leadership of the service is poor. Many functions within school improvement are unsatisfactory or poor and strategies for improvement are unclear; policy documents, evaluation of services and monitoring of provision are not in place. The decision to engage a consultant authority is a well-conceived idea. However, this decision is recent and the extent of this contract is unclear and has not been fully shared with all the school management. Impact at this stage is difficult to judge, although some useful auditing of current services has been quickly commissioned and completed. Services to support school improvement are currently providing very poor value for money.

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

50. The effectiveness of services to support school improvement is poor. Although attainment remains above national averages and standards are rising in all key stages, the rate of improvement is not keeping pace with the national rate.

51. The leadership of school improvement services is poor. It was unsatisfactory last time. The workloads on current personnel are high as they try to cover the gaps in the service. Staff are being asked to take on responsibilities for areas, such as early years, SEN and information and communication technology (ICT) in which they have had little experience or training.

52. Traditionally, the school has always sought advice and help from different outside agencies. However, communications between the school and the education department have become weak. The school has not been fully consulted on the future arrangements for support for school improvement, SEN and aspects of social inclusion. The interim contract for one year with the consultant authority is proving useful, but the remit for the continuing support after this time is uncertain and has added to the confusion.

53. Strategic planning was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and remains so. The service plan for support from the consultant authority is thorough, but weaknesses remain in the detailed planning for implementation. Where the support will come from and timescales for implementation remain unclear, for example in literacy, numeracy, SEN and inclusion. Targets for improvement are not based on reliable data. As a consequence, self-evaluation by the school and by the LEA is poor. Some valuable auditing has taken place in certain key areas, such as in Key Stage 3 and ICT, and governors have received some useful, but late, basic training in their new role as a single body for the newly federated school.

54. Performance management of school improvement services is poor. Induction procedures are unsatisfactory and appraisal of staff including those at the school has not been systematic. Targets for performance of staff are not set or monitored and staff development, both in the authority and the school, is *ad hoc*. The programme of staff development

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provides opportunities for training and development of skills but it is not supported by a coherent system for building on expertise and corporate priorities.

55. At the time of the last inspection, the expertise of school improvement staff was satisfactory. It is now poor as the new service contract that replaces this service lacks credibility with the school. Staff employed by the authority carry too wide a brief, and they are unable to fulfil their many roles well enough. As a result, monitoring of quality and standards lacks rigour, ineffective use is made of data, and there is an inability to determine the precise nature of overall support needed in the school. The contract with the consultant authority is designed to address this weakness.

### **Monitoring, challenge, and intervention in schools, and in particular on areas of greatest need and under-performing schools.**

56. The approach to monitoring, challenge and intervention is unsatisfactory. However, this is an improvement from the last inspection when it was poor. The recommendations in the last report have not been acted upon apart from the production of a written strategy for early intervention. The LEA intervened well in the management of the school last term, but this did not prevent the school from requiring special measures in July 2003.

57. Support for the areas of greatest need is poor. It was satisfactory at the time of the last report. No progress has been made in this area and the school remains unclear about the future relationships with consultants. However, the appointment of the consultant authority to oversee support for the school has already had some results in providing a better match of support such as in ICT where it has made use of its contacts to speed up the installation of broadband connections. The consultant authority has put in place valuable auditing exercises in a short space of time. This has resulted in sound evaluations of the LEA's effectiveness in some key areas such as literacy and numeracy.

### ***Recommendation***

#### **In order to focus support on areas of need:**

- work more closely with the school's management to evaluate its successes, raise its aspirations, and set realistic targets for future performance.

58. The use of data for monitoring the school is poor. Data are not collected from the school, primary managers do not have access to secondary data, and no systematic collection and analysis are taking place. The identification of and work with the under-performing school, previously satisfactory in the last report, are now poor; the recommendations were not met. The school is unable to evaluate its own performance, set targets or make any realistic progress in meeting them. The LEA has been largely ineffective in providing well-informed challenge to the school. It has relied solely on the Ofsted monitoring visits to identify weaknesses. The LEA did not identify weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning and school management through the office of its school adviser. Existing monitoring reports, although well written, are too optimistic about the school's performance and the quality of teaching and learning. Support was not coherent or sufficiently long-term to ensure that improvement was sustained. There was little indication about how weak the school was until

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it was too late and intervention was required. Through the consultant authority, the LEA now provides a range of services that are better designed to support the school in becoming more self-evaluative. The School Improvement Partnership Board has taken on the task of tackling long-term problems of recruitment and retention and providing housing for key workers. It is too early to judge how effective these new strategies will be in bringing about the improvement required.

### *Recommendation*

#### **In order to sustain the level of support currently in place at the school:**

- ensure that service provision drives long-term effective improvements in the school.

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

59. Support for literacy and numeracy are unsatisfactory. They were both satisfactory at the time of the last report and numeracy support had some good features.

60. The quality of training, purchased from outside sources, has been inconsistently monitored by the LEA. Monitoring reports failed to highlight the difficulties the school had in implementing the strategies. The training needs of the school were incorrectly identified because no reliable data have been used over the last few years.

61. Pupils' performance in English and mathematics national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2002 was below the national figure. Results for 2003 indicate that standards in reading and mathematics have risen while there has been no overall improvement in writing. At Key Stage 2, standards are well above the national average in mathematics, and in line with the national figure for English. For 2003, while this progress was maintained for average attaining pupils in mathematics, it was not for the higher attaining pupils. The English results have fallen to well below the national average for the first time this year. The targets set for 2004 are not based on reliable data and are unlikely to be achieved on present performance.

62. There has been little dissemination of the good teaching that was identified in some of the school bases. The school co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy have had little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning at the school and improve the weaker teaching identified in the school inspection report at one of the primary bases.

### *Recommendations*

#### **In order to improve support for literacy and numeracy:**

- develop more advisory and support roles for school co-ordinators; and
- monitor and evaluate the quality of all support provided by outside sources.

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**Support for information and communication technology**

63. Support for information and communication technology is poor overall as it was at the time of the last inspection. Very poor progress has been made in the last two years. The priorities for development, set out in the action plan, have not been completed. Progress in pupils' achievement in ICT has been identified as a weakness in the school.

64. There is no written strategy for the development of ICT that takes account of the need of the school and the authority. The support is not co-ordinated, is only reactive to developments and piecemeal in its approach to change. However, a recent audit is useful, detailed and evaluative. It has the potential to drive improvement in ICT. There are developments taking place to install a new network, using broadband technology, by the end of the 2003 autumn term that will combine administrative and curriculum functions. This should improve the reliability of e-mail communication and teachers' access to data. Nevertheless, this development has been a long time coming. The school has made its own internal arrangements for technical support and these are working well. There is currently no school intranet or website, although these are being developed by the school technician.

65. Support for ICT in the curriculum is poor, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There are no systems to collect or analyse the attainment data indicating the standards that pupils achieve in ICT. Although targets were set at Key Stage 3 for 2003, no reliable data were available at the time of the inspection to show whether these had been achieved. With the poor quality provision in the past and the unreliable data available, targets for 2004 seem unrealistic.

66. National Grid for Learning resources have been allocated to schools and have resulted in the purchase of hardware. National targets for the ratio of computers to pupils have been met. Government funding allocated for specific resources to support e-learning was not taken up and, as a result, the LEA missed an opportunity to support development in this area.

67. The authority is unclear about the take-up of training for teachers using New Opportunities Funding. The LEA did not monitor and evaluate the quality of the training, although the school did keep a record of teachers involved. Most primary teachers have completed their training but some secondary staff have not. There has been no attempt by the LEA to measure its impact on raising pupils' standards in ICT. Little support has been made available to teachers, other than in an informal way, to share good practice and expertise.

68. Support for administrative ICT was poor at the time of the previous inspection and it remains so. There has been limited development in the electronic transfer of records and information between the LEA and school sites. For instance, the use of different software concerning financial and personnel data means that information has to be entered twice. However, the school purchases good support for its financial software package from Cornwall. There is little progress on the common basic data set and information in the LEA. The council has a website but it is out of date and unexciting.

***Recommendations***

<b>In order to raise pupils' standards in ICT, improve the information available to the</b>
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**school and give support for ICT administration:**

- put in place an ICT strategy that is shared and consulted upon with the school;
- monitor and challenge the school about the quality of the provision and the educational standards achieved by pupils;
- develop a more robust LEA-wide strategy for communications and safe access to e-mail and websites; and
- develop and implement a central IT support system to integrate both administration and curriculum use.

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

69. The LEA's support for raising standards at Key Stage 3 and implementing the national strategy are unsatisfactory. This function of the LEA was not covered in the previous inspection. There is no LEA plan for Key Stage 3 and the priority in the first EDP unreasonably expected the development of all five curriculum strands of the strategy during 2002/03. The LEA gave the school suggestions for external adviser support, and training was provided for core and foundation subjects. The initial objective was far too ambitious, though the school has made some progress. The very recently revised EDP2 has a more manageable and phased approach with the focus on raising the standards of under-achieving pupils and providing training to improve teaching, learning and assessment.

70. Many pupils attain above average standards at Key Stage 3 but progress is uneven. Generally pupils' progress in English, especially that of boys, is below average. This represents under-achievement despite the relatively high performance. The school collects the available school and public data on pupil performance at Key Stage 3 but the LEA makes no analysis of these or of the trends they indicate. Consequently, the LEA cannot interpret the information or challenge the school over the current areas of under-performance. The targets set for English, science and ICT in 2004 are ambitious, while those for mathematics at Level 6 have already been achieved.

71. Recently, clear objectives have been established for Key Stage 3 in the new consultant authority's position statement. Curriculum development and cross curricular progression are not secure. To date, the LEA has failed to fulfil its key role to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategy and to challenge the school's progress and standards.

**Support for gifted and talented pupils**

72. The LEA's support for gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory. Pupils in the school reach standards that are mainly above national averages. Some pupils are successful in the higher level tests and gain A\* and A grades in their GCSE examinations. However, the proportion who excel is too low in a school population where above average attainment is the norm.

73. In the early stages of the national strategy for gifted and talented pupils, in 2002, the general adviser to the school, with an external consultant, provided valuable training for staff. This raised awareness and helped the school to benefit from good practice elsewhere. Since then, there has been no LEA support or guidance on this initiative, nor has the LEA planned, with the school, activities that might develop the talents and gifts of the pupils. No summer schools have taken place and, although out-of-school activities such as music and e-learning are supported by the LEA, there is no development of these programmes. The LEA has insufficient data about pupils to enable it to develop the work planned and does not monitor and evaluate the impact of initiatives.

74. Nonetheless, the school has developed a policy and guidance for staff, raised awareness of strategies for learning and started to identify the particular gifts and talents of its pupils. Master classes have begun and the new external consultants have clear and appropriate proposals for future support in the school.

### *Recommendations*

#### **In order to support the strategies for Key Stage 3 and gifted and talented pupils:**

- ensure effective planning of activities that will extend the learning and opportunities for gifted and talented pupils; and
- monitor and evaluate the outcomes of developments in the school for Key Stage 3 and for gifted and talented pupils.

### **Support for governors**

75. Support to governors is satisfactory as it was at the time of the last inspection. This area was not subject to fieldwork.

76. The governing body was re-convened at the time of the setting up of the school. This has had a positive effect as it greatly reduced the number of governors from a total of 70 to 17 and improved communications. They are in a stronger position to support and challenge the school and are fully involved in the School Improvement Partnership Board. They have received some recent training to support them in their new roles.

### **Support for school leadership and management**

77. Support for school management is unsatisfactory as it was at the time of the last inspection.

78. The LEA's programme for challenge and intervention has failed to identify weak school management. The programme for performance management was unsatisfactory and the LEA was slow to intervene to improve the poor leadership of the school. Relationships between the school and the LEA had deteriorated since the formation of the school in 2002, although they have begun to improve this term. In addition, advice to senior management in the school, from a variety of sources, has been variable in quality and inconsistent in delivery and has resulted in an uneven pattern of support to the school.

79. The LEA has appointed a temporary headteacher who has contributed significantly to the quality of leadership and management of the school. He has restructured the senior management team and there is now greater involvement of the good quality lead teachers from the off-island bases in the leadership of the primary phase. The setting up of the School Improvement Partnership Board has further improved relationships between governors, school management and the LEA.

#### *Recommendations*

##### **In order to support further the school leadership and governance of the school:**

- ensure the high quality of school leadership and governance through regular evaluation and performance review against measurable targets of success; and
- immediately put in place plans to ensure the appointment of an effective, substantive headteacher.

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

80. Support for schools to secure effective and efficient management services was poor at the time of the last inspection and it remains so. The council has examined options for buying well-integrated financial, personnel and ICT support and currently has a temporary contract for a wide range of education functions from the consultant LEA. It is in the process of designing the contract to go out to tender for more permanent provision from April 2004.

81. The LEA offers direct service provision in a limited range of functions, for example payroll services. Other areas, such as financial and personnel services, form part of the contract with the consultant authority. Currently no service level agreements exist with the school nor are service standards made clear. Information about alternative providers is not offered nor is advice on the content of the contract. The LEA does not monitor provision of services to the school and the current contract with the consultant authority does not focus on targets and monitoring processes.

#### *Recommendation*

##### **In order to assist the school with its purchasing decisions,:**

- provide annually, prior to the start of the financial year:
  - details of all services that can be purchased from the council;
  - information on centrally resourced services available to the school; and
  - guidance on service level agreements and standards with external providers.

82. **Financial support** to schools was poor at the time of the last inspection. It is now unsatisfactory. The LEA's service managers are adequately supported and receive monthly budget statements. However, limited support is given for school resource management and

benchmarking information is not provided. The LEA continues to deduct payroll costs at source and still uses a small business financial management system that is not compatible with the school system. It has, on the other hand, met some of the recommendations in the last inspection report and ensured that the school receives funding from the start of the financial year. It is more prompt in its provision of accounting information. Internal audit is purchased from Cornwall LEA and it continues to be good.

83. **Personnel services** were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and they remain so. The division of responsibilities is still not clearly set out, though the consultant authority has recently provided training to governors on their personnel responsibilities. Not all policies are in place and a number of those that exist are out of date. There have been some difficult industrial relations over last year that the authority has handled well once it became involved.

#### *Recommendation*

##### **In order to improve personnel services:**

- ensure that model policies and guidance for the school are in place and kept up to date.

84. At present, the school buys in personnel advice from Devon LEA and from an independent personnel adviser whom the council also use. The school and the LEA are in negotiation over a service level agreement for personnel services as well as payroll. Support for the school workforce reforms has not yet begun, therefore making completion by the prescribed national deadline difficult.

85. Support for **property services** was satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. This continues to be the position and no fieldwork was undertaken.

86. **Facilities management services**, which are secured and managed directly by the school, continue to be satisfactory.

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

87. The LEA's work in assuring the quality of teachers is unsatisfactory. However, the strategies for assuring the supply of teachers are mainly effective. The LEA has a complex task to assure the supply of teachers and it is doing this successfully as there are no vacancies. However, considerable difficulties exist in attracting and retaining teachers for the islands. Rented accommodation is only seasonally available and house prices are very high. To attract teachers, especially newly qualified teachers, the LEA provides some subsidised accommodation and recently senior officers have successfully agreed a one-year pilot scheme funded by the DfES, to provide additional subsidy for new teachers. The LEA is also in regular discussion with The Duchy of Cornwall, the DfES and the government office south west, to secure increased and better quality accommodation for the long-term future.

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88. Over time, the LEA has given advice and brokered services for staff development for the school; most teachers have a broad portfolio of work completed. Despite this the very recent Ofsted inspection of the school indicates too high a proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. The LEA has appropriately established individual mentors from a neighbouring authority, for all staff. This support has been provided through service level agreements and individually negotiated arrangements that are evaluated by the school. However, there is no published programme that offers teachers a continuum of professional development through training and other means. Development opportunities with colleagues beyond the islands, though limited, are beginning to improve through video links.

89. New headteachers have been suitably supported by a mentor programme with mainland schools. Despite this, not all headteachers have taken up this opportunity. The recent turnover of headteachers has been very high. The small number of newly qualified teachers receive good support from the LEA and their work has been monitored. The LEA also ensures that proper induction procedures are used by the school.



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

#### **Summary of the effectiveness of the LEA's special educational needs provision**

90. At the time of the previous inspection, the LEA's provision for SEN was generally good. The provision is now highly satisfactory with one significant strategic weakness. There has been some deterioration, mainly because the LEA has a policy statement that is out-of-date and no clearly articulated written strategy for SEN. Although the LEA's capacity to improve overall is satisfactory, it is dependent not only on successful contract delivery by the consultant authority, but also the LEA's capability to meet its responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of that provision. This they have not done well in the past.

#### **The LEA's strategy for special educational needs**

91. The LEA's strategic planning for SEN is poor. The adopted policy and guidelines from Cornwall LEA do not provide a local inclusion plan or strategic overview in which developments can take place in a coherent way. A clear commitment to inclusion is very evident among officers, council members and the headteacher. Nevertheless, in the absence of a locally devised policy and the strategic and financial planning to support this, no development priorities can be set or monitoring of progress take place.

92. The most recent revision of the EDP makes no mention of SEN in its priorities. This is unsatisfactory when the school is seeking strategic direction over the planning of its SEN provision. However, the Isles of Scilly's recently established contract for services with the consultant authority includes the bringing of new guidance on SEN to the attention of the council's education committee. This is likely to improve the LEA's capacity to undertake strategic developments and provide support to the school.

#### **Statutory obligations**

93. The LEA meets its statutory obligations well. Children with SEN are identified promptly and action is taken to address their needs. They are encouraged to participate fully in school life. The work of the school SEN co-ordinator is particularly effective in these aspects. Statutory assessment is completed within the prescribed timescales and officers are involved in the annual reviews and transition arrangements. Data collection is in its early stage, but a good start has been made. The number of children with statements in the school is in proportion to national averages.

94. The LEA has contracted with the consultant authority to ensure that its duties with regard to the SEN Code of Practice are met. The school is aware of this new arrangement, although it has agreed with the LEA that some of the former links will remain with Cornwall LEA and with the West Cornwall Primary Care Trust for specialist services, such as educational psychology. However, there is some confusion about arrangements. For example, the provision of independent parental advice and support now lies within the consultant authority's contract, but the school is unaware of this development.

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95. The criteria used for statutory assessment are consistent with the revised SEN Code of Practice and the school policy and guidance have been revised to reflect this. The LEA's contract with the consultant authority is appropriately designed to improve the capacity to support and monitor the school's special needs provision.

### **School improvement**

96. The provision to support school improvement is highly satisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection it was good and the provision has retained many of its strengths. However, support from the LEA over advice, training and guidance on school policy to raise the attainment of pupils with SEN is not systematic or supported by a strategy. Support purchased for individual pupils with SEN by the LEA or the school remains effective and of good quality. Occasionally the school purchases support for school development purposes and informs the LEA. However, the school indicates the need for some further clarification over what it is that the LEA and the school provide.

97. Local education authority funding, which is delegated to the school, is linked directly to an audit of need and the additional resources that may be required for children with statements following their annual review. Systems to track the progress and attainment of children with SEN are suitably in place. Individual education plans contribute successfully to the children's rate of progress. The LEA has no contingency plans in place to provide promptly for children who require specialist SEN teaching unavailable on the island.

### **Value for money**

98. The LEA now achieves highly satisfactory value for money in its SEN provision. At the time of the previous inspection value for money was good. The deterioration is linked to the lack of a strategic plan for SEN without which there is no clear financial planning to make it possible for the LEA, with the school, to monitor effectively the expenditure on SEN.

99. While the LEA does not routinely monitor the funding delegated to the school for SEN, it does, nevertheless, review annually the resource needs of those children with statements. The funding allocation is clear to the school and is used to address fully the requirements of those children assessed as in need of provision. Proportionately, the LEA spends less on SEN than most other authorities and the progress made by pupils is satisfactory.

100. Information about the respective funding roles and responsibilities of the LEA and the school is not formally set down, apart from the principle that the LEA seeks to maximise the funding available to the school. A central budget is retained but this only meet the costs of home tuition, purchased support to meet statutory obligations, and other contingencies as they arise.

### **Recommendations**

#### **In order to improve the LEA's strategy for SEN:**

- devise a clear policy on the full range of SEN that states pupils' entitlements

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and reflects the government's programme of action;

- in consultation with the school, develop the policy into clear strategic plans that indicate the steps the LEA intends to take towards maintaining inclusion and improving further pupil outcomes; and
- monitor the school's total expenditure on SEN to ensure that all support and resources continue to be deployed effectively.

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## Section 4: Promoting social inclusion

### Summary of effectiveness in promoting social inclusion

101. The LEA's promotion of social inclusion is unsatisfactory. Although corporate plans reflect the need for social inclusion, there has been little improvement in important areas, and significant deterioration in many. The LEA fails to meet its statutory responsibilities in relation to school attendance, provision for pupils without a school place, support for behaviour management, health and safety, and for looked after children. Its effectiveness in combating racism is very underdeveloped.

### The strategy to promote social inclusion

102. The LEA's approach to social inclusion has a number of positive features but overall it is unsatisfactory. This contrasts with the previous inspection where the judgement was that it was highly satisfactory. The decline stems from the lack of an overall strategy to promote social inclusion at a corporate level. The LEA has been slow to revise its behaviour support plan, and this has left the school without a coherent framework for planning. There remains a lack of provision to secure 25 hours of tuition for children educated other than at school and no clear plan exists for improving attendance.

103. There have been several encouraging developments, including an increase in the demand for adult and family learning. The plan to transform youth work on the islands is a highly commendable statement from which to develop the existing youth service. The EDP has a priority to improve the attainment of under-achieving groups in the school.

104. Liaison between the education department, social services, local health agencies and the police is very effective. A multi-agency strategy group meets frequently to address the needs of children at risk on the islands and involves parents as well. A lead professional is identified and a course of action agreed. The Children Services Plan has, however, lapsed and is out of date.

### *Recommendation*

**In order to revise the Children's Service Plan, the education department should:**

- in collaboration with social services and the West Cornwall primary care trust, review the key outcomes sought for children and young people.

### The supply of school places

105. Planning of school places was highly satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. It is now only satisfactory because, although the council effectively monitors requirements for school places, it has not produced a draft school organisation plan 2003 to 2008. It has, however, submitted the 2003 Supply of School Places return to the DfES that contains information about projected pupil numbers to 2010. Forecasting of pupil numbers remains

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accurate because of detailed community knowledge, but up-to-date capacity figures for the sites have not yet been submitted.

106. The federation of the school was in the final stages of planning at the time of the last inspection. The school has now been functioning for over one year and has a total of 258 pupils aged 4 to 16. Children continue to attend the primary site on their own island except for those on Bryher who travel by boat to Tresco. Secondary pupils from the off-islands attend the 11-16 school on St Mary's and board for four nights of the week. Post-16 provision is provided on the mainland. Although there is spare capacity in the off-island schools, the importance of these to the local community is recognised and increased community use is being considered.

107. The federation has also provided opportunities for sharing curriculum expertise that are beginning to be explored more thoroughly through the direction of the temporary headteacher.

### **Asset management**

108. Asset management was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and it remains so. A detailed asset management plan was prepared by a private company in March 2000. The condition part of this was updated in 2002. It was judged as satisfactory by the DfES.

109. The LEA has not met the recommendations in the previous report, but now provides long-term planning. The Isles of Scilly and the consultant authority considers that the secondary site will be difficult to adapt for access for pupils with disabilities and have concluded that, because of the overall condition of the building, the best value for money would be to rebuild the school. The consultant authority are in the process of submitting a bid for Building Schools of the Future for a new secondary building combining youth, community and leisure amenities and possibly conference facilities. Consultants have been appointed and the site has been provisionally identified.

110. At present, there is an informal process of monitoring the devolved capital funding but this will shortly be formalised by the consultant authority into written communication between the school and the LEA. Similarly, a service manual will be produced for each site within the next six months covering service maintenance and health and safety issues.

### **Admissions**

111. This was good at the time of the previous inspection. It continues to be so. No fieldwork was undertaken.

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

112. The LEA's strategy to address the standards of provision for pupils who have no school place remains, as at the time of the previous inspection, unsatisfactory. There has been little need to have extensive provision on the islands for education otherwise than at school and no pupils are currently excluded from school. Successful early intervention by the LEA and social services has avoided pupils at risk of exclusion from being excluded.

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However, the LEA doesn't have a plan to meet the entitlement of 25 hours of tuition per week should a permanent exclusion occur. One pupil is not attending school, but is receiving minimum home tuition with a gradual school reintegration programme.

113. For a pupil with a medical need involving a likely longer-term absence from school, appropriate support is planned between the LEA and the school. However, there is no policy linked to the relevant statutory guidance describing the LEA's arrangements for children out of school for reasons of illness.

### **Attendance**

114. Support for attendance is unsatisfactory. No clear strategy or recent guidance for improving attendance has been communicated to the school, nor does any systematic monitoring and analysis of attendance data take place. The target set for 2002/03 in the EDP has been exceeded and the attendance rates are above the national average. Higher rates of absence are recorded during the autumn term, because island families in the tourist industry take their holidays then, but they are lower at other times of the year, particularly the summer term.

115. The LEA does not have a set policy describing its statutory duties to enforce attendance, but prefers to work in partnership with the school, parents and other agencies on an individual basis. While this approach has its advantages, it does not provide a definition for the respective roles of the school and the LEA in relation to attendance issues nor show to parents that unjustified absence will be challenged. Co-operation between the LEA, the school and social services is very effective, providing appropriate and quick support.

### **Behaviour support**

116. Behaviour support is poor. It was good at the time of the last inspection. Deterioration has occurred because no action has been taken for several years to consult on or revise the behaviour support plan. It was devised for a period prior to the establishment of the federated school and references made in it to the former SEN Code of Practice are now out of date. The continuity of support is not linked well enough to school improvement strategies for behaviour support. The contract from the consultant authority for services with the Isles of Scilly includes a revision of the council's plan for arrangements for children with behavioural difficulties. This has the potential to improve the support for behaviour.

117. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory and in the school's primary bases mostly good. Where individual problems with pupils have emerged, purchased support from Cornwall LEA has been available to the school.

### **Recommendation**

**In order for the LEA to provide a coherent strategy and meet its statutory responsibilities for social inclusion in relation to attendance, behaviour support and pupils who have no school place:**

- Establish, as a matter of urgency, an action plan to provide relevant policies, strategic plans and guidance.

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**Health, safety, welfare, child protection and looked after children**

118. Since the last inspection the LEA has continued to meet its statutory responsibilities for child protection. However, in respect of health and safety and school security and looked after children, deficiencies are apparent. These two aspects make the current overall provision unsatisfactory.

119. No policy statement exists to describe the LEA's responsibilities for health and safety and school security. This is unsatisfactory as the LEA's duties are not met. Nevertheless, the council safety officer has responded co-operatively to schools' requests for health and safety and security advice, providing a wide range of general and specific guidance, reports and risk assessment feedbacks. However, there has been no risk assessment of the security arrangements for all school sites.

120. Child protection arrangements were highly satisfactory at the time of the last inspection and continue to be so. The LEA continues to meet all statutory requirements. The Cornwall area child protection committee procedures are detailed in a handbook for use by the LEA. The social services assistant director (children and family services) represents the LEA on the Cornwall area child protection committee. Liaison with the LEA at a strategic level is effective. The school's designated teacher for child protection has received training. Teaching staff have received guidelines and there are designated links on the off islands school bases. Close links between the schools and social services are established. There are no children currently on the child protection register.

121. A draft welfare inspection report of the school boarding hostel has recently been completed by the National Care Standards Commission<sup>2</sup>. The report states that the school and the hostel have a common child protection policy that is tied into area child protection committee procedures and that all the hostel staff showed awareness of child protection and how to report on concerns. The inspection team strongly endorses a recommendation of the report that all adults who have regular contact with children in the course of their school day should be subject to Criminal Record Bureau checks. Boarding hostel policy and practice indicate that bullying within the hostel is not an issue. However, social services and the police along with the LEA and its youth service, are preparing shortly to develop an anti-bullying strategy.

122. A well-developed sense of care for the well-being of children exists among both the LEA's officers and elected members. The LEA and social services co-operate well over the very small number of children on the islands currently in public care. However, a formal corporate parent undertaking has not been made by the council of its responsibility to promote the educational achievement of the children in their care. The LEA has not provided advice and training to the school on how pupils' achievement in this regard may be promoted.

***Recommendations*****In order to ensure that the LEA fulfils its statutory responsibilities for health and safety**

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<sup>2</sup> National Care Standards Commission- Draft report on Five Island's School boarding hostel - July 2003.

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**and looked after children:**

- produce a statement of general policy and school security arrangements within the context of the council's corporate policy under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and include a risk assessment of the security of all the school sites; and
- the council should affirm formally a policy and strategy that defines clearly the actions and accountabilities required as a local authority to promote educational achievement for those children who are looked after in public care.

**Measures to combat racism**

123. While the LEA's measures to combat racism are unsatisfactory, the council has very recently devised a racial equality scheme which requires that all services consider what steps they can take to promote good relations between people of different racial groups. The scheme has no service plan to identify the action needed, including a timetable for a training programme or the timescales necessary to achieve objectives. A further development is the commitment by the LEA to an equal opportunities policy where the action plan for 2003/04 includes the monitoring of racial incidents, bullying and sexual harassment, and training for the school on equal opportunities more generally. These proposals will enable the LEA to implement all the recommendations of the Macpherson inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. This work was undeveloped at the time of the previous inspection and no systematic progress has occurred since then to enable the school governors to fulfil the duties placed upon them to address racism.

124. A curriculum programme in the school has evolved and is well supported by the LEA, to take account of different faith and cultural groups. The initiative has involved teacher visits to both India and Canada. No formal assessment of the impact of the work programme and its initiatives has been undertaken. There are no minority ethnic or Traveller children currently on the islands.

***Recommendation*****In order to ensure that the LEA puts in place measures to combat racism:**

- urgently implement the recommendations of the Macpherson enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence and fully support the governors of the school to ensure compliance.



## **Section 5: Corporate issues**

### **Introduction to corporate issues**

125. There is considerable variation in the council's effectiveness in managing corporate matters for education. Corporate planning and operational work across services are satisfactory and education is a key player in this work. However, in the context of the LEA's functions in support of the school, elected members and officers are failing in their duty to monitor and secure the implementation of plans to improve the quality of education and raise standards. Corporate decision-making about education is secure and the development of effective partnerships to overcome the relative isolation of the education service is good.

### **Corporate planning and implementation**

126. Corporate planning was highly satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and it is now satisfactory. Councillors and senior officers have recently developed a shared vision statement that successfully reflects the needs of the islands and in which education has a key role. The council continues to be imaginative in supporting the weaker members of its community, preserving the quality of life and broadening the opportunities for the population of the islands. The corporate performance plan incorporates the priorities of the Best Value Performance Plan together with the objectives of the EDP and those of other key plans. At this level, the council's planning has a coherent approach across services that is focused on community development and inclusion. This is evident in effective joint work between education, health providers and social services and, in particular, those for adult learning. However, the plans have weaknesses in the detail of targets and in the use of performance indicators that can be measured or demonstrated when the outcomes are evaluated.

127. Procedures for consultation and communication with the community have been broadened effectively to use a range of electronic and paper-based methods together with meetings and open days. Nonetheless some school staff and others feel uninformed about a number of current issues, for example the provision for curriculum developments and SEN support.

128. The chief executive is the secretary for education and chief education officer. He has the responsibility for a wider range of services than his counterparts in other authorities. The implementation of plans across council services is satisfactory, joint actions are becoming more secure and benefits for children and young people are evident. The recent restructuring of the small education service was a well-conceived plan. Council-wide plans are mainly feasible and progress is being made across most of the council's services. The Corporate Assessment of the council confirmed this in 2002, which described the Isles of Scilly as a good council.

129. The implementation of corporate plans for education is poor. It was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. The content of the EDP has so far been mainly aspirational and is not grounded in satisfactory practice. Progress with the action plan since the last inspection of the LEA in 2002 is poor. Key weaknesses in the LEA's implementation of education plans are the limited support that has been given to the school, the low level of

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LEA monitoring of the school and the absence of evaluation and challenge both within the LEA and with the school.

130. Too many functions of the LEA are without policy statements and strategic plans. While rightly pressing for exemption from the high number of policies and strategies required of LEAs over the last few years, the council has failed to develop its own specific education policies, for example for inclusive education or for the welfare and safety of children and young people. Where the LEA is without policies for its key functions, especially in SEN and social inclusion, the council is vulnerable to legal challenge, lacks clarity about responsibilities for officers and the public at large, and is without guidance to inform its own decision-making.

131. The LEA's capacity to perform its educational functions is limited. This has not changed since the first inspection. Currently it has few personnel to monitor, challenge and support the school at a time when it needs this most. The consultant authority's plan is not long established and may conflict with established agreements with neighbouring authorities. It runs the risk of producing fragmented services for the school. The council's overall capacity to improve its education function is poor.

### **Decision-making**

132. Decision-making by the council is satisfactory. Clear procedures exist for committee decisions and the delegated powers to senior officers are explicit in the recently produced scheme of delegation. Members and officers confidently report more efficient practice and the speed and timeliness of the decisions are satisfactory. Systems are now in place to establish greater transparency about financial decision-making. Elected members are improving their evaluation of key decisions for which detailed minutes are kept. Recent training on the roles and responsibilities of elected members has helped clarify the education agenda. The council makes difficult decisions with confidence, for example the establishment of the federated school and the development of structures for lifelong learning. In the main, decisions are made in line with the proposals of the chief executive and officers but elected members receive, where appropriate, relevant and costed options. Generally the advice provided for elected members is satisfactory but sometimes it lacks information on the management implications that are crucial for a small officer team.

### **The leadership of elected members and officers**

133. The leadership of elected members is unsatisfactory. It was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Executive members of the council, in the main, have a clear view of the importance of education and are strengthening their understanding and use of the strategic role. For example, there has been a reduction in the tendency to seek informal discussions of issues. Elected members fulfil their monitoring responsibilities satisfactorily but lack confidence in the scrutiny role. Some members of the council are unable to exert sufficiently robust challenge in the education context, despite training. Elected members hold senior officers to account through an established performance review procedure in which the LEA's targets are the focus of evaluation. The education committee receives monitoring reports on the school from officers and recently from the headteacher. However, there is

little evidence in officers' reports and the education committee minutes to show that this is an LEA that is challenging the quality of education and focusing on the issues that matter most.

134. The chief executive provides strong, clear leadership across a wide range of council services and activities. Strategic leadership of education is poor, having been satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The delegation of the key role for challenging performance and quality in the school to officers who have lacked relevant experience has been a major weakness. Relationships with the school have improved of late, but the absence of robust challenge by officers and the LEA's late intervention have contributed to the deterioration in the quality of education and, in some cases, the standards achieved. The LEA's officers are few in number, have multiple roles in this small authority and, as at the time of the previous inspection, are under severe pressure. They have a limited strategic approach to planning and development for education overall, but it is to their credit that they staunchly approach new initiatives with enthusiasm and a strong commitment to make them succeed.

### *Recommendations*

#### **In order to improve the provision for education:**

- put in place co-ordinated strategies to cover statutory requirements and key priorities;
- ensure, through regular monitoring and robust evaluation, the effective implementation of education plans;
- provide opportunities for the officers responsible for education to develop the necessary skills and knowledge; and
- improve elected members' understanding of their responsibilities through, for instance, shadowing and peer mentoring with colleagues from another local authority.

### **Partnership**

135. The LEA's collaboration with partners to co-ordinate action and deliver priorities continues to be good and is fundamental to the work of the LEA. Partnerships, both formal and informal, operate across a wide range of organisations and council services for children, young people and their families. Community support features strongly in the corporate performance plan and in the work of education officers.

136. Since the previous inspection the islands have made considerable progress with e-learning and lifelong learning and this is promoting a climate of continuing education and qualifications to which pupils can aspire. The Connexions service provides effective guidance to pupils and young adults and supports the school with events to advise on career choices. Work experience opportunities are available for all Key Stage 4 pupils, normally, but not exclusively, with employers on the mainland. The co-ordination of this work is good and the benefits are reflected in the recently increased and high proportion of adults involved in programmes that lead to new skills and qualifications. The LEA has a productive partnership with the local Learning and Skills Council, which supports the use of mentors for

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students, providing tutors on specific courses and advice on course development for the 14-19 age-range. Although these developments are at a very early stage, the islands are exploring the possibility of further education status for some of the island-based training as well as foundation degree units linked to a mainland university.

137. A local strategic partnership operates across the islands with a focus on economic growth and promoting small business development with skills training. The LEA's links with social services are now effective operationally, and the formal links to the West Cornwall primary care trust, together with the police and the general practitioner, provide a secure multi-agency approach to early intervention. Important cultural partnerships are also encouraged, notably through music and literature. The partnership with the diocese of Truro is well established and the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education meets to consider matters of religious education and collective worship in the school. The school continues to use the Cornwall agreed syllabus for religious education and this contributes to the important elements of multi-faith education in the school.

### **Support for early years**

138. Support for early years education, including support and advice for the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), is satisfactory. Although the lead officer does not have an early years background, he has enthusiasm and strong commitment to the work. This is an achievement for a small authority that has problems with recruitment of adequately qualified staff. Advice and support for early years work are currently purchased from Cornwall LEA but plans are in place to make greater use of the consultant authority as part of the wider contract with them.

139. The current practice makes full use of private and voluntary sector providers to maintain maximum availability of places for three-year-olds whose parents want it. There is currently no LEA-funded nursery but all 4-year-olds have access to a primary base either on one of the off-islands or the main island. Transport is available between islands.

140. The EYDCP links a range of children's services across the islands. These include wrap around care, out-of-school clubs and child-minding networks. There is a long established and good relationship with the Cornwall Child Minding Association. The EYDCP monitors provision to ensure long-term sustainability. It promotes career opportunities through a newsletter and provides training to practitioners. There has been a good take-up of courses on offer. Links with the school are well established, and multi-agency working is well developed. Information packs are available for parents on the range of support available and there are effective early identification procedures with SEN support from the Cornwall area network.

### **Support for 14-19 education**

141. The development of the 14-19 curriculum presents many challenges to the LEA and the school. Support for this area is unsatisfactory. Discussions for change are at a very early stage but there are considerable energy and commitment to broaden and improve provision. Standards of attainment by students at Key Stage 4, though generally above national averages, are not high enough. The number of A\* and A grades in GCSE in 2003 does not

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represent high attainment. The LEA has given no leadership to the school in the analysis of attainment data and the progress into further qualifications by post-16 pupils is not recorded.

142. At present, the great majority of pupils follow their post-16 education in a range of settings on the mainland. The school and the LEA have appropriately begun to consider expanding the 14-19 curriculum, restructuring the Key Stage 4 provision and making greater use of the e-learning technology already available in the adult learning centre. In addition, a plan to use the lifelong learning centre as an extended learning base for homework and research is currently seeking funding.

143. The lifelong learning manager is considering a range of innovative proposals for post-16 education to link with further education colleges and universities on the mainland. Currently, with the support of the local Learning and Skills Council, tutored courses are provided on the islands. The number of students following young apprenticeships is rising. Development of the post-16 qualifications available for students, at least in part based on the islands, is being explored in relation to traditional and new business ventures.

#### Recommendations

**In order to establish a 14-19 curriculum for the islands' students that responds to government proposals:**

- in consultation with partners, including the local Learning and Skills Council, put in place a strategy for 14-19 education; and
- investigate the potential for significant and innovative broadening of the provision through a phased plan both for curriculum change, developments in learning, staff development and appropriate funding mechanisms.

## **Appendix 1: Recommendations**

The report makes a number of recommendations.

The following recommendations should be acted upon as a matter of urgency:

### **In order to improve the provision for education:**

- put in place co-ordinated strategies to cover statutory requirements and key priorities;
- ensure, through regular monitoring and robust evaluation, the effective implementation of education plans;
- provide opportunities for the officers responsible for education to develop the necessary skills and knowledge; and
- improve elected members' understanding of their responsibilities through, for instance, shadowing and peer mentoring with colleagues from another local authority.

### **In order to improve strategic planning:**

- ensure that plans for education contain measurable indicators of success and demonstrable improvement criteria;
- establish and implement an effective school improvement strategy to remove the need for special measures;
- sequence activities and timescales for completion, and agree success criteria so that future plans can be realistically met;
- make better use of performance indicators and reports from external sources to monitor and evaluate the success of actions taken; and
- thoroughly monitor and evaluate the provision and support from outside agencies to ensure high quality.

### **In order to increase funding for priorities within the education service:**

- reduce costs elsewhere within the service. For example in:
  - the provision for the free boarding of secondary-age pupils from the off-islands;
  - the post-16 transport support; and
  - the amount devolved to the school from the Standards Fund.

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However, the following recommendations are also fundamental in that they affect the LEA's overall capacity for improvement:

**In order to support continuous improvement:**

- introduce, as soon as possible, performance management for all education department staff.

**In order to focus support on areas of need:**

- work more closely with the school's management to evaluate its successes, raise its aspirations, and set realistic targets for future performance.

**In order to sustain the level of support currently in place at the school:**

- ensure that service provision drives long-term effective improvements in the school.

**In order to improve support for literacy and numeracy:**

- develop more advisory and support roles for school co-ordinators; and
- monitor and evaluate the quality of all support provided by outside sources.

**In order to raise pupils' standards in ICT, improve the information available to the school and give support for ICT administration:**

- put in place an ICT strategy that is shared and consulted upon with the school;
- monitor and challenge the school about the quality of the provision and the educational standards achieved by pupils;
- develop a more robust LEA-wide strategy for communications and safe access to e-mail and websites; and
- develop and implement a central IT support system to integrate both administration and curriculum use.

**In order to support the strategies for Key Stage 3 and gifted and talented pupils:**

- ensure effective planning of activities that will extend the learning and opportunities for gifted and talented pupils; and
- monitor and evaluate the outcomes of developments in the school for Key Stage 3 and for gifted and talented pupils.

**In order to support further the school leadership and governance of the school:**

- ensure the high quality of school leadership and governance through regular evaluation and performance review against measurable targets of success; and
- immediately put in place plans to ensure the appointment of an effective,

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substantive headteacher.

In order to assist the school with its purchasing decisions:

- provide annually, prior to the start of the financial year:
  - details of all services that can be purchased from the council;
  - information on centrally resourced services available to the school; and
  - guidance on service level agreements and standards with external providers.

**In order to improve personnel services:**

- ensure that model policies and guidance for the school are in place and kept up to date.

**In order to improve the LEA's strategy for SEN:**

- devise a clear policy on the full range of SEN that states pupils' entitlements and reflects the government's programme of action;
- in consultation with the school, develop the policy into clear strategic plans that indicate the steps the LEA intends to take towards maintaining inclusion and improving further pupil outcomes; and
- monitor the school's total expenditure on SEN to ensure that all support and resources continue to be deployed effectively.

**In order to revise the Children's Service Plan, the education department should:**

- in collaboration with social services and the West Cornwall primary care trust, review the key outcomes sought for children and young people.

**In order for the LEA to provide a coherent strategy and meet its statutory responsibilities for social inclusion in relation to attendance, behaviour support and pupils who have no school place:**

- establish, as a matter of urgency, an action plan to provide relevant policies, strategic plans and guidance.

**In order to ensure that the LEA fulfils its statutory responsibilities for health and safety and looked after children:**

- produce a statement of general policy and school security arrangements within the context of the council's corporate policy under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and include a risk assessment of the security of all the school sites; and
  - the council should affirm formally a policy and strategy that defines clearly the actions and accountabilities required as a local authority to promote
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educational achievement for those children who are looked after in public care.

**In order to ensure that the LEA puts in place measures to combat racism:**

- urgently implement the recommendations of the Macpherson enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence and fully support the governors of the school to ensure compliance.

**In order to establish a 14-19 curriculum for the islands' students that responds to government proposals**

- in consultation with partners, including the local Learning and Skills Council, put in place a strategy for 14-19 education; and
- investigate the potential for significant and innovative broadening of the provision through a phased plan both for curriculum change, developments in learning, staff development and appropriate funding mechanisms.

## Appendix 2: Record of Judgement Recording Statements for the inspection

No.	Required Inspection Judgement	Grade	NI
<b>SECTION 1 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY</b>			
1	The socio-economic context of the LEA	2	
2	The performance of schools	5	
3	Funding, including the co-ordination of external funding	2	
4	The LEA's strategy for school improvement including the EDP and EiC	5	
5	The progress on implementing the LEA's strategy for school improvement including the EDP and EiC	6	
6	The extent to which the LEA targets its resources on priorities	4	
7	The extent to which the LEA has in place effective strategies to promote continuous improvement including Best Value	5	
<b>SECTION 2 SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</b>			
8	The extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge, and intervention and shared those understandings with schools	5	
9	The extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need	6	
10	the effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve, including the use made of performance data	6	
11	The effectiveness of LEA identification of and intervention in under-performing schools	6	
12	Support to schools for raising standards in Literacy	5	
13	Support to schools for raising standards in Numeracy	5	
14	Support to schools for raising standards in and the curriculum use of information and communications technology	6	
No.	Required Inspection Judgement	Grade	NI
15	Support to schools for raising standards at Key Stage 3	5	

16	Support to schools in raising standards of ethnic minority and Traveller children including the effective deployment of the ethnic minority and Traveller achievement grants	N	N
17	Support to schools for gifted and talented pupils	5	
18	Support for school leadership and management including support for schools effort to achieve Best Value	5	
19	Support to school governors	4	
20	The effectiveness of its services to support school management	6	
20a	Financial services	5	
20b	Human resources	5	
20c	Property services	4	
20d	Services for ICT in school administration	6	
20e	Cleaning and caretaking	N	N
20f	Grounds maintenance	N	N
20g	Catering	N	N
21	The extent to which the LEA is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers	5	
22	The effectiveness of the leadership of services to support school improvement	6	
23	The effectiveness of the deployment of staff to support school improvement	6	
24	The effectiveness of strategic planning of services to support school improvement	5	
25	The effectiveness of the performance management of services to support school improvement	6	
26	The standard of expertise of staff to support school improvement	6	
27	The effectiveness of services to school improvement	6	
28	Value for money of services to support school improvement	7	
<b>SECTION 3 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS</b>			
29	The effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for SEN	6	

30	The effectiveness of the LEA in taking steps to meet its statutory obligations in respect of SEN	2	
31	The effectiveness of the LEA in exercising its SEN functions to support school improvement	3	
32	The extent to which the LEA has exercised its SEN functions to meet the requirements of value for money	3	
<b>SECTION 4 PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION</b>			
33	The overall effectiveness of the LEA in promoting social inclusion	5	
34	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to the provision of school places	4	
<b>No.</b>	<b>Required Inspection Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>NI</b>
35	The effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning	4	
36	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools	2	
37	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to provision for pupils who have no school place	5	
38	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to school attendance	5	
39	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to behaviour at school	6	
40	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to health and safety, welfare and child protection	5	
41	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to children in public care	5	
42	The effectiveness of the LEA in combating racism	5	
<b>SECTION 5 CORPORATE ISSUES</b>			
43	The clarity, consistency, coherence and feasibility of corporate plans	4	
44	The effectiveness of the procedures for implementing and evaluating corporate plans	6	
45	The speed, transparency and effectiveness of decision-making (particularly financial decision-making)	4	
46	The quality of leadership provided by elected members	5	

47	The quality of the leadership provided by senior officers	6	
48	The quality of advice given to elected members	4	
49	The effectiveness of the co-ordination of actions in support of priorities involving collaboration between several agencies	2	
<b>OVERALL JUDGEMENTS</b>			
50	The progress made by the LEA overall	7	
51	The LEA's capacity for further improvement and to address the recommendations of the inspection	6	
52	The overall effectiveness of the LEA	6	

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

- ☐ Grade 1 – Very good
- ☐ Grade 2 – Good
- ☐ Grade 3 – Highly satisfactory
- ☐ Grade 4 – Satisfactory
- ☐ Grade 5 – Unsatisfactory
- ☐ Grade 6 – Poor, significant weaknesses
- ☐ Grade 7 – Very poor, fails to provide effective support to schools