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IN EDUCATION**

**INSPECTION OF  
EALING  
LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

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in conjunction with the  
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## **APPENDIX: RECOMMENDATIONS**

## INTRODUCTION

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

2. The inspection was based on data, some of which was provided by the LEA, on school inspection information; audit reports and other documentation. Discussions were held with LEA members, focus groups of headteachers, governors and special educational needs coordinators, staff in the education department and in other council departments, and representatives of the LEA's partners. In addition, a questionnaire seeking views on aspects of the LEA's work was circulated to 88 schools. The response rate was 82 per cent.

3. The inspection also involved studies of the effectiveness of particular aspects of the LEA's work through visits to one infant, one junior, ten primary, two special and seven secondary schools and the pupil referral unit. A further nine schools were visited as part of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy monitoring sample. Generally the visits tested the views of governors, headteachers and other staff on the key aspects of the LEA's strategy. The visits also considered whether the support provided by the LEA contributes, where appropriate, to the discharge of the LEA's statutory duties, is effective in contributing to improvements in the school, and provides value for money.

## COMMENTARY

4. Ealing serves a diverse, multi-ethnic community to the west of London. Approximately one third of the population is from a range of long established ethnic minority communities, originally from the Indian sub continent, the Caribbean and west Africa. The borough is now home to an estimated 16,000 refugees from Somalia, eastern Europe and other troubled parts of the world. Unemployment is below the London average.

5. The current directorate inherited a department under severe financial constraints and a legacy of under-investment in school building maintenance. Standards remain in line or just below national averages, and performance in Key Stage 3 gives cause for concern. The LEA did not know its schools well, and as a consequence there have been low expectations by both parties. This has changed. Since his appointment in 1997, the director has shown good leadership. He recognised the issues facing the LEA and made good appointments to tackle the variable quality of services to schools. The revised Education Development Plan, while an improvement on the original, retains some unsatisfactory features.

6. Changes to the structure of the inspection and advisory services have had a significant impact in the last 12 months. The Excellence in Cities plan provides an ambitious framework for secondary school improvement. The re-structuring of the pupil and families division is improving the support provided to pupils with special educational needs. The LEA takes reasonable steps to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. Its performance of the following functions is very good:

- collaboration with other departments and external agencies;
- support to schools causing concern;
- provision for pupils educated otherwise than at school; and
- support for children and young people in public care.

7. Not all the issues facing the LEA have been fully grasped at a strategic level by the council. The LEA has significant weaknesses in the following areas:

- procedures for implementing and evaluating corporate plans;
- property services;
- information and communication technology (ICT) in school administration; and
- effectiveness of measures to combat racism.

8. Members need to subject the performance of services to schools to more rigorous scrutiny, using quantifiable success criteria and value for money considerations. The council's corporate planning framework and Best Value procedures are not yet sufficiently robust to aid them in this task. The council's response to the recommendations of the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence is inadequate. Recruitment is becoming increasingly problematic not only for schools but also for the education department itself.

9. Under effective leadership, the LEA has achieved a great deal in recent years, and particularly in recent months. It has improved, and is continuing to do so. However, some of the improved procedures set in place have had little time to take effect, and they are not consistent across all services. While the LEA has the drive, energy and commitment to put right what is currently wrong, the corporate governance of the council (although it, too, has improved) is not sufficiently embedded to secure continuous improvement. The LEA should expect a further inspection after two years.

## **SECTION 1: THE LEA STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **Context**

10. Ealing is the fourth largest London borough with a population in excess of 300,000, and it is still growing. Approximately one third of the population is from a range of established minority ethnic communities, originally from the Indian sub continent, the Caribbean and west Africa. The borough is now also home to an estimated 16,000 refugees from Somalia, eastern Europe and other troubled parts of the world. The borough is diverse in other ways. An above average number of residents with higher educational qualifications live in Ealing. However, there is also poverty with a number of council wards scoring highly in the index of deprivation.

11. In January 1999 there were 68,000 pupils aged 2-19 in Ealing schools. Approximately two per cent of primary and three per cent of secondary pupils had a statement of special educational needs in 2000; these figures are below the national average. Nearly 60 per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Some 28 per cent of primary and 32 per cent of secondary school pupils were eligible for free school meals in 2000; these figures are above the national average. There are two early years centres, six infant, four junior and 55 primary schools. Almost all of the borough's four-year-olds are catered for in infant, primary and special schools. The borough has 13 secondary schools: five foundation, two denominational and six community schools. Eight of the 13 high schools cater for pupils from age 11-19. Most primary schools are large; the average roll is 370 pupils, compared with a national average of 243 pupils. Occupancy rates in secondary schools are high, with an overall shortage of capacity. The LEA maintains seven special schools. It also has a pupil referral unit that caters mainly for secondary age pupils. There is a small net movement of pupils to neighbouring boroughs at age 11. A small number of schools experience high levels of pupil mobility.

### **Performance**

12. Standards of attainment on entry to primary schools are below the national average and that of similar LEAs<sup>1</sup>. The LEA's baseline assessment scheme assesses pupils' capabilities in literacy, numeracy, verbal communication and personal and social development on entry to reception class. Progress at pre Key Stage 1 is in line with the national average. When pupils are retested at the end of the year, the majority achieves close to full marks. Those not reaching the standard are often not yet fluent in the English language or have special educational needs.

13. In 2000, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in Key Stage 2 English is below the national average but broadly in line with that of similar authorities. In mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 or more is in line with the national average and that of similar authorities. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is below the national average and that of

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<sup>1</sup> \*The borough's closest statistical neighbours are: Hounslow, Brent, Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Merton, Croydon, Harrow, Reading, Wandsworth and Haringey.

similar authorities in English and mathematics. The number of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-C is broadly in line with that of similar authorities, but slightly below the national average. The average GCSE points score is in line with the national average. However, the A-level points score is below the national average, but broadly in line with comparable authorities.

14. Standards at Key Stage 2 have improved in line with the national rate in mathematics and science. In English, there has been year on year improvement but not as fast as that found nationally over the past three years.

15. Overall the percentage of primary schools judged in OFSTED inspections to be very good is below the national average but above that of similar authorities. The percentage of secondary schools judged to be very good is below the national average but well above that of similar authorities. However, only a small number of primary (nine) and secondary schools (five) in Ealing have undergone two inspections. A relatively higher number of those primary schools require some improvement than that found nationally but the converse is true for the secondary schools. There are currently three primary schools in special measures and a further three with serious weaknesses.

16. Attendance in primary schools in 1999/2000 was just below the national figures for both primary and secondary schools. Unauthorised absence rates are in line with the national figures for primary and secondary schools. The rate of permanent exclusions is falling in primary and secondary schools; nevertheless the figures in secondary remain above the national average. However, LEA data indicate that the number of fixed term exclusions is falling in secondary schools. The proportion of Black Caribbean and Black African boys excluded from school is still higher than other ethnic groups.

## Funding

17. The council has consistently spent at, or very close to, its Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) on education. All of the increase in SSA for 2000/01 was passed to schools in line with the Government's expectations.

	<b>1997/98</b>	<b>1998/99</b>	<b>1999/2000</b>	<b>2000/01</b>
Budget (£m)	113.3	122.9	129.7	136.8
SSA (£m)	112.1	122.9	129.4	136.7
Budget as percentage of SSA	101.1 per cent	99.9 per cent	100.2 per cent	100.1 per cent

18. Planned expenditure per pupil in 2000/01 was broadly in line with statistical neighbours and outer London borough averages. However, extra money was added to the education budget in 2000/01 for the transport of pupils with special educational needs, individual support in mainstream schools, and SEN recouplement, all of which were overspent the previous year.



	<b>Local Schools Budget per pupil</b>
Ealing	£3,194
Statistical neighbours	£3,202
Outer London boroughs	£3,054
All LEAs in England	£2,817

19. Schools' willingness to forego some of their delegated funding in order to ensure maximum take-up of Standards Fund grant reflects the generally good working relations between headteachers and the LEA. Ealing's net Standards Fund grant (£107 per pupil) in 2000/01 was a little less than its statistical neighbours average (£114 per pupil), but higher than the average for all outer London boroughs (£84 per pupil). Secondary schools will share £750,000 for curriculum developments over the next three years following a successful Excellence in Cities bid.

20. Planned expenditure in 2000/01 on central administration (£47 per pupil) was the same as the national average. It was well below the statistical neighbours (£63 per pupil) and outer London (£58 per pupil) averages and already well within the Government's new guidelines of £70 per pupil for London LEAs in 2001-02.

21. Ealing spends more than any of its statistical neighbours on fees at independent and other out-borough special schools. The council also spends more than its statistical neighbours and other outer London boroughs on home-to-school transport, about 80 per cent of which is to special schools and units. Appropriate steps are being taken to contain future growth in both these items.

22. More recently the LEA has been successful in securing capital receipts and grants from a variety of sources to support an increasing capital programme and to help address the poor condition of much of the school building stock. In the past the Council has been reluctant to fund improvements through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). However, credits have now been approved for a PFI scheme to refurbish a group of three primary schools and one secondary school.

### **Council structure**

23. Arrangements for corporate governance in Ealing are sound. The current Labour administration was returned to power in 1994 and re-elected with an increased majority in 1998. Members of all parties were keen to retain their reputation for probity and accountability, and this is reflected in the decision-making structures established as a one-year pilot in May 2000. There is a single party cabinet leader with eight cabinet members as well as a shadow cabinet. In addition there are advisory committees, area panels and four scrutiny panels. Matters related to education fall within the remit of two portfolio holders: the cabinet member with responsibility for 'developing young people' covers schools, early years, youth and children's social services, and the member responsible for 'services to adults and families' covers lifelong learning as well as adult social services provision. Both portfolio holders also serve on the corporate parent committee, which has made a significant contribution to improving the educational opportunities for young people in public care.

24. Diocesan bodies and parents are represented on the school standards panel (SSP) of the Individual Scrutiny Committee (ISC). The SSP discharges its brief to scrutinise Section 10 inspection reports and to monitor the implementation of the major education plans including the Educational Development Plan. While councillors are enthusiastic about the work of the ISC, which they see as pro-active, there is little awareness of these structures in schools or any evidence of their impact on improving services. A worrying number of stakeholders, including headteachers, see the new arrangements as irrelevant - a closing down, not an opening up of the council's decision-making processes. Contact between headteachers and councillors, other than in their capacity as school governors, is minimal. To date, the ISC has not been called upon to review any cabinet decisions pertaining to education.

25. The present director of education was appointed in 1997 and has recently reorganised the department. There are four assistant directors with responsibility for school standards, finance and planning, pupils and families, and lifelong learning. The department is now well managed and increasingly responsive to the needs of schools.

26. The officer structure to support the new executive and scrutiny functions is currently under review as is the whole pilot model of governance. The chief executive has instituted a programme 'Ealing 4 Excellence'; which seeks to strengthen the corporate centre. However, the process is unlikely to have any impact on education in the short term, as there are no plans to change the structure of the education department.

### **The Education Development Plan**

27. The strategy for school improvement outlined in the revised education development plan (EDP) is an improvement on the original, but has a number of unsatisfactory features. It is based on a thorough audit of the performance of schools and of OFSTED Section 10 reports. There is a detailed and useful section on the demographic characteristics of the school population, which makes explicit links with identified priorities. National priorities are appropriately addressed. The inclusion of 'effective learning' as the first activity provides an appropriate local dimension that cuts across and supports activities focusing on management, curriculum, teaching and learning. The modifications in the revised version reflect the need, recognised by the recently appointed assistant director (school standards division), for a sharper focus on school improvement. They are the result of a much improved consultation process with schools. Primary schools judged both the EDP and consultation on the EDP as better than satisfactory, but secondary schools were more critical. However, in practice the involvement of secondary schools in LEA planning for school improvement has been focused on Ealing's successful Excellence in Cities (EiC) bid.

28. The EDP priorities are:

- creating a learning culture;
- promoting the continuity of education between key stages;

- developing staff as teachers and managers, developing support staff and governors;
- developing literacy at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3;
- numeracy, with a particular focus on Key Stages 2 and 3; and
- design and technology and information and communication technology, Key Stages 1 – 4.

29. The revised plan is an improvement on the original, but it is still variable in quality and usefulness to schools. There are some strengths, for example planning for literacy and numeracy which demonstrates clarity of purpose, clearly defined tasks and well matched success criteria. Overall, however the organisation and structure of the EDP is unwieldy, and does not always do justice to the clear focus on raising standards which is an improving feature of the department. Priorities are over-complex and it is sometimes difficult to predict what will be included under a particular heading. Some of the tasks identified are not well defined. Success criteria do not consistently identify the intended impact of actions and too often they are a rephrasing of the task. The revised EDP was produced before the EiC bid. It does not reflect the relevant educational aspects of early years and post-16 education. These are usefully mapped in the education strategic plan 2000-2001 but are not yet fully operational.

30. The EDP describes the information and processes used to support the setting of school and LEA targets which have been in place since September 2000. These processes are now sound. Prior to this however, there were weaknesses in the target setting process which have since been addressed. There is now greater consistency in the role of the attached inspector and more purposeful use of the data available. The EDP targets for 2002 are variable in the challenge they present. In particular, the target of 73 per cent of pupils achieving level 4 or above in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is not sufficiently challenging and the LEA is working with schools to increase this to the national target of 75 per cent.

31. The audit recognises that Key Stage 3 is the only key stage where attainment is below national and statistical neighbour comparisons. The gap between the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above at the end of Key Stage 2 and the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 and above at the end of Key Stage 3 is wider in Ealing than nationally. Improving the attainment of pupils in Key Stage 3 is an element in several strands within the EDP but is given insufficient prominence overall. Similarly, the need to improve the attainment of boys, although recognised, does not receive sufficiently focused attention. Both of these issues are addressed with more clarity in the Excellence in Cities (EiC) plan.

### **Excellence in Cities**

32. The Ealing Excellence in Cities plan aims to promote further all EDP priorities and identifies a number of strands which will be given particular attention. It provides an ambitious framework for secondary school improvement. There is evidence that strategies for improving the transition between Key Stages 2 and 3 have been given a strong impetus by the EiC initiative in Ealing, with the establishment of a mini Education Action Zone in the north of the borough. It is too early to assess the

impact of other strands since most schools have only just appointed the relevant coordinators.

### **Progress in implementing the Education Development Plan**

33. Overall progress in implementing the EDP has been satisfactory. Although the 2000 Key Stage 2 results for English fell short of the interim target, the 2002 target is still feasible. Similarly, after a rise of 12.5 per cent in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in mathematics between 1998 and 1999, the results in 2000 showed no improvement. Nevertheless, the 2002 target of 73 per cent is achievable, and the LEA is rightly working with schools to increase the target to 75 per cent. At Key Stage 4, 46 per cent of pupils gained five A\* - C grades at GCSE, slightly below the target.

34. Arrangements for monitoring progress and evaluating the effectiveness of the EDP are improving. Each of the priorities has a nominated lead officer who collates monitoring information on the activities and provides termly reports for the SSP. The assistant director (school standards) reports regularly to the education department senior management team and annually to the SSP on progress against targets and success criteria. Evaluation processes include contributions from schools, but do not define with sufficient rigour the precise progress made within each activity.

35. The behaviour support plan is cross-referenced with the EDP, which also has targets to reduce exclusions and improve attendance. The LEA is making good progress in reducing permanent exclusions and has far exceeded what was, with the benefit of hindsight, an unchallenging target for 2002. Steady progress has been made in improving overall rates of attendance. There has been little progress in reducing the LEA's unauthorised absence targets.

### **Early years**

36. The LEA is successful in meeting its target for providing places for three and four-year-olds. However, insufficient prominence has been given to developing an overarching strategy for early years at both corporate and departmental level. Although the LEA is a high spender on early years provision, this area has been under-staffed because most resources go directly to schools and nurseries.

37. The early years childcare and development plan is a sound document, which provides clear targets on the provision of places, equalities, recruitment and training. It is weaker on monitoring and evaluation strategies and provides insufficient steer for the partnership sub groups. The LEA has been proactive in seeking funding for Sure Start and Wraparound care, and accessing Single Regeneration Budget funding to provide extended day and year-long provision at one of its early years centres.

38. Cross-divisional working has not been strong. Links with the EDP are tenuous. Long-term staff absence in the inspection and advisory service (IAS) and lack of expertise in early years, along with understaffing in the lifelong learning division has resulted in a loss of momentum. Plans are in hand to enhance the staffing in early years. The officer charged with the development of provision has shouldered an

unacceptably large and wide-ranging brief. Slow progress had been made in identifying good practice and training needs across all settings: this is now being addressed. Almost all four-year-olds are catered for in primary and special schools, many in nursery classes. Attainment on entry is below the national average and slightly below statistical neighbours. There is no early years' thread in either the priority B: the continuity between key stages, or priorities D and E, literacy and numeracy respectively. The need for Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision to be strengthened has been addressed through the very recent formation of a task group as part of overall SEN development. The transfer of social service nurseries to education provides a good opportunity to develop a clear strategy for SEN in partnership with health and social services

### **Lifelong learning**

39. Strategic planning on post-16 provision is unsatisfactory. The lifelong learning division does not provide an appropriate steer for this area of its remit. Strategies to raise attainment are not encompassed in the EDP or any other operational plans. The LEA strategic plan refers to a post-16 development plan but none exists.

40. The adult learning plan rightly focuses on widening participation and social inclusion. The LEA is working collaboratively with its partners in the west London learning partnership to prepare to launch a Connexions Service for 13 to 19 year olds in the borough, probably from April 2002. The Ealing lifelong learning partnership has secured funding to train personal advisers, including two from the youth offending team, in preparation for Connexions. The latter rightly aims to work directly with young people in order to secure their involvement in the planning and running of the Connexions Service.

### **The Allocation of resources to priorities**

41. The allocation of resources to priorities is now good. The council's priority for education is reflected in its commitment to fund the service at SSA for at least the next three years. The provision of a three-year budget forecast for each school has been welcomed by headteachers and has helped reinforce the strategic role of governing bodies.

42. Greater rigour and clarity have been introduced to budget setting and monitoring. The council has acknowledged the legacy of under-investment in building maintenance and ICT infrastructure. Directors have appropriate discretion to redirect any savings within their own service area and are expected to manage overspends within their total allocation. Any resources which become available to the council over and above its commitment to service departments are allocated in line with corporate priorities through a well-structured 'strategic intervention' procedure. Up-grading the council's IT systems is currently the highest priority, an investment which will benefit the education department and improve the LEA's support to schools.

43. Ealing met the Government's target for the increase in delegated funds per pupil in 2000/01. Further delegation, including the cost of primary school meals and elements of the education welfare service is planned. These, together with the

redefinition by the DfEE of the Local Schools Budget to exclude independent special school fees, will increase the level of delegation to about 86.5 per cent, above the minimum requirement of 85 per cent for 2001/02.

44. The funding formula is quite complex, although the calculation of each school's allocation is very clearly presented. The majority of schools are satisfied with the rationale behind the formula, and with the consultations on further delegation. The LEA has been responsive to schools' views by, for example, simplifying the factor for energy and adding a new factor for pupil mobility. The mobility factor was introduced following a careful analysis of pupils' performance. This is a good example of the LEA's ability to use its pupil-level data to identify trends and redirect resources to help raise standards.

45. An external funding officer post has recently been established. This is an appropriate response to the need to strengthen and coordinate the bid-writing capacity of the department. The post holder will also support schools in an area which the majority currently find less than satisfactory.

### **Structures for securing Best Value**

46. Structures for the implementation of Best Value are unsatisfactory, but are being strengthened in response to a number of recommendations from the external auditor. Involvement of members has been increased by the creation of a cabinet portfolio with responsibility for Best Value and performance management. Quarterly reports of progress against targets are now provided to the corporate management team and to cabinet. The review programme, which the external auditor described as undeliverable to a consistently high standard, has been revisited.

47. Progress on Best Value reviews within the education service has been slow and, in some cases, outcomes are already being pre-empted by other factors such as the need for further delegation. No reviews had been completed at the time of the inspection. A review of libraries which began in 1999 has been referred back by Members for further work on its improvement plan. Major reviews of SEN services to schools and of the school standards division are scheduled for completion in summer 2001. Headteachers and governors are appropriately represented on the steering groups.

48. Best Value training has been offered to headteachers and governors. Good information on the principles of Best Value has been provided by the LEA.

### **Recommendations**

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

- implement the recommendations of the external auditor to strengthen the council's Best Value processes; and
- produce the post-16 plan outlined in the education strategic plan.

- **Improve the effectiveness of the Educational Development Plan by:**
- reorganising the activities in the current EDP to improve clarity and reduce overlap; and
- ensuring that future versions of the EDP are coherent with the Excellence in Cities plan and give greater priority to raising standards in early years education, Key Stage 3 and boys' attainment.

## **SECTION 2: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **Implications of other functions**

49. Overall the LEA takes reasonable steps to fulfil its relevant functions well in order to improve standards in schools; however, there is scope for further improvement in strategic planning, management services to schools and reducing SEN expenditure.

### **Monitoring, challenge, support, intervention**

50. The LEA strategy for providing monitoring, challenge, intervention and support is satisfactory and has been shared with schools in a coherent and accessible document.

51. The inspection and advisory service is performing effectively since the appointment of the assistant director (school standards) in October 1999. The need to realign the inspection and advisory service (IAS) from a team where the emphasis was upon curriculum specialisms to one whose prime purpose was school improvement has been achieved. There have been significant changes in the membership of the IAS and an increase in the number of inspectors with senior management and primary expertise. Such changes have taken time and schools have only begun to recognise the impact of these improvements since the start of this academic year.

52. Alongside these changes, the LEA has recognised the need to rapidly redefine its strategy for monitoring, challenge, support and intervention. In September 2000, the LEA issued guidance on the monitoring and support programme for school improvement. This identifies a three level model of support based on the principle of addressing difficulties before they become matters of concern. The policy clearly articulates the LEA's belief that school self-evaluation is at the heart of school improvement and that the work of the IAS should support schools in developing or extending this capability. It builds on contributions from a working party focusing on the role of the attached inspector. The strategy was communicated to governors through the director's termly report and briefing meeting.

53. For the first year, each school is receiving six half-day visits, which combine aspects of monitoring, challenge and support. Before the visit the attached inspector conducts desktop monitoring based on an analysis of a good range of evidence. Each visit follows a published agenda which allows for the coverage of school as well as LEA issues. The process is helping the LEA to develop a clear understanding of the overall performance and context of each school. Information gained from the visits contributes to the LEA's ability to disseminate best practice and feed into the on-going evaluation of the EDP. Attached inspectors also observe literacy and mathematics lessons, often alongside school managers. This supports and promotes the process of school self review. At the same time the IAS is providing training on school self-evaluation based on the OFSTED model.



54. The LEA is well aware that this level of visiting can only be justified in the short term while it responds to concerns expressed. Until recently, however, the LEA did not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of its schools to provide a differentiated model of challenge and support. This was confirmed in the critical responses to the school survey by both primary and secondary schools on this issue.

55. Procedures are in place for schools at level one 'effective self evaluating schools' to agree with the attached inspector to reduce the number of visits to two half days a year. There are clear and detailed criteria for identifying those schools that will receive additional support at level two. These criteria discriminate between schools requiring support to improve standards and those with temporary difficulties such as more than two newly qualified teachers or an acting headteacher. Schools identified as giving cause for concern, either by OFSTED or the LEA, receive support at level three.

56. There are well defined procedures for intervention. The LEA sees the issuing of a formal warning notice as a last resort and not as a general purpose mechanism for securing school improvement. It has issued a formal warning in the case of one primary school, and has suspended the governing body's right to decide how to spend its own budget on two occasions.

57. Management of the inspection and advisory service is effective. The service is well led by an assistant director for school standards. The service improvement plan is a good document, which has guided the work of the IAS since November 1999. It accurately identifies performance indicators against which to measure the effectiveness of the service together with objectives and activities to improve consistency and quality.

58. Clear improvements have been achieved in a short period of time. The IAS now delivers a level of service, which is improving and provides satisfactory value for money. The IAS currently consists of three principal inspectors and ten general inspectors; three of whom are part-time. At the time of the inspection one general inspector and one principal inspector are on long-term sick leave. In addition to their attached inspector role, all inspectors lead on a subject or theme across the LEA. The increase in the number of inspectors with primary and senior management experience has enabled the assistant director to ensure an increasingly good match between the expertise of the inspector and the needs of an individual school. Lines of accountability are clear. Concerns about performance are dealt with through established confidential procedures, which are part of the authority's performance management scheme.

59. Most of the schools visited during the inspection demonstrated an understanding of the purpose of visits by attached inspectors. Notes of visit usefully record the key aspects of the visit and agreed action points. Information from the form, such as length and purpose of visit, is entered into a database. This enables the IAS to monitor progress in key areas of the EDP and the quality of support provided for schools. However, some areas still require more formal processes to be established. Visit reports are sent to headteachers but are not routinely shared with chairs of governing bodies. Generally headteachers were aware of, and agreed with, the model of three levels of support, although most of them could only guess

which group they were in. Headteachers and governors are right to feel that they should have been formally notified.

### **Collection and analysis of data**

60. The LEA provides schools with a comprehensive range of performance data in line with the best practice found nationally. The planning and research section produce increasingly pertinent analyses of relevant local as well as national attainment and performance data to complement the information given to schools by the DfEE, OFSTED and QCA. Guidance in the use of that data in schools is mediated through the attached inspector visits on target-setting and also by other officers charged with supporting schools to reduce exclusions and absence levels.

61. Support for target-setting has been unsatisfactory but is improving rapidly, since the introduction of more robust procedures in the IAS from September 2000. Attached inspectors have a clear, shared agenda and consistent processes through which to engage schools in the target-setting process. The revised EDP describes the processes clearly. Schools are now expected to compare performance at the end of one key stage against the same pupils' attainment at the end of the previous key stage, and to undertake a detailed contextual analysis as part of the targeting and tracking process leading to agreed targets. There is a presumption that targets will include an element of challenge. However, after only one term the impact on schools is not yet secure. There remains a significant gap between the aggregated schools' target and the LEA's target for English at Key Stage 2. There remains a significant minority of schools where the 2002 targets either lack challenge or are overly ambitious. From next year, schools will be asked to set targets for the end of Key Stages 1 and 3.

62. The planning and research section, in conjunction with the IAS, has provided training on the use of data and target setting, for headteachers, governors, senior staff in schools, inspectors and consultants. Written guidance has been circulated to all schools. This has been well received by the majority of primary schools. In an attempt to overcome some significant mis-matches of results and targets in some secondary schools, the LEA has produced a useful model for the target setting process against which secondary schools can evaluate their own procedures.

63. The transfer of data from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory and appears unnecessarily difficult in an authority where the majority of schools use the same pupil assessment and record software. While the statutory responsibility for the transfer of data rests with schools, guidance has been produced by the IT section which supports schools in transferring data electronically. The planning and research section has provided high schools with electronic information on Key Stage 2 results and unique pupil numbers for the majority of their Year 7 intakes during the autumn term. However the large number of separate admission authorities, failure to resolve the difficulties in admission, and the late notification of places are hampering strategies described in the EDP to sustain and extend pupils' attainment from Year 6 to Year 7.

## **Support for literacy**

64. Support for literacy is satisfactory. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen steadily from the 1997 level of 62 per cent achieving Level 4 and above to 72.6 per cent in 2000. This is below the national average and slightly below the LEA target of 74 per cent. Schools receiving intensive support have exceeded the LEA rate of improvement for the last two years. At Key Stage 3, 57.7 per cent of pupils achieve Level 5 or above compared with the national average of 64 per cent. Levels of attainment fell by five per cent between 1998 and 1999 before rising slightly in 2000. The need to improve attainment at Key Stage 3 is an EDP priority. The LEA is currently raising the issue of school level targets. The proportion of pupils gaining an A\* -C grade in English at GCSE is well below the national average. Secondary teachers have observed practice in Key Stage 2 and primary-secondary liaison has been further strengthened by literacy summer schools.

65. Developing literacy at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 is priority D in the EDP. The plan does not contain sufficient detail but practice in schools is good. There are good links between the literacy team and other teams providing specialist support for Travellers, pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and pupils with special educational needs.

66. Improving the attainment of boys appears as an activity in Priorities A and D in the EDP, but it does not receive sufficiently focused attention in either priority. In 2000, girls outperformed boys by eight per cent at the end of Key Stage 2 and by 16 per cent at the end of Key Stage 3. The gap has been significantly reduced compared with previous years, but much remains to be done.

67. Implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, while sound, has not had the same impact as in other LEAs. The membership of the team has changed considerably since 1997. This has led to some lack of continuity in the work in schools. However, training has been of a consistently high standard. A newly appointed strategy manager leads the literacy team with support from the new principal inspector. Two consultants work primarily in Key Stages 1 and 2, and one in Key Stage 3. The LEA gives a high priority to the strategy and is funding one of these posts.

68. The IAS is currently consulting on a draft paper which sensibly outlines the role of consultants and underlines the schools' responsibilities in making best use of the consultants time.

## **Support for numeracy**

69. Support for numeracy is satisfactory in primary schools, but has yet to have an impact in secondary. The standards achieved in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have been broadly in line with national averages since 1997, however improvement has not been consistent. A sharp rise in 1997 was followed by a slight drop in 1998 and another significant rise in 1999. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 4 and above remained static at nearly 71 per cent. Attainment at Key Stage 1 also fell slightly in 2000, taking it below the national average for the first time.

70. Raising attainment in numeracy in Key Stages 2 and 3 is an EDP priority. At Key Stage 3 the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 and above rose in 2000 by 4.5 per cent to 58 per cent compared to national average of 65.5 per cent. Attainment at Key Stage 3 has risen steadily but remains significantly below the national average for the past four years. The LEA's own analysis of OFSTED reports reveals that 25 per cent of schools were judged as poor for mathematics at Key Stage 3 compared with ten per cent nationally. The numeracy action plan indicates that high schools will increasingly be given priority support.

71. In 2000, 42 per cent of pupils gained a GCSE A\* - C grade in mathematics. Results have shown very little improvement over the last three years and remain below the national average.

72. Implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been managed effectively. There are four numeracy consultants whose time and expertise are well targeted. They provide good support for schools; demonstration lessons, observations of lessons and feedback are particularly valued. The quality of the five-day training was good. Intensive schools have improved their results at a greater rate than the LEA as a whole. The consultants provide further training on a range of mathematical topics, well matched to the emerging needs of teachers. The team is well led by a principal inspector whose role also covers mathematics and ICT. One of the four consultants work predominantly in Key Stage 3.

73. Priority E in the EDP focuses upon numeracy with a particular focus at Key Stages 2 and 3. Appropriate links are made with Priority B 'promoting the continuity of education between key stages'. Related initiatives include family numeracy, collaboration with staff funded by the ethnic minority and Traveller achievement grant (EMTAG) to support the assessment of the mathematical knowledge and understanding of pupils with EAL and work with the special educational needs service to schools.

74. The LEA's transition project, 'Spacebase' has been an important initiative for both literacy and numeracy. Programmes of work are taught at the end of Key Stage 2 and for the first half term of Year 7, with activities to be completed during the intervening summer holiday. Secondary teachers have observed Key Stage 2 teachers. Seven summer schools took place in 2000.

### **Support for ICT**

75. The LEA's strategy for investment in ICT, and its provision for ICT in the curriculum, has been piecemeal and ineffectual to date and renders the provision unsatisfactory overall. There has been insufficient steer from the LEA, where ICT has been an additional responsibility of the two inspectors who have been involved in developing policy and practice. It is only recently that a strategic plan for ICT has been published. There is dissatisfaction among schools that one of the major providers has proved unreliable and in those schools which are unable to supplement the number of machines from their own budget, an allocation of five machines, made available through National Grid for Learning (NGfL) funding, has proved to be inadequate. The slow implementation of an infrastructure is surprising

given that standards are well below other LEAs at all key stages and ICT is an EDP priority.

76. The EDP priority is based on sound activities but there is an absence of sharp success criteria. Given the urgent need to raise standards in ICT it is questionable to have combined ICT and design and technology in a single priority, when resources are at a premium. The ICT curriculum development plan provides a more coherent approach to planning and makes links with other EDP priorities as well as linking with the corporate strategic plan on social inclusion.

77. Support for curriculum ICT in schools is satisfactory. Planning and practice in schools are stronger and based on a detailed analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Intervention in schools is well targeted and the quality of the support good. The two consultants, who were appointed after the first phase of NGfL have made a discernible impact. Schools speak highly of their advice and support. A good range of training courses are well attended and well received. The consultants are hardworking and enthusiastic. As recent practitioners, they are knowledgeable and adept at providing clear advice that schools can act upon. There has been liaison with the literacy and numeracy consultants to advise on software and guidance to schools. An ICT dimension has also been included in literacy, numeracy and science training. A website has recently been developed to support New Opportunities Fund training and curriculum development. It is well designed and user-friendly, providing tutorials on developing competence in using the Internet and links to other websites. In addition, training has been provided to schools who wish to set up their own websites.

78. Nevertheless, the balance of the consultants' work between technical and curriculum support is unsatisfactory at present and has yet to be resolved. Until this happens, the consultants will be unable to provide the appropriate level of support to all those schools making slow progress and standards are unlikely to rise. Analysis of Section 10 reports over the past four years indicates some improvement, but progress remains poor at every key stage. Good practice has been shared at secondary level through the involvement of expert practitioners as teacher advisers for NOF training, but there is little opportunity for primary or special schools to benefit in the same way.

79. Phase four of the NGfL will link the borough with the London Grid for Learning and provide more cost-effective Internet access for schools as well as access to a wider range of content and expertise. Although this is due to start in September 2001, following a long planning phase, the LEA has not yet articulated its strategy for capitalising on this development.

### **Support for schools causing concern**

80. The LEA's strategy is good and its procedures are increasingly effective. The identification of and support for schools causing concern is now very good. Ealing has a small number of schools identified by OFSTED as needing special measures or with serious weaknesses. Three primary schools require special measures and three primary schools have serious weaknesses. In addition, one secondary and a further six primary schools have been identified as a cause of concern to the LEA.

81. In the past the LEA did not know its schools well enough to identify those at risk of sliding into the categories of special measures and serious weaknesses. As a result, schools did not always receive the necessary challenge, support or intervention early enough. Her Majesty's Inspectors visiting these schools found variations in the level and effectiveness of this support. This has since been addressed.

82. Effective procedures for the consistent monitoring and reporting of the work of schools are now in place. They include a data alert system which draws attention to areas of potential concern in relation to quantitative data. These procedures mean that the service is now better placed to recognise schools in difficulty and provide an appropriate and consistent level of support. Schools now in special measures or with serious weaknesses are well supported by task groups comprising the headteacher, the chair of governors, the attached inspector, the assistant director of the standards division and others with an interest in the welfare of the school. Each task group regularly monitors progress against the school's action plan for improvement. Governors perceive that these groups are a powerful mechanism for identifying what support is needed and ensuring that improvement takes place. Headteachers and chairs of governing bodies of schools currently in special measures report that support is well targeted and matched to the needs of the school.

83. Similarly, schools identified as causing concern to the LEA also receive support which is matched to their needs. The criteria for their identification are clear and contained in the LEA policy document 'schools giving cause for concern' which was circulated to all schools and described in the director's termly report to governors. These procedures were implemented from September 2000.

84. Procedures have been agreed for supporting schools following their removal from special measures or serious weaknesses, but have not yet been tested.

### **Support for governors**

85. Support for governors is satisfactory and represents value for money. Appropriate priorities for improving the quality of school governance and the recruitment, induction and retention of governors are identified in the EDP. However, some tasks identified lack sufficient detail and success criteria do not always describe the intended impact of the planned actions.

86. The governor support team provides a satisfactory support service to governors, responding appropriately to specific queries and difficulties. It monitors and responds to matters raised in the minutes of meetings of governing body. There is no general shortage of governors in Ealing schools.

87. The training and organisational development service manage, co-ordinate and commission training for governors. There are appropriate procedures for identifying governors' training and support needs through discussions with link governors, attached inspectors, course evaluations and school inspection reports. Most schools purchase school-based and/or centrally organised training for governors. Governors

value the induction training provided, but courses for more experienced governors are insufficiently differentiated. Schools report that the quality of 'bespoke' school-based training for governing bodies varies from good, for example training on effective learning, to unsatisfactory, where trainers have been unable to go beyond the script to meet the level of understanding of the governing body. Several of the schools visited prefer to organise their own school-based training.

88. The quality of information provided to governing bodies is good. The main form of communication is the director's termly report to governors and the follow-up meeting with headteachers and chairs of governing bodies. Governors' views about the usefulness of these sessions varied, with some governors reporting that opportunities for debate were limited. However, all valued the clarity of the written reports.

89. The support and challenge for governors of schools in special measures or serious weaknesses have improved during the last twelve months and are now effective. Governors are represented on the task group set up to address the identified weaknesses and receive regular progress reports on agreed action plans. However, governors in other schools are not always clear which level of support the school is receiving and why. Attached inspectors provide written visit reports for headteachers but do not routinely share the outcomes of these visits with chairs of governing bodies. The LEA relies on headteachers to keep chairs of governing bodies informed. This is unsatisfactory.

### **Support for school management**

90. Support for school management, including support for the curriculum and for improving the quality of teaching is satisfactory; strengths now outweigh weaknesses. Support for school management is embedded within Priority C of the EDP: 'Developing staff as teachers and managers, developing support staff and governors'.

91. Self-reviewing schools are a feature of Ealing LEA. Training on the OFSTED self-evaluation package has been provided by inspectors, which participants rated highly. Schools visited during the inspection welcomed the opportunity for senior managers to observe lessons alongside attached inspectors and saw this as contributing to schools' capability to evaluate progress and identify developmental needs.

92. During the inspection primary headteachers expressed a great deal of goodwill towards the LEA. They recognised the impact of the new assistant directors on structures and procedures, and agreed that these had led to a better organised department more able to support school management. In the school survey, the majority of primary schools judged support to the headteacher and senior management, and support for school self-evaluation, as satisfactory or better.

93. Many secondary headteachers no longer look to the LEA for advice and support. Although schools recognise the difficulties LEAs face in recruiting inspectors with secondary senior management experience, support in all three categories was poorly rated by secondary schools.

94. The LEA supports the development of senior managers through the National Professional Qualification for Heads (NPQH) and the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads (LPSH). A mentoring scheme for new headteachers was re-launched last term and the LEA is providing training for experienced headteachers to act as mentors. Specific support for headteachers experiencing difficulty is negotiated with the attached inspector in line with the three level model of support. Support for middle managers has been acknowledged as an area for training and development by both schools and the LEA.

95. The LEA has made limited progress in addressing its expected role in disseminating good practice. Prior to September 2000, best practice was identified by inspectors and disseminated by word of mouth and through relevant newsletters. Since that date, the newly appointed principal inspector has been responsible for developing a more co-ordinated and systematic approach and as a result the LEA is now more able to identify good practice. Preliminary meetings have been held with Beacon schools within the LEA to discuss their role in this process.

96. The LEA draws on a range of providers, including staff from the school standards division and external consultants, to support its management and professional development programme. The service is well regarded by schools. However, course evaluation processes lack rigour and the analysis of impact is often superficial.

97. The LEA meets its statutory duties in relation to religious education and there is a good working relationship with the Standing Advising Council on Religious Education.

98. The LEA's own analysis identified the need to improve further the quality of teaching in all key stages. The 'educating for effective learning' policy was ratified by the education committee in March 1999 and contributes to the council's policy on lifelong learning. It is the first activity in the EDP. Some of the primary schools visited during the inspection had been involved in the initiative from its introduction and expressed a high degree of commitment and enthusiasm. They were able to point to specific instances where effective learning principles were supporting the successful implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. The initiative is having less impact at secondary level.

99. Support for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) is well regarded. Comprehensive guidance on the induction, assessment and support of NQTs has been supplied to schools.



## **Recommendations**

### **In order to raise standards:**

- consolidate schools' understanding of the three level model of support by informing the headteacher and chair of governors which level of support they are receiving and why;
- ensure that effective schools receive a reduced number of monitoring visits;
- send copies of visit reports to chairs of governing bodies as a matter of routine;
- give priority to improving the electronic transfer of data, between the LEA and its schools and between schools at the end of Key Stage 2; and
- give a sharper focus on improving boys' attainment in literacy.

### **Improve strategic planning for curriculum ICT by:**

- giving priority to the implementation of the corporate plan for ICT, with particular emphasis on improving the communications infrastructure between schools and the LEA; and
- clarifying the strategy for Phase 4 of NGfL and communicating it effectively to schools.

## **SECTION 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

### **Corporate planning**

100. The clarity and coherence of corporate plans in providing a challenging framework for education in Ealing are unsatisfactory. There is no over-arching vision or set of values to inform individual service plans. The council's priorities are set out in its Best Value Performance Plan entitled 'Our Promises to You'. The format and content of the document, therefore, are largely dictated by Best Value requirements. However, in trying to combine corporate planning and public information in a single annual document, neither purpose is served well. There are seven cross-cutting priorities; the aim of raising standards in education forms part of a broad social inclusion priority, but is described almost entirely in terms of performance indicators for infant class sizes, National Curriculum tests and GCSE results, and attendance. There are few references to education's contribution to other priorities or how the council will add value through cross-departmental initiatives.

101. Procedures for implementing and evaluating the impact of corporate services on education are not robust. Mechanisms for seeking the views of schools on the services offered by the council are not systematic. The detrimental impact of services provided centrally such as payroll, finance, property, has only recently been acknowledged. These services might usefully have been candidates for early inclusion in any Best Value review schedule.

102. The education services strategic plan is also an annual document. The service's aim of creating a learning culture is appropriate, but stands somewhat apart from the aims in 'Our Promises to You'. The content of the plan is more operational than strategic, consisting mainly of 56 separate activities drawn from the service plans of individual sections.

103. Appropriate procedures for performance management are in place in the education department, using the corporate job performance scheme. The director has instituted a number of mechanisms for seeking feedback on the performance of officers and schools. The fortnightly briefing to headteachers is a particularly welcome development. However, a more systematic mechanism for seeking feedback on the performance of assistant directors and their service teams is not in place. Schools are not routinely canvassed formally by services for feedback.

104. The speed and transparency of financial decision-making are satisfactory. The commitment of the council to spend at SSA and to pass on increases in education SSA fully to schools has reduced the importance to schools of the annual round of budget consultations. Consultations form part of the information in the director's termly report to governors and the follow-up meeting for chairs. Budget items are also covered in the regular fortnightly sessions for headteachers. The majority of schools in the survey found the arrangements at least satisfactory.

105. Schools receive helpful budget information well before the start of the financial year. In addition to a three-year budget forecast in November, schools receive a copy of the budget report to cabinet in January which includes the outcomes of the

Fair Funding consultation and indicative allocations based on September rolls. Provisional budgets using January rolls and including devolved Standards Fund grants are issued by February half-term ahead of final budgets in March.

106. A number of headteachers reported taking over schools with large deficit budgets. The situation has improved since the devolution of the finance function to the education department. Only five schools had deficits greater than 2.5 per cent at the end of 1999/2000. However, the number of schools with large surpluses was high: over 40 per cent of schools had surpluses in excess of five per cent and one in eight had a surplus greater than 10 per cent. The LEA is taking appropriate action to alert schools to the situation, although in most cases the surpluses have been planned to support much-needed refurbishment projects.

107. The quality of leadership given by elected members is satisfactory. The two cabinet portfolio holders are clear about their roles. They participate regularly in the directorate management meeting and are well informed. The quality of advice received by elected members is satisfactory. Although elected members are generally well briefed on educational matters, the scrutiny role of members in the new structure has yet to be fully tested. Strengthening the procedures for holding schools more directly to account are also under-developed. The remit of the individual scrutiny committee includes education, housing and social services issues, deliberately cutting across both departmental and cabinet portfolio responsibilities with the commendable aim of further strengthening the corporate approach of the council. To date no cabinet decisions have been 'called in'. However, the committee has been proactive in establishing task groups to examine social inclusion and performance management. Members of the committee also serve on the long-established school standards panel which receives summaries of Section 10 reports and helpfully scrutinises any action required by the LEA.

108. The quality of leadership given by senior officers in the education department is for the most part good. The director has recognised the issues facing the LEA and has made good appointments to tackle the under-performance which was evident across the whole range of functions and manifest in the quality and variability of services to schools. The radical restructuring of the education department has been effective and it is now a well managed organisation. The directorate's aim to create a learning culture is clearly modelled and the objectives to foster innovation and creativity are evident across a range of services in Ealing LEA. The new directorate rightly enjoys the confidence of members as well as schools and other agencies.

109. Consultation and communication are increasing strengths of the LEA, not just with schools and governors, but other stakeholders. This is evident not only in the high regard with which senior officers are held but also in the quality of the relationships the education department enjoys with a wide range of corporate departments and external agencies. A notable example is the degree to which collaboration between education, social services and housing has secured tangible improvements for the education and wellbeing of young people in public care in Ealing. Less impressive is the liaison between schools and social workers and as a consequence the director for children's services is meeting headteachers to improve relationships. Discussions are also taking place with the housing department to

address the difficulties the borough faces in recruiting and retaining staff in an area of high cost housing.

110. The LEA has built strong relationships with external agencies such as the police through its long-established partnership on community safety and strategies to reduce youth crime. The LEA enjoys the confidence of a range of stakeholders including the diocesan boards, the health authority as well as parents through the auspices of Ealing parent partnership. Relationships with the voluntary sector have improved since the formation of the early years and childcare development partnership. There are good links with the local Pitshanger art gallery.

### **Management services**

111. The arrangements for buying back management services in 2000/01 are poor. Most of the service specifications are insufficiently detailed to allow comparison with alternative providers, thus hindering schools from adopting Best Value approaches. Although headteachers were fully consulted on further delegations under Fair Funding, the amounts delegated do not always include a share of overheads such as IT equipment and accommodation. They may not, therefore, represent the full cost of each service. The LEA does not offer a client support service for schools that wish to approach outside providers.

112. Schools wishing to subscribe to service level agreements do so by signing a single form. However, the information is not comprehensive – premises related services, for example, are not included. Service standards and quality assurance processes are incomplete. There is very little user input to service planning or review. In some cases it is unclear what service schools would continue to receive from central budgets if they did not subscribe. Few of the services offer different levels of subscription which would allow schools to tailor the service to their particular needs. Despite these shortcomings, the buy-back rate among community schools remains high, reflecting a combination of loyalty, inertia and low expectations rather than high customer satisfaction. Even the most highly rated services were barely average compared with responses to the survey from schools in other LEAs.

113. **Finance** support to schools is unsatisfactory, despite the competence of the officers and the high value accorded to them by schools. Primary schools in particular value the support for budget-setting provided by the schools' bursarial service. However, to a certain extent, the reliance on the schools' bursarial service, is precisely because of difficulties schools face in reconciling the council's monthly budget monitoring statements with schools' local records, including Standards Fund expenditure. Many of the errors in budget statements perceived by schools to be due to the unsatisfactory payroll service, which is currently a corporate function, and to the misallocation of employees' costs. There is a sense, therefore, in which schools are buying back a service to sort problems which are of the council's own making. This is clearly unacceptable.

114. Officers from the bursarial service alert inspectors if there are concerns about financial management, and also provide limited comparative information on school expenditure. For those schools astute enough to manage without the bursarial

service, the LEA's monitoring role is performed by accountants funded from central budgets. Clearly the monitoring and support functions should be such that schools do not pay for services which are available free of charge to others that do not buy back.

115. The LEA has responded to concerns about the pay-roll service by consulting headteachers about alternative delivery models including out-sourcing. In the first instance however, the service is being devolved to the education department in order to improve its reliability and responsiveness. The service should be subject to an early Best Value review.

116. The **personnel** service has many strengths and was among the most highly rated aspects of the LEA in the school survey, particularly in respect of support for casework such as capability procedures. Personnel officers are key people in the task groups supporting schools causing concern and have been proactive in helping Ealing to recruit and retain teachers. The service level agreement helpfully has three elements which can be purchased separately or as a single package. The specifications are clear and the service is working towards greater involvement of headteachers in monitoring performance against standards. Model policies on the personnel issues are available although the personnel handbook for schools has not been fully up-dated since 1997.

117. Support to schools on **buildings maintenance** and the management of projects is poor. Over 40 per cent of schools in the survey rated all aspects of building work as poor or very poor. There is a legacy of under-investment and the large backlog of repairs was compounded by disruptions following the transfer of the council's project management and in-house maintenance capacity to the private sector seven years ago. Schools regret the loss of an attached surveyor. They feel that the present pooling arrangements set up two years ago are cumbersome and unresponsive, although the majority have bought back into a maintenance agreement for mechanical and electrical work in order to secure peace of mind. There is some evidence that the situation is being addressed. The recent transfer of a small property team led by an experienced manager to the education department, the imminent re-structuring of the project management contract, and a revised repairs and maintenance service agreement with the option of an attached surveyor, offer schools some grounds for cautious optimism.

118. Support for **ICT in school administration** is poor with Ealing rated the worst of all 67 LEAs whose schools have taken part in the present survey. The LEA has acknowledged the shortcomings and, following appropriate consultations with schools, has recently adopted a clear three-year strategy to improve the situation. The under-investment has also been recognised corporately with ICT having the highest priority for additional funding under the corporate strategic intervention procedure. Negotiations have already been opened with the private sector with a view to out-sourcing all technical support.

119. There has been a lack of strategic direction and under-investment in corporate systems, and a number of overlapping routes through which schools can secure technical support. Schools have e-mail access to officers in the LEA and there is electronic transfer by email or disk of financial information. However, there is no on-

line transfer of financial transactions. The implementation of a central pupil database is only just beginning.

120. Client support for the procurement of services is unsatisfactory. Most schools make their own arrangements for **cleaning and grounds maintenance** with little or no client support offered by the council. This is an omission in an otherwise comprehensive range of services which the LEA offers for schools that wish to use them.

121. The central contract for **catering** in primary schools is well monitored by a small team who visit schools twice termly and act on complaints from headteachers. They have also worked with the contractor to improve menus at schools where the take-up of free meals is significantly below entitlement. Nevertheless, over half the schools rate the catering service as poor or very poor. It is planned to delegate the cost to primary and special schools from April 2001. High schools make their own arrangements for catering.

122. The LEA provides bus passes for pupils admitted to church schools on denominational grounds, but about 80 per cent of the large **home-to-school transport** budget is for travel to special schools and units, many of them out-of-borough. The SEN transport budget is well managed following a rigorous re-tendering exercise in September 2000. The small team provides a customer-focused service including centrally employed and trained escorts who form part of the monitoring arrangements.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve the quality of education strategic planning:**

- develop a more rigorous corporate framework for departmental planning;
- establish more robust procedures for evaluating the impact of corporate plans on education;
- develop more detailed and transparent service specifications so schools can apply Best Value criteria in procuring services;
- sharpen the customer focus of traded services and clarify entitlements to support from central budgets;
- seek routine feedback from schools on the effectiveness of services provided by education and other council departments;
- undertake a Best Value review of payroll and other under-performing services;
- simplify the accounting arrangements for Standards Fund expenditure;

- ensure that there is a negotiated re-structuring of the project management and buildings' maintenance contracts leading to a simpler and more effective service for schools;
- ensure that the revised repairs and maintenance agreement is put in place for 2001/02 and beyond; and
- implement the new ICT strategy without delay.

## **SECTION 4: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVISION**

### **Strategy**

123. The LEA's strategy for special educational needs (SEN) is unsatisfactory. While there is a clear commitment to the principle of social inclusion reflected in the council's local performance plan, until very recently progress has been modest. The recent appointment of an assistant director for pupils and families has given much-needed impetus to this area. A clear statement of principles has now been agreed by members to replace the outdated SEN policy. It includes the promotion of inclusion and the development of more locally-based provision to reduce the use of out-borough placements. There are appropriate arrangements for consultation and involvement of schools and other agencies in this process of policy development.

124. There are existing examples of successful inclusion arrangements between special and mainstream schools in Ealing, but the schools involved are not confident that the LEA is sufficiently aware or supportive of what has been achieved. The education department has been slow to provide schools with clear guidance on the implications of the government's inclusion agenda. Working parties have been established to develop a more detailed strategy for implementation.

### **Statutory obligations**

125. The LEA takes reasonable steps to meet its statutory duties. Formal assessments are undertaken and statements of SEN are prepared in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice. There has been a significant improvement in the percentage of draft statements prepared within the national target of 18 weeks. The LEA reports that in 1999/2000 the figure was over 90 per cent, including permitted exceptions, most of which required health advice. These improvements are not yet widely appreciated by schools. The SEN officer with the education psychologists and the service for schools teams liaise closely with parents during the statementing process. In addition, the effective interventions of the Ealing parent partnership have made an important contribution to improving LEA procedures for involving and informing parents. This is evident in the high number of cases which are resolved without recourse to the SEN tribunal. Effective arrangements are in place for annual and transitional reviews to be undertaken by schools and for the LEA to respond accordingly.

### **Improvement and value for money**

126. Overall support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Schools are well informed about SEN procedures. More effective performance management arrangements are now in place in the pupil and families division to address the wide variability in the quality of support to schools provided by the special educational needs service for schools, the education psychology service and the education social work service. Nevertheless, some schools have received excellent support and the planned restructuring of the division should ensure greater consistency of support for all.



127. Special education needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) are well supported by regular briefings by the SEN consultants. These are highly regarded. The regular school-based SENPLAN meetings which are all attended by the school's educational psychologist, establish the appropriate support for pupils at Stage 3 and helpfully identify which services will be involved.

128. Monitoring of SEN provision in schools is under-developed and not systematic. Most SENCOs would welcome more in-school specialist support from the school standards division. At present most of the support is discharged through training courses, which are valued, but this may be at the expense of targeted support in those schools whose provision for pupils with SEN is criticised in Section 10 reports or identified in the annual SEN audit.

129. Support for special schools is good. The inputs by attached inspectors and consultants are generally found to be effective in promoting school improvement in special schools. Special schools are working to develop more appropriate targets and assessment procedures. Despite increasingly effective liaison between education and social services at a corporate level, concerns were expressed by schools about liaison at school level with the health authority, and to a lesser extent with social workers.

## **Analysis**

130. The LEA has relied heavily on out-borough special school placements and total expenditure on SEN does not provide satisfactory value for money. Ealing's expenditure on independent special school fees (£94 per pupil) is the fifth highest nationally and significantly higher than the averages for both statistical neighbours (£58 per pupil) and outer London boroughs (£61 per pupil). Ealing also spends more per pupil on transport than any of its statistical neighbours, most of it for pupils with SEN. The amount retained for other non-delegated SEN is also above the average of comparable LEAs.

131. The monitoring and control of central SEN budgets have improved and are now good. The number of out-borough day and residential school placements has fallen by four per cent over the last year. Liaison with health and social services over joint funded placements has improved. Councillors have wisely agreed to maintain the non-delegated SEN budget at its present level so that savings in out-borough fees can be used to develop further local provision to support inclusion.

132. Partly as the result of greater inclusion, expenditure on statements of SEN in mainstream schools is growing. Nevertheless, the proportion of statements in primary and secondary schools remains below the national average and the proportion of children educated in Ealing special schools is stable.

133. The SEN service to schools, the educational psychology service and SEN administration are currently part of a Best Value review which will be completed in the summer.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to deliver more effective provision for pupils with special educational needs:**

- improve communication with all schools, including special schools, to ensure that the council's strategy for inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream provision is better understood and urgently implemented;
- improve the monitoring of services provided to schools and the quality of provision made by schools to support pupils with SEN;
- improve liaison with other divisions within education and external agencies, particularly the health authority; and
- ensure that the balance between training courses and institutional support is more equitable, and that intervention to monitor and improve SEN provision in schools is more systematic and based on a more robust assessment of need.

## **SECTION 5: ACCESS**

### **The provision of school places**

134. The LEA's planning of school places is good. The school organisation plan has been reviewed following appropriate consultation. It clearly describes the issues to be addressed over the next five years, helpfully dividing the borough into eight areas for planning future primary provision. Diocesan representatives report that they feel well consulted and have confidence in the work of the senior officers concerned. The methodology for forecasting rolls has proved very accurate and well within Audit Commission guidelines.

135. The proportion of unfilled places in primary schools has been reduced. The overall surplus of ten per cent is close to the national average but somewhat above the average for other London boroughs.

136. The actual capacity of secondary schools is just sufficient to meet current demand, although there is an overall shortfall compared with standard numbers. Most of the foundation and aided schools with sixth forms are overcrowded. A new school was opened in September 1998 to meet rising secondary rolls. The LEA is rightly cautious about further expansion until the impact of new schools in neighbouring boroughs is clearer.

137. The infant class size plan is being implemented judiciously. All infant children will be in classes below 31 by September 2001 without recourse to temporary accommodation. Building projects at a number of schools are successfully combining infant class size reductions with improved facilities and increased capacity in response to parental preferences. Planning for early years places has not been so effective.

138. Asset management is improving and the processes are now satisfactory. A legacy of under-investment remains in the poor quality and suitability of much of the school building stock. OFSTED inspections frequently cite shortfalls in accommodation having an adverse impact on the curriculum. All Section 10 reports are now routinely scanned to identify such references so they can be taken into account in planning projects. All aspects of buildings services included in the school survey were rated lower than the average for other LEAs reflecting the scale of the problem and the perceived lack of transparency in the past about how building work was prioritised.

139. The asset management plan is comprehensive and well presented. Priorities for future work are clear, as are the responsibilities of schools and the plans for future landlord work. The DfEE has confirmed that progress on the asset management plan has been satisfactory overall. Consultation on the local policy statement and the arrangements for determining priorities are considered to be very effective and an example of good practice. An advisory group of headteachers has been influential in supporting greater transparency and provides a good model of the partnership working which the LEA is trying to foster.

## **Admissions to school**

140. Admission arrangements are unsatisfactory. They are cumbersome for schools and frustrating for many parents in both primary and secondary schools. However, faced with heavy oversubscription at a small number of schools and the majority of secondary schools responsible for their own admissions, improvements are not entirely in the control of the LEA. The admissions forum has made limited progress in co-ordinating secondary school admissions. There is now a common application date, but there is no common preference form. Many parents make multiple applications and hold multiple offers for foundation and aided schools, delaying the appeals process and leading some children to miss induction days.

141. Admissions to primary schools are also unnecessarily complicated. Headteachers receive applications, but can only offer places to children who live within their defined catchment area, and only then if the school is undersubscribed. All other applications are processed centrally, with a four month gap before parents are notified of the outcome.

142. The admissions booklets for parents are very well presented and now incorporate most of the recommendations of the external auditor's value for money study in 1998. However, there are no references to appeals and, apart from a warning about missing the closing date in the latest version of the primary booklet, information is not provided in any of the main community languages. The poster about starting school is widely distributed but, again, is published only in English. The small central admissions team works hard to deal with the volume of enquiries, including over 1000 casual admissions in the four months prior to this inspection. Nevertheless, the LEA has recognised that restricting telephone calls and personal visits from the public to just three hours each day is not an acceptable way of helping to manage the workload.

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

143. Support for pupils educated otherwise than at school in Ealing is very good. The LEA has been successful in developing a number of effective strategies. These are based on sound educational principles, focused on curricular objectives and take account of present and future statutory requirements, particularly for secondary pupils. The LEA sees its pupil referral unit - the study centre - as pivotal in the development of this provision. Its staff are actively involved in working collaboratively with schools, officers in the pupils and families division and a wide range of other agencies. It is presently situated on three sites, two of which provide class-based tuition for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 and the other which offers individual or paired tuition, sometimes alongside other provision, as well as tuition at the local hospital. When inspected by OFSTED last summer, the study centre was judged to provide high quality education, promoting good progress, and giving good value for money.

144. At the end of the autumn term, 219 pupils were educated otherwise than at school, including 32 educated at home at their parents' request. Only two excluded pupils were of primary age; nearly three-quarters were in Years 10 and 11. The decreasing number of pupils at the Key Stage 3 site is evidence that the 'at risk'

programme has reduced the number of referrals. The LEA makes no more alternative provision than the national average and the percentage of Year 11 pupils who are entered for, and obtain, a qualification is above the national average. The number of referrals at Key Stage 3 has decreased, and number of pupils re-integrating to school has increased. The number of hours of tuition has increased for the majority of pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 who currently receive 18 hours. The number of Year 11 pupils attending college placements has increased and standards of attainment and attendance are rising. New accommodation on one site is a major priority for the capital programme, which will enable the LEA to meet the government's target of 25 hours by 2002.

145. The pupil placement panel, which meets fortnightly, is an effective mechanism for referrals. High school headteachers are actively involved, along with representatives from all the relevant services. Procedures are based on a multi-agency approach and clear criteria. Panel policy meetings ensure a constant cycle of monitoring, evaluation and improved systems. The good quality of data collected and its analysis has enabled the LEA to target its work very effectively. The education of home-educated pupils is monitored regularly. Attendance, welfare and attainment of all other pupils are carefully monitored. The study centre is moving towards setting targets in anticipation of baseline information and guidance from the DfEE. However, the EDP places insufficient emphasis on children educated otherwise and the target is unchallenging.

146. The work with pupils at risk of permanent exclusion at Key Stage 3 is very valuable but has been seriously affected by understaffing. The team leader is very highly rated for his work with disaffected pupils by schools. Links have been made with the learning support units in the four secondary schools with the highest exclusions, established as part of EiC and a monitoring exercise is being undertaken. The challenge remains to reduce the number of exclusions at Key Stage 4. There is close liaison with the youth service and with the youth offending team. The children's strategy group is pulling threads together and enabling second tier officers to think both strategically and creatively. Liaison with health and social services is improving but still has some way to go.

### **Attendance at school**

147. Support to improve attendance is good. The LEA takes reasonable steps to ensure that the statutory duties are met with regard to school attendance. Attendance is an explicit activity in the EDP priority relating to the raising of pupils' aspirations. There are clear targets and measurable objectives, most of which have been achieved. The education social work service (ESWS) leads on the programme in the EiC plan aimed at a further reduction of unauthorised absences, beyond those targets agreed in the EDP.

148. Overall rates of attendance are just below the national average for secondary schools. They are below at primary level although the last six years has seen a year-on-year increase ahead of the national trend of improvement. The LEA has not reached the DfEE set targets for unauthorised absence; levels are lower than statistical neighbours. The inability of primary schools to reach their target is largely

a result of the large number of pupils taking extended leave in term time from in a small number of schools.

149. The strategy for promoting regular attendance is outlined in the behaviour support plan. The LEA has been very effective in its data collection, which is translated into reports for each school. This has enabled the ESWS to agree a target with each school based on a thorough analysis of comparative data and to target its work effectively. Schools have been actively encouraged to take responsibility by implementing same day telephone calls. As well as responding to school-specific issues, the service uses a range of pro-active strategies to tackle persistent poor attenders, including truancy sweeps and the targeting of specific groups of pupils such as Travellers and looked after children. Members of the pupils' panel decide whether a warning letter should be sent to parents and an individual's attendance should be further monitored or whether to proceed to prosecution. The LEA's robust approach to prosecutions has shown measureable success.

150. The ESWS is going through a period of transition prior to the delegation of funding to secondary schools from April 2001, one year ahead of the Government's target for devolution. Evidence from schools indicates that secondary schools rate the service more highly than primary schools. The variable quality of education social workers, along with recent staff shortages, has meant that a few schools have not received adequate support. A well-considered shadow structure for the pupil and families division is planned to bring together attendance and admissions, and shift the focus to improving primary attendance.

### **Behaviour at school**

151. The LEA's support to schools and pupils presents a mixed picture, and is unsatisfactory overall. The LEA is consulting widely on the revised behaviour support plan (BSP), which is due to be adopted by March 2001. The revised plan will incorporate initiatives on behaviour support and social inclusion that have been developed in the LEA in the last two years, particularly in the secondary sector, and will take good account of the EiC plan. A restructuring of the behaviour support service is presently taking place to provide a coherent team with a clear remit and close links with the IAS and the EPS. Nevertheless the BSP is well integrated into the EDP with generally specific targets, which have been largely met.

152. Rates of permanent exclusions have fallen significantly in the last year from a level that was above the national average. The EiC targets are challenging and include targets for reducing fixed-term exclusions, although the permanent exclusions targets will need to be revised in the light of current data. Fixed-term exclusions are below the national average in primary schools and above average in secondary schools. Despite these indicators, schools have a variable opinion of the advice and support provided by the LEA. A significant variation in the performance of staff who support children at risk of exclusion accounts for the widely differing views of the schools visited. Performance management systems have not been robust in the past. The assistant director for pupils and families is now tackling this uncompromisingly. The remit of the exclusion support service goes from Year 6 upwards, and primary schools generally consider that they receive inadequate support. Secondary schools are increasingly using delegated monies to provide

tailored in-house support, although there are several examples of effective LEA support.

153. The special educational needs support services education behavioural difficulties team and the educational psychology services (EPS) work mainly in schools with individuals at Stage 3 of the SEN Code of Practice. They also provide institutional evidence on areas such as emotional literacy, anger management and social skills. The ESWs team works with the individual child and family and the EPS works with the individual child. Variable practice and recruitment difficulties have resulted in inadequate service in some schools.

154. The SEN inspector and two consultants provide training courses for staff and governors, which are based on a thorough identification of need and are well received. However, the courses are not a fully integrated part of the SEN strategy and, therefore, the good work of the team does not relate as closely as it could to work of other divisions.

### **Health, safety, welfare and child protection**

155. The LEA fulfils its statutory requirement in respect of child protection. Procedures provide clarity for schools so that they are aware of the steps to be taken should it be necessary to make a referral to social services or to seek advice from the designated officer, the principal education social worker. Schools feel well supported in this matter and the LEA maintains an up-to-date list of designated teachers.

156. The designated officer attends the multi-agency area child protection committee which benefits from the membership of other relevant services such as probation and a general practitioner. The committee has changed significantly over the past two years in order to include the voluntary sector.

157. The LEA provides comprehensive health and safety guidance and a wide range of courses including risk assessment training for headteachers. Advice from an experienced health and safety officer is available on request although evidence from school visits suggests that written reports are sometimes slow in arriving.

### **Support for children in public care**

158. Support for children and young people in public care is now a strength in Ealing. The council learned the lessons arising from a critical Social Services Inspectorate report three years earlier and now addresses this issue with an impressive commitment and high degree of effectiveness. The council has established a multi-disciplinary team of officers across education and social services which is working purposefully to promote the welfare of the young people, to monitor their educational attainment and to deploy a range of strategies to raise their educational achievement.

159. Good leadership has been demonstrated by members. The leader of the council chairs the corporate parenting committee (CPC) on which young people in public care also sit. The agenda helps senior officers from other departments to

understand and appreciate what the corporate parenting responsibilities mean for their service, how the service can contribute and how it can collaborate with other agencies to improve the support for the young people. As a result of the committee's discussions, housing advice is now offered in children's homes and young people leaving care to go to university have been able to secure access to housing in the holidays.

160. The council is fully aware that much of this excellent work at a corporate level is in danger of being undermined by the lack of awareness and low expectations of some social workers and carers. Raising the achievement of young people in public care is a priority in the EDP and there are two teachers-an education co-ordinator and a teacher funded through the Standards Fund-who have responsibility for this work. Good data is collected on the young people and officers have procedures in place to keep track of all those for whom the authority is responsible. Attendance is also monitored and reported to the corporate parenting committee as are public examination and National Curriculum test results. Schools have designated teachers for pupils in public care and roles and responsibilities for those teachers are clearly set out, including checking that each child has a personal education plan. Officers are now looking at the educational achievement of minority ethnic children in public care. Funding in the Quality Protects budget has been targeted in 2001/2002 to support strategies to raise the achievement of young black males in public care.

### **Minority ethnic pupils including Travellers**

161. The LEA support for minority ethnic pupils including Travellers in schools is good. The work of the peripatetic service, which is funded by the ethnic minority and Travellers achievement grant (EMTAG) is effective. Good links are made with the literacy and numeracy developments in schools. Schools, in general, are satisfied with the support now available from the LEA's EMTAG services and value the support provided by the peripatetic team, for new arrivals and asylum seekers. Support from the LEA's Traveller education team is also highly regarded. The team provides in-class support for Key Stages 2 and 3 and support for curriculum access for pupils. A strategy to make classrooms more inclusive to children of Traveller families has included the successful recruitment and training of classroom assistants from Traveller families.

162. The transition from Section 11 to EMTAG has been managed adequately. Schools welcome the delegation of grant funding, although the transition from grant maintained and LEA programmes to a single consistent distribution formula has meant that a number of schools have had to reduce their staff teams for this work.

163. Strategic planning to raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils has been inadequate. Improving the attainment of specific pupil groups is strand two of EDP Priority A 'Creating a learning culture'. The activities to raise standards are generally sound but progress has been hampered by the long term sickness of key members of the IAS and a disappointing lack of overall leadership with regard to this provision. This is also evident in the LEA's EMTAG action plan. Despite the LEA's capacity to produce high quality analyses of the performance of minority ethnic pupils, the higher grade targets set for the end of Key Stage 4 are lower for many ethnic groups for 2000, 2001 and 2002 than the actual known achievements in 1999.



164. Support for teaching **gifted and talented pupils** is at an early stage of development. Two summer schools were held in 2000. There has been slippage from the original timescale outlined in the EiC plan. To date progress has been hampered by the difficulties of appointing gifted and talented strand and cluster co-ordinators within the EiC initiative. Secondary schools have begun to identify gifted and talented pupils but a register has not yet been compiled.

### **Social exclusion**

165. The council has not given sufficient priority **to addressing the recommendations of the Inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence** (Macpherson report, 1999). There is no corporate or departmental action plan, which is a serious omission. Although an education equalities group was established in March 1999 to take forward the work in response to Macpherson, the result so far is a number of draft recommendations for further consideration and a considerable amount of activity planned for February 2001. The council's decision not to have a corporate action plan but for each department to produce its own has, in the case of the education department, permitted inactivity, despite the impact of staffing problems. There is a corporate intention to monitor the progress of departmental action plans but this has not proved a spur to action.

166. The education department does not have clear policies on **combating racism** and has failed to provide effective leadership to schools on this matter. Racist incidents in schools are not monitored by the LEA and no data has been collected centrally. The council's racial harassment policy has not been adequately disseminated. OFSTED reports routinely praise the ethos of schools in Ealing and the police report that incidents between school pupils are rare. There has been some collaboration between the LEA and schools on an inclusive classrooms initiative.

167. The local authority has committed itself to combating poverty and social inclusion is one of the priorities set by the council in its Best Value Performance Plan 2000/2001 'Our Promises to You'. However, its success in developing measures to combat social exclusion is uneven, for example, the provision for children in public care is of a high quality, whereas its approach to combating racism is disappointing. The education department aims to promote social inclusion. It provides a good level of pupil support in terms of clothing grant. Out of school activity includes youth and play facilities with holiday schemes, after school provision, breakfast and homework clubs. There has been SRB funded work with disaffected pupils. The LEA provides good support to improve school attendance and works with the local police on truancy sweeps. The LEA has secured additional resources through its successful EiC bid and Sure Start programmes. There is effective multi-disciplinary planning and service delivery between education and social services in support of children in public care. Education officers contribute to the children's strategy group. These latter examples provide good models of effective collaborative working.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve admissions:**

- review the admission arrangements for primary schools so that more decisions can be made at school level; and
- introduce a common preference form for all secondary schools to ensure a more equitable arrangements for all parents.

### **In order to improve school attendance:**

- work more actively with local communities to reduce unauthorised absence;
- implement strategies at institutional level to address attendance at transition from Key Stage 2 to 3; and
- better co-ordinate the work of the ESWS and IAS in those few schools where there is a high level of unauthorised absence.

### **In order to reduce exclusions:**

- implement strategies to reduce further the high level of fixed-term exclusions in secondary schools, in particular among Black-Caribbean and Black-African boys.

### **In order to support young people in public care:**

- ensure that the training of foster carers, social workers and others who have a mentoring and support role take account of the educational attainment and entitlement of young people in public care.

### **In order to improve the attainment of minority ethnic pupils, including Travellers:**

- provide more effective leadership in implementing the EDP and EMTAG targets to raise the attainment of minority ethnic groups;
- use the borough's pupil tracking data and performance analyses more effectively to set challenging targets to raise educational attainment of minority ethnic pupils including Travellers;
- provide racial harassment guidelines to schools;
- implement a post-Macpherson action plan as a matter of urgency and monitor the progress of the education department on the matter more effectively;
- review the allocation of EMTAG findings and ensure that schools have a better understanding of the LEA's strategy in this regard; and

- ensure that there are procedures for monitoring and recording racist incidents in schools, that incidents are reported to parents and that governing bodies advise the LEA of the pattern and frequency of such incidents.

## **APPENDIX: RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Section 1**

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

- implement the recommendations of the external auditor to strengthen the council's Best Value processes; and
- produce the post-16 plan outlined in the education strategic plan.

#### **Improve the effectiveness of the EDP by:**

- reorganising the activities in the current EDP to improve clarity and reduce overlap; and
- ensuring that future versions of the EDP are coherent with the EiC plan and give greater priority to raising standards in early years education, Key Stage 3 and boys' attainment .

### **Section 2**

#### **In order to raise standards:**

- consolidate schools' understanding of the three level model of support by informing the headteacher and chair of governors which level of support they are receiving and why;
- ensure that effective schools receive a reduced number of monitoring visits;
- send copies of visit reports to chairs of governing bodies as a matter of routine;
- give priority to improving the electronic transfer of data, between the LEA and its schools and between schools at the end of Key Stage 2; and
- give a sharper focus on improving boys' attainment in literacy.

#### **Improve strategic planning for curriculum ICT by:**

- giving priority to the implementation of the corporate plan for ICT, with particular emphasis on improving the communications infrastructure between schools and the LEA; and
- clarifying the strategy for Phase 4 of NGfL and communicating it effectively to schools.

### **Section 3**

#### **In order to improve the quality of education strategic planning:**

- develop a more rigorous corporate framework for departmental planning;
- establish more robust procedures for evaluating the impact of corporate plans on education;
- develop more detailed and transparent service specifications so schools can apply Best Value criteria in procuring services;
- sharpen the customer focus of traded services and clarify entitlements to support from central budgets;
- seek routine feedback from schools on the effectiveness of services provided by education and other council departments;
- undertake a Best Value review of payroll and other under-performing services;
- simplify the accounting arrangements for Standards Fund expenditure;
- ensure that there is a negotiated re-structuring of the project management and buildings' maintenance contracts leading to a simpler and more effective service for schools;
- ensure that the revised repairs and maintenance agreement is put in place for 2001/02 and beyond; and
- implement the new ICT strategy without delay.

### **Section 4**

#### **In order to deliver more effective provision for pupils with special educational needs:**

- improve communication with all schools, including special schools, to ensure that the council's strategy for inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream provision is better understood and urgently implemented;
- improve the monitoring of services provided to schools and the quality of provision made by schools to support pupils with SEN;
- improve liaison with other divisions within education and external agencies, particularly the health authority; and
- ensure that the balance between training courses and institutional support is more equitable, and that intervention to monitor and improve SEN provision in schools is more systematic and based on a more robust assessment of need.

## **Section 5**

### **In order to improve admissions:**

- review the admission arrangements for primary schools so that more decisions can be made at school level; and
- introduce a common preference form for all secondary schools to ensure a more equitable arrangements for all parents.

### **In order to improve school attendance:**

- work more actively with local communities to reduce unauthorised absence;
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- implement a post Macpherson action plan as a matter of urgency and monitor the progress of the education department on the matter more effectively;
- review the allocation of EMTAG findings and ensure that schools have a better understanding of the LEA's strategy in this regard; and

- ensure that there are procedures for monitoring and recording racist incidents in schools, that incidents are reported to parents and that governing bodies advise the LEA of the pattern and frequency of such incidents.

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