



**OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION**

**INSPECTION OF
GREENWICH
LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

January 2000

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

CONTENTS

PARAGRAPHS

INTRODUCTION	1 - 3
---------------------	-------

COMMENTARY	4 - 13
-------------------	--------

SECTION 1: THE LEA STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Context	14 - 15
Performance	16
Funding	17 - 18
Council structure	19 - 21
The allocation of resources to priorities	22 - 26
The Education Development Plan	27 - 33
Early Years	34 - 35
Libraries/music/arts/outdoor and physical education	36 - 37
Recommendations	

SECTION 2: THE LEA STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND SUPPORT TO RAISE STANDARDS

Monitoring, challenge, support, intervention	38 – 41
Support to schools on target-setting	42 - 43
Support for literacy	44 - 46
Support for numeracy	47 - 49
Support to schools causing concern	50 - 52
Support to headteachers	53 - 55
Support to governors	56 - 58
Recommendations	

SECTION 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Corporate planning	59
Education planning	60 - 66
Management services	67 - 80
Evaluation	81
Recommendations	

SECTION 4: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVISION

Strategy	82 - 85
Improvement	86 - 91
Analysis	92
Recommendations	

SECTION 5: ACCESS

The supply of school places	93 - 96
Admissions	97
Asset management	98
Health, Safety, Welfare, Child Protection	99 - 100
Attendance	101 - 102
Provision of education otherwise than at school	103
Behaviour support	104 - 107
Ethnic minority children	108 - 111
School improvement	112
Measures taken to combat social exclusion including responses to the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence	113 - 115
Recommendations	

APPENDIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. This inspection was carried out by OFSTED in conjunction with the Audit Commission under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997. The inspection used the *Framework for the Inspection of Local Education Authorities (July 1999)* which focuses on the effectiveness of local education authority (LEA) work to support school improvement.
2. The inspection was based on data, some of which was provided by the LEA, on school inspection information and audit reports, on documentation and discussions with LEA members, focus groups of headteachers and governors, staff in the education department and in other Council departments and representatives of the LEA's partners. In addition, a questionnaire seeking views on aspects of the LEA's work was circulated to 97 schools. The response rate was 81 per cent.
3. The inspection also involved studies of the effectiveness of particular aspects of the LEA's work through visits to 13 primary, four secondary and one special school. A further eight schools were visited as part of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy monitoring. The visits tested the views of governors, headteachers and other staff on the key aspects of the LEA's strategy. The visits also considered whether the support which is provided by the LEA contributes, where appropriate, to the discharge of the LEA's statutory duties, is effective in contributing to improvements in the school, and provides value for money. A further theme of this inspection was to assess the response of the LEA to the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence (Macpherson Report, 1999).

COMMENTARY

4. The London Borough of Greenwich has a rich history of serving diverse communities from Blackheath to Thamesmead. It boasts internationally renowned naval and military connections in Greenwich and Woolwich. The contrasts between wealth and poverty are marked. Home to the Millennium Dome, Greenwich is experiencing rapid change through an ambitious programme of regeneration. The borough has also attracted considerable media attention following the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the subsequent judicial inquiry.

5. Since his appointment 15 months ago, the new director of education and his team have been instrumental in creating a new mood of optimism evident throughout the LEA. Schools are now confident that the LEA will deliver more efficient and effective support. The vision for Greenwich outlined in its education development plan (EDP) has been well received.

6. This is no mean achievement, but it is not enough. In almost every aspect of its educational operation since its transfer from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) in 1990, Greenwich Council, by its own admission, had been slow in responding to both the national agenda to raise educational standards and to its own local imperative – to combat the social exclusion felt by many of its white and black residents alike. Schools felt isolated and neglected by an education directorate whose inspection and advisory service was more focused on meeting the income target set by the Council than on raising achievement in Greenwich schools. In this context the decision taken in 1997 by the chief executive (supported by members) to withdraw financial delegation from education was brave and timely. Not only did he, in effect, put his own education service into special measures but individual sections such as inspection and advice and special educational needs were subject to scrutiny by external consultants. Restructuring the education service subsequently took place and a new directorate team was appointed in 1998. Schools expressed high levels of support for the steps taken by the Council. However, the level of centrally retained costs for school improvement and strategic management are too high.

7. The challenges facing the LEA are considerable; major shortcomings remain. Standards of attainment are below national averages. Greenwich has a high proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need, with over 50 per cent of pupils with statements placed in special schools. The completion rate for statements was the lowest in London in 1997-98, and although it has improved to 40 per cent in 1998-99, it is still too low. The turnover of teachers in Greenwich at 14.7 per cent and 12.8 per cent for primary and secondary schools respectively is higher than the national figure (10.5 per cent and 9.6 per cent respectively).

8. The inspection team found clear signs of improvement. Staff at all levels in the education directorate have worked hard to improve the credibility of the LEA among schools. The work of the inspection and advisory service in Greenwich is very well managed and increasingly effective. The EDP is good and has been approved for three years. The policy and procedures to identify and support schools causing concern are comprehensive. The rate of improvement in English and mathematics is above the national rate at Key Stage 2 and in GCSE. An ambitious infrastructure for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is being developed in consultation with schools.

9. The LEA performs well in the following areas:-

- the work of the link inspector is good;
- support for schools in special measures is good;
- support for literacy is highly regarded by schools; the implementation of the Literacy Strategy is well managed and a good start has been made on the Numeracy strategy;
- personnel services are good;
- support for governors is good.

10. The LEA exercises its functions to ensure that pupils in its schools come to no harm and competently assists other statutory bodies charged with the protection of children. The LEA meets its statutory duties with regard to strategic management and some aspects of special educational needs adequately. It complies with its legal obligations with regard to the provision of school places and has regard to the Code of Practice on LEA-School Relations. The LEA takes reasonable steps to fulfil its statutory requirements, including headteacher appraisal.

11. The LEA is not performing adequately in the following areas:-

- it is struggling to fulfil aspects of its statutory responsibilities for attendance, behaviour and exclusions;
- although finance services have improved, they do not fully meet the needs of secondary schools; an unacceptable number of secondary schools' budgets remain in deficit;
- target-setting is not sufficiently robust;
- inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools;
- SEN assessment is still too slow;
- monitoring the attainment of looked-after children;
- managing the supply of post-16 places; ten of the LEA's secondary schools have sixth forms with numbers below 150;
- property services.

12. The Council will need to continue to reduce the high level of centrally recharged funds. The current basis for central charges is neither transparent nor open and is inconsistent with a funding regime which would encourage schools to take more responsibility for their own destinies. Headteachers and governors are keen to participate in the shaping of policy and improving practice. However, they will need to demonstrate a greater sense of maturity in facing the hard decisions that are required on three significant fronts. First, the current arrangements for post-16 provision cannot be justified and a radical restructuring of this provision is overdue. Secondly, a sea change is required in schools' approaches to provision for pupils with special education needs and those requiring behaviour support, if the LEA is to secure its goal of

inclusion. Thirdly, secondary schools in particular must demonstrate a more disciplined approach to managing school budgets.

13. Much remains to be done. The Council has improved the performance of its education service as an organisation, but the evidence that it is having an impact on standards in the schools is slight at this stage. The new director is providing good leadership and has set a formidable pace of necessary change. He needs to go on doing so, if the remaining weaknesses are to be tackled. Overall, our view is that the senior management of the LEA has the capacity to sustain and extend the improvements noted.

SECTION 1: THE CORPORATE STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION

Context

14. The borough of Greenwich is one of the most deprived local authority areas in England. The LEA has the highest proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need in London. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above national averages in both phases. Greenwich has a significant population of travellers' children as well as refugee and asylum seekers in both its primary and secondary schools.

15. Greenwich has 97 schools. The LEA provides six nursery, 64 primary, three infant, three junior, 14 secondary, eight special schools and a pupil referral unit which caters for pupils aged between 5-15 years. In the past, only one primary school had grant-maintained status; it is now a foundation school. The LEA offers a place to every four year old which has resulted in a take-up of 2201 nursery places. Primary school rolls have reached their peak and are expected to fall by two per cent over the next 10 years. Secondary rolls are projected to grow by 13 per cent between 1998 and 2004. Over 87 per cent of Greenwich pupils transfer to secondary schools in the borough which is high for inner London.

Performance

16. A detailed statistical analysis of school performance was supplied to the LEA by OFSTED. However, in order to indicate the nature of the task facing the LEA, the following general statements may be helpful:-

- the borough's baseline assessment data shows that pupils' attainment on entry to infant and primary schools is generally below average;
- attainment remains below national averages as pupils progress through the key stages;
- nevertheless, the rate of improvement at Key Stage 2 in both English and mathematics is above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C grades is also improving, albeit from a low base;
- average point scores for pupils gaining two or more A levels are well below national rates; as are the numbers gaining vocational qualifications post-16;
- the LEA has identified 49 schools as requiring significant improvement including the four primary schools currently in special measures;
- the rate of permanent exclusions is well above national averages;
- Attendance in primary and secondary schools is below the national averages; levels of both authorised and unauthorised absence are also high.

Funding

17. From 1990 when the London Borough of Greenwich took over responsibility for education from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) until 1997, there were several factors which undermined effective financial management of the education service. These included:-

- inefficiencies in financial information systems, particularly those relating to the provision of financial information to schools;
- poor financial control within the education directorate with frequent budgetary overspends;
- tight overall financial constraints within the Council which meant the Council was required to find substantial cuts each year;
- a complex Local Management of Schools (LMS) formula which did not provide a transparent and clear basis for schools to assess the overall level of resources available to them or the logic behind allocations;
- a very high level of delegation that left many LEA services too thinly stretched to respond to schools' needs.

18. These issues came to a head in 1997 and financial management of education was transferred to the borough treasurer. Considerable effort has been put into addressing the underlying weaknesses in the arrangements for funding education and the financial management of schools. Features of Greenwich's education funding since 1997 have included:

- a complete overhaul of the LMS formula, strengthening the role of finance staff within the education directorate. The quality and timeliness of information provided to schools has improved. Computerised financial systems within schools have been upgraded;
- more stability in financial management. A more systematic linking of budgetary decisions with corporate and directorate priorities has been secured and the Council has now implemented a four year budget strategy which is welcomed by schools. education funding is in line with Standard Spending Assessment (SSA);
- heads and governors have acknowledged the improvements in the quality of financial information and the clarity and transparency of the LMS formula for allocating funds to schools. However, the legacy of past financial management weaknesses still remains, particularly in secondary schools. Whilst all concerned have deficit recovery plans, an unacceptable number of secondary schools is in deficit and the level of deficit is rising, as outlined below:-

	1997/98			1998/99		
	> 5% surplus	In deficit	>2.5% deficit	> 5% surplus	In deficit	>2.5% deficit
Primary						
Number	33	8	6	28	14	10
Secondary						
Number	2	10	8	1	10	8
Special						
Number	5	1	0	5	2	0

Council structure

19. Greenwich Council consists of 62 members (52 Labour, 2 Liberal Democrat and 8 Conservative). In line with the Government's White Paper 'Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People' (July 1998), the Council reviewed its committee structures and the new arrangements for members took effect in May 1999.

20. The full Council retains the power to meet as the education committee, as and when required, to take strategic policy decisions, although it is envisaged that the education service board will be responsible for the planning, delivery and monitoring of the education service, using the performance targets outlined in the EDP and other statutory plans. New structures to involve governors and headteachers in strategic decision making mirror the Council's arrangements have been well received and developed in consultation with schools. However, it remains to be seen whether the new structures can contribute to school improvement in the long run.

21. Combating social exclusion and raising standards are clear priorities for the LEA. These are part of the Council's integrated regeneration strategy which is coordinated by the chief executive's office. Schools benefit from the steady flow of additional monies arising from the Council's successful bidding strategies. An external funding partnerships officer based in the education directorate maintains an effective overview of all the funding streams and programmes.

The allocation of resources to priorities

22. Greenwich spends in line with its Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) and has passported additional funds into schools. For 1999/00 the total education expenditure is given as £126.089m, a little less than the SSA of £126.2m. However, Greenwich Council's definition of budget expenditure differs from that used by the DfEE in their section 52 financial return. The budgeted expenditure for LEA services is analysed within the Section 52 return across six categories thus:

Analysis of LEA expenditure £ per pupil	GREENWICH	Average for Inner London Boroughs	All English LEAs
Strategic Management	166	155	124
Specific Grant	102	119	55
Special Education	229	241	156
School Improvement	68	54	25
Access	196	227	149
Total	761	796	509

23. Greenwich has the third lowest spending per pupil and the lowest pupil allocation through the SSA of all inner London boroughs. The section 52 return for the LEA indicates that 23.1 per cent of the total net local school budget is retained to fund LEA activities compared with an average of 22.8 per cent for inner London boroughs and 19.2 per cent for all English LEAs. Expenditure per pupil is higher than both the national and inner London averages for strategic management and school improvement. The largest component in the section 52 analysis of strategic management costs are those relating to statutory and regulatory (central administrative) duties which represents some £124 per pupil. This is the second highest figure for any LEA in England. The £4.452m of budgeted expenditure is split almost equally between services provided centrally, that is, from outside the education directorate (£2.233m), and education directorate management (£2.219m).

24. The LMS formula introduced in 1993 resulted in a high level of delegation of LEA services. In 1997/98 some 94.7 per cent of the potential school budget was delegated to schools compared with an average of 91.2 per cent for inner London boroughs and 90.6 per cent for all English LEAs. However, largely as a result of decisions to strengthen LEA services, the level of delegation fell in 1998/99 to 94.4 per cent. The overhaul of the LMS formula since 1997 has provided a clearer and fairer basis for allocating funding to schools.

25. Schools complained about the high level of charges. These complaints are justified. The basis for central support charges is neither transparent nor open. Analyses of central support and strategic management costs were prepared for schools in December 1996, February 1998 and September 1999. These substantial documents were a genuine attempt by the current borough treasurer to demystify central support costs and justify the size of the amounts charged. However, they contain a considerable amount of detail, which headteachers and chairs of governors alike find difficult to follow. The DfEE has indicated that in future such expenditure will be capped at £75 per pupil. The Council will need to reduce strategic management costs by £1.76m.

26. While schools were generally positive about the decision to increase the Inspection and Advisory Service, the percentage of the local school budget delegated within the 1999/00 budget is 78.5 per cent. This will need to be increased by 1.5 per cent to meet the DfEE target of 80 per cent. The officers within the LEA are in the process of drawing up proposals to achieve the target for delegation. While work to date has focused on reducing strategic management costs, more must be done to increase the level of delegation within the school improvement category to bring cost per pupil into line with that for other London boroughs.

The Education Development Plan

27. The main vehicle for the LEA's strategy for school improvement is the EDP, which was approved by the Secretary of State for three years beginning in April 1999. The EDP contains eight priorities:-

- i. raise standards of literacy at Key Stages 1,2,3,4 and post-16;
- ii. raise standards of achievement for all pupils;
- iii. identify schools at risk and monitor and accelerate improvement in all schools identified as needing special measures or having serious weaknesses, or causing the local authority concern (categories 1-3). Encourage good and improving schools (categories 4 and 5) to continue to improve;
- iv. improve the quality of teaching;
- v. improve the quality of leadership and management in schools;
- vi. improve provision for pupils who are not reaching their full potential and set in place programmes for improvement;
- vii. improve the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream and special schools;
- viii. ensure provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils with appropriate emphasis on personal, social and health education including preparation for employment.

28. The EDP contains detailed activities to support each priority with named lead officers, timescales and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. The descriptions of the priorities, (which grew in number as a result of consultation on the draft) and of the activities, contain cross-references to complementary priorities, activities and plans. On the whole, the activities constitute a coherent programme for improvement. The EDP is consistent with, and linked to, the borough's corporate strategies and other statutory plans. The plan is well managed and monitored by the senior staff of the directorate. The pace of change during the first year of the plan, and the speed with which major new initiatives are coming on stream make it essential that the planned review of the EDP achieves a clear refocusing of effort and resources. Reducing and rationalising the scale of the activities particularly in regard of Priorities (iv), (v) and (viii) is essential.

29. The EDP is firmly based on a thorough audit of local needs which addressed the characteristics of the local population, the performance of schools, the nature of the workforce and the resources available. External agencies and consultants were used to strengthen the audit, including the National Children's Bureau.

30. The attainment targets published in the EDP are in the main challenging and realistic, for primary schools, but less so for secondary. A more rigorous approach is now being taken with secondary schools, which should be reflected in the review of the EDP.

31. Consultation on the EDP was thorough and much appreciated by schools and stakeholders. All the schools visited were aware of and shared the LEA's priorities. Visits to schools and the school survey indicate widespread commitment to the implementation of the plan. The consultation led to important modifications of the draft, including:-

- greater emphasis on support for pupils with special educational needs in a context of inclusion and integration;
- training for headteachers in development planning;
- a programme of support for governing bodies.

32. In the changed climate from 1997, whereby partnership, involvement and consultation are replacing poor communication, centralism and opacity in management and policy making, a substantial degree of trust has been generated. This means that some aspects of the implementation of the EDP can be taken forward without further extended consultation (for example, on the criteria and processes for dealing with exclusions). This approach would relieve to some extent the 'consultation fatigue' expressed by a number of heads and governors.

33. The School Effectiveness Monitoring Group (SEMG) chaired by the deputy director meets regularly and combines effective monitoring with scrutiny of bids from schools via link inspectors for additional support from the intervention fund. This enables the LEA to respond quickly to situations which develop in schools, such as extended sick leave of staff who have key roles in school improvement. The monitoring and evaluation of the EDP are strongest where the responsibility lies with the IAS.

Early years

34. Greenwich is a 'trailblazer' authority for the Sure Start programme, with outreach focused on four wards of the borough. The implementation plan is well advanced, managed by a seconded manager in social services. The Greenwich Early Years Development and Childcare Plan sets out a rolling three-year programme, reviewed annually. Having achieved 98.5 per cent take up of provision for four year olds, the focus is now on the target of 85 per cent for three year olds. Implementation of the plan is overseen by an early years partnership coordinated by the chief executive's department with key support from education, social services and health and the voluntary and private sectors.

35. The LEA has six nursery schools whose headteachers play a part in the partnership's subgroups. They are supported by an early years inspector and two advisory teachers. The inspector is the link inspector for the nursery schools. The advisory teachers, together with the inspector for assessment, lead on baseline assessment and provide training and monitoring. The school survey rates their support as good and the best of the LEAs surveyed.

Libraries/music/arts/outdoor and physical education

36. The eighth priority in the EDP is to ensure the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. It responds to the concerns of all stakeholders that the Greenwich Curriculum for Achievement, agreed in April 1998, should continue to be pursued in the EDP. It is questionable whether a curriculum statement at a level of broad generality should be retained as a priority in any subsequent review. Greenwich Education Service has specialist staff in music, art, outdoor and environmental education. The outdoor and environmental education officer, a post shared with Lewisham, manages centres locally and further afield and provides INSET which in outdoor education has concentrated on mountain leadership training so that schools can be confident to continue activities which might be curtailed in the light of the Adventurous Activities legislation. The library service is well regarded and provides project loans to primary schools and is represented on the literacy steering group.

37. Greenwich has been very successful in attracting external funds for specific initiatives and projects which reflect the strong commitment to a multi-cultural community. There is a strong emphasis on celebrating the achievements of the local community. The report of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education "All Our Futures" has been enthusiastically received by GEIAS to inform INSET provision, implement the recommendations of the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, review the 14-19 curriculum and develop community partnerships.

Recommendations

- ☐ Take urgent steps to support schools in reducing their deficits, particularly in those schools where the deficit is rising.
- ☐ Reduce the high level of central charges and make the basis for charges more transparent to headteachers and governors.
- ☐ The planned review of the first year of the EDP should, in addition to evaluating progress:-
 - ☐ reduce the high level of retained funding to that needed to challenge and support school improvement, and delegate funding for curriculum support;
 - ☐ reduce the number of priorities and eliminate any overlaps between priorities, in order to achieve a sharper focus for action;
 - ☐ accelerate progress towards school self-evaluation;
 - ☐ re-deploy resources in order to reduce exclusions;
 - ☐ achieve a consistent approach to setting EDP targets that are measurable and have clear milestones.

SECTION 2: THE LEA STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND SUPPORT TO RAISE STANDARDS

Monitoring, challenge, support, intervention

38. The principal engine for driving school improvement on behalf of the LEA is the Greenwich Education inspection and advisory service (GEIAS). After years of cutbacks the service was re-organised in 1997 with a new post of chief inspector appointed at the beginning of 1998. The GEIAS and its senior management are strong features of Greenwich LEA. This is particularly true in respect of nursery, primary and special schools. The credibility of link inspectors assigned to primary schools, all of whom have recent experience of headship, is a keystone of GEIAS's success. Further development of the relationship with secondary schools is a service priority for the current academic year. The service has produced a great deal of good quality guidance, for example on new statutory requirements, which is welcomed by headteachers and governors.

39. The cost of GEIAS is high. There are 17.8 full time equivalent (fte) inspectors and 19.5 fte advisers and advisory teachers. There is also a consultancy budget for buying in specialist support where a permanent appointment is not warranted by the needs of an LEA the size of Greenwich. The time of members of the service is allocated between monitoring on behalf of the LEA and "buy-back" of additional support and training activities. Clear guidance is provided on these respective roles, with contracts between the LEA and schools. All schools receive a termly monitoring visit to maintain contact and work through the LEA's monitoring agenda. Beyond this basic entitlement and the work defined in the EDP, work with schools is differentiated according to their degree of need. However, the questionnaire returns and the school visits confirm that the service is highly valued by schools. Even so, a service of this size is not justified given the number of schools. While the director recognises that the size of the IAS cannot be sustained in the light of government policy on Fair Funding and delegating services to schools, no plans exist either for a staggered reduction of the GEIAS or reconstituting the service on a traded basis. These options should be considered as part of this year's review of the EDP.

40. Since April 1999, each school has been allocated to one of five categories ranging from special measures in category one to good schools in category five, based on evidence from OFSTED inspections, standards data, information from officers and visits. The categories enable the LEA to intervene in inverse proportion to success. However, the high number of schools in category 3 are too high and should be reviewed. Schools in categories 4 and 5 are rightly encouraged to develop their own ability to evaluate progress, using joint monitoring with inspectors and the Greenwich School Evaluation Framework. It is planned that categorisation will be checked termly and reviewed annually. From 2000, schools will carry out their own internal performance review to contribute to this process. Key issues relating to individual schools are raised with the School Effectiveness Monitoring Group at its monthly meetings. Some of the activities currently discharged by GEIAS run the risk of cushioning schools who should be taking greater responsibility for improvement and raising standards.

41. The service is well managed by the chief inspector. Guidance for the work of the GEIAS team is set out in an excellent staff handbook, updated regularly. It contains

all the relevant policy statements and explains the use of performance data for target-setting. It is just one part of the effective induction and management of the GEIAS, which has also introduced a performance management scheme to augment that of the LEA as a whole. Regular team briefing and training events ensure that the team maintains up to date knowledge of emerging national and local priorities.

Support to schools on target-setting

42. The LEA provides a comprehensive range of performance data. However, practice in the use of performance data to challenge schools to raise standards is under-developed. This is clearly evident in the number of schools visited whose targets for 2000 have already been met in 1998 and/or exceeded in 1999, particularly in mathematics and science. The LEA needs to build on the good practice of those schools who use the target-setting process with their link inspector as a starting point in bridging the gap between prediction and target. Although the schools visited value the analysis of performance data provided by the LEA to support target-setting, they also acknowledge that this is an area where some schools lead the LEA in terms of a developed understanding of how to use such data to improve individual pupils' performance. The LEA should ensure that these schools are represented in the target-setting forums.

43. Arrangements for the transfer of data from Key Stage 2 are inadequate. As some 87 per cent of local children transfer to secondary schools in Greenwich, it is important that the LEA gives particular attention to ensuring that the transfer of pupils' attainment data is more efficient. Neither primary nor secondary schools are happy with the current arrangements, which do not help the drive to raise standards on transition to Key Stage 3.

Support for Literacy

44. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) has been well managed by the English Inspector and her team. Although the rate of improvement is just above the national rate, standards in literacy remain stubbornly below national and London averages. Only 69 per cent of primary schools in Greenwich achieved their literacy target in 1999.

45. Support for literacy is a strong feature of the LEA. The literacy team enjoys a good reputation across all phases in Greenwich, and this was evident on all the visits to schools and in the questionnaire returns. The Council has demonstrated its commitment to raising standards in literacy by securing Single Regeneration Budget monies to support two of the four consultants. The team has good levels of subject knowledge, in-service training is thorough and the training programme is well-matched to the needs of schools. Support for literacy was a focus in 15 of the schools visited and in a further four schools where lessons were observed. All schools rated the support provided by the LEA from good to excellent. Demonstration lessons, inspection visits, additional literacy support, and booster classes all received very positive feedback in schools, as did the opportunity to visit schools in an inner London LEA where the NLS is working well.

46. The unconfirmed 1999 Key Stage 2 tests indicate a rise of six per cent on last year's scores; 58 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 and above, which leaves the LEA

some 17 per cent adrift of its 2002 target of 75 per cent. Attainment in writing remains a concern across the board. The literacy team is rightly seeking to increase the levels of expertise among teachers and classroom assistants. For example, the team has already identified the need to develop greater phonics awareness in Key Stage 1 and is monitoring closely the implementation of the Key Stage 3 literacy project where there is a need for a better understanding about how the literacy hour can be delivered within the secondary curriculum.

Support for Numeracy

47. Standards in numeracy are slowly rising though they remain below national averages in all key stages. In 1999, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 4 and above at Key Stage 2 improved by 11 per cent to 59 per cent (compared with a national improvement of 10 per cent) and exceeded the LEA target of 54 per cent. The proportion of pupils achieving level 5 increased and achievement of Level 4 by minority ethnic pupils increased by 14 per cent.

48. Improving standards in numeracy in Key Stages 1 and 2 is part of priority (ii) of the EDP. The LEA targets for the three years to 2002 are 60 per cent, 65 per cent and 70 per cent. There are wide variations between schools and so the challenge is not just to improve overall standards but to improve them fastest in the weakest schools.

Implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) has only just begun. A good start has been made, including the appointment of an experienced inspector. The LEA is giving intensive support through the National Numeracy Strategy and Single Regeneration Budget funding to 26 primary schools, amounting to nine days per school of demonstration lessons, lesson observation, lesson planning and assessment. The support is given by two numeracy consultants and an advisory teacher, managed by the new mathematics inspector. Monitoring visits by HMI this term to four primary schools record that all the mathematics co-ordinators and three of the four headteachers found the LEA training to be of good quality and practical relevance.

49. In the 13 primary schools visited in this inspection, there were improvements above the LEA and national averages in 11. In Key Stage 1, improvement is slow (76 per cent to 78 per cent achieving level 2 between 1996 and 1999) compared with national figures of 83 per cent to 86 per cent. Similarly in Key Stage 3, improvement is slow and rather less than the national improvement. Secondary schools now have detailed action plans to improve teachers' skills in Key Stage 3.

Support to schools causing concern

50. Overall support for schools causing concern is satisfactory and has improved considerably since the new directorate was established in 1998. Prior to that support for schools was *ad hoc* and piecemeal. A coherent strategy is now in place and schools are well supported. Eleven schools in Greenwich have been judged to require special measures since 1993. One secondary school has since closed. One nursery, two primary and two special schools have since come out of special measures. The four remaining primary schools have been in special measures for less than two years. Since September 1997 two secondary and four primary schools have been identified by OFSTED as having serious weaknesses. Only one primary school has been judged to have serious weaknesses since September 1998. Progress in a number of schools is hampered by high staff turnover which the LEA has tried to address, but with limited success.

51. Support for schools in special measures is good. The LEA meets its statutory duties with regard to schools in special measures. The LEA has developed a rigorous strategy for supporting schools in special measures and deploys a range of interventions. These include the allocation of a link officer to deal with financial matters and a link inspector to support the curriculum and raising standards. The LEA typically seconds an experienced headteacher to support the management, and is developing the role of advisory governors based on their past experience of using statutory powers to withdraw delegation and appoint additional governors. Staff and governors of schools in special measures feel the LEA is now in a partnership with them.

52. In line with the requirements of the Code of Practice for LEA School Relations, the LEA has consulted on its policy for intervention to support schools causing concern. The policy is comprehensive, with clear criteria for placing schools in one of five categories from special measures to good, using standardised statements which would trigger intervention and match the self-evaluation profile schools and governors are now encouraged to use. Details of schools' entitlement to support are also outlined. Despite these transparent procedures on which the LEA duly consulted and subsequently published in the EDP, a small number of headteachers visited expressed disquiet on being advised of their category at the beginning of this term. Nevertheless, the process has been timely and has jugged a number of schools out of their inertia. However, the LEA failed to inform chairs of governors of the categorisation of their schools which was clearly an oversight on the part of the inspection and advisory service. A follow-up programme is planned when link inspectors and link officers will visit schools to discuss improvement strategies. Chairs of governing bodies should be fully involved in these processes if the LEA is serious about its commitment to supporting self-evaluating schools.

Support to headteachers

53. Improving the quality of leadership and management in schools is a priority in the EDP. In the schools visited, support to improve their school's capacity to manage school improvement was judged to be good in nine schools, satisfactory in six, and unsatisfactory in two. Helpful guidance for new and acting headteachers was produced in 1998, and mentoring arrangements have been established. The INSET programme at the Professional Development Centre (PDC) reflects the emphasis on leadership

and management and links have been established with the London Leadership Centre. Last year roughly half the headteacher appraisals were completed. This year, guidance on new arrangements has been issued.

54. Greenwich is seeking through the EDP to overcome problems in the recruitment and retention of teachers, as part of the priority to improve the quality of teaching. A recruitment strategy manager was appointed in May 1999 with Standards Fund support and a marketing strategy has begun to be implemented. Payments to new teachers starting in the summer term, ("golden hello"), are seen by schools as beneficial and proof of the LEA's commitment. A comprehensive handbook for the LEA's Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) has been issued, supported by induction and training events. Over 100 NQTs joined Greenwich this academic year. All the schools visited which have NQTs reported that the new arrangements are being implemented effectively. It is too soon to judge whether the strategy will achieve the EDP targets of reducing turnover from 14.5 per cent last year to the London average of 11.5 per cent and of increasing recruitment of black and ethnic minority staff year on year by 10 per cent.

55. The LEA's handbook on school evaluation, drawn up by a working party which included primary headteachers and launched in September 1999, provides a useful focus for headteachers and governing bodies to begin to take greater responsibility for school improvement.

Support to governors

56. Support to governors in Greenwich is good. Eighty schools subscribe to some form of governor support from governor services. Current provision is regarded as good, with particular praise for the work of governor services with failing schools, where the head of that unit has acted as clerk to the governing bodies. Governors now sense a genuine partnership with the LEA – this is partly due to the work and personal style of the director, and partly to that of governor services. The Association of Greenwich Governors (AGG) works in effective partnership with the LEA and has 60 schools in membership. A fuller representative role for the AGG is envisaged in the LEA's strategic management arrangements, to match that outlined for headteachers.

57. Two service packages are available to schools: the Clerking & Support Package, together with the Governors & Headteachers Support Package. Training provision includes an induction course for new governors. Other recent training sessions have focused on finance, and on responses to the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. Training is regarded as good, and is well patronised by governors. Governors are kept well informed of both national and local developments. A newsletter and a training programme are circulated to governors. Face to face briefings with the director of education are provided. In the 18 schools visited in this inspection, headteachers and chairs of governors in 15 praised the quality of support and training for governors, in particular in schools which have faced serious finance or personnel problems.

58. Governor services operate a database of governors, and its policy on the appointment of LEA governors is, firstly, to offer the vacancy to the Council's political parties; then to attempt to fill it from the LEA's own list of potential governors; and finally

to offer it to the school. Some 10 per cent of the 1,400 governorships in Greenwich are currently unfilled. Filling of parent governor posts is delegated to schools.

Recommendations

- ☐ Improve the systems for transferring pupils' performance data from primary to secondary schools.
- ☐ Ensure that a more robust and consistently challenging approach to target-setting is adopted across the LEA, which builds on the experience and expertise within schools and sections of the education directorate.
- ☐ Review the effectiveness of LEA services in supporting secondary schools in becoming more self-evaluating.
- ☐ Review the size of the Inspection and Advisory Service as part of the reduction in centrally retained funds for school improvement and in line with the planned reduction of activities in the EDP from April 2000.

SECTION 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Corporate planning

59. During the early 1990s the Council faced acute financial constraints. Members took steps to ensure that schools' budgets were protected. Nevertheless, corporate planning during this period was primarily budget-driven, with the Council focused on securing substantial year on year cuts. This resulted in an increasingly short term planning horizon, increasing the difficulty of aligning service development priorities with the budget process. The focus on raising standards, which was promised in the first development plan for education produced in 1989, remained unfulfilled until 1997.

Education planning

60. The EDP is therefore a significant development for the education directorate on two fronts:- internally, in its increasing use within the Council as a performance appraisal and management tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the education directorate, and externally, as a mechanism for schools and other stakeholders to see where and how they might contribute to the overall goal of raising achievement and reducing social exclusion for children and their families in Greenwich.

61. Performance targets outlined in the individual statutory and other plans which steer the work of the education directorate are mapped in the Education Annual Service Plan, tabled at the first meeting of the education service board in July 1999.

62. The Council has a corporate commitment to partnerships and, at a strategic level, it has created structures for joint working, consultation and communication. New formal consultative arrangements have been agreed which outline the role of governors and headteachers and other stakeholders in formulating education policy in Greenwich and how that feeds into the education service board. These model the way the chief executive intends to work with his service directors by enhancing the role of those headteachers who chair consultative groups and bringing them into a closer relationship with the education directorate management team. Schools visited during this inspection welcome the new developments.

63. There is recent evidence of good joint working with external agencies. For example, successful initiatives have been launched with Woolwich FE College for disaffected pupils in conjunction with the PRU; with Greenwich University on the training of classroom assistants and the recruitment of ethnic minority teachers; with the health authority and the police. There are longstanding effective partnerships with the TEC and the careers service. Joint working with the police is increasing rapidly, not just on truancy patrols or youth justice but also on the police/schools involvement programme coordinated effectively by the head of standards and strategy. All these contribute to the raising of achievement.

64. Internal partnerships are also important, particularly with social services and housing and here too, new arrangements for joint working, consultation and communication are beginning to have an impact at the strategic level. Schools visited were unhappy about the support from social services. Some inter agency-decision making and funding has been secured for some cross-boundary work, for instance on

children and adolescent mental health and on the tracking of looked after children. Schools believe that the Council needs to find ways of doing more preventative work with the families of children with special educational needs.

65. Partnership with the diocesan boards is under-developed at a strategic level although relationships have improved markedly since the appointment of the current director of education. Good partnerships are already established between diocesan education officers and GEIAS in supporting denominational schools in special measures and with serious weaknesses.

66. A notable feature of Greenwich's planning arrangements is the involvement of Greenwich Young People's Council in the Council's consultation processes. GYPC was established in 1997 and is a constituent group for 11-21 year olds drawn from school Council, college and university representatives who are elected annually. Members of the Executive are consulted on a regular basis by the education department through termly meetings with the director of education. The chair and vice chair sit on the Education Services Board and the Children & Young People's Panel. GYPC members play an active part in the rapid responses to racism group which was convened by the Council as part of its response to the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. The group has been involved in making contributions to conferences, for example the director's launch of the Greenwich Partnership for Achievement and a social inclusion conference involving five other boroughs.

Management Services

67. The LMS scheme introduced in 1993 established a high level of delegation of LEA expenditure. As a result, a relatively large proportion of management support services was traded with schools. Between 1993 and 1997, in the opinion of most headteachers interviewed during school visits, the quality of management support services provided by the Council was poor. For example, financial information was slow and inaccurate, there were frequent payroll errors and information technology support for administrative systems was inadequate. Since 1997, there has been a major overhaul of the LMS scheme, and the LEA has improved the quality and level of support across a range of services. While some services, such as finance, have improved considerably, other services, particularly property services, have not improved to the same extent.

68. The quality and timeliness of financial support services in the mid-1990s were at the root of many of the complaints about the poor performance of the LEA. The LEA did not effectively manage the financial administration of LMS for schools recently transferred from ILEA. This led to a situation where schools frequently were unable or unwilling to set budgets and monitor expenditure effectively.

69. The support for financial management provided to schools has since improved. Schools are confident about the service provided and now receive timely, accurate and reliable information and advice necessary for effective monitoring and control of their finances. The finance service maintains regular contact with schools and has developed the mechanisms which allow it to monitor school needs and anticipate when additional support may be required. However, the finance service is generally more effective in the primary phase than the secondary. More must be done to address

the problem of deficits outlined earlier in this report. Secondary schools, in particular, must demonstrate a more disciplined approach to managing school budgets.

70. As a result of poor service provided in the past, many schools have engaged outside providers to provide bookkeeping and accountancy services. The LEA began its bursarial service in 1995. Since then the proportion of schools buying into the service has risen: about half of the primary schools and two of the secondary schools currently buy into the service.

71. Personnel services are a strength of the LEA. Its advice is well regarded by headteachers and governors. An annual programme of work is used to structure service planning. This provides a vehicle for aligning service priorities with those of the EDP, and for the coherent development of the personnel services. Increasingly, mechanisms are being established to ensure sharing of information about personnel management issues in schools with staff in other LEA support services to ensure better general understanding of school needs and early warning of potential problems.

72. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure of schools is currently undergoing profound change and will transform the teaching and learning environment within schools. The vision is for the new infrastructure for ICT support to curriculum and administration to be in place by the start of the millennium and completed by the end of 2001. While schools have a good opinion of ICT support and the implementation of the development programme, there is evidence of weaknesses in project management. Education ICT costs are almost £900,000. However, almost 85 per cent of these costs - £25 per pupil – relates to central ICT charges. These charges are too high and will need to be reduced if the LEA is to achieve the target of £75 per pupil for strategic management costs from 2000/01.

73. The overriding aim is to get the ICT network set up and use the resources within tight timescales. While schools welcome the implementation of the new network, problems encountered by schools during the implementation of the new network reinforce the suspicion that support services have yet to improve.

74. Property services for the education directorate service currently fall under the responsibility of the director of strategic planning and are delivered by a dedicated education surveyor section. Despite improvements in the provision of property services and the increase in the resources available to address the problem of disrepair in school buildings, schools remain deeply unhappy with the quality of property service which remains unacceptably low and is poorly regarded by schools.

75. The questionnaire returns indicated that almost all schools had a very poor view of the quality of school buildings and the performance of property services. The main complaints raised during school visits were:- poor services; failure of the service to understand the particular needs of schools and the problems caused to schools when major repairs are undertaken in term time; poor supervision of contractors; the high cost of services; and the failure of senior property services staff to answer return telephone calls.

76. The problems with property services are not new. From 1993 to 1997 responsibility for building maintenance was delegated to schools. Little support was given to schools to fulfil this responsibility. Property services were traded with schools

and stock condition surveys were only undertaken for those schools that purchased property services. During this period there was little willingness shown by the property services to consult with all schools to improve the quality of services.

77. From 1997, the policy of service delegation was reversed. While schools retained much of their existing resources for building maintenance, a central service was strengthened. This enabled the LEA to commence a comprehensive programme of stock condition surveys. However, there does not appear to have been any improvement in the quality of property services provided. While the conditions surveys provide a basis for a more effective planned approach to building maintenance in schools, little has been done to improve the capacity of schools to fulfil their building maintenance management responsibilities.

78. In March 1999 a Best Value fundamental review of the property services division identified the reasons why the service has failed to deliver and its findings should be implemented urgently.

79. Payroll services are provided by the corporate finance division of the chief executive's department. Responsibility for the payroll service is delegated to schools and 98 per cent of schools currently buy into the Council's service. Since the poor performance of the early 1990s the total number of errors in relation to school payroll transactions has been reduced to approximately 50 per annum.

80. The current crisis management plan is a good document and was produced in May 1999, arising from the lessons learned in responding to the destruction of a local school following an arson attack. Examples of good practice were also sought from other Councils. As well as the Council's crisis management plan, the LEA issues the guidance provided by the Gulbenkian Foundation to all schools.

Evaluation

81. In general management support services are improving. Concerns remain about property services, ICT and the effectiveness of financial support to secondary schools.

Recommendations

In order to improve strategic management, the following actions should be taken:-

- ☐ scrutinise the central department allocated overheads and other costs charged against the education budget to ensure that they are fair, represent good value for money, and are delegated to schools where this is appropriate under Fair Funding;
- ☐ provide all heads and chairs of governors with an annual statement setting out how central charges are calculated and how the activity related to these charges benefits school and education directorate activity;
- ☐ review the current basis for calculating expenditure on education services in order to bring it more into line with the figure used in the annual return made to the Department for Education and Employment under section 52 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998;
- ☐ review the current performance management and quality assurance systems within the directorate of education and other service areas relevant to education to ensure that they provide a better basis for monitoring performance against service targets and standards.

In order to improve the quality of services to schools, the following actions should be taken:-

- ☐ examine and ascertain the management services that secondary schools require currently and for the next five years, and revise the services provided in the light of this exercise;
- ☐ establish a timetable for the implementation of the findings of the recent Best Value review of the property services division in relation to schools;
- ☐ ensure greater consistency in project management arrangements in relation to the ICT development programme in schools, both for administration and curriculum;
- ☐ use the process of the development of the Asset Management Plan to review and reconstitute the arrangements for the provision of property services so that there is a new partnership between schools, the education directorate and the property services division in relation to the maintenance and development of school buildings.

SECTION 4: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVISION

Strategy

82. Greenwich has a high proportion of pupils with statements; less than 50 per cent of those Greenwich pupils with statements are in mainstream schools. In 1997, recognising that it was not suitably meeting the needs of either schools or pupils, the LEA commissioned a survey by the National Children's Bureau. The recommendations of their report formed the basis of the "Special Educational Needs Strategy for Greenwich" published in July 1998.

83. An aim of the strategy is for "all Greenwich schools to welcome pupils with special educational needs and that all children of school age are in an educational environment which demonstrably meets their needs". This strategy has been circulated and discussed. Headteachers acknowledge that it provides a suitable framework for the development of policy and the basis for an action plan. A policy for special educational needs currently exists in draft form.

84. LEA costs are high in relation to special education. The borough has eight special schools with places for up to 705 pupils. Recently, the LEA has had limited success in shifting the pattern from special school to mainstream provision. Some £1.331m additional growth has been included in the education directorate budget for 1999/00 to support initiatives in mainstream schools. Nonetheless, the level of expenditure on special needs has not stopped rising. Twenty five per cent of the LEA's SEN budget is represented by the cost of the pupil referral unit, behaviour support and fees for pupils at independent special schools. The proportion of the budget related to non-mainstream support is too high. Compared with the averages for both inner London and English LEAs, the expenditure per pupil in Greenwich for education psychology and specialist SEN support services for pupils in the mainstream remains low.

85. Both the 1997/98 SEN strategy and the EDP commit the LEA to a policy of inclusion and the reduction of the proportion of SEN pupils placed in special schools. Expenditure set out in the 1999/00 budget suggests a pattern of provision that is geared more towards exclusion than inclusion. The Council has begun to reverse this pattern. However, while generally supporting the principle of inclusion, headteachers and governors are both sceptical about the LEA's ability to deliver on the strategy, and reluctant to acknowledge the implications for their own institutions.

Improvement

86. To date, various initiatives have been set in motion to address the issues identified in the SEN strategy. Criteria and procedures for assessment have been established. The service has been stabilised. The assessment process is sound, but a significant number of schools rightly complain that the process is slow, inefficient and cumbersome. In 1997/98 only six per cent of SEN statements were completed on time: this was the lowest rate in London. The rate increased to 40 per cent in 1998/99, however, this is still too low.

87. The proportion of pupils with statements has now stabilised and 43 ceased to be maintained last year, but the figure still remains high. Financial provision for pupils with statements is seen in schools as generous; indeed, the number of statements is generally seen as an acknowledgement of difficulty, so it is hardly surprising that they are in great demand. This is a self-fulfilling cycle that the LEA and schools have to break. The high demand for statements constrains the ability of the Education Psychologist Service (EPS) to support schools to develop better strategies for early intervention and raises questions about whether the needs of pupils are being adequately met.

88. Currently the bulk of the EPS's time is given up to their statutory duties of individual pupil assessment and the preparation of information for annual and transitional reviews. Some new early intervention initiatives have been developed by the EPS, which provides valued input to some schools on behaviour support and classroom management. Schools value such services, but feel that they get too little EP time. High staff turnover in the EPS is also leading to discontinuity in staffing and is a cause of concern to a number of schools. Speech and language support, support for specific learning difficulties and physiotherapy are all valued by schools, so too is behaviour support but there is far too little available and access to it is hard. This is an area of particular difficulty and will remain so until the intentions of the SEN strategy are translated into robust, effective and rapid action. Few staff in mainstream are well trained or feel equipped to work with such children. History has led schools to believe that pupils with behavioural difficulties should be elsewhere. Hence the pressure of demand on an already overstretched behaviour support service, and in some cases the decision to exclude as a means of accessing those services. This situation is unacceptable and goes some way to explain the rising trend of exclusions in Greenwich. There is an urgent need to provide mainstream schools with the expertise, confidence and resources to work with pupils with behavioural difficulties. The support unit set up in one secondary school with New Opportunities funds is a step in the right direction.

89. Schools have warmly welcomed the recent appointment of an SEN inspector and an advisory teacher. They effectively support SENCOs in schools and encourage successful schools to advise and assist others. The SEN inspector and advisory teacher have run useful training on raising standards by preparing work matched to each pupil's needs and behaviour management. Some schools point to an improvement in the quality of teaching flowing as a direct consequence from intervention by the SEN inspector. New training initiatives set up for schools are valued and effective. Other successful initiatives have linked special schools with mainstream schools in order to disseminate special school expertise into the mainstream. However, the impact of this good work is very localised. Too many schools are still

seeking centrally managed support, instead of building up the confidence and capacity to tackle the issues themselves.

90. There are proposals both to review the number of special school places in the borough and to reduce the number of pupils placed in out-borough special schools. In conjunction with this, the borough is further developing units attached to schools. One large secondary school with two sensory impaired units has experienced difficulties communicating with the LEA about admissions issues. LEA planning for a new visual impairment unit at another large secondary has lacked clarity.

91. Aspects of the LEA's statutory duties, which include the appointment of a parent partnership officer, providing parents and schools with guidance and arranging, monitoring and reviewing the support provided for pupils, are being fulfilled. However, the poor completion rate of statements raises serious concerns about the LEA's functions with regard to the Code of Practice for SEN. Liaison with other agencies such as social services, housing and health is well established at senior management level, but joint working at operational level is still at an early stage of development. In particular, liaison between social services and schools is poor. Schools report communication difficulties and slow responses to concerns about urgent issues. The wait for Child Guidance services is excessively long.

Analysis

92. The assistant director for Pupil and Student Support has a clear understanding of the state of services for SEN in the borough. The inspector and the adviser have a good knowledge of the area, work well in schools and are valued. The SEN strategy acknowledges the changes that need to take place. But the legacy of the past still lingers and not all parties concerned, as indicated earlier, are yet fully committed to the necessary changes. Overall, the current arrangements for special educational needs are unsatisfactory. The LEA has identified what needs to be done to address the current mismatch between provision and needs, and has adopted an appropriate strategy for inclusion. But it has not yet convinced the schools either of the need for radical change or of its ability to manage that change. The measures by which the LEA hopes to achieve change are as yet insufficiently coherent, robust or urgent to deliver the necessary developments. Not wanting to alienate schools, the LEA is proceeding in a cautious and piecemeal manner. Paradoxically, this is not only failing to gain the full commitment of schools to the process of change, but is also compromising the LEA's ability to deliver the wholesale change it has itself identified as necessary.

Recommendations

In order to improve the quality of services provided for pupils with special education needs the following actions should be taken:-

- ☐ implement an urgent programme of action that sets out how the inclusion policy will be put into practice;
- ☐ complete SEN statements within statutory time limits;
- ☐ review the criteria for statements so as to reduce the proportions of children with statements of special educational needs;
- ☐ reallocate resources to support special educational needs in the mainstream, in particular, behavioural needs;
- ☐ reduce the number of exclusions of pupils with special educational needs;
- ☐ improve liaison and joint working with social services at operational level, including agreements about timescales for response to urgent concerns;
- ☐ reduce in the turnover of staff in the Educational Psychology Service.

SECTION 5: ACCESS

The supply of school places

93. The LEA takes reasonable steps to meet its statutory responsibilities with regard to the supply of school places. Following the publication of the Audit Commission annual report *Trading Places* in December 1997, District Audit carried out a review of the LEA's systems, procedures and performance relating to the planning of school places. The main conclusions at that time were that:-

- improvements were needed in the accuracy and use of forecasts of pupil numbers;
- while the LEA had been pro-active in reducing the number of school places, there was scope for further modest reductions;
- most of the sixth forms within LEA schools were smaller than the good practice guideline of 150, and therefore their viability in terms of breadth of curriculum and value for money was questionable.

94. District Audit has monitored the progress of the LEA in addressing the issues raised in the 1997 report, most recently in September 1999. The overall conclusions were that the LEA had had some success in implementing the recommendations of the first review. However, there was still a need to include schools on a more formal basis in the forecasting of places.

95. The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires the LEA to establish a Schools Organisation Committee and to produce a draft School Organisation Plan (SOP). The draft SOP was published in June 1999 and provides a balanced and objective analysis of the issues relevant to the planning of school places, identifies the main options for improving the provision of school places, and links these proposals to the key Council objectives in relation to raising achievement. The plan provides a coherent framework within which the provision of primary and secondary phase places can be planned in consultation with relevant partners and co-ordinated with regeneration activity. Consultation on the plan was completed in August 1999.

96. Ten of the borough's 14 secondary schools offer post-16 courses, although the size of sixth form varies considerably. Seven of the 10 schools have sixth forms with numbers below 150 including one with 63 pupils. The SOP seeks to reduce the number of sixth forms in order to improve the quality of experience for young people in Greenwich. This is long overdue.

Admissions

97. There has been progress in recent years in the LEA's management of admissions and appeals. Currently some 79.5 per cent of parents get a place in a Greenwich school of their first choice. The 1997 District Audit review of school places found that overall Greenwich has a smaller percentage of appeals than any London borough. Recommendations within the report called for better liaison arrangements with diocesan boards, which have begun slowly to improve following the arrival of the new director.

Asset management

98. The LEA was dealt a poor hand with the quality and condition of the school building stock it inherited from the ILEA. Despite capital expenditure of £12.7m over the past two years and projected expenditure of £7.7m for 1999/2000, the quality of school accommodation remains unsatisfactory in many instances. Progress has been unacceptably slow and there has been insufficient attention given to improving the capacity of schools to cope with delegated responsibility for building maintenance. Schools remain concerned about the quality of school accommodation and sceptical about promises of future improvements. Until 1997, responsibility for building maintenance was delegated to schools and the Council only undertook stock condition surveys for schools that purchased services from the Council's property services division. The absence of a comprehensive set of school condition surveys to support the systematic analysis of need limited the effectiveness of the LEA's New Deal bids. However, the LEA is now on target to have the programme completed by December 1999 - the deadline for asset management plans.

Health, safety, welfare and child protection

99. Child protection procedures are well established and regular in-service training and updating is provided for both schools and governors. Processes are being put in place to track the whereabouts and educational achievement of looked-after-children.

100. A recent audit of looked-after children in Greenwich schools and children placed in out-borough special schools identifies 114, of whom 48 have SEN statements and two were permanently excluded in 1998-9. Many looked after Greenwich children are fostered elsewhere and the audit does not include them, so the authority does not know their educational achievement. Nor does it cover children looked after by other authorities and placed in Greenwich schools. Amongst the children already audited, attainment is well below Greenwich averages. The targets set for 2002 are not founded on a secure base of information and a great deal of work will need to be done to fulfil them. Work is, however, underway to establish a means of gathering more comprehensive information in the future. Education, social services and the health authority are currently collaborating to establish a shared database on children looked after in Greenwich and Bexley. In addition, social services are putting together a new database on school placements and other information about looked after children.

Attendance

101. The education social work service, located in social services since April 1998, is involved in developing multi-agency approaches to improving attendance, working jointly with social services and the police. Schools speak well of the Transition/Inclusion (TIP) project, designed to prepare Year 6 primary pupils for secondary transfer and so reduce non-attendance in the secondary phase. Primary schools would, however, welcome more feedback from the secondaries about the outcomes.

102. The LEA itself does not have an agreed policy statement on attendance. The education social work service actively pursues cases of non-attendance; it initiated court proceedings for non-attendance in over 100 cases last year. Several posts within the education social work service are unfilled. There is staff absence due to long-term

sickness, and the service is struggling to provide adequate support for schools. The majority of schools are dissatisfied with the current level of service; particularly the slow response rates. The service is uneven: some schools get no more than a register check by a duty officer who may not know the school. In other schools where there is substantial education social worker involvement, it is valued and has been effective. Attendance remains below national averages in both phases, authorised and unauthorised absence rates are high.

Provision of education otherwise than at school

103. The Greenwich Pupil Referral Unit is responsible both for maintaining pupils in mainstream schools and for educating pupils who are unable to return to school. It is also charged with offering relevant education to pupils in the last year of compulsory education and supporting them into further education or the work place.

Behaviour support

104. The PRU also includes a set of specialist teaching services focused on supporting schools in the management of difficult behaviour. Its services to schools are valued and effective, but in short supply. Other effective sources of behaviour support mentioned by schools are the Early Years Behaviour Project and the Exclusion Advocacy Service. The behaviour support team has done some preventive work, for instance analysing the needs of disturbed children and designing programmes for teachers to follow with them, but there is a general view that more of this work needs to be done and earlier.

105. Secondary schools, in particular, do not feel confident that the LEA fully understands the problems caused by difficult behaviour. Several of them experience this as an area of difficulty and real danger, and feel unsupported in spite of recent LEA moves to put more resources into this area. At the moment schools exclude, justifying their actions in several ways in the interest of school stability. Several schools visited spoke of excluding "out of desperation" or being forced to exclude as the only way to get help. Even where there are possible sources of support such as the advocacy service, schools are not well informed about them. As a consequence, the rate of exclusions is well above national average and not declining. Although the LEA has made an EDP commitment to reducing exclusions, it has yet to agree policy, guidelines and procedures for this area. A consultative approach is certainly desirable in this contentious area, but so is more urgent action. In the absence of clear and transparent agreements, all concerned are struggling and some children are clearly falling through the gaps. This is unacceptable.

106. The Behaviour Support Plan promises closer monitoring of exclusions. There is now an enhanced exclusions database located in governor support services. This can produce data on children excluded on a given date. For example, there were 63 children permanently excluded on May 10 1999. Supplemented by casework data from SEN services, this gives an idea of the number of children of school age out of mainstream/special schooling. It is not possible for the LEA to establish the precise whereabouts of all these children. Currently excluded Year 10 pupils only receive six hours week tuition, but this will change to full time education in January 2000 when the PRU acquires a new building. Referral to the PRU can take a long time, then not all children referred actually attend, and though staff try to follow them up, they do not

always succeed. Evidence of this was gathered in many of the schools visited and confirmed by the police from their involvement in truancy patrols. On any given day a number of children, eight on 10 May 1999, have no place. Typically these are children who have recently moved into the borough and are living in temporary or safe accommodation, those whose 12 plus transfer arrangements from the borough's residential special school have broken down, or children on the borderline of needing hospital education.

107. The LEA is using its best endeavours to place these pupils. The LEA has recognised the need to tighten up its procedures and has recently produced a consultation paper proposing a policy for "casual" admissions to schools in Greenwich. A transparent and agreed policy is certainly necessary but by no means sufficient. More urgent action is now required.

Ethnic minority children

108. The LEA has prepared an action plan to raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils and has been successful in securing funding through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG). The transition from Section 11 funding to the EMAG has been generally satisfactory. The LEA has taken the opportunity to review its arrangements. Previously provision was discharged through the Language and Achievement Project (LAP).

109. Generally the arrangements for the support of bilingual pupils are good and well regarded by schools, although last year the LAP did not meet its Home Office targets. There are serious concerns about the under-performance of black Caribbean boys, children of Bangladeshi and Turkish heritage and white working class boys. In the past schools have been guilty of seeing staff from the LAP as responsible for the achievement of minority ethnic pupils. The EMAG bid includes attainment targets which schools will need support to deliver. As a requirement of the EDP, the LEA has identified support for under-performing groups as a major initiative. A comprehensive breakdown of key stage and GCSE results by ethnicity is provided by the standards and strategy team. In common with other LEAs once bilingual pupils achieve fluency, they outperform other groups. The stronger focus on literacy and numeracy is evident in most schools and this is beginning to challenge the previously compartmentalised approaches to language and literacy teaching.

110. The difficulties that other LEAs have faced in managing the transition from Section 11 funded support for minority ethnic pupils have largely been avoided in Greenwich. The LEA took legal advice and has retained its role as employer in the transitional period while former staff of the LAP are placed where appropriate in schools. Sensible procedures are in place for colleagues to appeal if they are unable to secure employment in local schools and severance arrangements have been negotiated with schools and teacher associations. It is hoped that the appointment of an inspector with responsibility for managing the delivery of the EMAG will address concerns about the strategic management of the project with more effective coordination across the department.

111. Policies and practices for ensuring Traveller children are able to attend school are well established in Greenwich.

School improvement

112. The LEA is meeting its statutory requirements with regard to looked after children, behaviour, health, safety, welfare and child protection. The LEA is struggling to deliver its functions with regard to attendance and provision for pupils who have no school place. Improved liaison with social services, health and housing at a strategic level through the social inclusion steering group is resulting in better arrangements for tracking looked after children, although those placed out of the borough are not yet included. However, though there is a clear will and corporate commitment to combating social exclusion, the mechanisms are inadequate. Poor management information, a lack of systems and procedures and an absence of agreed and transparent guidance bedevil the current situation. Greater urgency is needed on all fronts. Arrangements to improve attendance and reduce exclusions need to be rapidly agreed and implemented if the LEA is to achieve the targets in the EDP.

Measures taken to combat social exclusion including responses to the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence

113. The Social Inclusion Steering Group of the Equalities Service Board is beginning to pull together the various strands relating to the Council's commitment to combat social exclusion. But more needs to be done, particularly in relation to race related matters. The report of the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence (Macpherson Report, 1999) produced seventy recommendations. One is that LEAs should establish procedures for recording racist incidents. Greenwich has had racist incident reporting procedures and information packs in use and in place for over five years, and, as a result of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, has developed these further. The form for completion by teachers is easy to use and the pack includes appropriate guidance. Headteachers and senior school managers have been briefed on its use. Schools are required to submit completed forms at the end of every term. The procedure is under review and a revised version of the pack is expected to be circulated to schools before the end of Autumn term 1999.

114. The inquiry also recommended that LEAs should be developing other strategies to address racism in schools. Many staff in Greenwich have worked long and hard to make their schools racist free zones, but – as elsewhere - the world outside the school gates inevitably impinges. In 1997–98, 388 cases of racist violence and harassment were reported to local police stations. Young people aged under 16 years of age are stated to represent 50 per cent of those charged with racist offences in Greenwich. A number of initiatives to counter racism in schools and beyond are in place, or have been launched recently in Greenwich. These include the Charlton Athletic FC Race Equality Partnership; viewing of the "Routes of Racism" video by relevant stakeholders; and joint work between the Police and the Youth Service.

115. Two concerns about the effectiveness of the LEA's anti-racist work have emerged. Schools feel that more inter-agency work to address these matters on the ground needs to be undertaken. Some key anti-racist projects such as the Youth Self-esteem programme are in the EDP but have yet to begin. The second concern is that insufficient attention has been given to mapping out the range of initiatives underway in schools and evaluating their effectiveness. These are matters for the Social Inclusion Steering Group to consider. The Support for Black Governors project is due to begin this Autumn. Nevertheless, a good start has been made. The programme for all

Governing Bodies to have an opportunity to view the excellent “Routes of Racism” video will be completed by the end of the current academic year. The LEA needs to give more consideration to follow-up work in schools to support staff in addressing the challenges set out in the video to schools in terms of equality of opportunity and parity of treatment for black and white pupils. Senior officers and members in Greenwich have expressed their commitment to addressing racism in education. That can only be welcomed. Much remains to be done, and with some urgency.

Recommendations

Supply of places

- ☐ In order to provide an improved entitlement and better value for money, decisions should be taken urgently by the School Organisation Committee to rationalise post-16 provision.

Exclusions

- ☐ A policy, and transparent procedures and guidelines for exclusions, need to be agreed with schools and other stakeholders and implemented forthwith.

Attendance

- ☐ Improve the quality of support provided by the education social work service to reduce rates of absence in schools.
- ☐ Reduce the turnover of staff in the education social work service.

Behaviour support

- ☐ Build on the good preventive work done by the behaviour support team to enable all schools to develop confidence in dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour.

Social inclusion

- ☐ Improve the quality of management information about children out of school, for whatever reason.
- ☐ Improve the cross-agency arrangements at an operational level between Housing, social services, health, the police and education.
- ☐ Monitor and evaluate the range of Council initiatives to combat racism in Greenwich, and disseminate effective practice more widely in schools.

Looked-after children

- ☐ Extend the audit of looked-after children to include those cared-for outside the borough, so that the LEA has comprehensive information about the attainment of these children.
- ☐ In the light of the information gathered, review the 2002 targets both to ensure that they are realistic, and monitor progress.

APPENDIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Strategy for School Improvement

- ☐ Take urgent steps to support schools in reducing their deficits, particularly in those schools where the deficit is rising.
- ☐ Reduce the high level of central charges and make the basis for charges more transparent to headteachers and governors.
- ☐ Improve the systems for transferring pupils' performance data from primary to secondary schools.
- ☐ Ensure that a more robust and consistently challenging approach to target-setting is adopted across the LEA, which builds on the experience and expertise within schools and sections of the education directorate.
- ☐ Review the effectiveness of LEA services in supporting secondary schools in becoming more self-evaluating.
- ☐ Review the size of the Inspection and Advisory Service as part of the reduction in centrally retained funds for school improvement and in line with the planned reduction of activities in the EDP from April 2000.

Strategic Management

In order to improve strategic management, the following actions should be taken:-

- ☐ scrutinise the central department allocated overheads and other costs charged against the education budget to ensure that they are fair, represent good value for money, and are delegated to schools where this is appropriate under Fair Funding;
- ☐ provide all heads and chairs of governors with an annual statement setting out how central charges are calculated and how the activity related to these charges benefits school and education directorate activity;
- ☐ review the current basis for calculating expenditure on education services in order to bring it more into line with the figure used in the annual return made to the Department for Education and Employment under section 52 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998;
- ☐ review the current performance management and quality assurance systems within the directorate of education and other service areas relevant to education to ensure that they provide a better basis for monitoring performance against service targets and standards.

In order to improve the quality of services to schools, the following actions should be taken:-

- ☐ examine and ascertain the management services that secondary schools require currently and for the next five years, and revise the services provided in the light of this exercise;
- ☐ establish a timetable for the implementation of the findings of the recent Best Value review of the property services division in relation to schools;
- ☐ ensure greater consistency in project management arrangements in relation to the ICT development programme in schools, both for administration and curriculum;
- ☐ use the process of the development of the Asset Management Plan to review and reconstitute the arrangements for the provision of property services so that there is a new partnership between schools, the education directorate and the property services division in relation to the maintenance and development of school buildings.
- ☐ The planned review of the first year of the EDP should, in addition to evaluating progress:-
 - ☐ reduce the high level of retained funding to that needed to challenge and support school improvement, and delegate funding for curriculum support activity;
 - ☐ reduce the number of priorities and eliminate any overlaps between priorities, in order to achieve a sharper focus for action;
 - ☐ accelerate progress towards school self-evaluation;
 - ☐ re-deploy resources in order to reduce exclusions;
 - ☐ achieve a consistent approach to setting EDP targets that are measurable and have clear milestones.

Special Education

In order to improve the quality of services provided for pupils with special education needs the following actions should be taken:-

- ☐ implement an urgent programme of action that sets out how the inclusion policy will be put into practice;
- ☐ complete SEN statements within statutory time limits;
- ☐ review the criteria for statements so as to reduce the proportions of children with statements of special educational needs;
- ☐ reallocate resources to support special educational needs in the mainstream, in particular, behavioural needs;
- ☐ reduce the number of exclusions of pupils with special educational needs;

- ☐ improve liaison and joint working with social services at operational level, including agreements about timescales for response to urgent concerns;
- ☐ reduce the turnover of staff in the education social work service.

Supply of places

- ☐ In order to provide an improved entitlement and better value for money, decisions should be taken urgently by the School Organisation Committee to rationalise post-16 provision.

Exclusions

- ☐ A policy, and transparent procedures and guidelines for exclusions, need to be agreed with schools and other stakeholders and implemented forthwith.

Attendance

- ☐ Improve the quality of support provided by the education social work service to reduce rates of absence in schools.
- ☐ Reduce the turnover of staff in the education social work service.

Behaviour support

- ☐ Build on the good preventive work done by the behaviour support team to enable all schools to develop confidence in dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour.

Social inclusion

- ☐ Improve the quality of management information about children out of school, for whatever reason.
- ☐ Improve the cross-agency arrangements at an operational level between Housing, social services, health, the police and education.
- ☐ Monitor and evaluate the range of Council initiatives to combat racism in Greenwich, and disseminate effective practice more widely in schools.

Looked-after children

- ☐ Extend the audit of looked-after children to include those cared-for outside the borough, so that the LEA has comprehensive information about the attainment of these children.
- ☐ In the light of the information gathered, review the 2002 targets both to ensure that they are realistic, and monitor progress.

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

Tel: 0171 421 6800

This report may be produced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted and produced verbatim and without adaption and on condition that the source and date are thereof stated.

A further copy of this report can be obtained from the Local Education Authority concerned:

Education Services
London Borough of Greenwich
Riverside House
Woolwich High Street
London
SE18 6BP