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IN EDUCATION

INSPECTION OF
ENFIELD
LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

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APPENDIX 1: RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

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

2. The inspection was partly informed by data, some of which was provided by the LEA, on school inspection information and audit reports, on documentation and discussion with elected members, staff in the education and other council departments, other staff, and representatives of the LEA's partners. Information also included a self-evaluation undertaken by the LEA. In addition, the inspection team considered the earlier Ofsted/Audit Commission report on this LEA published in October 2000 and the outcomes of a survey sent to schools seeking their views on all aspects of the work of the LEA. The response rate to the questionnaire was 45 per cent.

3. The inspection also involved studies of the effectiveness of particular aspects of the LEA's work through small group discussions with headteachers and other staff. Visits were made to two primary schools, one secondary school, one special school and the LEA's secondary tuition centre. The discussions also considered whether the support provided by the LEA contributes, where appropriate, to the discharge of the LEA's statutory duties, is effective in challenging and contributing to improvements in schools, and provides value for money.

4. Inspection judgements, converted into numerical grades, are used in the comprehensive performance assessment profile for the education service. The Audit Commission published the assessments for each upper tier council on 12 December 2002. The judgements from this inspection will be incorporated into the proposed subsequent annual update of the education service scores.

5. Some of the grades are used in the comprehensive performance assessment profile for the education service. It is intended that the comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) for education will be updated annually so the grades from this inspection will contribute to the next annual assessment.

COMMENTARY

6. Enfield LEA was previously inspected during summer 2000. While the majority of functions were performed competently, the Education Development Plan (EDP) was lacking in ambition and the LEA posed insufficient challenge to schools. In addition, the council's priorities were not well articulated and it was without a systematic approach to monitoring the performance of schools and the education department. Determined to improve, officers and members responded promptly to the report's recommendations. The rate of improvement has been highly satisfactory, and good in important areas of school improvement and corporate issues.

7. The borough of Enfield serves a diverse socio-economic and cultural community on the northern edge of London, with stark contrast between the affluent suburban areas in the west and high levels of disadvantage in the south and east. Pupils from a range of minority ethnic groups represent over 50 per cent of the school population and almost one third of all pupils have English as an additional language. The borough continues to attract significant numbers of pupils from neighbouring authorities into its heavily subscribed secondary schools and, since the last inspection, a growing number of children from refugee and asylum seeker families into both primary and secondary schools. Despite a very high level of pupil mobility in a number of primary schools, and difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers in more disadvantaged areas, results have gradually improved and the overall performance of schools continues to be broadly in line with national averages.

8. Elected members assumed a more active role and, from May 2002, the newly elected administration has ensured a relatively measured, yet pragmatic approach to political change - in particular, proposals for addressing inequality through neighbourhood renewal and the decision to increase council funding for education. However, inadequate communication from the corporate centre leaves schools anxious about future political direction.

9. Strengthened by new senior appointments, leadership from the education group management team is now effective and purposeful, and the director of education continues to deserve the confidence, respect and trust of schools. Making good use of data across services to support school improvement, and building on its good partnership with schools and other agencies, the education department's capacity to plan strategically has improved markedly and a culture of Best Value is embedded in its work. The LEA's second Education Development Plan (EDP2) provides a clear sense of direction, and demanding targets have been set for schools' performance; confident of its core purpose, the school improvement service is now effective in challenging schools to meet these targets, while successfully advocating autonomy. There are particular strengths in:

- the LEA's strategy for school improvement;
- the effectiveness of the leadership, strategic planning and performance management of services to support school improvement;
- monitoring, challenge, intervention and support to schools, including the use made of performance data;
- support for raising standards in literacy and numeracy, and of minority ethnic and Traveller children;

- statutory obligations in respect of special educational needs (SEN);
- partnership working;
- combating racism;
- advice to elected members;
- support to school governors;
- admissions;
- asset management planning; and
- human resources services.

10. Although high priority is given to the needs and interests of vulnerable children, there has been less improvement in provision for aspects of SEN and social inclusion due to a long-term absence in the education management team. Progress has accelerated in recent months as a result of an acting appointment and this impetus is set to continue through the imminent cross-cutting review of services for vulnerable children. However, the following weaknesses remain:

- provision for pupils who have no school place; and
- provision for looked after children.

11. A shortage of places in the secondary phase is a recurring problem and, despite an increase in the number of school places, demand still outstrips supply. At the beginning of the school year over 100 pupils were waiting to be placed and statutory provision for education otherwise than at school was not met. Solutions in the past have been to a large degree too insular; alliances with neighbouring authorities have been slow to emerge, but effective links have now been made and these are gathering momentum. The preparation and completion of personal education plans for looked after children has been too slow, hampered by recruitment difficulties in social services as the lead agency.

12. Much has already been achieved in a relatively short time. Emerging now from political, structural and policy transition, is an LEA with a new administration, a local authority acting chief executive, an acting assistant director for children's services and a new director of social services. While many recent initiatives promise well for the future, and some are already making a difference to the work of schools, it is too soon to judge the effect of others. Nevertheless, Enfield is now a highly satisfactory LEA with an unambiguous sense of direction and some considerable strengths; its capacity to make further progress and to act on the recommendations of this report is also highly satisfactory.

SECTION 1: THE LEA STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Context

13. Enfield LEA serves a diverse socio-economic and cultural community, with stark contrast between the affluent suburban areas in the west and high levels of disadvantage in the south and east. Of the 19 outer London boroughs, Enfield is now the seventh most deprived.

14. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils has risen by an estimated 2,000, from 46,410 to 48,562, and includes a growing number of refugees and asylum seekers. There is a very high level of mobility of pupils in a number of schools, averaging 16.5 per cent in primary schools, and seven per cent in the secondary phase. Pupils from a range of minority ethnic groups represent over 50 per cent of the school population and almost one third of all pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals remains broadly in line with national figures, averaging 23 per cent, but ranging from two to 51 per cent in primary schools and three to 40 per cent in secondary schools. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs remains below the national average for primary-aged pupils and in line for pupils of secondary age.

15. The borough currently maintains 65 primary schools (two schools have amalgamated since the time of the last inspection); six special schools; two pupil referral units, and 17 secondary schools with an 11-18 age range, most of which are oversubscribed (an additional school was built through Private Finance Initiative funding in 2000). Sixteen per cent of pupils transferring to Enfield secondary schools are from neighbouring LEAs. There are now seven Beacon schools; two more secondary schools having been awarded this status since the previous inspection.

Performance

16. Since the last inspection, results have gradually improved and the overall performance of schools continues to be broadly in line with national and 'statistical neighbours' averages, except in reading at Key Stage 1 and science at Key Stage 3, where performance remains below national figures.

17. The percentage of pupils entering primary schools with poor levels of attainment remains above national figures. However, pupils make average progress and the rate of improvement in standards accelerates at Key Stage 2. Conversely, a high percentage of pupils enter secondary schools with good attainment, but progress at Key Stage 3 is only average and the rate of improvement dips. At Key Stage 4, pupils make above average progress and the rate of improvement accelerates once more.

18. The majority of schools that have been inspected twice by Ofsted have improved, although the percentage of good or very good primary schools is still below the national average.

¹ Enfield's statistical neighbours are Bury, Bolton, Croydon, Dudley, City of Bristol, Hillingdon, Brighton and Hove, Southend, Bexley and Redbridge.

19. Attendance in both primary and secondary schools continues to be broadly in line with national figures, while unauthorised absence remains above the national figure for secondary schools and well above the national figure for primary schools. Exclusion rates in primary schools are at the national average, but in secondary schools, although the rate is decreasing, this continues above the national figure.

20. There are currently three schools in special measures. Three schools, compared with seven in 2000, are deemed to have serious weaknesses; in addition, one secondary school is facing challenging circumstances.

Funding

21. The 2002/03 education Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) for Enfield, at £3,106 for primary pupils and £3,936 for secondary pupils, is broadly in line with outer London authorities, but higher than the England averages of £2,797 (primary) and £3,582 (secondary). Enfield's education budget for 2002/03 was 98.8 per cent of SSA compared with 99.2 per cent in 2001/02. The council had previously funded education at SSA, but the Government's ceiling on funding led members to a decision to reduce proposed education spending.

22. The council has taken up its full Standards Fund allocation for 2002/03 and has been successful in attracting a wide range of substantial external funding including £20.5 million from the New Opportunities Fund, Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, funding from Sport England and Sure Start, and over £2 million support for a Private Finance Initiative from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

23. Good progress on asset management planning has secured capital allocations from central Government and Private Finance Initiative credits for two schemes. Since 2000/01, the capital programme has increased from £6.5 million to £14.2 million. For 2002/03, the approved capital programme is funded by £3.3 million borrowing, £7.8 million capital grant, £923,000 revenue contributions to capital and £2.3 million receipts.

24. In 2001/02, centrally retained funding of £474 per pupil was high compared with outer London authorities (£438) and the England average (£417). Budgets delegated to schools in 2001/02 were in line with outer London averages and above the England average. In the individual school's budget, Enfield funds its schools in line with its neighbours as shown in the table below.

<u>2001/02*</u>	<u>Enfield</u>	<u>Outer London</u>
Primary ISB/pupil	£2,188	£2,198
Secondary ISB/pupil	£2,984	£2,929

* Individual school's budget (ISB) per pupil

Council structure

25. In May 2002, following local elections, the council changed from Labour to Conservative control and continued with a leader and cabinet structure; the new

administration comprises 63 councillors (39 Conservative members and 24 Labour). Education, skills and learning is one of seven portfolios held by the nine-member cabinet. Portfolios are matched with six cross-party scrutiny panels, chairs of which constitute an overview and scrutiny committee; expert advisers are co-opted to assist panel and committee members in their scrutiny function.

26. Other committees are appropriate in range and composition. Community forums have recently been disbanded, but plans are in hand to replace these with local area committees.

The LEA strategy for school improvement

27. The LEA's strategy for school improvement, unsatisfactory two years ago, is now good. Although based on a sound audit of need, the first EDP lacked ambition and focus, outcomes were difficult to discern and the quality of monitoring information produced for senior officers and members was unsatisfactory, as were arrangements for evaluating the plan. This is now far from the case.

28. Following the previous inspection, year three of the EDP was substantially revised. School improvement was designated the core work of the LEA and greater emphasis was given to assisting schools in managing their own improvement. Actions more accurately reflected the diverse needs of Enfield schools and were generally clearer in purpose and outcomes. Targets were revised so as to be more demanding and the introduction of the 'Good Schools Policy' provided a good framework for school improvement, directing resources more effectively to schools most in need of support. A member-led forum was established to monitor and evaluate systematically the implementation of the plan.

29. The current strategy for school improvement, which comprises EDP2 and the LEA's plan for Excellence in Cities, 'Enfield Excels' is strong in ambition, focus and structure. Priorities clearly reflect local circumstances, plans for Excellence in Cities, which include all secondary and special schools, are coherent and well-targeted, and sound links are made with other key plans, including the revised inclusion strategy. Actions originate from a thorough audit, including a comprehensive evaluation of the first EDP. They subsume the small residue of action following the previous inspection and are organised through five national and three well-chosen local priorities. The purpose of each is clear and monitoring and evaluation strategies are securely aligned to activities and outcomes. Targets, including those in the Excellence in Cities plan, are challenging, with some set above schools' aggregated targets. This justifiably reflects the anticipated effect of activities within the school improvement programme. Although complex and detailed, the plan is carefully costed and will provide a secure basis for school improvement over the next five years. Priorities and targets for the Edmonton Education Action Zone are clear and well targeted.

30. Despite its original shortcomings, highly satisfactory progress has been made in implementing the first EDP and improvement is evident in all priority areas. This is due to improved relevance of EDP priorities to schools, good management from lead officers, and very thorough monitoring and evaluation. Most significantly, the strategy for school improvement drives a fundamental change in the LEA's

relationship with its schools, now resolutely focused on challenge for self-improvement. Implementation of the Excellence in Cities action plan is well underway and partnerships between schools are working well; the very recently established Education Action Zone is off to a good start.

31. Results have gradually improved, but in 2002 fell short of very demanding targets for Key Stage 2, and below targets set for Key Stages 3 and 4. This means that a greater rate of progress is needed to meet targets for 2003. However, aspirations remain high; a systematic analysis of school-level data is in hand and well-targeted actions within EDP2 should ensure that results continue to improve. The number of schools with serious weaknesses has reduced, but difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers has adversely affected progress in some. Exclusions in the secondary sector are yet to reduce in line with targets, but early indicators from Excellence in Cities activities point towards a reduction in permanent exclusions in nine schools and a reduced number of fixed term exclusions overall.

The allocation of resources to priorities

32. The allocation of resources to priorities, previously unsatisfactory, is now satisfactory, although some weaknesses remain.

33. Spending largely reflects the council's priorities. Following wide consultation on its 2002/3 budget priorities, spending on education was strongly supported, but the public's first priority was improving the local environment and this was funded well above SSA. However, education expenditure was increased by over £11million to cover the teachers' pay award, increased numbers of pupils, matched standards funding and essential growth items. The council has prioritised part of a £1 million growth in schools' budget on increased funding at Key Stage 2, performance management and the admission of pupils without a school place.

34. The current consultation on a draft three year medium term financial and capital strategy commits the council to funding education at SSA, although schools are disappointed by the decision to phase this over four years rather than to restore it in one year. The council has successfully secured substantial additional grants, and a major capital programme rightly prioritises the provision of sufficient school places. The review of the special schools' funding formula is in line with the SEN strategy, but the school funding formula continues to channel more funding through age-weighted pupil units than other factors. The council meets Government delegation targets.

35. Processes for budget-making, consultation and scrutiny are clear, monitoring and reporting structures are sound and schools are fully involved in determining priorities. For 2003/04, the new administration has prudently introduced a 'Star Chamber' process to scrutinise all council service budgets and to improve its understanding in making budget decisions. Council mechanisms for scrutinising bids for increased funding from services are sound.

36. The school funding formula itself has not undergone a fundamental review, but schools effectively influence budget development through the finance, resources and economic development policy group; its budget sub-group has modelled a needs-

based approach to school funding as recommended in the previous inspection report. The authority has also reviewed the distribution of the funding formula for additional educational need to improve differentiation and to match need more closely.

Recommendation

In order to improve the match of funding to priorities:

- link work on the needs-based funding of schools with the implementation of the new funding formula for LEAs and schools, to form the basis of a comprehensive review of the existing school funding formula.

37. Processes for supporting and monitoring school budget-making are effective. Although schools are questioned about surplus balances, challenge is insufficient and levels of surpluses are too high. Three quarters of primary schools, all six special schools and one third of secondary schools have balances over five per cent; only one secondary school is in deficit.

38. All services are subject to regular review to ensure Best Value and, as schools further improve, the allocation of resources to priorities will rightly be subject to further review. Strategic management costs are high in comparison with outer London authorities and there are a number of centrally funded teams providing support to schools, which could increasingly, and more appropriately, be provided on a self-funding basis.

Recommendation

In order to reduce strategic management costs and enable schools to have greater flexibility in the purchase of non-core services:

- identify opportunities for further delegation of responsibility in the 'Education Strategy' and team service plans through risk assessments and options for the provision of services.

Promoting continuous improvement, including Best Value

39. Strategies to secure continuous improvement remain satisfactory. The council has a sound performance management and Best Value framework and culture, and the LEA's self-evaluation in preparation for this inspection has provided additional evidence of its capacity to self-review.

40. The council's Best Value Performance Plan for 2002/03, 'Future Enfield', establishes clear strategic priorities, and it details how each will be delivered and evaluated against key targets. Corporate priorities drive effectively the priorities of the Education Strategy 2001-2006, EDP2, the school organisation plan and the asset management plan. A clear corporate planning framework ensures service plans are derived from corporate priorities, and performance appraisal is well linked

to service planning. Some service plans, however, lack sufficient detail on resourcing: activities are costed on the basis of total days rather than actual cost and there is no reconciliation of total days against total available staffing. This makes it difficult to assess value for money.

Recommendation

In order to determine value for money from all services:

- include more detailed costing of activities in the review of service plans and information on expenditure in monitoring reports, so that annual reviews can assess service outcomes and value for money.

41. Well-targeted reviews of services to schools have resulted in restructuring, improved service delivery, greater flexibility in service level agreements and opportunities for schools to benefit from economies of scale. The review of special educational needs and the current review of access and school places planning appropriately focus on key areas for service improvement. Significantly, the council's Best Value sub-committee was deliberately retained following modernisation to oversee reviews and their implementation. For the future, reviews will be more strategic and cross-cutting, starting with a priority review of services for vulnerable children.

42. The council is managing a substantial transition process effectively and has successfully maintained momentum for continuous improvement. With the change of administration and its emerging priorities, alongside a planned restructuring of council departments to ensure effective service delivery, it is clear that Best Value principles underpin its agenda for change.

SECTION 2: SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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

43. Good progress has been made in important aspects of support for school improvement. All functions are now carried out well or very well and the overall effectiveness of services, previously unsatisfactory, is now highly satisfactory.

44. The LEA responded promptly and effectively to the last report, building on its strengths and correcting weaknesses. In particular, two radical changes have had far-reaching benefits. The restructuring of the school improvement service altered the balance of its work, sharpened its focus on raising standards, strengthened work with other services and raised its standing in the eyes of secondary schools. The redesigning of the system for monitoring and review improved the LEA's knowledge of its schools and increased its capacity to identify weaknesses early while enhancing schools' potential for self-management.

45. Although the LEA maintains a large school improvement service, with a very substantial centrally-funded component, Best Value principles are incorporated into service and performance management. There is ample evidence that these services make a difference to the work of schools and provide highly satisfactory value for money.

Monitoring, challenge and intervention

46. The last inspection found a number of weaknesses in the LEA's procedures for monitoring and challenging schools and for determining the circumstances in which it would intervene. The weaknesses have all been rectified and this is now an area of strength. There is a well-defined and transparent system, developed in consultation with schools, providing clear categories of need and sensitive triggers for additional support. The system draws on extensive, objective performance indicators and is integral with schools' self-evaluation processes, ensuring that it increases, rather than detracts from, the capacity of schools to manage themselves.

47. The process has been carefully disseminated to headteachers and governors and is now being built into the LEA's management training at all levels. It is yet to be fully embedded, but the great majority of schools understand and value the new approach and they have been prepared to invest time and effort into adopting it. In most respects standards are gradually rising and practice is improving. The LEA has made a significant contribution to this change.

The focusing of LEA support on areas of greatest need

48. The LEA's ability to focus its support on areas of greatest need, which was previously satisfactory, is now good. The rationale for intervention and support has been radically overhauled so that the LEA achieves a good balance between gaining sound knowledge of the progress of all schools and providing support where it is most needed. The basic entitlement to advisory support, which was formerly excessive, has been reduced and schools are clear as to when it is their responsibility to purchase the additional advice and training they require. When, as

a result of the LEA's monitoring, a school is placed in a category of need which triggers additional LEA support, there is a good system for agreeing with headteachers and governors the kinds of help needed and a satisfactory procedure for determining the level of support in the light of competing priorities. Almost always, schools in greatest need report this support as sufficient and of good quality.

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

49. The LEA is now effective in monitoring and challenging schools, whereas at the last inspection it was only partly effective, with limited capacity in the secondary sector and a relationship with primary schools that tended to be supportive at the cost of challenge. The restructuring of the school improvement service, in combination with the redefinition of procedures described above, has rectified these weaknesses. New appointments have led to greatly increased confidence in secondary schools and both primary and secondary schools report a rise in the LEA's capacity and readiness to offer constructive challenge. The data which informs the debate between officers and schools, already good, has been further improved, with more useful benchmarks. Information, formerly lacking, on the attainments of minority ethnic groups at each key stage is now complete. The school self-review system closely follows that used for external inspection and schools are rapidly adopting it and finding it useful. There is, therefore, a strong basis for discussion. School improvement officers' visits are more sharply focused and productive, and there is good oral and written feedback. In particular, governors receive an annual evaluative report on the school, which they have generally found useful.

50. School improvement officers play a pivotal role in advising schools on sources of specialist consultancy and training that they can purchase. This is very effective where the LEA itself can offer the support, alone or in collaboration with its partners in higher education and in other LEAs. The brokerage of outside provision is less effective.

51. Support for target setting has improved in that there is no longer the same tendency for the highest achieving schools to set the least demanding targets and vice versa. Instead, targets are now consistently challenging. Given the current rate of progress, provisional data for the current year suggests that some targets for the next two years are unlikely to be achieved; the LEA is considering how best to work towards them. There is wide variation between subjects and between schools, particularly at Key Stage 3. Nevertheless, standards have generally improved at all key stages since the last inspection, at least in line with national trends. In schools and curriculum areas where the LEA has targeted resources, for example in schools using drama to support writing, it is able to demonstrate measurable improvements.

52. Most of the data relating to pupils and their attainments are now transferred electronically, although there is more work to do before all databases and software are compatible. Performance data are duly transferred when pupils move between schools and key stages, and more comprehensive pupil records are being trialled, especially to ensure smooth transition from primary to secondary school. Pupil transfer information is distributed to a large number of neighbouring LEAs, and

effective exchange of data takes place with the borough from which most pupils transfer. However, standards have yet to be agreed with other neighbouring LEAs.

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

53. The LEA has made good progress in identifying schools which are under-performing, intervening early and preventing further decline. Its capacity in this regard, unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, is now good and the number of schools with serious weaknesses has already reduced. The support provided to schools, once categorised, continues to be good and in most cases they make reasonably rapid progress. Strengths have been maintained in key areas, such as the strong support of school improvement officers, help with action planning, intensive curriculum support, especially in literacy and numeracy, and guidance on personnel matters. Senior officers and members monitor the situation in each school carefully and the members' education standards forum makes this even more systematic.

54. However, some schools have progressed too slowly, or have suffered setbacks, due to excessive pupil mobility and heavy staffing losses. The recruitment and retention programme is helping to address such issues and additional support has been provided to individual schools. Despite difficulties in parts of the borough in recruiting governors, the LEA has appointed sufficient additional governors to strengthen the management of schools causing concern. A minority of appointments have proven unsuitable, indicating that there remains a need to build up the pool of expert and experienced governors.

55. The new, more rigorous procedures for monitoring and school self-review are leading to earlier identification of difficulties and appropriate, measured intervention. The criteria for intervention now take proper account of both adverse contextual factors and persistent under-performance. There are no recent examples of governors being surprised when presented with weaknesses, as was the case previously. The school improvement officers are frank in their feedback to headteachers and governors and their judgements are sound.

Support for literacy and numeracy

56. Support to schools for raising standards of literacy and numeracy, previously highly satisfactory, is now good. Strengths have been maintained, management is thorough and teams of consultants are competent and effective. The quality of training continues to be high and school partnerships, or clusters, still play a useful part in disseminating expertise and supporting co-ordinators.

57. Both strategies have developed well and are now better integrated with the EDP. There is renewed emphasis on effective teaching and new initiatives addressing local issues, such as underachievement in writing. A Beacon school is developing a numeracy programme for parents and a helpful model for the whole primary literacy curriculum has been published. There are clear indications of the effectiveness of these initiatives. Leading teachers are used very well to demonstrate good practice and to conduct training. In both subjects there is good co-ordination of the work across Key Stages 2 and 3. Consultants have worked

closely with other services to develop curricula for underachieving groups and pupils learning English as an additional language.

58. Improvements in standards are encouraging. In English there was a substantial increase in results last year, taking the LEA above the national average for the first time at Key Stage 2. This year there has been further improvement in writing, although at the cost of reading where standards have stalled. Standards in mathematics have risen steadily. Both subjects have seen significant improvements in the numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels at Key Stages 1 and 2.

59. However, very demanding targets in EDP2 for 2002 have not been met in either subject. They had been raised from this year onwards and it is now clear that those for the next two years are unlikely to be achieved. This shortfall has been approached constructively by identifying particular areas for further improvement.

Support for information and communication technology (ICT)

60. Previously unsatisfactory, support for the use of ICT in the curriculum has improved and is now satisfactory, although there are still some weaknesses and some areas in which improvements have yet to take effect. There is a sound strategy, but the level of schools' understanding is varied. The signs are that the strategy is beginning to clarify the LEA's purposes and to remove some unrealistic expectations of the past. The decision, as part of the strategy, to join the London Grid for Learning promises to be a good investment, but it is too soon for the benefits to be felt.

61. Funding and provision from the National Grid for Learning has continued to be well administered by the LEA. Schools are beginning to appreciate the benefits of more equipment and it is clear, particularly in primary schools, that this has often been a stimulus for developing the ICT curriculum. Advice on installations for curriculum purposes is satisfactory and the majority of primary schools subscribe to the technical support scheme.

62. National training from the New Opportunities Fund has remained unsatisfactory. After a slow start, it is now predicted that virtually all teachers will have received their training by the target date. However, few schools are satisfied with the quality of the training. In so far as the LEA has contributed to it, or presented the options, this has not reflected well on the LEA in the eyes of schools.

63. The chief weakness at the last inspection was in lack of support for the curriculum. Extensive changes have been made to address this. The strategy is being managed at a senior level; the number of advisers has been increased from one to two and an ICT consultant has been appointed for Key Stage 3. The ad hoc response to requests for support from primary schools, which had defeated the LEA's best efforts, has been largely discontinued. Instead, the central training programme has been increased, particularly to promote national guidelines. Reasonably, such provision as the LEA is able to make from its retained funding is now concentrated on those schools requiring intensive support.

64. The LEA monitors schools' ICT development plans and offers useful advice for improvement; schools' inspection reports are also reviewed for evaluations of ICT. However, knowledge of standards is limited because the LEA is reliant on incomplete and sometimes impressionistic evaluations from schools. It has addressed this through co-ordinators' seminars on assessment and moderation. Again, this is a good investment, which should lead to more consistent data on teacher assessment in the future.

Support for raising standards at Key Stage 3

65. There is a highly satisfactory strategy for raising standards at Key Stage 3, rooted in the EDP and based on a thorough audit of available data. This is well known and welcomed by schools, which are generally pleased with the LEA's support. The strategy is well managed and consultants are competent, enthusiastic and well-regarded.

66. In line with its own priorities, the LEA has wisely chosen to fund an additional consultant for the foundation subjects from its central resources. This is an effective response to a number of schools keen to develop teaching and learning simultaneously across several or all departments. The Key Stage 3 strategy is interwoven with that of the literacy and numeracy strategies at the primary stage, with imaginative projects supporting progression between Key Stages 2 and 3 in the core subjects. Primary and secondary teachers have worked together in running successful summer schools and the leading literacy and numeracy teachers have made an important contribution to the launch of the strategy at Key Stage 3. The consultants have worked closely with the ethnic minority achievement service, the Excellence in Cities staff, the education welfare service and others in developing the curriculum for pupils who are underachieving or in danger of doing so. This includes gifted and talented pupils.

67. The LEA monitors progress regularly and there is close liaison with school improvement officers in this respect. A number of promising improvements are reported, both by schools and the authority. Lesson planning is better, with work more varied according to the range of pupils' abilities; teachers and managers are receptive to fresh approaches; departments are working more closely together, and secondary and primary schools are co-operating more effectively. These developments do not apply equally to all schools, but a firm foundation has been laid upon which to build. The catch-up classes for under-achieving pupils have been effective in some schools, especially where they have been fully incorporated into the timetable. Other schools have found these sessions burdensome and consultants are considering innovative ways of organising them for the future.

68. Standards are around the national average in English and mathematics, but below this in science. Suitably ambitious targets were not met this year in any of the core subjects, but there were, nevertheless, significant improvements in mathematics and science. Standards in English improved markedly last year, but fell back this year, coinciding with abnormally wide variations between schools exceeding or falling short of their individual targets. It is too soon to say how far work within the strategy is influencing standards.

69. In general, the LEA has supported schools well in setting their own targets, although it is limited by the data available as no simple comparisons can be made between standards at Key Stages 2 and 3 because of the extent to which pupils cross borough boundaries when transferring from primary to secondary schools. Schools are encouraged to adopt the voluntary end-of-year tests and most have done so already for Year 7. As yet, there are no comprehensive data for individual pupils at Key Stage 3.

Support for minority ethnic groups, including Travellers

70. Good support is provided for minority ethnic pupils, including Travellers and those for whom English is an additional language. The strengths reported at the last inspection have been maintained and developed. The language and curriculum access service is now fully established as a mainly advisory team and integrated within the school improvement service. This has facilitated some productive collaboration with other advisers and consultants on particular schools and groups of pupils likely to underachieve. Advice to schools remains good and supported by effective training for whole staffs and individual teachers. Guidance based on Enfield's training for teaching assistants has been adopted by the Department for Education and Skills for publication nationally. The service regularly monitors the use of the ethnic minority achievement grant in all schools and offers good guidance on planning. Useful criteria have been offered to schools to help them in their self-review.

71. Weaknesses have been addressed. The formula for devolved funding has been subject to further consultation with schools and is now accepted as fair, although there remains a minority view that more funding should be devolved. The achievements of Turkish and African Caribbean boys remain a concern but measures to raise standards have been strengthened. Previously it was only possible to analyse performance by ethnicity at Key Stage 4 but the required data are now available for other key stages.

72. The Traveller service continues to support schools well and provides good value for money. This small team is diligent in tracking a diverse group of pupils whose movements are not easily followed and whose numbers have risen since the last inspection with further arrivals from eastern Europe. Schools have been helped in recognising ethnic differences, supported with translations and offered useful documentation. Liaison with Traveller families is good, as are contacts with other agencies, inside and outside the borough. The team works closely with the education welfare service regarding attendance.

73. There is a wealth of very good quality guidance to schools from both services on, for instance, managing multilingual classrooms, providing for asylum seekers and refugees, understanding cultural differences and dealing with racism.

Support for gifted and talented pupils

74. The LEA's support for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. There are well-established practices, particularly in the primary sector, while the Excellence in Cities gifted and talented strand is bringing new vigour to the work in secondary schools.

The main weakness is that the two elements of the work are not unified into a comprehensive strategy and this is reflected in a degree of inconsistency in schools. Nevertheless, there is a strong foundation for future development.

75. Despite a relatively small investment of time and resources in the past, there has been good leadership to schools. The majority have nominated co-ordinators, established registers of able pupils, pay greater attention to the higher levels of achievement and build more appropriate provision into lesson and curriculum plans. Some schools have developed enrichment activities within the curriculum or as additional activities. There has been regular training to promote the LEA's policy and regular meetings for co-ordinators. Some notable enrichment activities are provided at borough level, such as annual science challenges and musical productions to which many schools contribute. However, awareness is variable in primary schools.

76. Secondary schools are all involved in the Excellence in Cities project. A useful handbook for co-ordinators includes comprehensive criteria for school self-review and strategies for raising the attainment of gifted and talented pupils. This is currently used by secondary schools and those primary schools involved in the Education Action Zone. With minimal changes, it could be equally valuable to all primary schools. Schools have been organised into clusters for mutual support and several are leading the development of enrichment projects.

Recommendation

In order to secure improved provision for gifted and talented pupils:

- unify current work in primary and secondary schools into a comprehensive strategy spanning both phases.

Support for school management

77. Support for school management remains highly satisfactory and some areas of support have been developed further. Management training, from the first years of teaching to headship, continues to be clearly defined. Participation in national courses for headteachers and aspiring headteachers is strongly encouraged, as are applications for any of the recognised quality marks applicable to schools. The LEA's own management training is of good quality and the proportion of headteachers and deputies participating has increased. Worthwhile accredited courses are made available to middle managers.

78. New headteachers generally feel well supported. They are carefully introduced to the authority and their needs for induction training are assessed in detail. They are well supported by the LEA's advisory headteacher, particularly when they find themselves faced with challenging situations. There is some variation in the extent to which helpful peer mentoring is arranged, although there are examples of very useful associations. The clusters, or partnerships, of schools provide support networks for headteachers, but they are somewhat variable in their effectiveness. A comprehensive handbook for headteachers is nearing completion. Most of the

guidance is already available in some form; this includes useful guidance on schools' responsibilities for Best Value, not only as a procurer of services, but as a provider.

79. The self-review programme, complemented by good benchmarked data supplied by the LEA, has been powerful in increasing schools' autonomy. Headteachers now consider their relationship with the LEA to be more business-like and appreciate improved challenge.

80. Relationships between officers and schools are very good, providing an environment in which Beacon schools, advanced skills teachers and leading literacy and numeracy teachers have been able to make valuable contributions. Nevertheless, the dissemination of good practice could be more effective. For example, there are a number of schools which could develop leadership roles across the borough in a variety of areas, such as the induction of new teachers or provision for gifted and talented pupils. Similarly, experienced governors might be drawn upon more to share leadership in governor training and support.

Support to governors

81. Although this function was not inspected in depth, there is ample evidence of continuing good support. Governing bodies are helped in recruiting new members and communication between members and officers, as well as the provision of high quality information, advice and training remains good. In addition, and in response to recommendations in the last report, an annual report to governors has been instituted summarising the LEA's evaluation of their school's performance. Governors have been supported further in setting appropriate school targets.

The effectiveness of services to support school management

82. The LEA's provision of services to support school management was highly satisfactory in the previous inspection and remains so. Although no direct fieldwork was undertaken, evidence of improvement is clear from outcomes of internal service reviews. In addition, schools indicate that services are responsive and tailored to their needs - confirmed by service level agreements, which are flexible, clearly priced and provide succinct service specifications.

83. **Human resources** was previously an excellent service and other services in this group were highly satisfactory. This continues to be the case. A completed Best Value review of **grounds maintenance** and **catering** has resulted in a reconfiguration of services and improved customer focus and accountability. Since the previous inspection, the LEA has fully delegated funding for primary and special school meals and take-up remains high.

84. Changes to **property services** following a service review mean that this is now a highly satisfactory service, despite difficulties experienced by some schools with individual projects and repairs and maintenance.

85. A range of helpful professional advice and guidance, including technical support and flexible and well-priced maintenance contracts, is available to schools to support them in managing their premises and in preparing school premises development

plans. However, there is some variability in the levels of technical support provided and variability in delivery to timescales on projects, especially during the summer break.

86. Well-constructed service level agreements are succinct in detailing provision and charges, benefiting schools from contractors' rates negotiated for the council. A comprehensive property services manual will shortly be available for schools, which includes good advice on legal duties, preventative maintenance, managing building contracts and conducting risk assessments. Helpful guidelines on commissioning external consultants ensure that schools are properly supported in becoming effective procurers of building services.

87. The **ICT support for administration** service continues to be satisfactory, although there are some areas of weaknesses in support for schools. The information and communication management service was formed in July 2002, from a merger of existing services. The council has invested significantly to implement this merger, which has included a business analyst to identify and commission systems to meet the business and data requirements of the education service. This has resulted in a stronger and better co-ordinated service, but difficulties in recruiting to key posts have delayed action.

88. A comprehensive ICT strategy for 2002-2007, covering both curriculum and administration and supported by a five-year action plan aligned to the council's e-government strategy is now in place, but some schools are not clear on either direction or policy. Although this strategy rightly links curriculum and administration, it is not sufficiently targeted on the outcomes. Local targets only reflect how the council will achieve national targets for pupil : computer ratios, broadband access and Key Stage 3 achievement. They do not incorporate the 14 aims of the strategy to 2007 and beyond. The supporting action plan is more detailed, but success criteria are imprecise, resources are not fully costed and funding streams not identified.

Recommendations

In order to ensure effective implementation of the council's ICT strategy:

- ensure that schools are clear about the council's strategy, policy and action plan for ICT; and
- fully cost the ICT action plan, setting costs against clear targets and success criteria in order to assess value for money in its implementation.

89. An education ICT strategy group with headteacher representation has been set up and effective electronic communications with schools are in place, with a schools' intranet due for launch in February 2003. Strong links between education and corporate ICT ensure management information across the council is linked, but issues are still to be resolved over corporate sharing of individual pupil data transferred from schools. All schools have e-mail addresses that are used increasingly by the council to communicate with them, although some schools have still to use these efficiently. The electronic transfer of pupil transfer data and

financial reconciliation are effective, as is the management of pupil assessment data and the Common Transfer Form. The council's e-government strategy allows on-line applications for teaching posts.

90. The council has rightly encouraged schools to select systems relevant to their needs, but schools have been critical of the quality of technical support available; this has very recently improved. Service level agreements with schools are still in draft form and currently lack sufficient detail about the services offered and costs of buy-back. This is important, as the newly established team will need to secure sufficient resources from schools to sustain its planned programme of work.

91. As part of a fundamental review, **cleaning and caretaking** became part of catering, transport and cleaning services and, in line with other services in this team, continue to be highly satisfactory. The service is available to all schools. Buy-back is very high and service level agreements are flexible and clearly priced. Monitoring arrangements are good and well linked to internal and corporate complaints procedures.

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

92. Support to schools in recruiting teachers and maintaining their quality is highly satisfactory. Vacancies as well as the profile of the workforce are closely monitored in order to determine priorities. The resulting strategy includes a range of measures that address local issues and reflect national guidance. The appointment of an enthusiastic strategy manager and experienced former headteachers has increased outreach work. Attendance at recruitment fairs across the country has had some success in attracting newly qualified teachers, but, in a situation where there are unlikely to be sufficient candidates for vacancies, more might be achieved by interviewing earlier, rather than compiling a list of interested applicants. However, once appointed, the induction programme for the new entrants is comprehensive and well regarded.

93. The main challenge for the LEA is to retain teachers who are considering management posts. This said, inducements provided by the continuing professional development programme would be hard to better. There continues to be good collaboration with higher education institutions and with neighbouring LEAs, and some courses are accredited towards a master's degree. Support for teachers in finding affordable accommodation is still developing in accordance with the corporate policy regarding key workers, which includes housing association and property letting arrangements and interest free loans for a small number of teachers.

94. Currently, no classes are without a teacher, although some schools are heavily dependent on supply and overseas staff. The valuable support provided by the LEA in operating a supply pool for primary teachers results in considerable savings and greater freedom for schools when compared with the use of independent agencies. This arrangement also serves as a useful route for experienced teachers returning to work.

The effectiveness of services to support school improvement

95. Leadership of services to support school improvement, previously satisfactory, is now good. In 2001, the restructuring of the advice and development service, as the school improvement service, signalled a fundamental change in the nature of the LEA's relationship with its schools - from specialist curriculum advice, to challenge for school improvement. Management and communication systems have improved considerably, existing expertise has been thoroughly examined and a number of crucial, and effective, appointments made. The 'Good Schools' policy provides a clear steer for services and details an appropriate framework for differentiated support to schools.

96. Schools report greater clarity about the core purpose and effect of services. The work of teams within the education group is well co-ordinated and well managed, communication with schools is good and plans for realising priorities are well known and successfully implemented.

97. The deployment of services is now highly satisfactory and consistent with service priorities, apart from the provision of support for behaviour in secondary schools, although this is improving through the Excellence in Cities initiative and the behaviour improvement project. Expertise is used well, and work programmes are carefully monitored to ensure staff are not overburdened. Support to schools is well differentiated according to need and schools causing concern receive timely and appropriate support through good procedures for pooling information across services. The use of recently developed school-based work plans strengthens further the deployment of resources to priorities.

98. The LEA has been particularly effective in ensuring that new priorities are successfully accommodated, considerably increasing its capacity and expertise by using consultants and senior managers from schools to lead important initiatives, such as Excellence in Cities.

99. The quality and effectiveness of strategic planning have improved from satisfactory to good. Set against the education strategic plan, service plans explicitly link education priorities to corporate objectives and school improvement to social inclusion, but some of these are not clearly costed. Actions are coherent, well defined and subject to regular review and honest evaluation against measurable targets, ensuring effective implementation within specified timescales. Outcomes contribute to raising standards in schools and to school and service improvement. Schools are satisfied with their influence on policies, plans and procedures.

100. Good performance management and good use of increasingly sophisticated data across services within the education group, ensure continuous improvement in the delivery of services. Service principles, management structures, operating procedures and accountabilities are clear, and regular appraisal is used well to monitor performance against annual work plans. Individual targets are well matched to service priorities and, in line with the council's recent award of Investor in People status, professional development for officers ensures competence and credibility in the discharge of their duties. Consistency is promoted through joint induction activities, a new service handbook and a regular cycle of meetings within and

between services. Although somewhat resource-intensive, these meetings provide for good information exchange and for sharing and developing effective practices.

101. The expertise of staff is now highly satisfactory. School improvement officers, teaching and learning advisers and support teams are well qualified and generally have sufficient capability to promote improvements in schools in line with targets. Schools acknowledge considerable improvement in the quality of support over the past two years and significantly improved challenge to secondary schools, but report some variability within the school improvement service in their work with special schools and with schools facing challenging circumstances.

102. A large central service ensures expertise is readily available to schools and service level agreements identify clear performance standards and quality assurance measures. Alternative providers are beginning to be identified and plans are in hand for brokering arrangements with a consortium of London LEAs to enable the pooling of expertise and increased purchasing flexibility for schools. Nevertheless, there is further work to be done to ensure that services remain competitive as schools become more discerning purchasers.

SECTION 3: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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

103. Satisfactory progress has been made in improving provision for pupils with special educational needs, and all aspects are now secure. When inspected previously, the LEA's strategy for more inclusive education was unsatisfactory and serious questions were raised about whether in-school support for pupils with statements met their entitlement.

104. The completed Best Value review and EDP2 have provided a clear strategic direction to the SEN inclusion policy and action plan, but the pace of change has been slowed by long-term absence in the education management team. However, progress has accelerated in recent months as a result of an acting appointment. The LEA is effective in meeting its statutory obligations. Value for money remains satisfactory, although plans are at an early stage to improve the targeting of resources to need, in particular support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in the secondary phase, and to evaluate progress against expenditure.

The LEA's strategy for special educational needs

105. Strategic planning for SEN is now satisfactory. Following a comprehensive Best Value review and audit of need, the LEA has consulted widely and launched an inclusion and SEN strategy, which demonstrates a coherent and measured approach to the range of needs of pupils in Enfield; implementation is at an early stage. Funding for pupils with statements in mainstream schools is now delegated. Monitoring by the LEA is appropriate in ensuring that resources are used properly and effectively. In consultation with schools, the LEA is currently reviewing the funding formula for SEN to improve further the targeting of resources to need.

106. The Best Value review, reported in November 2001, was sufficiently broad in scope, effectively managed and highly instrumental in informing policy direction. Consultation was extensive and responses endorsed Enfield's definition of special educational need and informed decision making.

107. Although implementation has been delayed, the SEN inclusion action plan is sound. Priorities, responsibilities, timescales and success criteria are clearly identified and progress is regularly reviewed by senior officers. The plan's current weakness, however, lies in a failure to identify the resource implications for each priority. In the medium term, there are sensible plans to reduce dependence on specialist places outside the borough and to develop options for educating more pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. Appropriate funding has already been allocated for three primary resource bases for 2003-04 and access funds have been earmarked for the adaptation of identified schools. The need for further consultation with schools and parents on the detail of the proposed changes is well understood.

108. With considerably strengthened strategic direction, schools now understand and support the objectives of the policy. Despite this, reliance on statutory assessment to attract resources continues to rise, although in 2001, the number of

statements maintained by the LEA was below figures for similar local education authorities.

Statutory obligations

109. The LEA is effective in meeting its statutory obligations. It was previously commended for reducing the time taken to complete statements which, excluding those delayed by other agencies, are now all completed in the recommended 18 week period. In cases where advice from other agencies arrives late, the rate of improvement is satisfactory and 87 per cent of statements are completed in the recommended time.

110. Supporting advice from educational psychologists is detailed and the specificity of the resulting statement is good. Annual reviews are well managed and all statemented pupils have learning support plans. The attendance of an educational psychologist at all annual reviews is a significantly strong feature of the LEA's monitoring of the progress made by statemented pupils in schools outside Enfield.

111. The parent partnership service is provided by a charitable voluntary agency. Relationships with the LEA are very effective, and an annual report from the service includes data on parental satisfaction and a good analysis of casework resolution. The low number of appeals reaching SEN tribunals is a reflection of the good dispute resolution service and effective support to parents offered by the Parent's Centre.

School improvement

112. Support for school improvement, previously unsatisfactory, is now satisfactory. In line with the inclusion policy, concerns about the in-school support service for pupils with statements in mainstream schools, formerly judged as unwieldy and difficult to manage, have now been addressed following the delegation of resources within a clearly defined framework of responsibility.

113. This has been welcomed by schools, although primary schools have found the transition more difficult and concerns remain over the loss of what has been a highly regarded central service. Nevertheless, the LEA has successfully managed a difficult decision, and special educational needs co-ordinators broadly welcome increased flexibility in the use of resources. Monitoring by the LEA has been reviewed recently. The effectiveness of the match of resources to need, as well as the retained central service itself, will need to be monitored carefully in the wider review of SEN formula-funding.

114. Schools value the expertise of individual services, including those supporting pupils with visual and hearing impairment, and with autistic spectrum disorder. The educational psychology service is particularly effective. Termly liaison meetings with other agencies are efficient in monitoring provision for pupils on the SEN register.

115. The SEN handbook has been revised and provides schools with clear guidance on the criteria for statutory assessment in line with the revised Code of Practice, but training has been slow to materialise. Although not all procedures are

yet fully aligned to the new criteria, these are to be reviewed for consistency by an external consultant and a working group of special educational needs co-ordinators.

116. Target setting for low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs in mainstream and special schools is integrated within the school improvement strategy. The LEA has well-established systems to assess the progress of pupils with statements through annual reviews and individual education plans. Strategies for target setting are developing, but the small cohorts of pupils, together with severity and range of need in each school, has encouraged an approach based on indicators of performance rather than specific targets. Special schools do not yet have access to national comparative data, but are receiving good support on consolidating assessment practices and on monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Based on tracking individual pupil's performance, high quality training for all schools in analysing the performance of low attaining pupils is offered through the school improvement service.

Value for money

117. Value for money was not inspected in detail. It was satisfactory during the previous inspection and remains so. Provisional comparative financial indicators continue to show that spending on SEN is broadly in line with the national average. Furthermore, over the last two years, revised assessment criteria have been introduced and there is budget monitoring of the allocation and use of SEN resources. The SEN funding formula is under review, provision is being mapped, and consultation is taking place over the introduction of funding bands. A Best Value review of transport for SEN pupils has resulted in changes to the way the service is delivered, securing improved arrangements for managing cross-borough travel and providing accurate costs.

118. Tracking the progress of individual low-attaining pupils is developing, but the LEA is yet to put in place a mechanism to evaluate pupils' progress against expenditure.

Recommendation

In order to ensure value for money in support for SEN:

- put in place arrangements to evaluate the extent to which money spent on special educational needs results in improved outcomes for pupils.

SECTION 4: PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION

Summary of effectiveness in promoting social inclusion

119. In 2000, there were signs of an emerging strategic focus on promoting social inclusion. Now, the council's strong determination is clear and the high priority given to the needs and interests of vulnerable children and young people has been translated into corporate and education planning and partnerships.

120. Although resources are generally better targeted at need, and improvement has been made in some areas, many actions are yet to have a demonstrable effect. What is of particular concern is the continuing unsatisfactory provision for pupils waiting for a secondary school place.

The strategy to promote social inclusion

121. The LEA's effectiveness in promoting social inclusion has improved and is highly satisfactory with good features.

122. The council has been successful in securing additional external funding from sources such as Sure Start, Excellence in Cities, Single Regeneration Budget and Neighbourhood Renewal Funding; this has been well targeted towards wards with the greatest need. Improving educational standards is a key element of the Neighbourhood Renewal strategy and, based on a comprehensive audit of need, funding has been well used for breakfast clubs, additional childcare places and family literacy and numeracy schemes. The very recent launch of a pilot 'full service' school is making access to improved services a reality for families in the regeneration area.

123. Narrowing the attainment gap and tackling under-achievement is a priority in EDP2. Data on pupil's performance have been used well to identify under-achievement in specific minority ethnic groups and plans are in hand to refine existing data to enable an analysis of the achievements of pupils living in socially disadvantaged wards. Data are also used effectively with schools to agree, set and monitor attendance and exclusion targets; this process has reduced the rate of exclusion for African and Caribbean pupils to below national levels. The need for a common database to improve the sharing of information among agencies is now a priority and the LEA is currently bidding to fund an identification, referral and tracking project.

124. A range of projects promote social inclusion through the use of external funding and in co-operation with voluntary and other agencies. For example, an out of school hours learning project, the Edmonton Sure Start scheme and the Enfield Parents Centre, which provides support for parents of excluded pupils. In addition, Excellence in Cities funding supports 48 learning mentors, with early indicators suggesting a number of pupils, previously at risk of exclusion, have remained in schools.

125. Partnership working with health, social services and the police has considerably strengthened and is now highly satisfactory. The behaviour

improvement programme steering group is a good example of such multi-agency co-operation. The racist incident action group is both a national model of good practice and an effective local forum to combat racism and promote inclusion. However, structures to integrate services in schools are less well defined and due to be addressed through the cross-cutting review of services for vulnerable children.

The supply of school places

126. The authority has satisfactory strategies for planning school places, but these have not been fully effective in meeting demand. The previous report recognised the council's sound practice and initiative in planning over a number of years, the significant pressures it faces in meeting growth, both from within its area and from neighbouring authorities, and acknowledged a highly complex picture.

127. Despite securing Private Finance Initiative funding to build a new school and investing significant capital funding to create a substantial number of additional places, most secondary schools are over-subscribed, primary schools are under increasing pressure and there remains a core group of pupils for whom a school place is not available. In some secondary schools the pressure to admit pupils above agreed admissions numbers has reached the point where unavoidable pressures on accommodation could jeopardise the council's inclusion strategy.

128. The school organisation plan clearly sets out the policies and planning issues in relation to school places, including assessments of future needs and potential solutions for meeting these. The work of the school organisation committee is effective, not only in dealing with statutory proposals, but also in providing constructive advice on place planning issues.

129. The authority has worked closely with central Government in explaining its case and has now successfully secured £20 million Basic Need allocation over three years, the highest allocation in London. There are now good working links with neighbouring authorities on admissions and the supply of places, and a strong commitment to develop more co-ordinated strategies across north London. This is essential in responding to proposals for removing surplus places by neighbouring authorities, which would result in increased demand in Enfield. Innovative joint work with the London borough of Newham has secured government support for a second Private Finance Initiative scheme in Enfield. Effective work with officers in planning and housing has secured contributions from developers. In addition, the council is conducting a Best Value review of its access and school places planning services.

130. A recent District Audit value for money study on school places planning concludes that the authority has made good progress in improving the accuracy of its projections, which will be further challenged through the Best Value review. Links with the admissions team are highly effective in monitoring the availability of places in individual schools.

131. Schools will be affected substantially by the outcomes of capacity assessments; plans for reducing Key Stage 2 class sizes; proposals to increase the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into mainstream schools; the development of mainstream resource bases and a proposed increase to the

council's overcrowding target. The LEA acknowledges the effect cannot be alleviated solely through additional age-weighted pupil unit funding as this does not fully enable schools to deal with the effects of overcrowding, mobility and curriculum development. It rightly recognises these factors as key determinants of its asset management, school organisation and school improvement planning. It is important that these factors are assessed now in order to minimise their impact.

Recommendations

In order to ensure effective provision of school places, the authority should:

- complete schools' capacity assessments as a priority in order to include the outcomes in plans to develop resource bases, increase the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into mainstream schools and manage temporary increases in admissions numbers;
- complete risk assessments on these plans;
- use outcomes to form the basis of future discussions with the Department for Education and Skills on Basic Need and modernisation funding requirements; and
- review its asset management to ensure that strategic priorities continue to be effectively targeted.

Admissions

132. Arrangements for admissions to schools were good in the previous inspection and continue to be good. The admissions service is currently involved in a fundamental Best Value review and no fieldwork was undertaken, but feedback from schools is positive and the effective work of the admissions team was reinforced in other discussions.

Asset management

133. Asset management planning is good with some very strong features. The authority's comprehensive and well-targeted asset management plan underpins the school organisation plan, EDP2 and its education strategy; this is implemented through clear aims and objectives outlined in the local policy statement. The authority has particularly strong links with diocesan authorities on voluntary school needs and all stakeholders are clear about their individual responsibilities. The draft statement of priorities, currently out for consultation, is well targeted and supported by a substantial education capital programme, which includes provision for additional school places, two city learning centres and the authority's plans for specialist schools.

134. The authority maintains a reasonably large education asset management team to support schools and deliver its responsibilities. The process and criteria for determining priorities are rigorous and effective. Priorities are derived from schools' premises development plans, evaluated, and recommendations made against a range of funding streams. Projects are subject to rigorous option appraisal to secure Best Value and improvement targets relate not only to premises, but also to

educational outcomes. A particular strength of Enfield's asset management planning is the use of premises development plans, which link to school improvement planning. The authority also uses these to support its landlord functions and ensure that schools commit capital and revenue premises funding effectively and efficiently.

135. An accelerated programme of full building condition surveys is planned for the next three years. All schools are being re-measured and computer design plans will be used to negotiate and agree capacities with schools.

Provision of education for pupils who have no school place

136. Provision for the education of pupils who have no school place remains unsatisfactory. Although the number of permanent exclusions has reduced, the requirement to provide full-time education for excluded pupils is not being met, and the upward trend in fixed term exclusions has continued. In 2000, the LEA was criticised for unsatisfactory arrangements in meeting the rising demand for secondary places. This position has not significantly improved.

137. At the time of the inspection, 109 secondary pupils new to the borough were awaiting placement in schools and not receiving full-time education in registered provision. Too many pupils are without a full-time school place and waiting times are too long for a significant number. However, an accurate database is maintained, the quality of emergency provision is effective and the target for placement has reduced from twenty to fifteen weeks.

Recommendation

In order to ensure effective provision for pupils educated otherwise than at school:

- urgently put in place arrangements for suitable education facilities and full-time registered provision for all pupils waiting for a school place. Planning should address the costs of facilities, staffing, resources and transport, and include provision for ICT.

138. The LEA maintains two pupil referral units offering highly satisfactory educational provision to pupils excluded from schools. The behaviour support service effectively manages provision for pupils of primary age by placements at the pupil referral unit and through successful reintegration and outreach work in schools. Secondary schools praise the work of the secondary centre, but provision does not yet meet the requirement for full time education, although plans for this are well advanced. An exclusions and re-admissions working party, a 'hard to place' panel, and the 'fresh start' strategy, are improving the reintegration rate for pupils at Key Stage 3.

139. Procedures for monitoring home-educated pupils are sound and suitable provision is made for pupils with medical needs and schoolgirl mothers to continue their education.

Recommendation

In order to improve support for pupils educated otherwise than at school:

- ensure that all pupils attending the secondary tuition centre receive the legally required 25 hours tuition per week.

Attendance

140. The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements and achieves value for money in relation to school attendance was not inspected in detail. This was satisfactory in the last inspection and the LEA's self-evaluation, alongside other indicators, confirm support for attendance remains satisfactory. Although the rate of unauthorised absence is above national figures, the LEA and schools rightly take an uncompromising stance as part of the wider strategy to improve rates of attendance. In addition, a range of strategies, including truancy sweeps and the support of learning mentors demonstrate further determination to promote regular attendance.

Behaviour support

141. Support for behaviour is satisfactory. The new behaviour support plan is based on a sound audit of need, details a clear rationale for action and provides a comprehensive evaluation of progress from the first plan. There is good support for primary-aged pupils from the behaviour support service and the secondary tuition centre is highly regarded by schools. Although the centre has increased the level of outreach it does not currently have sufficient specialist resources targeted to meet the needs of secondary schools in developing strategies to manage the increasing number of pupils with behaviour difficulties. It is not surprising therefore, that secondary schools rate the LEA's support as inadequate.

142. The EDP priority to increase inclusion in Enfield schools sets demanding targets for reducing the rate of permanent and fixed term exclusions. While permanent exclusions in primary and special schools remain broadly in line with national figures, the rate of permanent exclusion in secondary schools is above the national average. The LEA has been successful in significantly reducing the rate of exclusion of African and Caribbean heritage pupils, but the number of girls excluded has risen sharply. Fixed-term exclusions in primary and secondary schools in 2001 were significantly above those of similar authorities. Secondary schools are making sound progress towards the LEA's targets with the effective use of Excellence in Cities funding, resulting in an impressive twenty one per cent reduction in fixed term exclusions in the past year. This is a creditable achievement, but it is too early to judge long-term success.

143. The LEA has successfully attracted additional funding to target truancy and poor behaviour under a recent government initiative and a comprehensive and well-targeted behaviour improvement programme is now in place. Focusing on schools where exclusion rates have been high, early indications are that prevention work is beginning to be effective in four secondary schools that previously accounted for

over 50 per cent of exclusions in the borough. A multi-agency steering group successfully ensures that strands within the action plan are well integrated with, and extend the work of, existing services; for example, creating full-time provision for excluded pupils at the secondary tuition centre and improving reintegration rates. Activities within the programme provide well for the development and sharing of good practice across all schools. This, together with work taking place through the Excellence in Cities initiative, provides a sound framework for reducing unacceptable behaviour in schools.

Health, safety, welfare and child protection

144. Support for health, safety, welfare and child protection is highly satisfactory with some good features. Health and safety procedures were previously thorough; since then, good progress has been made in supporting schools to develop policies, risk assessment and reporting procedures. Child protection procedures were known and understood in schools, and the introduction of revised procedures confirms the high priority given by the council to protecting vulnerable children.

145. Policies for health and safety, educational visits and visitor behaviour on school sites are detailed, clear and supported by good procedures for monitoring and dealing with areas of significant risk. Information, advice and training are comprehensive and readily available. Consultative procedures are good and a health and safety management plan details the priorities and resources for the coming year. The LEA maintains very good data on the reporting of accidents and incidents of violence and abuse to staff, and makes effective use of this to prioritise development work.

146. The LEA takes sound steps to meet its statutory obligations in relation to welfare and child protection; strategic work with social services has improved and is now highly satisfactory. Recently revised child protection procedures require schools to refer directly to social services and a few schools report some initial difficulty in making contact with social workers. However, an effective monitoring system enables the LEA to act swiftly when schools encounter such problems.

147. The education protects group co-ordinates support for vulnerable children and provides an effective link to the area child protection committee. All schools have a designated teacher and the LEA maintains up-to-date records of attendance at training. The commitment to ensure children are safe is clear, and, despite recruitment difficulties to social worker posts, the child protection service is now fully staffed and relationships between schools and other agencies are set to improve as the allocation of casework becomes more effectively managed.

Looked after children

148. Support for looked after children, previously poor, has improved, but remains unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in the provision of guidance and training for schools have been addressed. Systems for monitoring and sharing information about educational progress are improving, but the number of pupils without personal education plans is unsatisfactory, and there are gaps in records of attainment.

149. The council is committed to improving the educational attainment of looked after children within a joint education and social services plan for strengthening support for vulnerable children. Relevant agencies work well together and the strategy to fund a joint planning team to co-ordinate action across agencies has been successful in supporting designated teachers and improving the sharing of data. Procedures notifying schools of changes in placements are efficient, and, despite pressure for secondary school places the education service secures places in line with its target.

150. There are currently 175 looked after children of statutory school age within Enfield and over half are educated outside the LEA. While there has been a steady improvement in the number of pupils gaining one or more General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) grades, only one pupil gained five higher GCSE grades in 2001. Although unconfirmed, performance data for 2002 suggests satisfactory progress towards the national target, the current proportion of pupils attaining five or more A* - G grades is well below the targets in EDP2 for 2003 and beyond.

151. The preparation and completion of personal education plans has been too slow, caused by recruitment difficulties in social services as the lead agency. Currently, 38 per cent of looked after children have a completed plan; this is an improvement from a very low starting point, but is nevertheless unsatisfactory in view of the large number of children educated outside the borough, and the necessity to further improve the attainment of this group.

Recommendation

In order to improve provision for looked after children:

- take urgent action to ensure that all looked after children have a completed personal education plan. In the interim, take steps to closely monitor and record the progress of children educated outside the borough.

Measures to combat racism

152. Measures to combat racism are good. The last inspection noted the high priority given to tackling racist incidents and the work of the racist incidents action group is praised by the Home Office as a model of good practice. The council has responded effectively to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and published a race equality scheme for public consultation. Schools have access to high levels of support and training to develop their own policies and action plans in response.

153. The ethnic minority achievement service provides good support to schools in the development of anti-racist policies and procedures, and all have race equality policies and action plans. Good quality guidance and training based on the Commission for Racial Equality school standards 'Learning for All' is available to schools and governors, with regular newsletters and updates to keep schools well informed.

154. Significantly, Enfield's 'Good Schools Policy' encourages schools to review how well they deal with racist incidents and all schools record and investigate racist incidents for termly reporting to governors, some using the common racist incident report form. As part of their broader monitoring visits, the ethnic minority achievement team audit and challenge the effectiveness of the racist incident reporting systems used by schools. Data are collated from the minutes of reports to governors and, more recently, reported to a multi-agency racist incident action group in response to concern about the absence of information from schools. This group is now better placed to monitor the level of recorded incidents and the effectiveness of schools' response. As it is too recently established, the benefits of this procedure have yet to be fully realised.

155. The education service is well represented on the council's corporate equalities group and in the preparation for assessment against level three of the Commission for Racial Equality standard for local government. Relationships with the Enfield Race Equality Council are effective and shared concerns, for example about the under achievement of some minority ethnic pupils, leads to positive action. Targets in EDP2 aim to narrow the attainment gap and bring the achievement of minority ethnic pupils to at least in line with the LEA average.

SECTION 5: CORPORATE ISSUES

Introduction to corporate issues

156. Corporate matters are now highly satisfactory. The rate and extent of improvement has been impressive in an area previously identified as causing considerable concern and triggering a corporate governance inspection. Two years ago, expectations of schools and the council's education function were unambitious. Corporate plans offered little in the way of vision from the council, and there were weaknesses in procedures for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the education department.

157. Officers and members responded promptly to the report's recommendations. In September 2001, the corporate governance inspection identified a marked improvement and the subsequent corporate assessment judged the council to be strongly led, determined to improve, and fairly strong in ambition. The findings of this report confirm much improved corporate planning, strong leadership from the new administration, a cabinet and scrutiny structure that is working well, and a clear sense of direction for education.

Corporate planning

158. Corporate plans are highly satisfactory: clear, well sequenced and achievable. Inevitably, these are undergoing review to reflect the policy of the new administration, but education remains a high priority and the transition has not disrupted progress towards key targets. The main features of 'Future Enfield' are sensibly maintained as the broad vision for the newly-formed council's draft community strategy 'Enfield's Future'. This provides a secure framework for delivering the council's ambitions, meeting the diverse needs of its communities and coherence for work across council services. 'Learning for all' is one of eight key priorities; objectives for education are appropriate, and set alongside challenging targets for improvement. Enfield's 'Education Strategy' for 2001-06 is firmly based on this framework and provides the context for EDP2; stemming from a comprehensive analysis of the needs of pupils, schools and the wider community, this provides an impressive level of coherence to guide the work of the LEA over the next five years. Key strategic priorities are well focused, effectively encompass an array of local plans, and link to clear outcomes through well-targeted activities. Robust monitoring informs future action. The council's draft Neighbourhood Renewal strategy reflects the workings of a strong local strategic partnership and presents a detailed analysis of disadvantage and local need in its proposals for reducing inequality and promoting social inclusion.

159. Implementation and evaluation of corporate plans have improved markedly and are now highly satisfactory. The council's strong performance monitoring framework makes clear its commitment to continuous improvement. A very effective reporting structure links the review of strategy, planning, targets and objectives to performance management in meeting the council's vision; lines of responsibility and accountability are clear, as are the roles of officers, members and officer and member groups. The education standards forum, chaired by the cabinet member for education and reporting to the cabinet, was constituted in June 2001 as the central

body for monitoring policy. This was established in direct response to criticism from the previous report that members were not taking a sufficiently robust role in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the education service or its schools. Comprising councillors, governors, headteachers, senior officers and the acting chief executive, the forum is effective in its functions. However, although monitoring is systematic and very thorough, findings are not yet used to evaluate policy or to formulate recommendations to the cabinet on the allocation of resources to strategic priorities.

Decision making

160. Corporate decision making is highly satisfactory, sharply focused on achieving tangible outcomes, and takes place within a well-constructed schedule of meetings. Decisions are open and transparent, fully recorded and subject to very strong scrutiny procedures, which are monitored through the overview and scrutiny committee. Duplication of effort and the potential for joint work across the six scrutiny panels has been carefully examined. Budgets are under review as the council moves from an inherited pattern of expenditure to one which aligns with the administration's priorities. Difficult decisions, for example, in considering the funding of education at SSA, have been made after a rigorous examination of alternatives and their implications. However, despite a wide range of sensible actions to reduce the number of pupils waiting for a secondary school place, resolutions have been, to a large degree, too insular and effective alliances with neighbouring authorities slow to emerge.

161. An extremely comprehensive corporate consultation strategy advances 'Future Enfield' in providing for widespread local consultation. Regular surveys of public opinion inform council decision-making. Consultation about education priorities occurs through a range of forums involving schools, parents, teachers and governors, but schools are not convinced that the outcomes of consultation are sufficiently influential on council decisions.

Leadership of officers and elected members

162. Elected members' leadership is highly satisfactory. Newly elected lead members are working hard to meet their April 2003 deadline for the launch of policies, some of which are already out for consultation. However, insufficient communication with schools leaves headteachers anxious for future direction. Members directly involved in education have sufficient expertise, and a determination to learn and succeed. Areas of weakness are fully realised. Measures to strengthen leading members' knowledge and understanding of educational issues are in hand and action to increase the number of councillors serving on school governing bodies is commendable.

163. The leadership provided by senior officers is effective and purposeful. Emanating from the acting chief executive, and strongly apparent throughout the education department, is a drive for continuous improvement in services and schools. Expectations are high and commitment is strong. The director of education is highly effective in her leadership role, gaining the trust and confidence of headteachers, governors and partners. Since the previous inspection, the education

group management team has been considerably strengthened by the appointment of two assistant directors and still further by an acting assistant director for children's services. Senior education officers are confident, capable and comprise a strong and strategic team; relationships with schools and partners are constructive and effective, and consultation and communication are good. Significantly, following from the previous inspection, the fundamental cultural shift required in the relationship between the LEA and its schools has been well handled; little remains of the tendency to rely on the LEA for support as schools, guided by officers, improve in their capacity for self-management.

164. While much has been achieved in a short time, the acting chief executive, the director of social services and the acting director for children's services are newly in post. In addition, many initiatives that promise well for the future are relatively recent, and while some are clearly making a difference to the work of schools, it is too soon to judge the effect of others.

165. Members receive good advice from officers. Reports to the council offer plausible options for decision making, and an informative termly newsletter keeps members up-to-date on educational issues. Lines of accountability are explicit and well understood, routine decisions are delegated to the director of education through a robust scheme of delegation and, following weekly consultation with the cabinet member for education, outcomes are speedy and effective.

Partnership

166. At the last inspection the education department was building strong relationships with schools, other departments and external agencies. This has continued and collaboration is now one of its strengths.

167. Enfield promotes partnership through its corporate strategy, which has resulted in shared priorities for educational improvement and community regeneration across services and with local partners. All agencies are kept informed of developments through good support from dedicated officers and good structures for co-ordination and communication. Work results in well-targeted initiatives where they are needed most, such as breakfast clubs in the Edmonton neighbourhood renewal area, funded from the Single Regeneration Budget. The Enfield strategic partnership structure is in the process of review to ensure that its activities are clearly focused on corporate priorities. Key targets are being revised to make them more measurable and manageable so that they can be monitored effectively and the usefulness and value for money of the various initiatives properly evaluated. The leader of the council, who chairs the partnership, and senior officers have a firm grasp of the complexity of activity and a determination to make it productive.

168. The LEA's partners, including the authorities for voluntary aided schools, the standing advisory committee for religious education and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, speak very highly of the support they receive. It is clear that, while respecting their autonomy, the LEA is pivotal in enabling them to be effective. The education department works closely with the social and health services at a senior level, but contacts on the ground are more variable.

APPENDIX 1: RECOMMENDATIONS

The report makes a number of recommendations. Of these, the following should be acted upon as a matter of urgency:

In order ensure effective provision for pupils educated otherwise than at school:

- urgently put in place arrangements for suitable education facilities and full-time registered provision for all pupils waiting for a school place. Planning should address the costs of facilities, staffing, resources and transport, and include provision for ICT.

In order to improve support for pupils educated otherwise than at school:

- ensure that all pupils attending the secondary tuition centre receive the legally required 25 hours tuition per week.

In order to improve provision for looked after children:

- take urgent action to ensure that all looked after children have a completed personal education plan. In the interim, take steps to closely monitor and record the progress of children educated outside the borough.

We also make the following recommendations:

In order to improve the match of funding to priorities:

- link work on the needs-based funding of schools with the implementation of the new funding formula for LEAs and schools, to form the basis of a comprehensive review of the existing school funding formula.

In order to reduce strategic management costs and enable schools to have greater flexibility in the purchase of non-core services:

- identify opportunities for further delegation of responsibility in the 'Education Strategy' and team service plans through risk assessments and options for the provision of services.

In order to determine value for money from all services:

- include more detailed costing of activities in the review of service plans and information on expenditure in monitoring reports, so that annual reviews can assess service outcomes and value for money.

In order to secure improved provision for gifted and talented pupils:

- unify current work in primary and secondary schools into a comprehensive strategy spanning both phases.

In order to ensure effective implementation of the council's ICT strategy:

- ensure that schools are clear about the council's strategy, policy and action plan for ICT; and
- fully cost the ICT action plan, setting costs against clear targets and success criteria in order to assess value for money in its implementation.

In order to ensure value for money in support for SEN:

- put in place arrangements to evaluate the extent to which money spent on special educational needs results in improved outcomes for pupils.

In order to ensure effective provision of school places, the authority should:

- complete schools' capacity assessments as a priority in order to include the outcomes in plans to develop resource bases, increase the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into mainstream schools and manage temporary increases in admissions numbers;
- complete risk assessments on these plans;
- use outcomes to form the basis of future discussions with the Department for Education and Skills on Basic Need and modernisation funding requirements; and
- review its asset management to ensure that strategic priorities continue to be effectively targeted.

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