

Inspection report
GREENWICH
Local Education Authority

Date of inspection: September 2003

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Basic information

Name of LEA:	Greenwich Local Education Authority
Address of LEA:	9 th Floor Riverside House Beresford Street LONDON SE18 6DF
Lead inspector:	Malcolm Wall
Date of inspection:	September 2003

Introduction

1. This inspection of Greenwich 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, some of which were provided by the LEA. That material also included school inspection information; HMI monitoring reports; audit reports; documentation from, and discussions with, LEA officers and elected members; focus groups of headteachers and governors; and discussions with staff in other directorates of the local authority and diocesan representatives. In addition, the inspection team considered the earlier Ofsted/Audit Commission report on this LEA (published in January 2000). A questionnaire, seeking views on aspects of the work of the LEA, was circulated to all schools, and its results were considered by the inspection team. The response rate to the questionnaire was 57 %.
3. For each inspected function of the LEA, an inspection team makes up to 52 judgements which are converted into a numerical grade. 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, and indicate the effectiveness of the LEA's performance of individual functions at the time of the inspection. The numerical grades must be considered alongside the comments on the individual functions within the report.
4. Some of the grades are used in the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) profile for the education service. It is intended that the CPA profile for education will be updated annually so that the grades from this inspection will contribute to the next annual assessment.
5. The CPA profile for the education service takes account of the performance of several aspects of the local service, including pre-school and adult education. The CPA for education is composed of a number of inspection judgements, as well as other performance indicators, such as improvement trends at Key Stage 3. The assessment, published in December 2002, gives star ratings for each local authority for a range of local services, for example social services, benefits and environment, whereas this report focuses on the local authority's work to support school improvement.

Commentary

6. The London borough of Greenwich has high levels of deprivation and areas of affluence. The population is ethnically diverse: a third of pupils attending schools in Greenwich are from minority ethnic backgrounds and over 20 % have English as an additional language. Levels of pupil mobility are high in a quarter of primary schools and in two high schools. At the point of transfer to secondary schools, a significant number of more able pupils leave Greenwich to go to selective education in surrounding boroughs. A growing proportion of pupils are from refugee or asylum seeking families.

7. Attainment of pupils in the primary sector is improving, but attainment at all key stages is below, or well below, the national average and that of similar authorities ¹. Rates of improvement are generally above the national trend, but for pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades at GCSE the rate of improvement is well below the national average. Specific groups of pupils, such as boys and some minority ethnic groups, continue to underachieve. The rate of progress in individual schools is too variable.

8. The previous inspection, in the autumn of 1999, concluded that Greenwich provided satisfactory support to schools. The council had improved the performance of its education service, but there was limited evidence of its effect on the standards in schools. Greenwich continues to be an improving LEA and satisfactory progress has been made in improving the quality of service it provides to schools and in carrying out the recommendations of the previous inspection. Expectations of services are high in Greenwich, and most functions are now performed to a satisfactory or good standard.

9. Elected members provide good leadership and scrutiny of education is developing strongly. The council has a clear vision for the regeneration of the economy and promoting the borough as a place in which to live, learn and work. "*Greenwich First*" is the strategy to keep pupils in the borough and is at the heart of an ambitious programme for promoting social inclusion. There is a well developed understanding that services need to be joined up, especially, at the point of delivery to children and young people, and many ground breaking initiatives are at the early stages of development. The implementation of strategies is not as strong in delivering the council's ambitions, particularly for special educational needs and aspects of social inclusion. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality and implementation of operational planning are less well developed. The pace of improvement has, of necessity, been very rapid and, as a result, communicating the vision and direction of change to other partners has sometimes lagged behind the ambition to establish Greenwich as the place for citizens to "*live and learn*".

¹ City of Bristol, City of Derby, City of Nottingham, Lewisham, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, Portsmouth, Rochdale, Salford, Southampton.

Strengths

There are particular strengths in:

- the clarity, consistency, coherence and feasibility of corporate plans;
- the quality of leadership provided by elected members;
- the quality of advice given to elected members;
- the definition of monitoring, challenge and intervention;
- the effectiveness of monitoring and challenging schools to improve;
- support for raising standards in literacy;
- support for raising standards at Key Stage 3;
- support for governors:
- financial services;
- human resource management;
- assuring the supply and quality of teachers; and
- the effectiveness of leadership to support school improvement.

Weaknesses

The following weaknesses remain:

- support for schools for the administrative use of information and communication technology (ICT);
- the implementation of the strategy for special educational needs (SEN);
- support for attendance; and
- support for behaviour.

10. The recently appointed director of education is challenging schools and the education directorate to raise the achievement of all pupils. Partnership working with schools is focused sharply on the child and on improving the life chances of all pupils. It is based on developing collaborative approaches to improvement. Elected members and officers share the commitment to improving services by looking ahead and securing longer-term planning. Following an external review, the council acted promptly to introduce revised and strengthened performance management arrangements. The education directorate is using this development appropriately to secure improvement in operational planning, monitoring and evaluation.

11. The LEA's effectiveness in meeting its statutory duties and working to improve schools is highly satisfactory. It has improved the majority of the services that were unsatisfactory or poor in the previous inspection. Where this is not the case there are

appropriate action plans to improve. The broadly satisfactory performance of the education service is reflected in the outcomes of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for education, published in December 2002. In view of the satisfactory progress made since the previous inspection and the sustained commitment of the council to improving education in Greenwich, the capacity of the LEA to act on the recommendations made in this report is highly satisfactory.

Section 1: The LEA's strategy for school improvement

Context

12. The context of the LEA has not changed significantly since the previous inspection in 1999. Greenwich LEA serves a diverse socio-economic and cultural community; it has a significant proportion of minority ethnic residents. There is a stark contrast between the affluence of Greenwich and Blackheath and areas with high levels of disadvantage such as Woolwich and Plumstead.

13. In 2000, the then Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions index of multiple deprivation ranked Greenwich as the 44th most deprived district of 354 in the country. A third of the population live in the bottom 10 % of most deprived wards in the country. Across the borough, unemployment is 4.4 %, which is above the national average of 3.1 %.

14. Since 1999, the number of pupils has remained stable at about 37,000, and includes a growing number, about 2%, of refugees and asylum seekers. The average rate of mobility of primary pupils, is around 6% but nearly a quarter of primary schools have had rates of mobility between 10 and 20 % during the last two years. The rate of mobility for secondary pupils is more stable, but the intake of many of these schools is affected by the exodus, at the point of transfer from primary schools, of more able pupils to selective schools in surrounding boroughs.

15. Pupils from a wide range of minority ethnic groups represent 36 % of the school population which is above the national average. The percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language is also above the national average.

16. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average at 44.8 and 32.7 %, respectively, for primary and secondary schools. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) is above the national average for primary-aged pupils and well above for pupils of secondary age. The participation rate for 16 year-olds continuing in full-time education and training has risen by 18 % between 2001 and 2002, and provisional data for 2003 indicate this increase is being maintained.

17. The borough currently maintains: 64 primary schools; 14 secondary schools; one stand-alone post-16 setting in the reorganised G Plus network, a collaborative partnership of sixth form centres at five secondary schools in Greenwich; five special schools; six nursery schools; and one secondary pupil referral unit. There are eight Beacon schools, and six secondary schools have specialist status.

Performance

18. Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment has improved from a low baseline. However, standards of attainment continue to be below or well below national averages in all key stages. The progress of pupils between Key Stages 1 and 2 is broadly in line with the average rate of improvement. Between Key Stages 2 and 3, however, the rate of progress dips

and is well below that found nationally. The significant movement of pupils across borough boundaries at secondary transfer is a contributory factor to this dip. This is reflected in the progress pupils make between Key Stages 3 and 4, where the trend is above average progress.

19. Data for 2002 indicate that attainment for all core subjects at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 is below or well below the national figures. Performance at GCSE is also below national averages on most measures, and well below on the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE. Based upon 2002 data, the performance of students in Advanced Level GCE (General Certificate of Education) and vocational qualifications is well below the national performance.

20. Data from Ofsted inspections of schools indicate that the percentage of pupils entering primary schools with poor levels of attainment is well above national figures.

21. Rates of improvement vary. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the rates of improvement in pupils' attainment between 1999 and 2002 have been above the national trend. The rate of improvement at Key Stage 3 in English and mathematics is above the national trend, and well above in science. At Key Stage 4 the rate of improvement for pupils achieving one or more A* to G grades at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and the average points score is better than the national trend. The rate of improvement for pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades is below average.

22. Provisional data for 2003 indicate that the improvement has been maintained at Key Stages 2 and 3, although performance at Key Stage 1 dipped significantly. At GCSE, invalidated data show an increase of 1.8 % in the number of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades. Provisional data indicate the performance of students at Advanced Level GCE has improved faster than the national rate.

23. The findings of the most recent Ofsted school inspections show that the proportion of primary schools that are good or very good overall is well below that found nationally and below that found in similar authorities. In the case of the secondary schools inspected, the proportion of good or very good schools is below that found nationally but in line with those in similar authorities.

24. Attendance in secondary schools is below the national average; it is well below in primary schools. Unauthorised absence in 2002, for primary and secondary schools, is well above the national figure. In 2001, the rate of permanent exclusion from primary and secondary schools was in line with the national average.

Council structure

25. Since the previous inspection the council has implemented a new constitution. The council has 38 Labour, nine Conservative and four Liberal Democrat members. The cabinet comprises ten members from the leading political group, including the leader and two deputy leaders of the council. The portfolio responsibility for education lies with one cabinet member. The overview and scrutiny committee that monitors the work of the executive is supported by scrutiny panels with responsibility for monitoring services, including an education and lifelong learning scrutiny panel.

26. The education directorate is one of six service areas in the council. The directorate was restructured after the previous inspection to respond to the recommendations in the report and to focus more clearly upon the priorities for action. There are seven divisions currently: access and inclusion; effectiveness and improvement; initiatives and partnerships; strategic projects; administration and communication; education finance; and personnel. This revised management structure was established in 2002. The new director has appropriate plans in place to review this, and the head of education personnel has transferred to a new central council human resources function.

Funding

27. The funding for education in Greenwich is good, as it was at the previous inspection. The council's four-year budget strategy made the commitment to fund education above its Standard Spending Assessment (SSA), the amount the government considers should be spent on the service, for the first three years and to passing on funding increases to schools. In the 2002-03 financial year, the final year of the strategy, schools were funded at a level just below SSA. Greenwich's education SSAs, for primary pupils at £3,622 and for secondary pupils at £4,650, are low for inner London authorities (£3,882 and £4,958 respectively), but well above similar authorities (£2,873 and £3,707 respectively) and national averages (£2,797 and £3,582 respectively).

28. Within the funding blocks for education for the 2002-03 financial year: the council spent 34 % above SSA for provision for under 5s, and 6 % above on other education activities. Primary and secondary pupil funding blocks were funded at 95 % and 97 % of SSA and post-16 at 100 %.

29. Greenwich's Local Schools Budget (LSB) is well above that of similar authorities: but below that for inner London authorities. Both primary and secondary LSB had substantial increases of around 10 % in 2001-02. The council delegated 86 % of the LSB, the same level as similar authorities, and met all the targets for delegation. For the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), primary and secondary are well above the national averages and those for similar authorities, but below inner London averages, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1 – ISB	Greenwich £ per pupil	Similar authorities £ per pupil	Inner London authorities £ per pupil	England £ per pupil
Primary individual schools budget (ISB)	2694	2256	2928	2223
Secondary ISB	3518	2985	3667	2929

Data source: CIPFA² Section 52 data 2002-03.

² CIPFA – the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

30. The council's total expenditure on centrally provided services is well above similar authorities and the national average but below the inner London average. All categories of expenditure are well above similar authorities and the national average. Strategic management and access are also high in comparison with inner London authorities, but SEN and school improvement are much lower. Some of these higher costs are because of the school reorganisation currently being implemented. The council has retained funding appropriately to maintain stability during significant changes across the school system.

	Greenwich £ per pupil	Similar authorities £ per pupil	Inner London authorities £ per pupil	England £ per pupil
Strategic management	131	114	111	101
School improvement	39	29	55	30
Access	176	107	158	130
SEN	179	157	234	160
Total	525	407	558	422

Data source: CIPFA Section 52 data 2002-03

31. Capital expenditure has increased significantly since the previous inspection from £6.7m in 1999-2000 to £17.3m in 2002-03, with a similar amount planned for 2003-04 to continue to fund the school reorganisation programme. The funding is a combination of borrowing (£3.4m), capital grant (£13.9m) and capital receipts. In addition, £1.5m of capital funding is used for schools' repair and maintenance.

32. In addition to Standards Fund and School Standards funding, the council has obtained a range of external funding including: Children's Fund, Sure Start, Local Public Service Agreement, New Opportunities Fund, Single Regeneration Budget and Neighbourhood Renewal.

33. Early indications are that, for 2003-04, the council continues to be well funded with schools receiving a 10.8 % increase. The change to funding methodology has increased the centrally held funding required to support the reorganisation of schools, including provision for pupils with SEN and the continued revenue investment in the repair and maintenance budget to reduce the backlog of condition work at schools.

The LEA's strategy for school improvement

34. The strategy for school improvement and progress on implementing it remain highly satisfactory. The previous inspection recommended that: the number of priorities in the Education Development Plan be reduced; a consistent approach to setting measurable targets be introduced; and clear milestones to evaluate progress be set. The LEA has made highly satisfactory progress in carrying out the first two of these recommendations, but further

improvement is needed in the specificity of the milestones used across the priority areas as measures of progress. The most recent Education Development Plan for 2002-07 (EDP2) provides a sound basis for future development with the clear focus on improving the attainment of pupils.

35. The draft strategic plan for the LEA emphasises the promotion of continuous school improvement and the delivery of high standards. Two of the broad themes, raising achievement and promoting and extending inclusion, incorporate the objectives and activities of the six priority areas in EDP 2. The third theme related to the integration of services for children is focused appropriately on the education directorate's actions to support the council's priority to improve the life chances of children and families in Greenwich.

36. The EDP 2 reflects national priorities and retains an appropriate local emphasis. The plan is based on a comprehensive analysis of the outcomes of the previous EDP and a thorough audit of strengths and weaknesses against national and local priorities. Although there is a good match generally between priorities and activities to achieve these, the actions in the plan for addressing underachievement and promoting inclusion are not defined as well in priority four, and do not always state clearly what needs to be done or how it should be accomplished.

37. The links with other plans are explicit and well made, in particular those for Excellence in Cities (EiC), the Education Action Zone (EAZ) and Neighbourhood Renewal. The school improvement strategy is reflected effectively in the education directorate's draft strategic plan and operational service plans, where these are in place. Senior officers understand the need to make planning coherent across the wide range of council initiatives.

38. Performance targets for 2004 and beyond are challenging. There was a shortfall in meeting the targets for 2002 across all key stages. Based on these results and current trends, increases by 2004 of 10 % or more are needed to meet the targets for English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 and five or more A*-C grades at GCSE will require an improvement rate considerably greater than in previous years. Targets for 2004 at Key Stage 3 are more likely to be achieved if the recent improvement in performance is maintained.

39. The LEA has made highly satisfactory progress in implementing its strategy for school improvement. Since the previous inspection, levels of attainment have improved at a faster rate than the national average. Examples of improvement as a result of the successful implementation of the EDP 2 include the good progress at Key Stage 3; the outcomes of school inspections that demonstrate improvement in the leadership and management of schools; and the successful reorganisation of special school provision. Attendance is improving in primary and secondary schools, but not at a sufficient rate to suggest the demanding Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets for 2004 can be achieved. The proportion of schools identified as requiring special measures or having serious weaknesses has been reduced significantly.

The allocation of resources to priorities

40. The LEA's allocation of resources to priorities is highly satisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The recommendations of the report have been implemented

in full in relation to supporting schools with deficit budgets and making the high level of central recharges more transparent to headteachers and governors. However, the education directorate has insufficient opportunity to negotiate either the levels of service required or provided and, despite substantial work to identify and quantify corporate recharges more clearly, the level of central recharges to education remain high.

41. The four-year budget strategy, which started in 2003, is underpinned by a rigorous comprehensive spending review against nine strategic themes. Education is a high priority in the strategy for the regeneration of Greenwich. This focus has enabled the council to pursue and secure a substantial range of additional capital and revenue funding which it deploys effectively. The strategy also commits the council to passing on in full any future increases in central government grant for funding schools, and, if necessary, increasing the council tax to do so.

42. There are highly effective budget monitoring arrangements. Elected members receive quarterly reports which highlight significant variations in performance and the action required to reduce overspends.

43. The Education Directorate's financial strategy, budget making and management are highly effective. The strategy supports the priorities of the school reorganisation plan: redirecting resources released as this is implemented; reducing or redirecting resources from activities no longer compatible with its strategic priorities; and improving efficiencies in its central costs. The education directorate has remained within budget for the past four years. Overspends in the services under most pressure, such as transport for pupils with special educational needs, have been managed within the overall budget. The draft education strategic plan now provides greater direction for individual service plans and is intended to make the financial planning of individual services more consistent.

44. The school funding formula is simple, clear and transparent. Consultation is comprehensive and a model of good practice. The LEA is responsive to the views of schools: for instance it has separated the funding for additional educational needs and SEN, treated primary and secondary schools equally within the formula, and introduced the prior attainment of pupils as a factor in the formula for SEN funding. The Schools Forum carries out its statutory responsibilities, and it has, for instance, commissioned a full review of SEN funding. Satisfactory plans are in place to ensure it can contribute to the council's budget making process.

45. Over half of schools continue to have high uncommitted funding surpluses. The LEA is clear about schools' plans to use surplus funds. At the time of the previous inspection, 21 schools had budget deficits and this has now risen to 24, but seven schools have realistic plans to move out of deficit by the end of 2003-04. Elected members monitor school surpluses and deficits closely. There are strategies in place with individual schools to manage both surplus and deficit positions. Given the volatility of pupil numbers in parts of the borough, the implementation of the SEN and school re-organisations, and the advice to schools from the LEA to adopt longer-term budget planning, this is sound practice.

46. The council has satisfactory arrangements to co-ordinate bids for external funding and is highly successful in securing such funding. Schools receive appropriate guidance about bidding for external funds, but some schools report they find the eligibility criteria and

the many sources of grant funding confusing. The council recognises that more work is needed to strengthen this support.

Strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value

47. Previously, the LEA's approach to promoting continuous improvement was highly satisfactory; it remains so. The council responded effectively to a peer review and the CPA report. Standards in schools are rising and the reviews conducted by the education and lifelong learning scrutiny panel have led to improvement, but the implementation of new corporate performance management processes is at an early stage.

48. The council has moved from its planned programme of service specific Best Value reviews to cross-cutting reviews targeted on services to the community. Education related reviews have covered "Life Chances for Children with Additional Educational Needs" and "Enabling Young People to Achieve and Succeed". The former has resulted in the appointment of a senior officer with responsibility for co-ordinating the work of education, social services and health in procuring services for children with additional educational needs (AEN) linked with the council's pilot Children's Trust.

49. Reviews involve sound external challenge and are planned to lead to improvements in the council's processes as well as to the services provided. The council has a programme of time-limited reviews commissioned by the scrutiny panel. In education, these have included: primary to secondary school transfer; teacher recruitment and retention; and early years and childcare. Elected members ensure that time-limited reviews engage a range of expert inputs and user contributions, promote challenge, and lead to specific recommendations for improvement.

50. A useful handbook on Best Value reviews ensures they are scoped, implemented and reported appropriately. Elected members demand and receive clear, useful and relevant reports. The education and lifelong learning scrutiny panel has involved users and stakeholders very effectively.

51. The council has implemented a revised cross-council approach to performance management. While this has been achieved within tight timescales, it is not yet used consistently in all services to support operational service planning.

52. The Best Value Performance Plan 2003-04 has been agreed with the external auditor. Difficulties with the reliability of performance indicators, identified in previous plans, have been addressed successfully. Lead officers and cabinet members take responsibility for monitoring key performance indicators that support strategic and service priorities. A new format for reporting on these indicators, in particular those in the lowest quartiles, has been introduced. This is beginning to be used consistently by the cabinet to compare performance across service areas and take remedial action where appropriate.

Section 2: Support for school improvement

Summary

53. Sound progress has been made in improving the LEA's support for school improvement since the previous inspection. Activities are clearly related to priorities, staff are deployed appropriately to address them and accountability has been strengthened. New initiatives have been well managed. With the exception of support for ICT in school management and provision for attendance and behaviour, support for school improvement is now either satisfactory or highly satisfactory. There are particular strengths in the support for finance, human resources, and the supply and quality of teachers.

The effectiveness of services to support school improvement

54. The effectiveness of services to support school improvement is highly satisfactory, and they provide satisfactory value for money.

55. The leadership of the assistant director for the effectiveness and improvement service (EIS) is good and has led to marked improvements in the alignment of staff to address key priorities. The role of link advisers has been strengthened further, with a greater emphasis on secondary management expertise, and increased focus on monitoring 14-19 education. The deployment of EIS staff is highly satisfactory. Management of most other services to support school improvement is also highly satisfactory, and is good in human resources, finance and the recruitment and retention of teachers.

56. Strategic planning is highly satisfactory and well focused on the education service priorities. Planning in the effectiveness and improvement service is good, and satisfactory or highly satisfactory in other services with the exception of support for attendance. Service plans and monitoring are, however, more variable, with the exception of the inspection and advisory service where service planning is good and monitoring thorough. Elsewhere, not all service plans provide a sufficient direction for teams, relate activities to priorities and resources, or define outcomes with sufficient precision.

57. Performance management of services, satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, is still satisfactory but with sound plans in place to secure further improvement. A corporate performance management scheme has been introduced into the education directorate this year and has helped to set specific priorities for work, linked to the Education Development Plan. There are sound systems for the induction of new staff and for identifying professional development needs.

*Recommendations***In order to improve education planning to support the LEA's strategic priorities:**

- establish clear plans for all services, aligned to the priorities of strategic plans, which identify key activities, costings and outcomes; and
- link these to targets for performance management.

58. At the time of the last inspection, the expertise of school improvement staff was highly satisfactory, and it remains so. There have been significant improvements in realigning the roles, responsibilities and expertise to the services' priorities. For example, the effectiveness and improvement service has appropriately recruited additional support for secondary schools. In addition there is increased expertise for early years, but it is not yet clear that this will be sufficient to accelerate improvement at Key Stage 1. Consultants are more widely used to provide additional expertise or cover gaps: for example, secondary school improvement advisers, and subject advice for modern foreign languages. Other services such as the educational psychology service, contribute well to school improvement.

Monitoring, challenge, intervention and focusing of support on areas of greatest need

59. The LEA's strategy for monitoring, challenge, intervention and support is good overall, with particular strengths, for example in the use of performance data to identify where support and intervention are needed and to offer proper challenge to all schools. All weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed.

60. The targeting of support on areas of greatest need was unsatisfactory previously; it is now highly satisfactory. The clear priorities and well-focused service planning in the effectiveness and improvement service lead to clearly targeted and differentiated support for schools. On the other hand, weaknesses in the rationale for the provision of support for behaviour and attendance impede the LEA's effectiveness overall in raising achievement and improving social inclusion.

61. Schools are clear about the LEA's procedures for monitoring, challenge and intervention. Developments in the strategy are consulted on thoroughly. All schools now have a clear rationale for the level of support offered and this is appropriately differentiated. Link inspectors have an agreed focus within the service for their termly visits, with additional time to monitor specific aspects such as post-16 provision. The LEA is currently piloting a system of peer review with six primary schools which is intended to promote greater independence and self-management among schools. Some advice is given to schools on alternative sources of support from other providers, but the LEA does not yet have a well-developed or consistent system to do this.

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

62. The LEA's work in monitoring and challenging schools, satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, has improved and is now good. Target-setting, which was not sufficiently robust at the time of the last inspection, is now based in good data on pupils'

performance and progress. The target-setting forum, which establishes the LEA's targets, represents a range of stakeholders, including the schools and the council. Schools agree that the challenge from the LEA is properly grounded in evidence from the data, incorporates the school's knowledge of pupils, and sets high expectations particularly for underachieving groups. The use of data for monitoring schools is now good, for example to identify areas for improvement in rates of progress. The annual self-review, undertaken by all schools with their link adviser, is highly valued. It draws on a good range of quantitative and qualitative information for schools to evaluate their own performance and to identify targets for further action. The process is challenging, supportive and a key element of school self-evaluation. The self-review profile is closely linked to the LEA's system for intervention and additional support. Most monitoring reports are of good quality, with incisive evaluations of schools' strengths and weaknesses that offer clear advice on action needed. They are valued by headteachers and governors.

63. The previous inspection indicated the need to improve the use of performance data and ensure transfer of key data from primary to secondary schools. These recommendations have been addressed, and data are transferred electronically from primary schools to secondary schools in September. The data are well presented and accessible to schools. The data enable schools to benchmark their performance against national trends and other schools in the LEA, to set challenging targets and to monitor the progress of under-performing groups, including specific groups of minority ethnic pupils. Training in managing and interpreting data has continued, sometimes with advice for individual schools. Consultants for the national strategies have given headteachers and co-ordinators training and support in the analysis and use of data for planning and setting curriculum targets. This has been a particular strength in the Intensifying Support in Primary schools project (ISP).

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

64. The LEA's identification of and support for under-performing schools are highly satisfactory. Monitoring of school performance and progress is rigorous, and improvements in the management and co-ordination of support to schools causing concern have made services more effective in the earlier identification of schools facing difficulties.

65. The overall number of schools identified by Ofsted as requiring much improvement has reduced since the last inspection. Schools in this category make satisfactory progress, most within a reasonable timescale. Nonetheless, more remains to be done: four schools have been found to require special measures since 2000, and two are currently still in special measures. The LEA has successfully reduced the number of schools with serious weaknesses. At the time of the last inspection, four schools were in this category; of these, one has been subsequently placed in special measures, but the others no longer have serious weaknesses. Only one school is judged to be underachieving.

66. Of the LEA's eight secondary schools facing challenging circumstances, one is judged by Ofsted to require substantial improvement. A further two are on the LEA's list of schools causing concern, in recognition of their vulnerability. Most schools facing challenging circumstances are making highly satisfactory progress. In line with the recommendation of the previous inspection, the LEA has reduced the number of schools on its own list of schools needing additional support; twelve of these schools are recognised as

needing additional support because of specific circumstances such as reorganisation or staffing shortages.

67. The LEA has strengthened its early identification procedures and has intervened successfully to support the most vulnerable or under-performing schools. Monitoring by the senior management team and elected members is very systematic, with regular meetings and case conferences to review progress and identify targets. The case conference is part of a cycle of monitoring and support which is generally effective, though there have been some difficulties, for example, in issuing minutes and agendas in good time to allow governors and head teachers to prepare. Although packages of support are based on a thorough identification of need, some secondary heads reported that the support was not always well co-ordinated or negotiated with the school to ensure manageability and maximum effect. Primary schools which had received support report that it was well planned and co-ordinated.

Recommendation

In order to improve support for schools identified as seriously under-performing:

- ensure that the necessary support and training are planned with the headteacher and governors to ensure that they are coherent and programmed on a manageable timescale.

68. The LEA is effective in identifying weaknesses in leadership and management, and informing headteachers and governors of concerns. Where necessary, formal warnings are issued. Advisory or acting headteachers have been effective in some schools, as has support for some governing bodies, for example the provision of clerking or additional governors. There is phased and well planned withdrawal of support for schools which no longer need intensive support.

Support for literacy

69. Support for literacy was good at the time of the previous inspection. The LEA's self-evaluation and other data indicate that it remains good. Accordingly, no fieldwork was conducted during the inspection.

Support for numeracy

70. Support for numeracy is highly satisfactory, improved from satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Progress has been satisfactory, though more remains to be done to accelerate and sustain progress. The service is well led and has good capacity for further improvement.

71. The performance of pupils at Key Stage 1 and 2 remains well below the national average and that in similar authorities. Although the LEA did not meet its target in 2002, the rate of improvement between 1999 and 2002 was above that found nationally, and in Key Stage 1 was well above that in similar authorities. Performance, however, declined at Key Stage 1 in 2002 and 2003 and the LEA has now established a clear strategy to reverse this. The rate of progress will need to be accelerated if the LEA is to meet its target.

72. Support is well targeted to need, based on a detailed analysis of performance data. The LEA monitors its schools well and has identified where there is significant variation in the rates of improvement between schools and different groups of pupils. Support is increasingly focused on reducing such variability. Co-ordinators in particular benefit from good support with management, for example in analysing the optional test results for Year 5 pupils in order to plan effective action in their own schools. Support is highly regarded by those schools receiving additional support. Standards have risen at a significantly faster rate in these schools, particularly those in the intensifying support project. Good use is made of leading numeracy teachers. Some light touch schools report that central training has not reflected local needs sufficiently and this was reflected in the school survey.

73. Enrichment activities such as the mathematics competition and challenge have successfully encouraged participation by schools. Links with other teams, for example the special educational needs and ethnic minority achievement grant (EMAG) teams, have been strengthened with the development of an overall primary strategy. A well-planned strategy to improve performance at Key Stage 1 is to be put in place this year, focusing on teachers' subject knowledge and the teaching of reception classes.

Support for information and communication technology (ICT)

74. Support for ICT was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. The LEA's self-evaluation and other data indicate that it remains satisfactory. Accordingly, no fieldwork was conducted during the inspection.

Support for raising standards at Key Stage 3

75. The LEA's implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy is good and schools rate the support they have received highly. This function was not inspected previously. A particular strength of the support is the consistency across all curriculum strands, including modern foreign languages. The strategy is well managed. Consultants are appropriately informed and provide expert guidance. More remains to be done to improve attendance, and to ensure continuity and progression between Key Stages 2 and 3, although appropriate plans are in place to ensure the effective implementation of these strands as the strategy moves forward.

76. The performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science is well below the national average, but in line with that found in similar authorities. The rate of progress between 1999 and 2002 was broadly in line with that found nationally in English, mathematics and science. Provisional data for 2003 indicate that progress of pupils at level five and above has been sustained, particularly, in English and mathematics. The interim target for pupils achieving level 6 in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 3 has been achieved. With this sustained improvement the LEA is on track to meet its targets for 2004 in English and mathematics. Science exceeded its targets for 2002, and the rate of improvement in science was well above that in similar authorities. However, staffing difficulties in several schools have led more recently to a slowing down of the rate of progress. This is confirmed by the provisional assessment data for Science for 2003, and a significant improvement in performance will be needed if the target for 2004 is to be achieved. This is recognised and the LEA has a comprehensive strategy to bring about improvements.

77. The strategy for Key Stage 3 is well developed in terms of curriculum support. Involvement in development work funded by the single regeneration budget, and in the national pilot for Key Stage 3, has enabled the strategy to be well established. Schools in Greenwich have benefited from the expertise gained when the project was extended to new subjects and through the support for teaching and learning across the curriculum. Support is provided for all schools, well differentiated according to need. Higher-achieving schools have received effective support to improve standards and the quality of teaching. Schools value highly the coherence of the strategy and the expertise of all the consultants. Most schools report that the support is well tailored to their needs and has significantly improved teaching, learning and their expectations of what pupils can achieve.

78. Links with other initiatives are sound, including Excellence in Cities (EiC) and the city learning centre (CLC). Support for transition between Key Stages 2 and 3 has been more limited. However, the LEA has made this a priority for the current year with the appointment of a consultant to lead this aspect. The strategy for behaviour and attendance has yet to be formulated, in line with the national timetable for the strategy, though a consultant has been appointed. The need to co-ordinate these aspects across the directorate to achieve a rapid and sustained improvement in the attendance of pupils in Key Stage 3 is well understood by officers.

Support for minority ethnic groups, including Travellers

79. Support for minority ethnic groups was highly satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. The LEA's self-evaluation and other data indicate it remains highly satisfactory. Accordingly, no fieldwork was conducted during the inspection.

Support for gifted and talented pupils

80. Support for gifted and talented pupils is highly satisfactory. This function was not inspected previously. The LEA has a clear strategy to build on the long-standing and successful practice in schools, and has consulted widely about a borough wide framework for meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils in recent months.

81. There is a wide range of successful projects and well-managed initiatives to support gifted and talented pupils, many of them carried out as part of the firmly established EiC programme. These have included summer schools, masterclasses and specialist sessions for more able pupils in a range of subjects. There are effective links between the gifted and talented strand and other components of the EiC programme. In particular, the city learning centre has promoted initiatives to enhance learning, especially through programmes that make innovative use of new technologies.

82. Most schools are responding well to the high expectations and ambitions for improvement held by the LEA. Each school has a co-ordinator who is expected to maintain an informative register of all the gifted and talented pupils in the school. Evaluating the provision and practice for gifted and talented pupils is an integral part of schools' self-reviews, and link inspectors engage the schools in debate about challenging targets for these pupils.

83. The rates of improvement by more able pupils at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are broadly above the national trend, although the standards of attainment remain below national averages. Trends in improvement at the highest level at GCSE have not shown any discernable increase. The LEA recognises that provision for gifted and talented pupils needs to be at the core of all schools' activities. As part of the drive to improve further, the LEA is developing a framework and policy for work with the gifted and talented; is increasing support across all schools; and is establishing tracking systems to monitor the progress made by gifted and talented pupils.

Support for governors

84. Support to school governors was good at the time of the previous inspection. The LEA's self-evaluation and other data indicate that it remains good. Accordingly, no fieldwork was conducted during the inspection.

Support for school leadership and management

85. Support for school leadership and management is highly satisfactory. This area was not previously inspected. Support for senior managers has improved significantly and there is good capacity for further improvement. Support for middle managers has improved, but not sufficiently to have an effect, as yet, on the overall quality of their leadership and standards achieved.

86. Improving school leadership is a fundamental strand in EDP 2. Monitoring of strengths and weaknesses in school leadership is robust. Increasingly, schools are engaged in self-review of leadership and management, helped by the range of financial and performance data provided by the LEA. Much dissemination of good practice takes place, for example through the literacy and numeracy strategies, Beacon schools and advanced skills teachers, although some schools feel that such practice needs to be communicated still more widely. The LEA has strengthened leadership and senior management through a good programme of support and training. The effectiveness of this support is confirmed by Ofsted inspection data, in particular in primary schools. Induction for new headteachers is systematic, though less well planned for acting headteachers. Leadership and management skills have been developed successfully by programmes of training, notably in the Education Action Zones (EAZs), and are being disseminated to other schools. Link inspectors provide effective support and advice to headteachers and governors. Where necessary, weak management is challenged and addressed appropriately.

87. Middle management is improving, as confirmed by Ofsted inspection data, but more slowly. Training and support are addressing the needs of middle managers. For example, Beacon schools and advanced skills teachers offer support that is well targeted; the national strategies have begun to contribute significantly to improvements in middle management and are beginning to address ways of developing management capacity in teachers other than the head of department to improve continuity within schools. The programme for continuing professional development has recently been aligned to provide training for teachers at all stages of their career.

The effectiveness of services to support school management

88. The overall effectiveness of services to support school management was not inspected previously: it is now satisfactory. The previous inspection found that the quality and level of support across a range of services had improved but not consistently. The LEA has responded to the specific recommendations of the previous report and is developing a more strategic approach to the delivery of support services. The performance of most of the individual services is satisfactory or better.

89. The council has recognised that it has not supported schools well enough for them to become discerning purchasers of services, although individual services have made some progress towards this. Schools are offered flexible contracts by most service providers and have opportunities to influence the service offered. However, the provision of clear service level agreements, consistent advice and quality assurance on alternative providers or efficient billing arrangements are uneven. External evaluation, commissioned by the council, confirmed these weaknesses. An immediate outcome has been the establishment of the services to schools board with a clear remit to improve the consistency, quality and value for money of the council's traded services. The board's purpose is to help schools specify and purchase services using Best Value principles and develop a 'services to schools' brochure with clear service specifications, standards and prices. This development is long overdue.

90. **Financial services** are good, having been unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. The services are rated very highly by schools. There is a proper and clear distinction between core services and those that schools can purchase. Financial systems work effectively and efficiently with smooth electronic transfer of financial data.

91. The majority of schools buy the bursarial service offered by the LEA. Training programmes for bursars and finance officers are regarded highly. Consistent financial reporting was implemented smoothly. Schools receive excellent financial benchmarking data. The data are used well by officers to support and challenge schools on budget management issues.

92. Schools have been well supported by the finance service during the recent reorganisation, and the implementation of the current education budget. Officers managing service budgets are very well supported in their budget making and monitoring.

93. **Human resources** is a good service that is very well regarded by schools, having been highly satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. The service has been valued particularly during the reorganisation of schools. It deals effectively with a range of personnel issues for the authority and schools, and responsibilities are very clearly delineated. The council has challenged poor leadership and management in schools and provided effective support to tackle underperformance. The council maintains an up-to-date and comprehensive personnel handbook with model policies and procedures. Schools are well supported in dealing with individual cases and have confidence in the advice they receive. Few referrals reach industrial tribunals. The service is proactive in raising potential issues about employment practice for headteachers, governors and the education directorate.

94. The council and the professional associations and trades unions maintain a generally positive climate of relations, for example in dealing with workforce remodelling, with regular

meetings and informal communications. The human resources function has been restructured to undertake a more corporate role. This is timely to support the work on the council's pilot Children's Trust, although the need to maintain a good standard of service to schools is also recognised.

95. The human resources team has plans in place to provide more choice to schools as part of a service package that is differentiated. Schools have issued employment contracts since 1994. These are well monitored and followed up. Sound links between payroll and personnel systems exist, but do not enable data to be extracted electronically. The current reliance on manual analysis is cumbersome and not sustainable.

96. **Property services** are satisfactory, having been unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. The recommendations from the previous report focused on implementing the findings of a completed Best Value review and establishing a new relationship between schools, the education directorate and the property services division of the council. Sufficient progress has been made, but there remains a lack of clarity for schools about the distinction between traded property services and asset management planning.

97. An annual meeting takes place with each school to discuss the priorities for the asset management plan and the link to the school's development plan. Schools can have flexible maintenance contracts and charging mechanisms are clear, but detailed service level agreements are not yet available. Emergency repairs are carried out quickly and efficiently.

98. Although the support property services provides for the school reorganisation programme and dealing with the extensive repair and maintenance backlog has been positive, project management has been inconsistent. The quality and value for money of building works have been variable. Weaknesses also remain in the commissioning role of the education directorate for property services, and in communication between education, property services, and schools.

99. **Information and communication technology (ICT)** strategy, infrastructure and support for administration were unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, and remain so. The inspection recommended that the council should ensure greater consistency of project management arrangements for the use of ICT both for the curriculum and for administration. Although the council is now addressing some of these weaknesses through its own self-evaluation, secondary schools, in particular, remain dissatisfied with the services provided.

100. The council's recent ICT strategy has focused clearly on delivering the government's aims for improving ICT in schools. Much has been achieved, although there has been a particular difficulty with broadband. Schools are able to transfer financial data electronically but the pupil level annual school census was managed via e-mail. Most secondary schools have linked curriculum and administrative systems. Many schools operate common hardware and software platforms and the council is able to work with those that are different. Primary schools are able to purchase appropriate technical support. Secondary schools purchase support from their own choice of provider, but the council has not provided adequate advice to secure the quality of these services. Training for the systems commonly used by schools is delivered locally at a reasonable cost to schools.

101. Until recently, the council lacked an overarching strategy for ICT and failed to invest sufficiently in its own infrastructure requirements. Information systems are not able to store, handle or communicate efficiently a range of pupil and other key information across the education directorate. Schools are asked to provide information more than once and officers frequently have to re-enter data manually, a major barrier to improvement. The council is tackling this rather belatedly through a partnership with an external ICT provider to increase the level of investment and meet the commitment to e-government, but the new management information system is not scheduled to be fully operational until 2005.

102. Electronic communication is patchy, underdeveloped and poorly rated by schools. Clear protocols for sharing information and for communication are not yet agreed with schools. All schools have e-mail, but there are difficulties in exchanging information. There is an adequate, though underdeveloped, council website.

Recommendations

In order to improve ICT for administration:

- bring forward the timetable for implementing the education management information system; and
- introduce and monitor the implementation of an information management protocol with schools.

103. **Cleaning and caretaking, grounds maintenance and catering services** are satisfactory. These services were not previously inspected. Following a review of direct services, the council intends to consult with schools about greater flexibility in the services offered, to establish a single point of contact and co-ordinate the efficiency of billing. There are plans in place to enable schools to purchase a mixed package of services tailored to their own needs or those of a group of schools.

104. Each of these services has secured appropriate external quality standards. Pricing and costing mechanisms are reasonably clear. Regular client surveys are now being brought together into one annual survey. All participate in relevant benchmarking groups. Complaints are dealt with promptly. A particular feature of these services is their commitment to providing work experience, training and an intermediate labour scheme to provide post-16 employment opportunities for pupils excluded from school in Years 10 and 11.

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

105. The LEA's work in assuring the supply and quality of teachers is good. This area was not inspected previously. Action has gathered pace over the last year and has led to improvements, in particular to support the retention of good quality teachers and headteachers. The strong corporate commitment to recruit and retain staff is reflected by the introduction of key worker schemes for first time homebuyers and the recent time-limited review of teacher recruitment and retention by the relevant scrutiny panel.

106. In response to high levels of teacher turnover and unfilled vacancies, the LEA has developed successful recruitment and support packages for specific groups, such as overseas trained teachers, newly qualified teachers and black minority ethnic teachers. It has used a range of effective strategies to recruit teachers, including overseas visits funded by schools, a teacher associate scheme, and an interactive website. Work to recruit a higher proportion of minority ethnic teachers is developing. Applications from newly qualified teachers from a black minority ethnic background are rising, reaching a creditable 18 % of all applications in 2002.

107. The LEA has recently improved its strategy and initiatives to retain teachers. It maintains data that allow it to analyse the composition of the workforce, to make comparisons with other LEAs, particularly in London, and to inform the strategy for recruitment and retention. Data show a small fall in unfilled vacancies for teachers and fewer headteachers leaving their current posts. The strategy for continuing professional development has been drawn up in partnership with schools, and arrangements for effective monitoring and evaluation are in place. It is an entitlement for all staff, in order to give teachers a sense of professional esteem that will help to keep them in Greenwich. Training courses are increasingly based on an analysis of school inspection reports and the needs of the LEA, schools and individual teachers. The LEA has actively supported the work of school staff development co-ordinators to ensure that continuing professional development is varied, and to monitor and evaluate the take up and effect of the provision.

108. The LEA has made a sound start on workforce remodelling. A co-ordinator has been appointed, and an advisory group has been established. The job descriptions for classroom assistants have already been revised. An audit of the progress being made in schools to introduce workforce remodelling was being carried out at the time of the inspection.

Section 3: Special educational needs

Summary

109. Aspects of Greenwich's special educational needs (SEN) provision are satisfactory, but the implementation of the strategy for SEN is unsatisfactory. In the previous inspection, the arrangements for SEN were unsatisfactory. The LEA has reorganised its special schools, opened designated special provision in mainstream schools and changed the system of funding for pupils with SEN, in line with the recommendations of the previous report.

110. The strategy for SEN is highly satisfactory in terms of stated principles and broad intentions which are fully in line with national policies for inclusion. Pupils with SEN have more opportunities to access mainstream education, and the LEA has become more effective in developing mainstream schools' capacity to meet the needs of many pupils with SEN. However, significant weaknesses in implementation include the lack of clarity about forward plans, the timetable for developments, and the relative responsibilities and key accountabilities of schools and the LEA. Although the objectives and next steps in the strategy for SEN have been drafted, the audit of the use of delegated resources and monitoring of the quality of special educational provision in schools are not robust as yet.

The LEA's strategy for special educational needs

111. The implementation of the strategy for SEN is unsatisfactory. There has been progress since 2000, which has been achieved with the general support of schools, but there are weaknesses in communication with the full range of stakeholders about the operation of policies and intended strategic developments.

112. Information for schools and parents has not been sufficient to eliminate confusion about the operation of the LEA's framework for SEN. Schools lack clarity about the strategy that has been in place since 2000. They are unsure about the relative responsibilities and accountabilities of the LEA and of themselves for identifying, assessing and providing for the needs of children who have SEN but no statement. The LEA has proposed broad principles and objectives for the next phase of strategic development to groups of stakeholders. Consultation is about to begin on a new draft strategy for SEN, which sets out an appropriate agenda for 2003 and beyond, but has yet to be clarified with schools and other partners. There is, however, uncertainty about how far the LEA is moving to support schools by brokering the procurement of services to enhance or replace what is available from centrally-provided services. The outcomes of the LEA's review of SEN funding will inform the strategy, but as yet financial planning lacks the detail required.

*Recommendations***In order to improve the implementation of the strategy for SEN:**

- ensure schools and parents understand who is responsible and accountable for the identification, assessment and provision for the special educational needs of pupils without a statement; and
- ensure the alignment of objectives, actions and financial plans in the revised strategy for SEN.

113. The LEA funds schools for pupils with less severe learning difficulties through a formula, rather than new statements of SEN. The proportion of pupils for whom the LEA maintains a statement peaked in 2000, but remains above that of similar authorities and LEAs nationally. The percentage of pupils in special schools is above national comparators at primary and secondary levels, although the proportion is reducing. However, the full effect of the LEA's strategic changes will only be seen once those who are currently in special schools and those with existing statements for less severe learning difficulties move on from school.

Statutory obligations

114. The LEA is taking reasonable steps to meet its statutory obligations, as it was when previously inspected. The previous report identified the need for the LEA to improve its completion of statements of SEN within statutory time limits. In response, the LEA has improved the administration of statutory assessments and has directly employed therapists, in part to provide assessments. It has worked with other agencies to identify factors that delay the provision of advice. Some 63 % of statements were prepared within 18 weeks in 2003, taking into account delays caused by late provision of advice from other agencies. This is better than the average performance in all LEAs nationally, but below that for similar authorities. Where advice from other agencies is provided on time, performance has improved so that 95 % of statements were completed on time in 2003.

115. The LEA has organised suitable training on the revised SEN Code of Practice and the SEN and Disability Act, including advice on obtaining and responding to the voice of the child. It has arranged a disagreement resolution service and expanded the parent partnership service. However, the parent partnership is not always perceived as offering an entirely independent service. The LEA also arranges for translation, interpretation or signing support if necessary. Information to parents has been limited, but the parent partnership is about to publish a range of information on SEN for parents. The LEA intends to increase the information on the council website to support this development.

116. There are criteria for the initiation of a statutory assessment, but their interpretation depends too much on an acquired understanding by those involved, and they are not fully understood by schools. The LEA is now helpfully issuing a handbook for schools that will include its recently finalised statement on the expectations of what schools will provide from their budgets for pupils with SEN but without a statement.

SEN functions to support school improvement

117. The LEA is providing satisfactory support for school improvement. The previous inspection found the LEA's exercise of this function to be unsatisfactory. Recommendations were to reduce the turnover of staff in the educational psychology service and reduce the number of exclusions of pupils with SEN. Both have been satisfactorily addressed, and primary schools especially view the effectiveness of educational psychology support as having improved significantly.

118. Evidence from Ofsted inspections of schools shows that all secondary schools and about 80 % of primary schools are good (and none are poor) with respect to how well pupils with SEN learn. The LEA is promoting the Inclusion Chartermark for schools to review and evaluate their policies and practices on inclusion. There is evidence that schools rate highly the work of the inspector and advisory teacher for SEN, who are supporting and challenging schools in implementing their own strategies for SEN. Special schools are starting to be supported and challenged in setting appropriate targets for pupils. Link inspectors discuss targets for all mainstream children, and proposals to formalise the measurement of the progress of the lower achieving 20 % of pupils are under active consideration in school.

119. The quality of support for behaviour has been adversely affected by the relocation of the service to a special school that is now in special measures. The LEA is supporting the acting headteacher effectively to address difficulties in the school. Heads of support services provided satisfactory evidence of work in progress to monitor service effectiveness and to develop criteria to prioritise the allocation of resources to individual pupils and schools. Planned improvements include the establishment of an early years inclusion team and the reorganisation of some of the support services so that they are provided by outreach from special schools.

Value for money

120. The extent to which the LEA exercises its functions to assure value for money is satisfactory. The LEA has increased the delegation of the resources to support SEN in mainstream schools, in particular to meet behavioural needs, in line with the recommendation in the previous report. In addition the LEA has reduced the number of out of borough placements in the independent sector, reorganised special schools and moved to formula funding for those less severe learning difficulties that would previously have attracted funding through a statement of SEN.

121. The LEA has a clear financial strategy that supports the SEN strategy. Resources released by the reorganisation of special schools and reductions in the number of statements and out of borough special school places, are being recycled progressively to support and extend inclusion in mainstream. The current budget indicates that the LEA spends more on SEN than similar authorities, but this is to support schools to implement the strategy for SEN and the reorganisation of provision. Planning and control of the SEN budget are good. Expenditure is closely monitored and overspends avoided.

122. Resources for mainstream pupils with statements are allocated by reference to criteria and reviewed regularly. Resources to meet the needs of other children with SEN are

allocated through using measures of prior attainment, as well as allocating funding for additional educational needs. Although a high proportion of the SEN budget is devolved to schools, the programme to audit and monitor provision is in the early stages of implementation; however, the pace has been slow. As a result, schools are not yet confident that funding is matched to needs or that they will have continuing capacity to fund fully the requirements of all statements in the longer term. The LEA does not yet have a complete understanding of how schools deploy funds that are delegated for SEN, and, as such, cannot be sure that resources are leading to improved pupil outcomes.

Recommendations

In order to improve value for money for SEN:

- restate and clarify with schools the rationale for delegating resources to meet the needs of pupils with SEN but without a statement; and
- implement the auditing and monitoring programme across all schools.

123. The Schools Forum is carrying out a review of the ways in which funding released by the reorganisation of SEN is used to ensure realisation of the overall strategy. The LEA has also decided to carry out a time-limited review of SEN provision to inform any revision of the formula for funding SEN. The LEA's capacity to achieve its strategic objectives for 2003 and beyond will depend on incorporating the findings of these reviews and those of the audit and monitoring programme, into detailed financial plans to support the SEN strategy.

Section 4: Promoting social inclusion

Summary

124. The LEA's overall effectiveness in promoting social inclusion was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and remains so. Cross-agency working and the quality of information about children out of school have been improved, in line with the recommendations in the previous report. Educational inclusion is a high priority for the council and is a clear thread that runs through all policies. Integrated service planning for children and families is developing and there are a few examples where resources across agencies have been pooled to maximise the effectiveness of joint working. A structure linking the council and the Primary Care Trust is being created through proposals to establish a Children's Trust.

125. All functions, apart from support for behaviour and attendance, are performed at least satisfactorily. Permanent exclusions have been reduced and provision of education for pupils who have no school place has improved, although rates of reintegration remain low. Schools are developing a collective responsibility for the children and young people in Greenwich. Partnership working between secondary schools has been strengthened by the newly agreed protocol for casual admissions. Arrangements are in hand to discuss similar agreements for the casual admission of pupils to primary schools.

The strategy to promote social inclusion

126. A key strength is the strong corporate drive for improvement and the over-riding principle of social inclusion that underpins major corporate plans, including the draft strategic plan and other statutory plans for education. There is clear vision and leadership at both political and senior officer level and joint working across directorates is developing.

127. The realisation of the strategy is not yet as strong as the plans and intentions, although services to support educational inclusion have improved and are mostly satisfactory. Significant strides have been made in ensuring that comprehensive information and data on the most disaffected and vulnerable children are available, and in setting challenging targets for underachieving groups. Procedures and protocols for the identification, referral and tracking of children and young people are under discussion, although, as elsewhere, the practicalities and technicalities in exchanging data are still a long way from being agreed.

128. The LEA and schools are successful in accessing a wealth of national projects and grants to stimulate developments, and there are relevant and innovative initiatives to support inclusion, which are managed effectively. There is also evidence of productive, mutual co-operation with other key agencies. Police officers are attached to three secondary schools as part of the 'Safer Schools' initiative. It is too early to see the sustained effect of this venture but early signs indicate that the police officers are starting to work successfully in challenging any criminal behaviour, promoting attendance and supporting students in the transition from primary to secondary schools.

129. The strategic overview of how these projects interrelate is at an early stage of development. Monitoring and evaluation of initiatives are variable, and the LEA is not always in a position to demonstrate the additional value that projects are adding to school improvement.

Recommendations

In order to improve and develop the LEA's strategy for social inclusion:

- clarify procedures for the monitoring of plans; and
- establish regular and clear evaluations, across all services, of the effectiveness of the implementation of plans and initiatives and the value that is being added to school improvement.

The supply of school places

130. The planning of school places is highly satisfactory; at the time of the previous inspection arrangements were satisfactory. The report recommended that a review of post-16 places be undertaken. A major reorganisation of schools is underway, in line with this recommendation.

131. The council consulted widely and effectively on its proposals for reorganisation. It took the opportunity to incorporate within the reorganisation a review of early years and for primary provision, to phase out where possible, mixed age classes and intakes of less than one form of entry. The council is implementing a phased reorganisation of special school provision, in line with the policy for the inclusion of pupils with SEN. The review of post-16 provision, supported with capital investment from the Learning and Skills Council, resulted in the implementation of the G Plus network of schools.

132. The planned overall reduction in surplus places has not yet been achieved fully. There are surplus places as new schools fill and schools due to close receive reduced numbers of pupils. However, surplus sixth form capacity has been reduced substantially, capacity has been increased at popular secondary schools and the council is achieving a better balance of places in primary schools. The reorganisation of schools is being well managed and benefits from the strong and positive leadership of elected members. The council has clear and effective mechanisms for planning school places, modelling the need for places in areas of growth is well co-ordinated by officers across the council. Pilot work is under way to strengthen this further, and improved ICT links are planned to monitor trends in admissions to predict the demand for school places.

133. The school organisation plan is clear, comprehensive and accessible. The School Organisation Committee (SOC) is representative and has played a significant role in the statutory processes for school reorganisations. However, not all stakeholders are as clear that it is an independent body, rather than a forum for implementing the plans of the council. Despite the challenge Greenwich faces in planning school places, the SOC has only met once this year, which has provided insufficient opportunity to consider the implications of future proposals for changes in the nature and character of schools.

Asset management

134. Asset management planning is satisfactory. This area was not inspected previously. However, the progress to meet the first stages of the Department for Education and Skills requirements for asset management planning was reported. Although, the council has yet to comply fully with the DfES requirements for asset management planning, it has been highly successful in securing resources from the DfES and the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for the strategy to reorganise schools. As a result of the effective management of capital resources, sound progress is being made with the implementation of the strategy and in improving the condition and suitability of schools.

135. Responsibility for education asset management planning is shared between the education directorate and the council's property service. The strong working relationship has enabled a complex programme of school reorganisation to be managed on time and within budget. However, there is no service level agreement, and the education service cannot define its requirements or negotiate how resources are targeted to achieve its priorities. Pressures on the council's budget meant that funding was not made available to undertake suitability assessments in accordance with the requirements of the DfES. Although these have now been completed, the capacity of schools is still being assessed. As a result, the council has limited autonomy and must seek DfES approval for individual projects.

Recommendation**In order to secure clear agreements about the levels and nature of support for asset management planning:**

- introduce a service level agreement that specifies the level of service available to the education directorate from the council's property service.

136. The council is committed to improving the fabric of schools not included in the reorganisation by giving priority to work to reduce the backlog of the most serious repairs, currently estimated at £3.5m. An ambitious target has been set to carry out all these projects by 2004-05. The council has bid to become a private finance initiative (PFI) pathfinder, jointly with two other London authorities, to develop extended schools through a social enterprise model, the Greenwich Education and Achievement Trust (GrEAT). It is working closely with the schools involved, and ensures that other schools and stakeholders are informed about the development.

137. There has been insufficient explanation to schools about how priorities are identified and resourced for the asset management plan. Potentially, the council has some good information available. There is an interactive website, an occasional newsletter and a building guide for schools to support them in their role. These have not been supported by adequate training and briefing. An education property group includes representative headteachers and chairs of governors, but the outcomes of the work of the group are not known widely. Weaknesses in communication have limited the commitment of schools to asset management planning and their understanding of it.

*Recommendations***In order to secure schools' understanding of and commitment to best practice in asset management planning:**

- introduce a specific training programme for schools and governors on asset management; and
- ensure that schools and governors understand the procedures for agreeing priorities for building projects and are informed about the outcomes of the process.

Admissions

138. The LEA's management of admissions is satisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection it was highly satisfactory but, subsequently, unsatisfactory management and the high level of staff turnover led to a deterioration of the service. Through the services of an external consultant, the management of the service has been strengthened, staff have received training on appeal case work, and schools report that the most recent admissions process was better managed. The rate of successful appeals has reduced, and appeals are well managed to enable all pupils to join the induction programmes at their new schools in the term before they transfer.

139. Changes to the transfer procedures for pupils moving from primary to secondary school are now being introduced as result of the time-limited review by the education and lifelong learning scrutiny panel. As a consequence there are suitable plans to improve the training of independent appeals panel members and increase the number of governors from ethnic minority communities recruited to these panels. There is now more secure liaison between primary and secondary schools and the transfer of information is improving. A new admissions module is now being installed to track the movement of pupils between schools, and produce reports regularly for the re-integration officer to identify and follow up pupils at risk of being missing from school.

140. Links between the admissions team and the officer responsible for the planning of school places are being strengthened to improve the analysis of trends for individual schools and across areas. Phased admissions at new, extended and closing schools are better managed as a result.

141. Information for parents is clear and available in a number of community languages. The admissions process itself is transparent for parents to follow. Greenwich currently meets 88 % of parents' first preferences, which is close to the national average. Admissions criteria for LEA and diocesan schools have been changed recently to strengthen the priority given to children looked after by the local authority, in line with the council's commitment to vulnerable children.

142. The Admissions Forum has not met for nearly a year, and is yet to consider arrangements for co-ordinating and operating pan-London admissions by 2005.

Recommendation

In order to ensure that the council is well prepared for implementing co-ordinated admissions and the Pan-London strategy:

- introduce a scheduled programme to enable the Admissions Forum to consider fully the implications of the strategy.

Provision of education for pupils who have no school place

143. Provision of education for pupils who have no school place is satisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection, the LEA's provision was unsatisfactory. The quality of management information has improved, in line with the recommendation in the previous report. A comprehensive database has been established to track pupils who are out of school for any reason, with clear referral routes to a range of agencies and services. The LEA has tightened up procedures so that excluded pupils are now normally placed within 15 days and all receive full-time provision. The LEA is determined to tackle intractable issues in partnership with headteachers.

144. The LEA has reorganised the pupil referral unit (PRU), following a Best Value review. Since January 2003, provision for secondary aged pupils has been brought together in newly adapted premises, which offer much improved facilities with separate units for pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4. Pupils follow a broad curriculum and almost all pupils leave with a GCSE qualification and a clear set of options for future education or training. Provision is focused on meeting the needs of individuals and enabling them to work towards accredited courses. The PRU works closely with the local college of further education and independent providers, and holds regular meetings with them to monitor pupils' progress and attendance. In consultation with headteachers, the LEA has developed a range of alternative provision for pupils at risk of exclusion, mainly through dual placements.

145. Since Easter 2002, separate provision has also been made for pupils of primary age who are permanently excluded at a new school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The LEA intervened within a year of the school opening, but this did not prevent the school from requiring special measures following the Ofsted inspection in May 2003. However, in a short space of time, the quality of provision for excluded pupils has been brought up to an acceptable standard, and effective arrangements are in place for flexible placements to support those pupils at risk of exclusion.

146. Rates of reintegration are low and this inhibits the LEA's ability to offer flexible arrangements and dual placements at the PRU to schools as part of their continuum of provision. This is of particular concern to schools at Key Stage 3 where there is no alternative provision available. Improving the rates of reintegration is now a top priority and the new director has very recently injected impetus by securing with secondary schools a protocol for accepting excluded pupils from September 2003, along with a new agreement on casual admissions. These agreements are planned to ensure that the capacity of the PRU is used more effectively. Although the agreement supports the commitment to inclusion, it has been too long in coming, and it is too early to assess its potential contribution to the council's priorities.

*Recommendations***In order to better meet the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion:**

- improve the rates of reintegration and the quality of support for pupils moving back into mainstream schools; and
- provide greater flexibility at the secondary PRU, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 3.

147. The PRU provides a unit for the hospital team and for young mothers who are unable to attend school. Most young mothers are encouraged to continue at school, with free childcare provided up to age 19, and are well supported by an advocate who works effectively in partnership with their school where appropriate. The minimum requirement of ten hours is made for pupils with medical needs and pupils are reintegrated whenever possible. The LEA has effective arrangements in place to monitor the education of the 56 pupils whose parents choose to educate them at home.

Attendance

148. Support for attendance is unsatisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection, the LEA's support for attendance was poor. There has been some improvement but this has not been sufficient. Recommendations from the previous report are still being tackled.

149. Attendance is in line with that found in similar authorities, but below the national averages for both primary and secondary schools. Attendance rates have fluctuated since the previous inspection, although there are indications of an upward trend in secondary schools with the unpublished 2003 levels at their highest for ten years, and within reach of the 2004 target. Primary school attendance is of concern to the LEA, with almost half of all schools triggering the attendance criteria for schools causing concern. Unauthorised absence remains high in both phases and compares unfavourably with similar authorities. The LEA fell far short of its targets for unauthorised absence in 2003.

150. There have been a number of strategies to improve attendance, but these have had limited effect because of poor co-ordination, inconsistent practice and ineffective targeting of resources. The shortage of education welfare officers has limited the LEA's ability to tackle high levels of unauthorised absence. The absence of an accurate audit of need and a work focused service plan means that the LEA is not yet in a position to target the deployment of resources effectively. The need to improve the collection, analysis and application of data is identified as a priority in the EDP.

*Recommendation***In order to raise levels of attendance and to tackle high rates of unauthorised absence:**

- urgently improve the analysis and use of data at school and LEA level to ensure that the deployment of resources is based on an accurate identification of need.

151. Weaknesses are recognised and, in the light of the council's clear commitment to improving the service, proposals for action are appropriate. The attendance advisory service (AAS) has been relocated recently within the education directorate. It is being restructured to define clearly its purpose in relation to school improvement. The new principal officer is leading an ambitious and appropriate improvement plan that includes developing clear criteria for attendance in order to categorise schools in need of support. Guidance is being revised, supported by a sharper focus and improved co-ordination. Accountability, through regular staff and management meetings, supervision and performance management, has been tightened up to tackle the unacceptable inconsistency within the service. The turnover of staff is still too high but the service is almost at full complement and most schools now have an allocated officer. The school survey painted a bleak picture, with schools in all phases dissatisfied with the service. During the inspection, those schools interviewed confirmed the previous poor level of service, but pointed to the early signs of improvement since the beginning of term.

Behaviour support

152. The LEA's support for behaviour is unsatisfactory. It was poor at the time of the last inspection. Limited progress has been made towards enabling all schools to develop confidence in dealing with pupils who behave poorly as recommended in the previous report. The LEA is giving this the highest priority, and has set itself a challenging agenda to co-ordinate and to improve support for behaviour. There is satisfactory capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

153. Improvements have been made in policy, guidelines and procedures. Permanent exclusions have reduced substantially in secondary schools and compare favourably with national averages and with authorities in inner London. However, fixed-term exclusions in secondary schools have increased by over a third, and are the highest they have been for five years. One secondary school accounts for a third of these fixed-term exclusions and for half of the pupils placed at the PRU currently. Permanent exclusions in primary schools are more volatile, and in 2002 were above the national average, although there has been a substantial decline in 2003. The overall exclusion rate of minority ethnic pupils has been reduced significantly by the effective work of a parent-pupil advocate who has challenged schools to examine their practice. Permanent exclusions of looked after children have also fallen sharply, in line with the council's stated priorities for this group of young people.

154. The behaviour support plan is well written, building positively on previous planning and targets. The LEA recognises the need to establish a clear continuum of high quality provision, and to improve monitoring and evaluation to ensure that schools are able to identify and intervene early to support pupils at risk of exclusion. A wide-ranging review of provision for children with emotional and social behavioural difficulties (ESBD) has been launched with a clear and detailed remit and timetable for reporting. Two special schools that admit pupils with ESBD are causing concern to the LEA. Rates for the re-integration of excluded pupils are poor, there are insufficient alternative placements for secondary pupils and there is too little flexibility, particularly for pupils at Key Stage 3.

*Recommendations***In order to improve support for behaviour:**

- establish and co-ordinate the continuum of provision across all phases; and
- clarify schools' responsibilities to use their resources to identify and intervene to support children at risk of exclusion.

155. Greenwich is one of 34 LEAs in the national behaviour improvement programme (BIP). In a very short timescale, the LEA has appointed key staff to the project. Despite enthusiastic staff who are co-ordinating the programme, and the appointment of the behaviour education and support teams (BEST), schools' use of resources is at an early stage in effecting institutional change. Behaviour audits do not yet lead provision and in the main, school systems continue to respond to crisis. Management of additional resources by headteachers and the LEA have yet to be integrated into mainstream practice. The LEA has formed a working group to co-ordinate BIP and the strategy for attendance and behaviour at Key Stage 3 to ensure coherence, but is not yet in a position to provide clear guidance to schools. Independent evaluation of secondary provision highlighted weaknesses in the role of learning support units (LSUs) in reducing exclusions and significant inconsistencies in the approach taken by schools. There has been insufficient focus on outcomes for LSUs and learning mentors, and monitoring of academic progress has been unsatisfactory. At the same time as fixed-term exclusions rose in secondary schools, the use of pastoral support plans (PSP) reduced significantly. It is a significant weakness of the strategy that high excluding schools have made least use of PSPs.

*Recommendation***In order to improve support for behaviour for schools in the behaviour improvement programme:**

- provide a stronger lead to ensure that they make effective use of the time-limited resource and disseminate good practice to mainstream schools.

Health, safety, welfare and child protection

156. The LEA's provision for child protection is satisfactory and reasonable steps are taken to meet statutory obligations. During this inspection, fieldwork was carried out to follow through procedures for child protection, but not for health and safety.

157. The council has responded effectively to national developments. Training has taken place on the joint framework for the assessment of children in need and their families. The council and its partners have started work to develop an identification, referral and tracking system to support local preventive strategies. They have rightly recognised the need to agree the purposes and protocols before commissioning any supporting information and communication technology.

158. Greenwich has one of the highest proportions of children on the child protection register. The social services inspectorate reviewed the council's child protection arrangements recently and expressed concerns that, at an operational level, inter-agency work was relatively undeveloped. Representation by the education directorate on the area child protection committee has been strengthened and the council is working with partners, both locally and across London, to develop procedures to improve child protection. The speed of response by social services to concerns from schools is reported by schools to be satisfactory although variable. This is recognised by the council. The structures and systems of the initial response team are under review to ensure that referrals are dealt with promptly.

159. Each school has a designated teacher for child protection. Although training is well-regarded, not all of these teachers have taken the opportunity to update their training within the last two years. The local authority has identified this as an issue and has set suitable targets for improvement.

Recommendation

In order to improve the provision for child protection:

- ensure that all designated teachers receive the required training on a regular basis.

Looked after children

160. Support for looked after children was satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. The LEA's self-evaluation and other documentation confirm that the quality of support has been maintained. Accordingly, no fieldwork was conducted during the inspection.

Measures to combat racism

161. Support for combating racism is highly satisfactory, as it was at the previous inspection. The council provides a good lead to schools by drafting and circulating clear policies and procedures for tackling all forms of racism. Arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of initiatives to combat racism, and for the dissemination of good practice, have been strengthened, in line with the recommendations in the previous report. With the support of a wide range of partners, there are well-established initiatives to counter racism, tackle anti-social behaviour and encourage respect for diversity that are highly regarded by schools.

162. The council demonstrates a strong commitment to combating racism. Work on race equality has been directly informed by the McPherson Inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, which has particular resonance for Greenwich. The council is in the final stages of the completion of an external evaluation to assess how well it has responded to managing racism during the last ten years, which has included looking at the specific contributions of both council and partnership initiatives. Working groups, involving head teachers, have developed good quality and highly regarded materials, including an equalities guide and comprehensive guidelines for schools on dealing with racist incidents.

163. The LEA has drafted clear policies and procedures for combating all forms of racism. The procedures for recording racist incidents in schools are well defined, although, until recently, a very few schools have not, despite reminders, submitted incident forms. The LEA provides detailed feedback to schools on key facts and trends in statistics over the last three years, and has provided recommendations and a helpful check list for schools and governors in assessing that appropriate policies, procedures and review mechanisms are in place. It is recognised, however, that there has not always been sufficient follow through to explore the quality of schools' provision and this is earmarked for attention. Self-evaluation materials have been disseminated recently to schools and training courses on the use of materials have been scheduled throughout the current academic year. The monitoring of the quality of provision is to be carried out by link inspectors.

164. Equality targets have been set as part of the social inclusion and justice strategy, including those to improve the proportions of teachers and governors from minority ethnic groups. The council adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government, and achieved the first level by March 2003. The education service is making sound progress within plans to move to level 2 of the standard by March 2004, although the arrangements for the monitoring of progress against targets are inadequate.

Section 5: Corporate issues

Summary

165. Education continues to benefit from the purposeful leadership of senior officers and the good leadership of key elected members who together are determined to improve schools and raise standards of attainment. There is a strong commitment to partnership working. The cabinet member for education, and the leader of the council are very well informed and share a clear understanding of the role for education in tackling social deprivation. Education is a high priority within the corporate strategy. The administration is explicit about its commitment to regeneration, to improve the life chances of children and young people. This is reinforced by the far-sighted three-year political commitment to pass on funding to schools in line with the rises in education spending granted by central government. The scrutiny function is developing strongly, and the well thought out work programme provides a good basis for informed debate within the directorate and cabinet.

Corporate planning

166. The quality of corporate planning for education is good. At the time of the previous inspection, the council's commitment to corporate planning was moving away from being short term and budget-driven. The introduction of the first EDP had successfully refocused the council, the education directorate and schools on raising standards of attainment. Since this time good progress has been made with corporate planning. Corporate plans reflect a shared vision, and are clear and well sequenced.

167. The "Greenwich Strategy" and the corporate performance plan recognise that education, and, more specifically, improvements in the performance of schools and the achievements of pupils and promoting inclusion, are essential elements in the regeneration process. The aim to make Greenwich the place to learn is one of five key priorities. The recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) report commented positively about the sustained focus the council has had on its ambitious programme of regeneration and the improvement of educational performance. Raising attainment is reflected fully in corporate plans and the council's CPA improvement plan. The education directorate's draft strategic plan outlines in detail the contribution to be made by each part of the service to corporate plans. Statutory plans for key aspects of the raising achievement agenda and some service plans such as that for the effectiveness and improvement service, are linked closely to the second year action plans for the Education Development Plan (EDP) and the achievement of the council's overarching priorities.

168. The financial feasibility of the corporate plan is underpinned by careful and detailed work at directorate level. The funding allocated to education reflects fully the priority given to it in the corporate plan. Corporate and directorate planning are well aligned with the financial planning cycle and emphasise the efficient co-ordination of plans to maximise improvement. There is a highly satisfactory system for reviewing the implementation of corporate plans. Lines of accountability are clear and monitoring takes place at both directorate and corporate level. Monthly monitoring by the directorate and regular reporting to the cabinet forms the basis for very effective financial control of the education budget. A

quarterly review of key performance indicators provides the cabinet, and the cabinet member for education, with sound monitoring data. The overview and scrutiny committee and the education scrutiny panel increasingly use these data to plan work programmes, to review the implementation of agreed plans and projects, and to challenge where appropriate.

169. The implementation of corporate planning is highly satisfactory. The education directorate produces clear and informative reports, for the cabinet and the education scrutiny panel, on standards in schools and progress with statutory plans. Progress with service plans is reviewed by heads of service and the education management team. Suitable plans are now in place to use the revised corporate performance management process to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of operational teams within the directorate and across the council. The education management team are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the directorate; the well-targeted EDP, the best of the operational service plans and the director of education's self-evaluation of the service, drawn up in advance of this inspection, confirm this.

Decision-making

170. The speed, transparency and effectiveness of decision-making are highly satisfactory. The cabinet takes decisions in an open and accountable way, and has a well-publicised forward plan that contains the details of key decisions and dates when they will be taken. The cabinet has taken controversial and difficult decisions to proceed with the reorganisation of post-16 and special educational needs provision. The consultation process, led by the education scrutiny panel, was extensive and well managed with a wide group of stakeholders. The restructured post-16 provision, despite the inevitable concerns of those schools losing their sixth forms, now has widespread support and is a model of good practice.

171. The council is ambitious and willing to consider radical solutions in order to improve educational attainment. It has recently consulted effectively with a range of stakeholders, including the diocesan authority, to explore the opportunity of drawing in external funding to develop a city academy on the site of an existing maintained high school. The council has consulted widely on a number of difficult issues facing the educational community in Greenwich. However, in some instances, stakeholders and partners do not always feel that their views have been taken into account sufficiently in decisions that are made.

The leadership provided by officers and elected members

172. The quality of leadership provided by key elected members is good. The leader of the council and other elected members interviewed in this inspection regard the education service, together with schools, as crucial to bringing about the improvement and regeneration needed in the borough. The cabinet member for education is very well informed, and although new to the education portfolio, is taking every opportunity to visit schools to listen to the views of staff and governors. Schools share and support fully the aspiration and determination of elected members to raise standards.

173. The cabinet member for education works closely with the director of education and the senior management team, and chairs the education strategic planning group. The work of

elected members in monitoring education policy and the work of the education directorate is well developed. The education and lifelong scrutiny panel's role in leading time-limited reviews is developing strongly and there is sound evidence about the educational improvement brought about by these. The panel has moved well beyond merely receiving reports from officers. It has shown itself very capable of conducting rigorous and systematic examination of policy decisions, often engaging expert and external advice in the process. This has led to thorough and independent recommendations to the cabinet on key education concerns.

174. The leadership provided by senior officers is highly satisfactory. The restructuring of the directorate and the appointment of a new director of education and a number of senior officers, has strengthened further the focus on school improvement and raising the achievement of all pupils. Nevertheless, these changes are quite recent and have not had time to demonstrate long term effect. The council's education team is highly professional and skilled but its capacity, in the areas of access and inclusion, and improving the performance and quality of early years and reception provision, has been stretched by the competing demands of the educational improvement agenda undertaken since 2000.

175. The quality of advice provided to elected members by senior officers is good. For example, good advice, based on a range of suitable options, enabled the council to undertake the successful review of post-16 and SEN provision. Communication, consultation and the provision of information within the education directorate are satisfactory. There is an increasing level of trust and respect between schools and officers. The new director of education has reinforced the shared vision with schools and there is a sense of optimism about the future direction of education policy in the borough.

Partnership

176. Partnership with other agencies is highly satisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection, the council had a strong commitment to partnerships and had created appropriate structures for joint work, consultation and communication. This continues to be the case and highly satisfactory progress has been made in developing the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and the 14-19 partnership arrangements with schools and external partners.

177. The education directorate is developing a more strategic approach to the partnerships supporting the corporate regeneration and neighbourhood renewal priorities of the council. The Local Strategic Partnership, chaired by the leader of the council, has a clear sense of direction and commitment to adding value to the borough. There is ownership of the "Greenwich Strategy" and the priorities for joint action within the council and with external partners. The partnership with the voluntary sector has been less strong, but it is improving and is now satisfactory.

178. The partnership with the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education is effective, despite a concern about funding for activities to support the preparation of the new agreed syllabus for religious education. The partnership with the diocesan authorities is improving, in particular in relation to proposals for school organisation, and for schools causing concern. Links between education and health are good at the strategic level. Work at

the operational level to co-ordinate the strategy for preventive services is developing well. Relationships at a strategic level are good between education and social services. At an operational level there are clear protocols for work between the directorates, but both need to improve the planning, implementation and follow through of initiatives. Links with the police are good. The LEA offers effective support to joint initiatives such as those focused on preventive strategies and restorative justice.

179. Highly satisfactory partnership working to support developments in the **early years** is well established and productive. There have been a high investment in and commitment to early years education, and the Greenwich Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership's strategy has been successful in providing local parents with a range of options for childcare and early years education. The borough has access to universal part-time provision for all three and four-year-olds, and is committed to supporting families in deprived areas through the development of community nursery schools, the establishment of early years centres, Sure Start programmes and a range of Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives. It is recognised that access to childcare remains an issue for a number of lone parents and the partnership has strengthened working relationships with local employment and training agencies.

180. Support for **14-19 education** in Greenwich is highly satisfactory and developing well. Most of the work has concentrated on the reorganisation of post-16 education and the development of the GPlus network. The partnership work between schools, Connexions, the local Learning and Skills Council and Greenwich Community College has been very effective. The breadth of the curriculum on offer is appropriate and students benefit directly from common timetabling arrangements, collaboration between providers to ensure minority subjects are viable and the range of post-16 qualification routes that are increasingly provided. Students with special educational needs are now well provided for by the network. Relationships are strong, with the shared objectives to extend collaborative work and broaden the curriculum opportunities for pupils and students.

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 value for money for SEN:

- restate and clarify with schools the rationale for delegating resources to meet the needs of pupils with SEN but without a statement; and
- implement the auditing and monitoring programme across all schools.

In order to better meet the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion:

- improve the rates of reintegration and the quality of support for pupils moving back into mainstream schools; and
- provide greater flexibility at the secondary PRU, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 3.

In order to raise levels of attendance and to tackle high rates of unauthorised absence:

- urgently improve the analysis and use of data at school and LEA level to ensure that the deployment of resources is based on an accurate identification of need.

In order to improve support for behaviour:

- establish and co-ordinate the continuum of provision across all phases; and
- clarify schools' responsibilities to use their resources to identify and intervene to support children at risk of exclusion.

In order to improve support for behaviour for schools in the behaviour improvement programme:

- provide a stronger lead to ensure that they make effective use of the time-limited resource and disseminate good practice to mainstream schools.

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

In order to improve education planning to support the LEA's strategic priorities:

- establish clear plans for all services, aligned to the priorities of strategic plans, which identify key activities, costings and outcomes; and
 - link these to targets for performance management.
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In order to improve ICT for administration:

- bring forward the timetable for implementing the education management information system; and
- introduce and monitor the implementation of an information management protocol with schools.

In order to improve the implementation of the strategy for SEN:

- ensure schools and parents understand who is responsible and accountable for the identification, assessment and provision for the special educational needs of pupils without a statement; and
- ensure the alignment of objectives, actions and financial plans in the revised strategy for SEN.

In order to improve and develop the LEA's strategy for social inclusion:

- clarify procedures for the monitoring of plans; and
- establish regular and clear evaluations, across all services, of the effectiveness of the implementation of plans and initiatives and the value that is being added to school improvement.

We also make the following recommendations:

In order to improve support for schools identified as seriously under-performing:

- ensure that the necessary support and training are planned with the headteacher and governors to ensure that they are coherent and programmed on a manageable timescale.

In order to secure clear agreements about the levels and nature of support for asset management:

- introduce a service level agreement that specifies the level of service available to the education directorate from the council's property service.

In order to secure schools' understanding of and commitment to best practice in asset management planning:

- introduce a specific training programme for schools and governors on asset management; and
 - ensure that schools and governors understand the procedures for agreeing priorities for building projects and are informed about the outcomes of the process.
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In order to ensure that the council is well prepared for implementing co-ordinated admissions and the Pan-London strategy:

- introduce a scheduled programme to enable the Admissions Forum to consider fully the implications of the strategy.

In order to improve the provision for child protection:

- ensure that all designated teachers receive the required training on a regular basis.

Appendix 2: Record of Judgement Recording Statements for the inspection

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

17	Support to schools for gifted and talented pupils	3	
18	Support for school leadership and management including support for schools effort to achieve Best Value	3	
19	Support to school governors	2	NI
20	The effectiveness of its services to support school management	4	
20a	Financial services	2	
20b	Human resources	2	
20c	Property services	4	
20d	Services for ICT in school administration	5	
20e	Cleaning and caretaking	4	
20f	Grounds maintenance	4	
20g	Catering	4	
21	The extent to which the LEA is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers	2	
22	The effectiveness of the leadership of services to support school improvement	2	
23	The effectiveness of the deployment of staff to support school improvement	3	
24	The effectiveness of strategic planning of services to support school improvement	3	
25	The effectiveness of the performance management of services to support school improvement	4	
26	The standard of expertise of staff to support school improvement	3	
27	The effectiveness of services to school improvement	3	
28	Value for money of services to support school improvement	4	
SECTION 3 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS			
29	The effectiveness of the LEA's implementation of the strategy for SEN	5	
30	The effectiveness of the LEA in taking steps to meet its statutory obligations in respect of SEN	4	

31	The effectiveness of the LEA in exercising its SEN functions to support school improvement	4	
32	The extent to which the LEA has exercised its SEN functions to meet the requirements of value for money	4	
SECTION 4 PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION			
33	The overall effectiveness of the LEA in promoting social inclusion	4	
34	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to the provision of school places	3	
No.	Required Inspection Judgement	Grade	NI
35	The effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning	4	
36	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools	4	
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	4	
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	5	
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	4	
41	The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to children in public care	4	NI
42	The effectiveness of the LEA in combating racism	3	
SECTION 5 CORPORATE ISSUES			
43	The clarity, consistency, coherence and feasibility of corporate plans	2	
44	The effectiveness of the procedures for implementing and evaluating corporate plans	3	
45	The speed, transparency and effectiveness of decision-making (particularly financial decision-making)	3	
46	The quality of leadership provided by elected members	2	
47	The quality of the leadership provided by senior officers	3	
48	The quality of advice given to elected members	2	

49	The effectiveness of the co-ordination of actions in support of priorities involving collaboration between several agencies	3	
OVERALL JUDGEMENTS			
50	The progress made by the LEA overall	4	
51	The LEA's capacity for further improvement and to address the recommendations of the inspection	3	
52	The overall effectiveness of the LEA	3	

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.