



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Brighton and Hove

Local Education Authority

Inspection Report

Date of Inspection: January 2004

Reporting Inspector: Rosemary Matthews HMI



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Basic information

Name of LEA:	Brighton and Hove Local Education Authority
LEA number:	846
Address of LEA:	King's House Grand Avenue Hove East Sussex BN3 2SU
Reporting Inspector:	Rosemary Matthews HMI
Date of Inspection:	January 2004

Summary

Introduction

Brighton and Hove is a city of differences. Alongside a thriving tourist-based economy, some parts of the city are affluent and successful, but in other areas there are pockets of significant disadvantage. In 2002, almost half of the council's 26 wards were amongst the 25% most deprived in the country.

Since the last inspection, standards of attainment in schools have risen at a faster rate than nationally but, apart from those of seven year-olds, remain mostly below national averages. Standards generally start off lower than those in similar authorities¹, but are in line with the average by the time pupils leave school at 16. With the exception of information and communication technology (ICT), this improvement has not been enough to reach the targets set for 2003 and targets for 2004 are unlikely to be achieved.

There have been major changes within both the council and the education department since the previous inspection. Services for children have been reviewed and, in April 2002, education and children's social care were merged into the directorate of Children, Families and Schools. Some new senior officers have been appointed and a major programme is underway to transform the way that education, health and social services work together. The council has taken part in a large number of national initiatives aimed at furthering this transformation.

Following a change in the structure of the council in October 2001, Brighton and Hove reverted to a leader and an executive committee system. In May 2003, local elections left the council with no overall political control but there remains strong cross-party support for the new directorate.

¹ Brighton and Hove LEA's statistical neighbours are: Merton; Enfield; Croydon; Bury; Sutton; Hillingdon; Bournemouth; Portsmouth and Stockport.

Main findings

Summary

The directorate of Children, Families and Schools in Brighton and Hove has made significant progress since its creation. Its overall effectiveness is good. A clear vision, explicit priorities, strong strategic capability and successful work with a number of other agencies have enabled the authority to position itself in the forefront of national developments. Officers and elected members know what needs to be done to improve further, as confirmed by the self-evaluation for this inspection, and there is good capacity for further improvement. The directorate is well placed to undertake its planned transition towards a Children’s Trust, provided that schools and social care staff who work with children and young people, both within the council and in the voluntary sector, are confidently engaged as partners as the authority strides forward.

Areas of strength	Areas of weakness/for development
Corporate leadership of education	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council’s priority and funding of education and social inclusion • Bold and innovative decisions made by officers and elected members to improve services • Progress in building education, social care and health partnership work in local areas • Planning that builds well on success • High quality support for pupils aged 14 - 19, with very good support for Early Years’ education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of schools and social care staff who work with children and young people as partners in change • Insufficient attention to some crucial areas of SEN and aspects of social inclusion
Strategy for education and its implementation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links between strategies for school improvement and those for education and social inclusion • Effective challenge and support to schools, including the quality and use of data on pupils’ performance • Helping schools to attract and keep teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets for the performance of pupils have not been met
Support to improve education in schools	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to leadership and management, including governors, so schools manage their own improvement • High quality support to schools as well as to groups of pupils, with very good support for minority ethnic groups including Gypsy and Traveller children 	
Support for special educational needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for schools and teachers that ensures pupils with special educational needs make good progress • Statements completed within the statutory time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a coherent overall written plan • Slow progress in reviewing provision and high spending in special schools
Support for social inclusion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good collaboration between education, social care services and schools to meet the particular needs of all children and young people • Multi-agency working to provide early intervention and support to children and families • Support for behaviour in schools and in promoting race equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the progress of all vulnerable groups of pupils is well known • The security of medium-term financial planning • Making sure that social care staff can give timely support for child protection

Recommendations

Key recommendations

Child protection: make sure that schools' child protection policies are checked regularly; take action to make sure that social care staff can cope with their workloads and successfully safeguard children.

Leadership of senior officers: work with headteachers and social care staff to examine their concerns about communication and to strengthen partnership working within the authority.

Strategy for special educational needs: produce a single written plan which shows how the very high expenditure on special schools will be reduced, and how progress will be checked.

Social inclusion: prepare a medium-term financial plan for preventive services which takes account of current and possible future funding streams, and which costs anticipated work over the next five years.

Other recommendations

Corporate leadership of education

Strategy for education and its implementation

Support to improve education in schools

Support for special educational needs

Value for money: make it clear how staff in special schools will work with teachers in mainstream schools, and how the difference they make will be assessed.

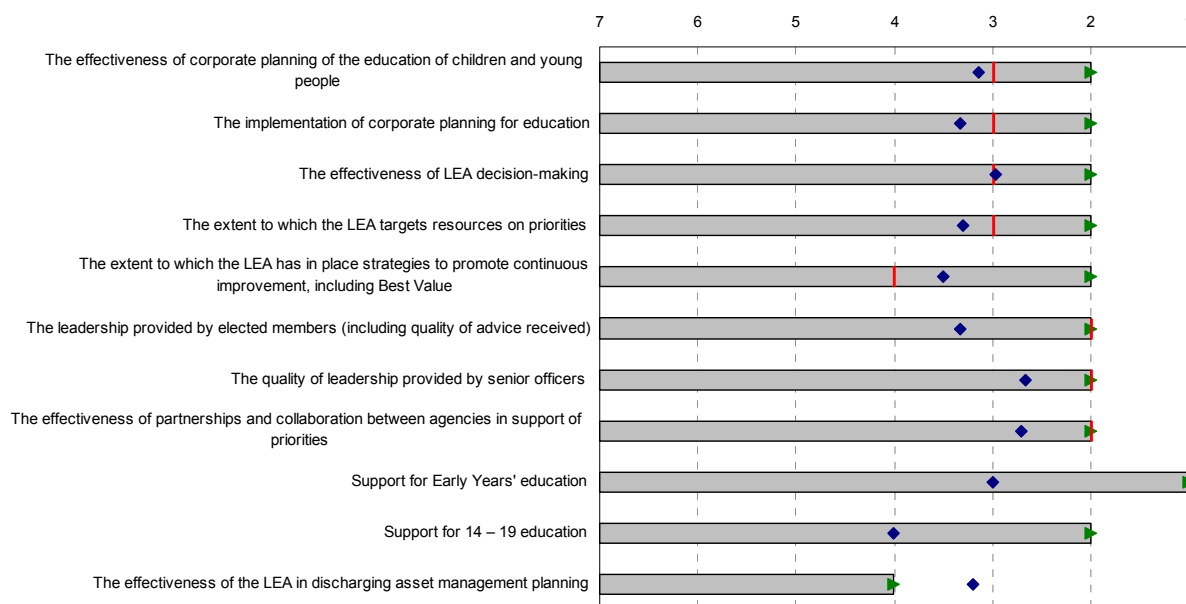
Support for social inclusion

Children who are not educated in school: ensure that good information is collected from schools and other services on all these groups of pupils so that how they are doing is better known.

Looked after children: set up better procedures for monitoring the quality of personal education plans and improve the use of the information kept on these children.

Section 1: Corporate leadership of education

Summary table of judgements



The bar represents the grade awarded to the LEA, the triangle represents the LEA's self-evaluation grade, the vertical line represents the LEA's previous grade and the diamond represents the average grade of all LEAs inspected in the last year. 1 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 3 = Highly Satisfactory, 4 = Satisfactory, 5 = Unsatisfactory, 6 = Poor, 7 = Very Poor.

Corporate planning for education and its implementation

1. Much has been achieved since the previous inspection. The council is driven by an unswerving commitment to improve the quality and life chances of children, young people and families in Brighton and Hove. This commitment is embedded in good corporate planning which gives high priority to education and clearly defines and addresses local needs. Schools and other stakeholders are signed-up to integrated education and social care services as central to the realisation of the council's objectives, although they consider the speed at which this happened did not allow enough time to develop partnerships within the authority.

2. The community strategy, developed through the local 2020 community partnership, sets a highly ambitious direction for the city over the next two decades. Ensuing plans are coherent, well sequenced, firmly linked by common performance indicators and well aligned to the financial planning cycle. A council-wide planning framework ensures that systems for co-ordinating policy and service developments are secure and effective. All plans are subject to systematic and rigorous monitoring by senior officers and members, with service managers held to account for shortfalls in progress and for securing improvement.

3. Planning for children, families and schools (CFS) is good, as is the implementation of plans. The directorate development plan contributes significantly to council priorities and skilfully addresses the core work of the service. This incorporates the authority's Education Development Plan (EDP2) as well as the highly ambitious Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) plan. The authority recognises that the time is now right to engage more fully social care staff delivering services in consultation and planning processes.

4. As the foundation for integrated services and multi-disciplinary working, and with some involvement of children and young people, the CYPSP has secured funding for a wide range of successful initiatives. Although it supports the authority's intent, this considerable activity generates mixed responses from headteachers. A lack of clarity over how seemingly disparate projects link to an overall plan is causing anxiety over the number, direction and sustainability of initiatives which are promoting inclusion. In reality, these are well mapped and coherent. Careful monitoring realigns less successful aspects of provision. Schools involved in these initiatives clearly see the benefits of integrated services. Others, accepting that resources are well matched to need, are concerned that outcomes from good work on the ground are not sufficiently disseminated.

5. Despite political change, and a radical realignment of services within CFS, decision making for education has improved from highly satisfactory to good, owing to clear priorities and good strategic planning. Plans following inspection, internal and external audit, and Best Value reviews underpin decision-making and intelligent action. Members' decisions are well informed by good information, advice and training from officers.

6. The authority, backed by a combination of new and well-established partnerships, has applied successfully to establish a Children's Trust which will be responsible for the strategic commissioning of multi-agency services across the city.

Targeting of resources

7. Since the previous inspection, the council has improved its procedures for targeting resources, which are now good. Spending on education has consistently been above the previous Standard Spending Assessment and the current education funding share for schools. Effective use has been made of opportunities available to enhance capital funding. The LEA has taken every opportunity to maximise school funding from external sources; its advice to schools has been well received.

8. The centralisation of support services has increased efficiency in education and the council manages its educational finances prudently. The recent introduction of a medium-term financial strategy provides stability for future years and successfully aligns key financial objectives and indicators to the council's priorities. Budget-setting has been accurate and there are thorough arrangements for budget control, involving regular reporting procedures both to officers and members at appropriate points throughout the year. The continuing overspend for social care is being examined. Recommendations to members will include a review of this budget and the adoption of a financial strategy within which the Children's Trust and the family support strategy can proceed without undue financial risk.

9. Recommendations from the previous inspection on the delegation of funding have been addressed though, in the case of the special needs element, only recently. Spending on major headings within the budget is similar to other LEAs, though special educational needs (SEN) as a whole is significantly higher than the average.

10. The formula for allocating funds to primary and secondary schools reflects schools' comparative need. Consultation on school budgets has been timely and thorough, assisted by the Schools Forum. Budget information is submitted to schools in good time. School budget surpluses are reasonable and effective action has been taken to address the few examples of individual schools' high balances or deficits.

Strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value

11. Procedures and practice for consistent self-evaluation and review are now good, reflecting in part improvements across the council. Responsibilities and accountabilities at all levels are very clear and exercised well. Cross-cutting Best Value reviews have produced key benefits in the organisation and quality of service delivery. The principles of Best Value are now well incorporated into service planning.

12. The council's comprehensive framework for performance management is well set out in its corporate plan and takes good account of national and local performance indicators alongside service objectives and targets. Systematic monitoring underpins strategic and operational planning, although the need for further improvement is recognised, and evaluation determines action.

13. In the CFS, procedures for managing the performance of individuals fully reflect those of the council. The directorate development plan is backed by comprehensive and specific team plans, which are checked by the corporate performance team, and supported by personal objectives for all staff. Regular monitoring by managers against standards and targets for individuals identifies areas for training and development. However, for some social care staff, meetings with managers are less frequent.

14. For the most part, the CFS evaluation of its own performance for educational functions is thorough and accurate, reflected in the self-evaluation for this inspection. Outcomes of evaluation and review are used routinely to inform strategic and operational planning, for example strengthening schools' capacity to self-evaluate. Where progress is limited, weaknesses are well known and subject to concerted management action.

Leadership by elected members and advice given to them

15. The leadership of elected members has remained good, demonstrating a strong commitment to improved services for children and young people. Corporate decision-making is characterised by a high level of co-operation and consensus between political parties, which by no means lacks challenge. Committee procedures are effective and non-bureaucratic. The CFS sub-committee is systematic and rigorous in monitoring the work of the directorate and the performance of schools, rightly expecting services to deliver.

16. Constitutional requirements for scrutiny sit uncomfortably with the council's committee structure. Procedures have improved, again through good support from officers, but do not yet probe sufficiently the formulation of policy. There is also some duplication on CFS matters between the main scrutiny panel and the scrutiny panel for education. Nevertheless, the protocol for school mergers is an example of how scrutiny has successfully held lead members to account.

Leadership by senior officers

17. Education is well led. The leadership of CFS and the vision for the Children's Trust, reflect the strong strategic capability of the director. Despite an initially high turnover of assistant directors in the last two years, headteachers rightly identify considerable capability in those leading on education within the new senior team.

18. The three key partners of education, health and social services have successfully agreed governance arrangements for the trust and the key priorities for project groups. Optimism for integrated and localised services is high, although all are realistic about the challenges in aligning cultures and working practices. Although the financial strategy is not yet mapped in detail, outline planning is sound but long-term sustainability is still to be secured. The commissioning strategy itself includes a review of all council services to ensure effectiveness and cost-efficiency. Discussions are already under way with local universities and other partners on a range of workforce development initiatives. Initial change has inevitably been top-down. Understandably, the rapid pace and complexities of cutting-edge developments have militated against consultation. This situation is now shifting and consultation with strategic and operational managers and staff can now proceed. Nevertheless, headteachers have scant knowledge of work of the children's services commissioner appointed to establish the commissioning function of the trust. This has done little to allay criticisms over communication.

19. Procedures for communicating with schools have undoubtedly improved, but a gap still remains. While the principles of the CFS are well supported by all schools and most acknowledge the forward thinking of the leadership, some secondary schools in particular feel insufficiently engaged as partners in the vision and priorities for education. There is criticism of apparently contradictory decision-making, for example, the proposed closure of East Brighton College of Media Arts (COMART), as well as the implementation of the funding review of special educational needs in mainstream schools. There are also concerns that good inclusive practice in schools is not fully harnessed. In fact, decisions taken by members and officers are well considered and further the council's priorities but headteachers are not always sufficiently aware of the underlying rationale and complexities.

20. Of concern are the views of operational managers and front-line social care staff about their ability to safeguard children on behalf of the council. This is compromised by their capacity to manage workloads, despite additional funding and efforts to recruit and retain staff, and still largely reflects the pressures at the inception of CFS and the subsequent child protection inspection.

Recommendation

- Work with headteachers and social care staff to examine their concerns about communication and to strengthen partnership working within the authority.

Strategic partnerships

21. Strategic partnerships are good. Partnerships are many and varied, and partnership activities strong, wide-ranging and central to the work of the council. Good use is made of jointly funded posts. Many well-targeted initiatives are improving the quality of educational provision, promoting inclusive schools and demonstrating highly beneficial outcomes for children, young people and families. Considerable success is evident in areas where joint-working initiatives have been developed, and there is strong aspiration for further developments across the city.

22. In CFS, there is very good evidence of staff at all levels working in partnerships. Activities in EDP2 are furthered through successful networks and clusters of schools, both independently and supported by CFS. This is also found in schools targeted for social inclusion initiatives, where headteachers are highly committed to, and enthusiastic about, services working jointly. However, there is some confusion over how projects link to an overall strategy and some headteachers do not feel sufficiently involved as partners in the authority's vision.

23. The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education is an example of effective partnership work within education in the development of a syllabus reflecting the cultural diversity of Brighton and Hove. The Parent Partnership, jointly funded by CFS and health for other work, is engaged in an impressive breadth of activity with parents and children across council services and with other agencies.

24. An audit of the council's strategic partnerships is currently under way, sensibly aligning groups to corporate performance indicators to ensure the best use of resources and expertise. As yet, this has not taken account of external funding, leaving in question the sustainability of the work of some voluntary organisations.

Support for Early Years

25. Support for early years' education is very good, and a key priority for the council. The strategy for raising attainment and improving the quality and range of provision is coherent, comprehensive and impressively linked to other key plans.

26. Links with CFS, through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), are very clear, resulting in good communication and effective decision-making. Officers have a thorough understanding of the role of the EYDCP and the contribution it makes to the council's strategy and vision for integrated services for children. Members of the partnership have been involved in consultation and planning for the Children's Trust and in the council's plans for children's centres. Multi-agency working is very effective and joint funding is used to support a number of very successful projects, for example, childminding networks and Sure Start activities. The Hollingdean programme has developed a thriving

local community partnership comprising statutory, voluntary and community representatives. Playlink home visiting schemes, funded by CFS, are integral to these new initiatives. Good work with pre-school children through the pre-school special educational needs (SEN) service has resulted in successful and sustained placements in mainstream schools.

27. The LEA provides very good support for the use of baseline assessment and the Foundation Stage profile. In addition, officers have produced a comprehensive transfer document assisting transition from early years' settings into reception classes. Training, support and advice are fundamental to the work of the EYDCP and have increased expertise. The training programme itself is well designed and tailored to meet the needs of all providers through creative, flexible and varied options.

28. Ambitious targets identified in the EYDCP plan have been exceeded. There has been an increase in settings receiving a satisfactory or good Ofsted report and an increase in the availability of childcare places. All four-year-olds have access to an education place and 94% of three-year-olds can obtain early years' education. A good balance of provision has been established across the private and voluntary sectors. Areas of disadvantage have been well targeted and plans for the children's centres are appropriately located in these areas.

Support for 14-19 education

29. The LEA provides good support for 14-19 education. It monitors the performance of schools carefully, sets challenging achievement targets, and intervenes appropriately to support schools facing difficulties. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades at A*-C has increased at a greater rate than nationally, but performance still remains below the national average.

30. Data indicate that lower performing pupils tend to remain at school while those with higher attainment generally opt for the sixth form colleges. The participation of looked after children in education or training at age 19 is above the national average, partly due to good transition arrangements and an unequivocal commitment by the council to support children's progress to further and higher education. Progress at post-16 is above satisfactory when compared with statistical neighbour authorities, even though the impact of newly-established vocational courses has not yet been fully realised. The number of points scored in General Certificate of Education A/AS-level examinations is higher than statistical neighbour authorities.

31. Plans for raising the levels of achievement of 14-19 year-olds are clearly set out in EDP2 and reflect corporate priorities. Effective partnerships with relevant agencies place particular emphasis on supporting and raising the achievements of vulnerable groups. Schools have been provided with a strong lead to help them develop the 14-19 curriculum and support for the local learning partnership has helped foster good working relationships between institutions providing post-16 education. Relations with the Connexions service and the local Learning and Skills Council are good and the post-16 education and training needs of the area have been analysed well through joint working. The extent to which the current configuration of providers can meet education and training needs has been assessed and areas for development identified. The three organisations have formalised their working relationships through the preparation of a joint strategy for 14-19 education and training. The

strategy includes broad improvement targets for the area and the progress made establishes a firm foundation for further development. No detailed action plan to enable the strategic priorities to be addressed across all providers and age groups has yet been prepared. However, an agreement to share information will improve the tracking of individual pupils and underpin monitoring of progress and achievement.

Asset management planning

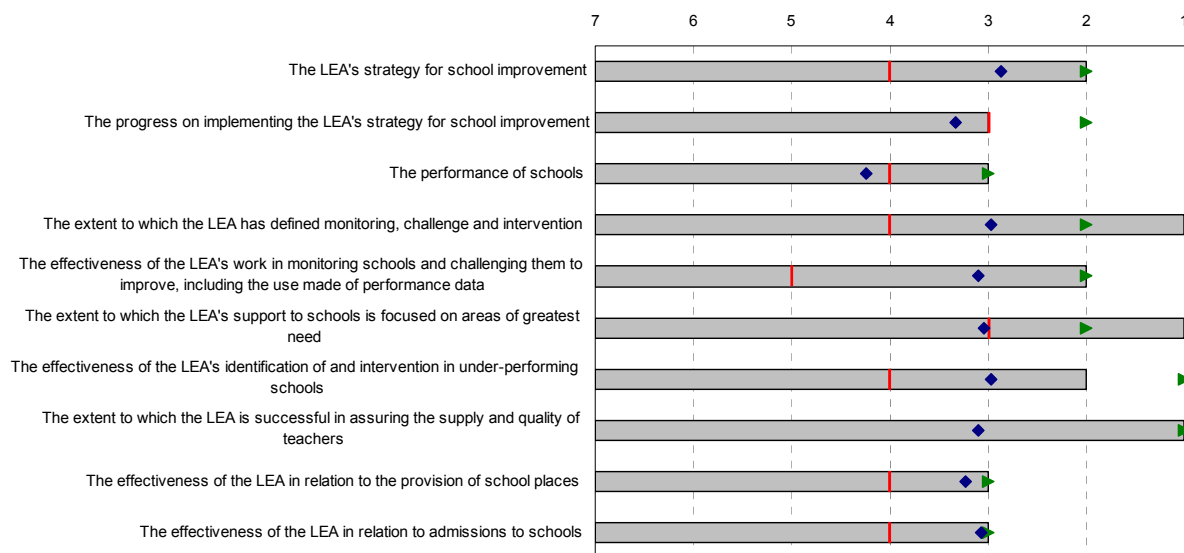
32. Asset management planning is satisfactory. There is a clear understanding of what now needs to be done to improve further and action is taking place to that effect.

33. Many aspects of the authority's stewardship of its education building assets are better than satisfactory. There is good co-operation with the corporate department responsible for property issues, and the corporate asset management plan is clear and well structured. While funds to address school maintenance and improvements are correctly recognised as inadequate by the authority, Brighton and Hove's urgent priority condition needs are less than average. Good use has been made of capital receipts and suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that the various sources of funding for capital work, including schools' devolved funding, are effectively marshalled to meet priorities. Innovative partnership arrangements with a local contractor have successfully delivered two major building contracts.

34. Procedures for prioritising school building work, although correct, have been insufficiently transparent and not enough use has been made of the asset management plan steering group for this purpose. The Department of Education and Skills (DfES) judged the Education Asset Management Plan as satisfactory; the new plan, just revised, shows a definite improvement on issues such as how capital investment will meet the authority's aims. The building work for the secondary schools' Public Finance Initiative scheme is now complete, and the authority is necessarily doing what it can to resolve any continuing concerns in schools about its operation.

Section 2: Strategy for education and its implementation

Summary table of judgements



The bar represents the grade awarded to the LEA, the triangle represents the LEA's self-evaluation grade, the vertical line represents the LEA's previous grade and the diamond represents the average grade of all LEAs inspected in the last year. 1 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 3 = Highly Satisfactory, 4 = Satisfactory, 5 = Unsatisfactory, 6 = Poor, 7 = Very Poor.

The strategy for school improvement and its implementation

35. A good strategy for school improvement is well set out in EDP2 and establishes a clear direction for education. Priorities are well matched to national imperatives and accurately reflect local needs. Routine consultation with schools has been good. Links with strategies for SEN and social inclusion are explicit. Progress is systematically and thoroughly monitored.

36. Implementation is highly satisfactory and standards have been rising. Clear priorities and good planning effectively direct resources and grant funding to schools through individual and area-based initiatives and in partnership with a range of agencies. Children and young people have undoubtedly benefited and standards for targeted groups have risen. Monitoring, challenge and intervention are exercised very strongly; the proportion of good and very good schools has increased; leadership and management have been strengthened; support for pupils with SEN is good, and the quality of teaching has improved.

37. Despite results rising faster than the national average and a strong and well-targeted strategy, ambitious targets set for all key stages have not been met. The gap between results and targets is particularly significant in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, where there is also a too wide variation in the performance of individual schools. On the basis of current

rates of improvement, targets are unlikely to be met in 2004 and those for 2005 will present a considerable challenge to schools.

The LEA's monitoring, challenge and intervention in schools and the targeting of support

38. Monitoring, challenge and intervention are very well defined and good procedures are well differentiated. This is a result of sharply focused criteria and good use of data. Headteachers have a thorough understanding of the principles underpinning the categorisation of schools through good training provided for senior managers. Responsibilities of schools and the LEA are very clear and the role of the link adviser is well understood. The progress schools make in improving the performance of pupils and strengthening the quality of teaching and management is constantly reviewed. Challenge is strong and support to schools is very firmly and consistently focused on those in greatest need. Link advisers are highly regarded. Clear notes of visits leave schools in no doubt as to their strengths and weaknesses.

39. Schools are offered comprehensive guidance and good support for self-evaluation. The individual school profile is a sophisticated and valuable document containing a broad range of data which include the performance of different groups of pupils and examine both attainment and progress. This is used well for target-setting by schools and provides the foundation for monitoring, challenge and intervention by the LEA.

40. Identification of and intervention in underperforming schools are now good and has considerably improved since the previous inspection. In the last 12 months, no schools have been identified as having serious weaknesses or in need of special measures. The number of schools requiring extensive support has significantly reduced. COMART has been a long-standing challenge for the LEA and has required significant investment of resources. Reluctantly, and mindful of the implications for the local community, members have now signalled their intention to close the school.

The supply and quality of teachers

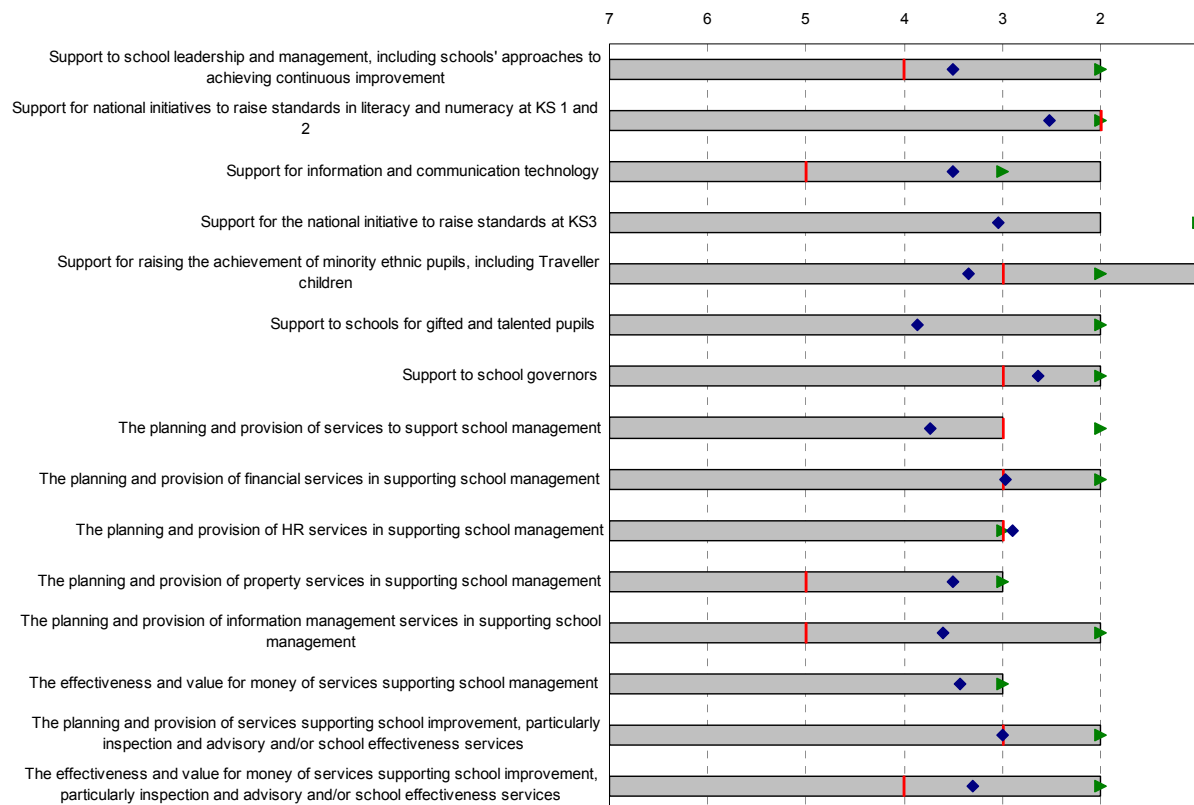
41. This aspect of the LEA's work is very good, successfully enabling schools to attract and retain suitably qualified staff. Vacancies across the authority have been very well analysed and shortage areas targeted and filled.

42. The partnership with a consultant agency has been very successful and of great benefit to schools. This has supported a very wide range of initiatives for recruiting and training teachers and support staff, and established a pool of supply and newly-qualified teachers. Close partnership working with the two local universities underpins discussions on innovative approaches to recruiting, training and developing the teaching and social care workforce.

43. The strategy for continuing professional development is wide-ranging, effective, well monitored, thoroughly evaluated and well received by schools. Attendance is increasing, especially for management courses. Support and induction procedures for newly-appointed headteachers are good, as are those for newly-qualified teachers.

Section 3: Support to improve education in schools

Summary table of judgements



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Support for school leadership, management and continuous improvement

44. This key area of the LEA's work is good. The LEA is wholly committed to self-managing schools and provides good advice, support and training for self-evaluation. This is backed by high quality pupil performance data and accessible financial benchmarking data. Pupil data in particular are well used for annual target setting meetings with link advisers. Targets are now owned by schools and are providing a more secure measure of progress. Chairs of governing bodies report increased confidence in challenging headteachers and some use benchmarking information to prepare for target-setting meetings.

45. Considerable effort goes into networking schools successfully and into the dissemination of professional expertise. This is evident in most aspects of the LEA's support for school improvement, as well as in its support for pupils with SEN. A culture of shared practice, although stronger in initiatives related to the curriculum than in those for promoting

social inclusion, is supporting school autonomy. The curriculum website is valued by schools.

46. Ofsted inspection of schools shows improvement in the quality of leadership and management since the last inspection. This is due in part to good intervention and support from advisory teams, improved support for headteachers and governors, and considerably strengthened opportunities for ongoing professional development.

Support for national initiatives at Key Stages 1 and 2

47. Support to raise standards in literacy and numeracy remains good and is highly rated by schools. The recently published primary strategy is clear, coherent and builds incrementally on current work across CFS. This includes the strengthening of links with the Foundation Stage.

48. The progress of all primary schools is closely monitored. The LEA knows its schools well and, through increasingly thorough analysis of data, has targeted those schools where further intervention and support are now needed. This has guided the efficient deployment of the consultant team.

49. Improvement strategies focus rightly on learning and teaching, as well as on leadership and management. Whilst the emphasis is on better teaching for all, well-targeted projects are benefiting individual groups. Although the primary leadership programme is still in its early stages, there are already signs of success, notably improved communication within schools, a better understanding of the use of data and the raised profile of literacy and numeracy across the 12 schools involved. The LEA makes good use of effective practitioners through support clusters around its Beacon schools and from the deployment of consultant leaders and expert teachers. Strong links with other teams, including the learning support services, the service for English as an additional language and the early years' service, make a discernible difference for pupils.

Support for information and communication technology (ICT)

50. Support for ICT is good. The LEA has made very good progress since the previous inspection, when support was unsatisfactory. A clear and comprehensive strategy links with corporate plans and to schools' development plans. Close monitoring of school inspection reports, good data analysis and clear priorities have resulted in a sharp rise in standards. Better training for teachers, as well as better technical support, has also contributed to this improvement.

51. Individual schools are known well. Detailed records of progress are maintained and intervention is well judged. Good links are established with the primary strategy group. As a result, work is under way to improve the use of ICT across the curriculum at all key stages. The National Grid for Learning resource has been well used and all teachers have completed their training through New Opportunities Funding. With training provided by CFS, teachers' skills and assessment practice have improved and better use is made of ICT in lessons. Where good practice is identified, it is shared. Good networks have been established across neighbouring counties and regions.

52. New initiatives should improve further the quality of resources for teachers and pupils and allow improved access to technology for disadvantaged groups and appropriate equipment for pupils with SEN. The LEA is on track to meet 2004 targets for the ratio of pupils to computers.

Support for the national initiative at Key Stage 3

53. Good support is provided at Key Stage 3. Clearly set out within EDP2, the strategy is well integrated with those for secondary education and school improvement. Weaknesses in schools, identified from data and through the work of consultants, result in appropriately targeted support. There has been a steady rise in standards over the past four years. Provisional data for 2003 indicate results just short of targets in mathematics and science, but a bigger shortfall in English. Despite the rate of improvement, targets for 2004 and 2005 are unlikely to be met. In addition, staffing vacancies for English and mathematics consultants in the autumn term 2003 led to very reduced support for weaker departments, a situation that will continue into 2004 for mathematics.

54. Monitoring of schools' progress through regular visit reports and departmental improvement plans sharply focuses the work of the strategy. This is becoming increasingly rigorous as the monitoring of activities moves towards an evaluation of outcomes. Additional funding enables timely intervention and, since their introduction this year, intervention plans are precise, tightly costed, and well used by lead consultants during visits to schools. Progress towards targets is well monitored.

55. The extension of the strategy to include the foundation subjects, and most recently the strand for behaviour and attendance, has strengthened the team and furthered the whole-school approach adopted in many schools. School staff and lead teachers are increasingly involved in training and support, much of which is school-based. This has been well-received by schools who report good, though occasionally variable, quality. Good practice is effectively disseminated.

56. The LEA and individual schools have made very considerable progress to improve transition between Key Stages 2 and 3. A range of projects, run in partnership with the primary strategy, now provide a firm base for consistent practice across the authority.

Support for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsy and Traveller children

57. The LEA provides very good support for raising the attainment of minority groups and data are used effectively to monitor their progress. This work, undertaken by the learning support service, the service for English as an additional language and the Traveller support services, contributes well to the school categorisation process. Although numbers in individual groups are small, the attainment of most minority ethnic pupils is above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 4, there is evidence of good progress overall. Progress towards targets is monitored by link advisers; in 2002, these were met by 90% of pupils receiving support for English as an additional language.

58. Focused support to minority groups of pupils is of high quality. The specialist language support programme is comprehensive, well targeted and very well received by schools. In particular, support for early years' education is highly valued and has led to significant improvement in performance. Training for personal, social and health education is very effective, as is work through the anti-bullying project, a major curriculum initiative, to raise awareness and promote racial equality.

59. Gypsy and Traveller pupils receive specialist support through the traveller education service, shared with a neighbouring LEA. Detailed records of pupils' progress indicate that 85% of pupils meet their weekly targets. The mobile vehicle, resourced jointly by education and health, provides good support to roadside children. Support to asylum seekers is well co-ordinated across CFS and effectively monitored by the learning support services.

Support for gifted and talented pupils

60. Support for gifted and talented pupils is good, contributing to significant improvements in results at higher levels since 2002. The implications of the strategy and its accompanying policy statement are clearly understood by schools, which receive good guidance. Initiatives and partnerships provide effective programmes of support; for example, the excellence cluster targets thirteen primary and three secondary schools in disadvantaged areas, and there is a range of opportunities for disadvantaged pupils. This includes conferences for parents about how to access provision for their children.

61. Partnerships with the Children's University, the Education and Business Partnership, and through the music service, offer a good range of extended activities. The LEA has carefully evaluated its local support, including the use of summer school programmes, so that good practice is identified and shared.

Support for school governors

62. Support for governors is good and has contributed to strengthening their leadership role in schools. The LEA has a coherent plan for governor support which is linked closely to EDP2. Links between the governor development service and other school improvement services are effective. Good, regular briefings are given to governors, who are fully represented on a range of forums and working groups as well as on decision-making and consultative bodies.

63. Recruitment targets are met, including the appointment of governors from minority ethnic groups. Initiatives such as the parent governor group provide helpful support to governing bodies for recruiting parent governors. The comprehensive governor training programme is well received and has seen improved take-up over the last year. Where governing bodies have commissioned school-based training, this has successfully met their needs. Plans are in hand to develop further the use of a website for training.

64. Chairs of governing bodies are familiar with the school categorisation process and involved in the annual target-setting meeting with the school's link adviser. The increased quality of data now available to schools from the LEA has supported them well in this. The strengths and weaknesses of governing bodies in schools of concern to the authority are well

known. In order to extend this knowledge, this year will see the launch of comprehensive self-evaluation package for governing bodies.

Effectiveness and value for money of services to support school management

65. These aspects of services are highly satisfactory, though more could be done to assist schools to become more informed purchasers. Individual services are, at least, highly satisfactory and are steadily improving. Many have been restructured to improve performance and reduce costs, particularly those now contained within the Corporate Services Directorate of the council. All services are subject to effective performance monitoring arrangements within the council and consult with headteachers about levels of performance.

66. The recommendations from the previous inspection have, for the most part, been implemented. Information presented to schools is clear, sets out a suitable range of options and distinguishes clearly between services provided centrally, free of charge, and those open to purchase. All services are free-standing and are subject to negotiation with schools. The high level of buy-back reflects the satisfaction of schools.

67. Arrangements for the co-ordination of services have been made more complex by the transfer of some functions to the corporate centre. Plans for improving this, together with the introduction of greater flexibility into the timescale of some services' contracts, are in hand. The implementation of these plans in time for 2005-06, through consultation with the Schools Forum, should produce a good support service for school management.

68. Financial support, satisfactory in the previous inspection, is now good. The dedicated schools' team within corporate finance provides a service to schools that is bought back by all and regularly praised. Recommendations made in a District Audit finance study, published in 2002, have been addressed.

69. Financial systems function reliably and relate effectively to school systems, with accurate reconciliation of financial data. Full automation of financial systems has been achieved and schools now have better access to, and are encouraged to make use of, financial benchmarking. The finance guidance manual provides a comprehensive guide for schools. Schools receive good support in budget planning, particularly in the difficult financial climate faced in 2003-04. Schools with budget difficulties are quickly identified and assisted in finding a solution.

70. The costs of the finance service to schools are reasonable and there is an appropriate programme of school training. The payroll service was poor but is much improved now that the service is provided directly by the council.

71. Property services have improved from unsatisfactory to highly satisfactory since the last inspection. The buildings maintenance service, which was delivered through a private contractor, is no longer provided. This reflects schools' general dissatisfaction with this arrangement. The replacement of the service by the corporate design and property team providing procurement advice and a list of recommended contractors receives a mixed response from schools but is satisfactory overall. Accurate technical advice offered by the team is available to schools on request.

72. Effective monitoring arrangements ensure that major capital projects are delivered on time and within budget. There are appropriate mechanisms to consult schools in planning these projects. The council makes good use of investment appraisal and has procedures for monitoring carefully the performance of building contractors.

73. Support for information management is good, with a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The strategy for ICT is clear and thorough. Links between the corporately-provided ICT support for school management and the advisory service ICT curriculum support are effective, enabling schools to operate well-integrated systems. Schools have received appropriate advice on how to purchase hardware and software at the best price.

74. Transfer of performance and financial data is quick and accurate. Technical support is efficient and responsive and its organisation tailored to meet the different demands of primary and secondary schools. The council's website is well organised and readily accessible. The recent re-launch of the education online intranet, following good consultation, allows for effective dissemination of information and good practice.

Effectiveness and value for money of services to support school improvement

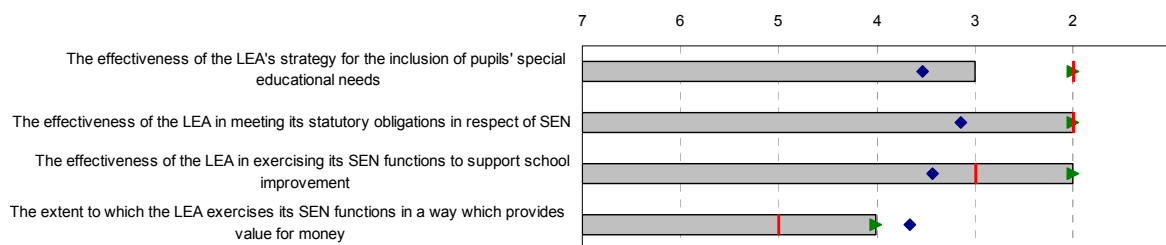
75. The planning and provision of services supporting school improvement are good. Good use of data and thorough monitoring and review are very strong features of the deployment and delivery of services. Ongoing evaluation underpins plans. Performance management procedures are secure and lines of responsibility well defined. Links across services and teams are increasingly strong, with examples of good cross-service and multi-agency work promoting social inclusion.

76. In the main, services have high levels of expertise and the confidence of schools. After a period of staffing change, there is now greater stability, with fewer temporary appointments. Recent short-term vacancies provided good opportunities for effective school leaders to support other schools and the expertise of staff in schools has been well harnessed in some areas. Beacon and specialist schools working in partnerships with other schools also make good use of existing resources.

77. Services provide good value for money. Costs are comparable to those in similar LEAs, Best Value reviews improve the quality of service delivery and the principles of Best Value are well incorporated into service planning. A number of services make good use of benchmarked information from other local authorities to review performance against cost.

Section 4: Support for special educational needs (SEN)

Summary table of judgements



The bar represents the grade awarded to the LEA, the triangle represents the LEA's self-evaluation grade, the vertical line represents the LEA's previous grade and the diamond represents the average grade of all LEAs inspected in the last year. 1 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 3 = Highly Satisfactory, 4 = Satisfactory, 5 = Unsatisfactory, 6 = Poor, 7 = Very Poor.

The strategy for SEN

78. LEA's strategy for SEN is highly satisfactory in that it builds on previously strong foundations and uses resources well overall. Although the various strands are clear to officers and matched by appropriate financial plans, there is no overarching written strategic plan indicating how these cohere as the pattern of SEN provision shifts and expenditure reduces.

79. Policy and procedures for SEN have been thoroughly reviewed following widespread consultation with schools and other agencies. The new policy statement is clear, succinct and guides practice. Schools have a good understanding of inclusion and are well supported in moving towards inclusive education. Plans are consistent with other key plans, well matched to the needs of schools, systematically monitored and thoroughly reviewed. This provides senior officers and members with good information on the effectiveness of practice and on the progress of pupils, as well as informing work with other agencies.

80. Strong partnerships and multi-agency work are key to the success of practice on the ground and successfully support schools, parents and pupils. A number of projects demonstrate this: for example, the multi-service planning and review meetings in ten primary schools enable timely and co-ordinated intervention for pupils with SEN. In the case of the PRESENs team, very effective working across the maintained, private and voluntary sectors has resulted in improved identification of, and good support for, pre-school children, parents and settings. The Parent Partnership is a model of excellence.

81. Improving services for children with physical disabilities is another strong and successful multi-agency initiative. The authority's accessibility strategy for schools meets statutory requirements and sets out a clear and detailed programme for improving access to buildings and the curriculum, and to written information for disabled pupils

Recommendation

- Establish a coherent strategic plan with milestones and a financial strategy for the changing pattern of provision for pupils with SEN, which enables progress to be measured and value for money assured.

SEN function to support school improvement

82. The LEA provides good support for school improvement. Ofsted inspection reports show pupils with SEN in primary and secondary schools, including those in special provision, are much better provided for in general and make much better progress than the average for all pupils. Higher grade examination results for lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 are above the national average.

83. Pupils' progress and the quality of SEN provision in schools are carefully monitored. Concerns are identified from inspection reports, through annual review procedures, from casework officers and by specialist staff. All officers are clear that the purpose of support is to strengthen schools' own capacity to manage inclusion. To this end, intervention clearly indicates actions to be taken by schools. A helpful framework for review should enable schools to evaluate thoroughly all aspects of provision for, and the performance of pupils with, SEN and should further strengthen school self-evaluation.

84. The high quality learning support services set themselves challenging targets against demanding timescales and systematically review their work. They are diligent in aligning resources from each team to the needs of schools and other settings, deserving a reputation for responsiveness. The educational psychology service (EPS) has improved but the ratio of psychologists to schools remains low. Schools still report some variability and remain frustrated over the amount of time available to them. They are also concerned over the limited availability of support for speech and language therapy.

85. Comprehensive and high quality advice and guidance are available to schools and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) are very well-supported. A very useful handbook, developed by a joint LEA and schools policy and review group, contains clear guidance on all aspects of SEN. This should prove invaluable in implementing policy, as will the broad range of high quality and highly rated training for schools. A very successful SENCO support group in primary schools and a number of successful projects, for example a leading SENCO project in primary schools to disseminate good practice in all aspects of SEN, develop the capacity of schools to manage inclusion. Where outreach work from special schools supports mainstream schools, this is very successful in improving the expertise of teachers.

Value for money

86. Value for money has improved and is now just satisfactory when high spending is balanced against good support and increasingly judicious use of existing resources which clearly benefit schools and individual pupils. There were two recommendations in the

previous report. The first, that of reviewing the special needs element of the funding formula, is to be implemented in 2004-05. The second, to review the number and type of special school places, is about to commence. In both cases, progress has been slow.

87. Expenditure on special education is higher than the average for all LEAs. Within this expenditure, Brighton and Hove's spending on special schools is far in excess of the average; this accentuates the criticism of the slow progress in reviewing provision. The principle of including the outreach function of special schools in the funding formula is sound, but imprecise in practice. There is some overlap with the learning support services and provision is not well monitored and evaluated. Nevertheless, a growth in this work has begun to secure the role of special schools in supporting inclusive practice, contributing to a reduction in the number of pupils in special schools and supporting reintegration into mainstream schools. Dual placements between mainstream and special schools work well. Resources in some special schools are not yet effectively utilised, although there are plans to address this. Budgetary control of special education is satisfactory, but it is only recently that the LEA has been able to contain more effectively special education home to school transport expenditure.

88. Against this high spend, the very high number of statements maintained by the authority has reduced overall, but remains too high for secondary-aged pupils. This reduction is due to increasingly successful early identification, clear thresholds for intervention and good quality support to schools. Where statutory assessment is required, the authority is effective in completing statements within the specified time limits. A multi-agency placement group, comprising education, health and social services, works successfully to ensure good provision for pupils with highly complex needs who are placed outside of the city. Although numbers have not reduced, fewer placements have broken down.

89. Monitoring of schools' budgets is rigorous. Where there are concerns, these trigger an audit of expenditure. Resources to mainstream schools are allocated on clear criteria and subject to annual review, further sharpened by robust monitoring and good interventions from officers. Some schools evaluate their own spending against pupils' progress. The individual education plans, examined during the inspection, have specific targets alongside criteria for measuring success, are relevant to need, involve pupils, and are useful to teaching assistants, parents and carers.

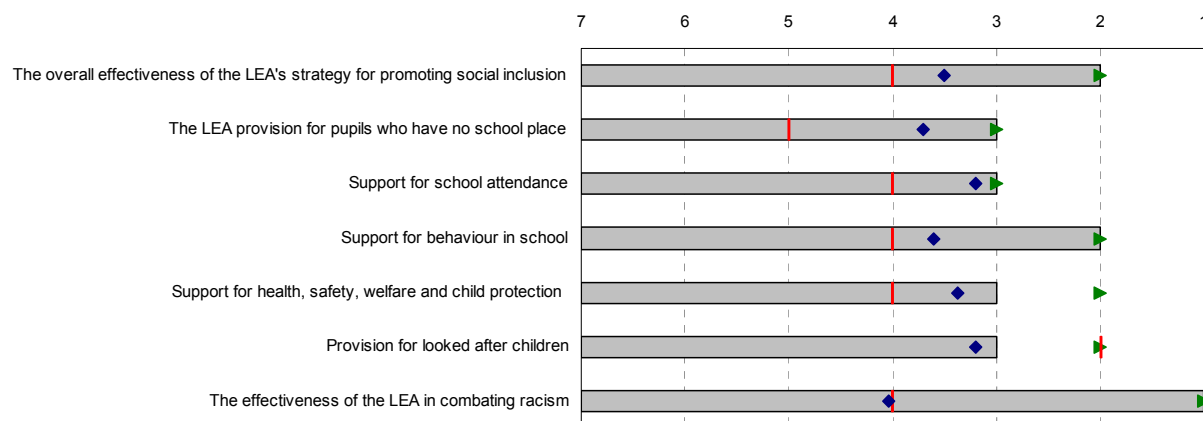
90. Value for money has been further strengthened by the close alignment of the high quality work of the learning support service to the needs of schools. Alongside this, provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties has greatly improved; the Alternative Centre for Education (ACE) has provided much needed support successfully, albeit partially, addressing a shortage of provision.

Recommendation

- Define the specific purpose of the special schools outreach role, ensuring that it is appropriately monitored and evaluated.

Section 5: Support for social inclusion

Summary table of judgements



The bar represents the grade awarded to the LEA, the triangle represents the LEA's self-evaluation grade, the vertical line represents the LEA's previous grade and the diamond represents the average grade of all LEAs inspected in the last year. 1 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 3 = Highly Satisfactory, 4 = Satisfactory, 5 = Unsatisfactory, 6 = Poor, 7 = Very Poor.

The strategy for social inclusion

91. The LEA's strategy and provision for social inclusion have improved and are now good. The council has a very clear vision for social inclusion and for tackling underachievement and social deprivation, as part of its corporate priorities for regeneration. It has a strong track record of successful bidding for external funding, particularly regeneration funding, to meet its corporate priorities and for targeting resources effectively to the needs of particular areas of the city. Schools rightly acknowledge improving support. All functions contributing to this key judgement are at least highly satisfactorily, with some significant improvements in the provision for pupils educated otherwise than at school, for behaviour, and in the promotion of racial equality. The overall strategy is coherent. However, much of the funding is time-limited and the longer term financial viability of many of the initiatives is not secure. Developments are not underpinned by a medium-term financial plan for preventive services which takes into account current and anticipated funding streams. At present, the preventive strategy is vulnerable in the light of major budget pressures on the council and uncertainty over the continuing availability of grant funding.

92. Elected members and senior officers have established a clear framework of policy which sets high aspirations for improving the quality of support. The combined CFS directorate was created principally to provide more coherent and co-ordinated planning and delivery of services. The intention was also to improve the overall performance of social care services. The authority has taken a number of ambitious decisions to implement its priorities. For example the Family Support Strategy and more recently the Children's Trust represent a clear continuum of strategic thinking. Action continues to build on what has worked well, for example, the very successful 'On-Track' project which provides early intervention and multi-

agency support to children and families in an area of the city. The work of multi-agency teams tackling teenage crime and drug and alcohol misuse has resulted in continued education and reduced offending.

93. There is now greater coherence and integration of planning for support to schools. Liaison and co-ordination between services and teams are generally good and there is effective partnership work with other agencies. Good strategic use of funding has enabled officers and schools to establish a very effective network of staff responsible for inclusion in schools. This has helped to improve schools' understanding of pathways and access to support services. Links with strategies for school improvement and SEN are strong, as is the focus on developing schools' autonomy and capacity to provide inclusive education.

94. The creation of the CFS has led to demonstrable improvements in the education of those children and young people who are most at risk of being excluded from education. Some weaknesses remain in the nature and timeliness of response to schools over concerns for the safeguarding of children (as identified in the report on the inspection of Children's Services). This is not as a result of weaknesses in schools or failure of education services, but because the capacity of social care staff to safeguard children is compromised by too heavy workloads. Action to halt declining attendance in primary schools has been too slow. The LEA does not monitor rigorously enough the attainment of some groups of pupils.

Recommendations

- Prepare a medium-term financial plan for preventive services which takes account of current and anticipated funding streams, and costs work needed over the next five years.
- Take action to ensure that social care staff safeguard children.

Provision for pupils educated other than at school

95. This provision was unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. It is now highly satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. There are satisfactory procedures to ensure that no pupils become lost to education. A new head of service has recently been appointed and a more comprehensive definition of strategy, principles and practice is being produced.

96. Good support for schoolgirl mothers is provided through the multi-agency Teenage Pregnancy reintegration project. The time that excluded pupils spend without educational provision has been reduced and support for this group is now based securely on principles of inclusive education. A clear approach to behaviour support and better integrated provision for excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion is provided through ACE as a small facility for full-time placement, and from joint provision with host schools. This has worked well. Rates of reintegration are now slightly below similar authorities but explained by an intentional high incidence of dual placements with ACE and mainstream schools. Schools assume a high degree of responsibility for assuring pupils' attainment and progress and for managing the provision of alternative education courses at Key Stage 4. At the time of the inspection, the LEA's own data was not sufficiently comprehensive to monitor the

achievements of all pupils who receive support or to determine the reasons for low levels of attainment by individual pupils.

97. The proportion of parents in Brighton and Hove wishing to educate their children at home remains high. Collaborative work with these parents is very effective. Support for children unable to attend school on medical grounds is also effective. There are well-established procedures for monitoring both the education and the welfare of these children.

Recommendation

- Obtain better quality data and information from schools and other services and use this to develop and maintain a comprehensive database.

Support for attendance

98. The authority performs this function highly satisfactorily and schools report improving support. CFS has responded well to the recommendations from the previous inspection through a Best Value review of the education welfare service (EWS). A good service level agreement ensures that schools understand their respective roles and responsibilities and the support they can expect to receive. The LEA has introduced sound procedures for tracking pupils who are not in schools; these are used consistently across services. The EWS has not shied away from using its statutory and legal powers to good effect when necessary.

99. As one of the services most regularly in contact with schools, the EWS has worked hard to maintain and strengthen its links with other teams across the directorate. Its role should be strengthened further through its inclusion in the Family Support Strategy. The service contributes effectively to partnership work within a number of the good multi-agency projects, including the Youth Offending Team. Its work with the Connexions service in schools is good.

100. Attendance in secondary schools is improving and is now in line with that nationally, but levels of attendance in primary schools have been declining and are below average. Additional support is provided to the 21 lowest performing primary schools to meet Local Public Service Agreement targets. This intervention has resulted in some improvements but, at the current rate, these will not be sufficient to reach the target for 2005. The EWS plans to build on this recent work by providing firmer guidance to all schools on effective practice, specifically on managing data and monitoring attendance. However, given the pattern of attendance in primary schools for some years, its response has been slow.

Support for behaviour

101. Support to schools in managing behaviour and maintaining discipline has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good. The strategy, centred on ACE, has proved a creative and successful solution to a difficult and, for many LEAs, intractable problem. This is undoubtedly increasing schools' own capacity to manage behaviour.

102. Rates of permanent exclusions and overall rates of fixed-term exclusions are falling, significantly so in secondary schools, and are now in line with those nationally. Careful attention is given to placing looked after children in schools, although intervention is sometimes not sufficiently early when problems arise. Exclusions of pupils with statements of SEN are low. The main causes of exclusions are monitored carefully. The existing Behaviour Support Plan is good. It identifies clearly how various policies interrelate at strategic level and details how a matrix of inter-service and multi-disciplinary support skilfully delivers the strategy. This is strongly backed by the focus on behaviour and discipline in the school self-evaluation framework, and associated monitoring by the school improvement service. Most significantly, ACE itself has proved very effective in managing more accurate assessments of need and provision. This has resulted in more efficient and coherent referrals to appropriate agencies, closer alignment of support for behaviour with SEN, and closer liaison between teams supporting behaviour, including the EPS.

Support for health, safety, welfare and child protection

103. These two separate but related functions, assuring the health and safety and the welfare and protection of children, in educational settings and mainstream schools, have improved and are now performed highly satisfactorily. The concern expressed by the previous inspection over schools' access to sufficient advice on health and safety issues has been addressed. There are clear and comprehensive policies and improved resources for monitoring health and safety across educational settings and care placements.

104. Developments in the support for child protection in schools have stemmed clearly from the Best Value review and, as far as schools and education services are concerned, are improving since the creation of the new directorate. The liaison between education and social care services has improved and there are clear arrangements for managing education's contribution to safeguarding the welfare of children. CFS meets its statutory obligations and plays an active role in Area Child Protection Committees locally and regionally. Good multi-agency training on child protection is provided for all new staff, including new designated teachers in schools. The take-up of required training and the records of designated teachers in schools are properly monitored.

105. Schools' child protection policies are monitored over a three-year period. In addition, link advisers review policies during visits to schools. Revisions to the framework for school self-evaluation will further strengthen monitoring and enable a more detailed and systematic review.

106. Updated guidance on child protection procedures fully reflects area requirements. This provides clear advice to schools and to those working with children and young people. There have been early improvements in the quality and rate of referrals from schools as a result. However, the heavy workloads of social care staff have led schools to report variable quality of response and feedback on referred cases.

Recommendations

- Establish existing procedures to establish more consistent monitoring, validating and reviewing of schools' child protection policies against local and statutory guidance.

Provision for looked after children

107. At the time of the previous inspection the LEA's contribution to the local authority's responsibilities as corporate parent and its work in safeguarding the education of children and young people looked after by the council were good. Many of the strengths evident at that time remain and there have been improvements. However, in the light of changed national requirements there are some weaknesses in the monitoring of the education of these children and, overall, this function is now performed highly satisfactorily. Tangible progress has been made by the council in actively promoting and safeguarding the education and social inclusion of looked after children, and in collaborative work between education and social services. Schools rate highly the support they receive.

108. Services in CFS collaborate effectively to ensure that care and educational placements are suitable and sustainable. There are also close working arrangements with a number of successful multi-agency projects. Designated teachers in schools are well supported. The council and CFS have taken positive action to improve the attainment of these children, providing additional home tutoring for those taking GCSE examinations. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the number achieving five or more A*- C GCSE grades in 2003, exceeding both the council and national targets. Attainment of primary-aged children is in line with that nationally, but there has been a decline in the performance of looked after children at Key Stage 3. The LEA is beginning to tackle this in one school, but on current rates of improvement, the authority will struggle to achieve its target of 50% of looked after children achieving five or more A*-G grades without focusing substantial additional support at Key Stage 3.

109. For the most part, the educational achievement and progress of children who are looked after inside and outside of the authority are monitored satisfactorily. There are effective joint protocols with neighbouring authorities and officers attend reviews in other LEAs. Education services do not consistently and systematically monitor the quality of personal education plans. This is being addressed. There are well-established protocols for sharing information between education and children's social services, and schools and social workers. However, monitoring of the progress of looked after children is constrained, as the electronic data systems operated by the looked after children team are not wholly compatible with databases for education and social care.

Recommendations

- Establish manageable procedures for consistently and systematically monitoring the quality of personal education plans.
- Improve the data systems used by the looked after children support team to ensure better access and analysis of information.

Promoting racial equality

110. At the time of the previous inspection the LEA's work on promoting racial equality and combating racism in schools was satisfactory. Since then, the authority has made significant strides in embedding race equality within the education agenda. Its performance is now very good. This strong corporate emphasis is fully reflected in the priorities of CFS, including raising the attainment of all minority ethnic groups. The council has produced a clear Race Equality Scheme and its objectives are becoming well embedded into planning through corporate performance management.

111. The involvement of CFS in race equality initiatives is well co-ordinated and has developed in partnership with ethnic communities and a range of agencies. Very positive and productive links have been established with the Racial Harassment Forum to ensure that local issues are identified and addressed. Members of ethnic minority communities are well represented on schools' governing bodies. Significant efforts have been made to involve young people in the development of work on combating racism and promoting equality. Not all young people who contribute to policy discussions on equalities and children's rights, however, feel that their voice is sufficiently heard or is making a difference.

112. Schools have received good guidance and training on developing policies for monitoring equality issues. This has been well co-ordinated with very effective work on anti-bullying. All schools have a race equality policy. Ofsted inspections show that schools' support for equality is very good and this is monitored carefully by officers. Procedures for schools to report racist incidents have been amended and early evidence indicates that, in conjunction with the work on anti-bullying, this is leading to increasing confidence in identifying and reporting incidents. The timetable for this work is on track. CFS has made very effective use of Single Regeneration Budget funding to develop a number of innovative projects and initiatives to address equality issues, such as the 'Safe-at School' and 'Coastkid' websites for children and teachers, and support for parents of children who are bullied or harassed.

APPENDIX A: Record of Judgement Recording Statements

Name of LEA :	Brighton and Hove Local Education Authority
LEA number:	846
Reporting Inspector:	Rosemary Matthews HMI
Date of Inspection:	January 2004

No	Required Inspection Judgement	Grade	Fieldwork*
Context of the LEA			
1	The socio-economic context of the LEA	4	
Overall judgements			
0.1	The progress made by the LEA overall	2	
0.2	Overall effectiveness of the LEA	2	
0.3	The LEA's capacity for further improvement and to address the recommendations of the inspection	2	
Section 1: Corporate strategy and LEA leadership			
1.1	The effectiveness of corporate planning for the education of children and young people	2	
1.2	The implementation of corporate planning for education	2	
1.3	The effectiveness of LEA decision-making	2	
1.4	The extent to which the LEA targets resources on priorities	2	
1.5	The extent to which the LEA has in place effective strategies to promote continuous improvement, including Best Value	2	
1.6	The leadership provided by elected members (including quality of advice)	2	
1.7	The quality of leadership provided by senior officers	2	
1.8	The effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration between agencies in support of priorities	2	

1.9	Support for Early Years' education	1	
1.10	Support for 14 – 19 education	2	
1.11	The effectiveness of the LEA in discharging asset management planning	4	
Section 2: Strategy for education and its implementation			
2.1	The LEA's strategy for school improvement	2	
2.2	The progress on implementing the LEA's strategy for school improvement	3	
2.3	The performance of schools	3	
2.4	The extent to which the LEA has defined monitoring, challenge and intervention	1	
2.5	The effectiveness of the LEA's work in monitoring schools and challenging them to improve, including the use made of performance data	2	
2.6	The extent to which the LEA's support to schools is focused on areas of greatest need	1	
2.7	The effectiveness of the LEA's identification of and intervention in under-performing schools	2	
2.8	The extent to which the LEA is successful in assuring the supply and quality of teachers	1	
2.9	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to the provision of school places	3	NF
2.10	The effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools	3	NF
Section 3: Support to school leadership and management, including schools' efforts to support continuous improvement			
3.1	Support to school leadership and management, including support for schools' approaches to continuous improvement	2	
3.2	Support for national initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy at KS 1 and 2	2	
3.3	Support for information and communication technology	2	

3.4	Support for the national initiative to raise standards at KS3	2	
3.5	Support for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsy/ Traveller children	1	
3.6	Support to schools for gifted and talented pupils	2	
3.7	Support for school governors	2	
3.8	The planning and provision of services to support school management	3	
3.8a	The planning and provision of financial services in supporting school management	2	
3.8b	The planning and provision of HR services in supporting school management	3	NF
3.8c	The planning and provision of property services in supporting school management	3	
3.8d	The planning and provision of information management services in supporting school management	2	
3.9	The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school management	3	
3.10	The planning and provision of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services	2	
3.11	The effectiveness and value for money of services supporting school improvement, particularly inspection and advisory and/or school effectiveness services	2	
Section 4: Support for special educational needs (SEN)			
4.1	The effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for SEN	3	
4.2	The effectiveness of the LEA in meeting its statutory obligations in respect of SEN	2	NF
4.3	The effectiveness of the LEA in exercising its SEN functions to support school improvement	2	
4.4	The extent to which the LEA exercises its SEN functions in a way which provides value for money	4	

Section 5: Support for social inclusion			
5.1	The overall effectiveness of the LEA's strategy for promoting social inclusion	2	
5.2	The LEA provision for pupils who have no school place	3	
5.3	Support for school attendance	3	
5.4	Support for behaviour in school	2	
5.5	Support for health, safety, welfare and child protection	3	
5.6	Provision for looked after children	3	
5.7	The effectiveness of the LEA in promoting racial equality	1	

**NF' under fieldwork means that no fieldwork was conducted on this function during this inspection.*

JRS numerical judgements are allocated on a 7-point scale:

Grade 1: Very good; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Highly satisfactory; Grade 4: Satisfactory;
Grade 5: Unsatisfactory; Grade 6: Poor; Grade 7: Very poor

Appendix B

Context of the inspection

This inspection of the Children, Families and Schools (CFS) Directorate of Brighton and Hove local education authority (LEA) was carried out by Ofsted in conjunction with the Audit Commission under section 38 of the Education Act 1997. It was conducted jointly with the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) but reported on separately. The two reports should be read in conjunction.

This report provides a commentary on the inspection findings, including:

- the progress the LEA has made since the time of its previous inspection in June 2000;
- the overall effectiveness of the LEA and its capacity to improve further;
- the LEA's performance in major aspects of its work;
- recommendations on areas for improvement.

The summary is followed by more detailed judgements on the LEA's performance of its individual functions which sets the recommendations for improvement into context.

All functions of the LEA have been inspected and judgements reached on how effectively they are performed. Not all functions were subject to detailed fieldwork, but in all cases inspectors reached their judgements through an evaluation of a range of material. This included self-evaluation undertaken by the LEA, data (some of which were provided by the LEA), school inspection information, HMI monitoring reports, and audit reports. In addition, the inspection team considered the earlier Ofsted/Audit Commission report on this LEA and a questionnaire seeking the views of all schools on aspects of the work of the LEA. In those areas subject to fieldwork, discussions were held with LEA officers and members, headteachers and governors, staff in other departments of the local authority, diocesan representatives, other agencies and LEA partners.

The functions that were not subject to detailed fieldwork in this inspection were:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the effectiveness of the LEA in relation to the provision of school places;• the effectiveness of the LEA in relation to admissions to schools;• the planning and provision of human resources services in supporting school management;• the effectiveness of the LEA in meeting its statutory obligations in respect of SEN. |
|---|

Inspection judgements are made against criteria that can be found on the Ofsted website. For each inspected function of the LEA an inspection team agrees a numerical grade. The

numerical grades awarded for the judgements made in this inspection are to be found in Appendix A. These numerical grades must be considered in the light of the full report. Some of the grades are used in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment profile for the education service.

Context of the LEA

Brighton and Hove is marked by considerable social and economic differences. While affluence, success and ambition sit alongside a thriving tourism-based economy, pockets of significant social deprivation present high incidence of crime, disorder, family breakdown and homelessness. In December 2002, 12 of the council's 26 wards were within the 25% most deprived in the country. In these areas, there are high rates of substance and alcohol misuse, mental illness, teenage pregnancy and domestic violence.

There are currently 17,577 pupils in primary schools, 12,466 in secondary schools and 626 in special schools. The percentage of the school population from minority ethnic heritage is broadly in line with the national figure. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in maintained primary (17.6%) and secondary schools (16.1%) is in line with national figures and those of similar authorities. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs in primary schools (2.5%) is broadly in line with the national average. In secondary schools (5.2%), this is well above the national average.

Educational provision is available in a variety of settings for all three and four year-olds whose parents seek it. There are two nursery schools and 20 nursery classes within infant and primary schools. Since the previous inspection the number of pupils on roll in maintained mainstream primary schools has fallen by 3.2%. Planned amalgamation has reduced the number of separate infant and junior schools and created two additional primary schools. There are now 12 infant schools, 12 junior schools and 32 primary schools in the LEA. Four of ten secondary schools are for pupils aged 11-18. Of seven special schools, one includes the Alternative Centre for Education, comprising provision for primary and secondary aged pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, a pupil referral unit and outreach support to mainstream and other special schools. Post-16 education is also provided by two sixth form colleges and a college of further education within the LEA's boundaries. Six schools have Beacon status and one secondary school is a leading edge school. Of the 10 secondary schools, five have specialist status.

The performance of schools

The performance of schools in Brighton and Hove is highly satisfactory, representing satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

Over the last four years attainment has risen at all key stages faster than the national rate. Standards at Key Stage 1 have remained broadly in line with those nationally. Standards at Key Stage 2 are in line with the national average for English, but below this for mathematics. At Key Stage 3, standards have risen steadily though results remain just below national figures except for ICT, where standards are above the national average. In 2003, provisional data show improvement in the number of pupils achieving Level 6 at this key stage. At Key Stage 4, higher grade GCSE results are below average and standards for pupils taking GNVQ are well above average. In 2003, provisional data show average point scores improved, but continuing below the national average. Progress at post-16 is satisfactory to good when compared with statistical neighbour authorities. At GCE A/AS-level examinations the number of points scored is higher than statistical neighbour authorities.

With the exception of ICT the LEA has failed to meet its targets at all key stages. The gap between results and targets is particularly significant in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. On the basis of current rates of improvement, targets are unlikely to be met in 2004, apart from ICT where this has already been exceeded. Targets for 2005 will present a considerable challenge to schools.

Boys' achievement, particularly in reading and writing, is an area for concern from Key Stage 2 onwards. There is also some underachievement amongst more able girls from Key Stage 1 onwards. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, though relatively small in number, make good progress overall. For pupils leaving public care in 2002, provisional data indicate a significant improvement in those gaining five or more A*-C grades, exceeding the council's target. However, there has been a decline in performance at Key Stage 3.

Data from school Section 10 inspections show a higher percentage of good and very good schools than nationally and in similar authorities. There are no schools in need of special measures or with serious weaknesses and the percentage of school causing local concern has dropped.

Attendance in secondary schools is in line with the national average, but in primary schools has fallen to below average. Rates of permanent exclusions and overall rates of fixed term exclusions are falling, significantly so in secondary schools, and are now in line with those nationally.

Funding data for the LEA

Schools Budget	Brighton and Hove	Statistical neighbours average	Unitary Average	England Average
	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil
Individual schools budget	2,621	2,724	2,613	2,708
Standards fund delegated	60	51	58	61
Education for under fives	138	86	98	96
Strategic management	52	28	28	29
Special educational needs	182	157	109	120
Grants	6	26	41	53
Access	24	53	55	55
Capital expenditure from revenue	36	13	20	24
Total Schools Budget	3,119	3,140	3,024	3,145
Schools formula spending share	2,951	2,935	2,808	2,904

Source: DfES Comparative Tables 2003-04

LEA Budget	Brighton and Hove	Statistical neighbours average	Unitary Average	England Average
	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil	£ per pupil
Strategic management	66	95	86	95
Specific Grants	22	16	19	16
Special educational needs	20	33	32	32
School improvement	30	31	33	36
Access	124	108	128	133
Capital expenditure from revenue	0	1	2	2
Youth and community	52	61	70	74
Total LEA Budget	316	345	370	388

Source: DfES Comparative Tables 2003-04

Note: All figures are net

Notes