



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS  
IN EDUCATION

**INSPECTION OF  
LEICESTERSHIRE  
LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

**NOVEMBER 1998**

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

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This inspection was carried out by OFSTED in conjunction with the Audit Commission under Section 38 of the Education Act 1997. The inspection used the Framework for the Inspection of Local Education Authorities<sup>1</sup>, which focuses on the effectiveness of Local Education Authority (LEA) work to support school improvement. In addition to the standard themes, the inspection covered support for small schools; support for improving transition of pupils between the different phases of education; the work of the Arts in Education Service; and initiatives to reduce school exclusion and provision for excluded pupils.

2. The inspection was in two stages. An initial review established a picture of the LEA's context, the performance of its schools, its strategy and the management of services. The initial review was based on data provided by the LEA, school inspection and audit reports, LEA documentation and discussions with LEA members, staff in the Education Department and in other Council departments and representatives of the LEA's partners. In addition, a questionnaire seeking views of aspects of the LEA's work was sent to 98 schools. The response rate was 89 per cent.

3. The second stage of the inspection involved studies of the effectiveness of aspects of the LEA's work through visits to five upper schools, eight high schools, 18 primary schools and two special schools. The purpose of the visits was to discover the views of governors, headteachers and other staff on aspects of the LEA's strategy. The visits also considered whether the support provided by the LEA contributes to the discharge of the LEA's statutory duties, is effective in contributing to improvements in the school and provides value for money. In addition, short visits were made to schools by Audit Commission staff to follow up in more detail the work of the Governor Support Service. Three visits were made to the Arts in Education centre. Three days were spent inspecting the Student Support Service's work with pupils who are at risk of exclusion and the provision which is made for excluded pupils.

4. This report draws on material from the initial review, from the school survey and from the school visits, together with evidence relevant to the themes drawn from recent HMI visits to Leicestershire schools.

## **COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **COMMENTARY**

5. Leicestershire is, to a very large extent, a new LEA. In 1997 local government reorganisation divided Leicestershire into three new authorities including the City of Leicester and Rutland. The new LEA retains more than the name of "old" Leicestershire. It continues to benefit from the consistently high priority which Councillors have attached to education. It maintains assiduous administrative practices and sound casework in response to questions from the electorate. Overall its strengths outweigh its weaknesses.

6. The new LEA is responding well to the opportunities offered, both by reorganisation itself and by the national policy agenda, and it is beginning to develop some new strengths. Local government reorganisation has resulted in the formation of an LEA which is predominantly rural and which has little cultural diversity or economic disadvantage. This has made it easier to begin to focus, with schools, on a smaller number of shared priorities. At the same time, it is beginning to forge a more explicit, better defined and more clearly understood relationship with schools. It has demonstrated a real intention to consult, though, understandably, not one that is as yet fully worked out in every detail.

7. The LEA fulfils a number of important functions very well. The officers advise members effectively. Services are co-ordinated in a highly effective way and at the same time the flexibility is reserved to respond to new issues and initiatives. Support for schools in difficulties is very good and support for literacy is very well-conceived and co-ordinated. Support to Governors is well structured and expert. A well-designed project is in operation to encourage disaffected Year 11 pupils to return to education and training opportunities.

8. In its approach to school improvement, the LEA believes that its job is to reinforce the schools' capacity to manage their own improvement. This is the right emphasis and one which the LEA is beginning to implement successfully through its programme for school self-evaluation and management. Other approaches to improve the quality of teaching, numeracy and the support for more able pupils are in the early stages of implementation and are not yet sufficiently well understood by schools.

9. Ironically the LEA argues that it is unable to exert the strategic effect it would wish because it delegates much of the funding for curriculum support to schools. This report illustrates that the LEA can and does influence schools, although the upper schools less than the others and even in this respect it has begun to make progress. Because of its recent experience of providing services to customers, it is, in many ways, better placed than many LEAs to move towards the requirements of the new Code of Practice for School - LEA relations.

10. There are a number of areas where the LEA could do a great deal better. It has not sufficiently adapted the national agenda to reflect the local circumstances which are particular to Leicestershire. Two such issues are the high proportion of small schools and the exceptional complexity of transition from one phase of education to the next. In both instances the LEA is aware of the issue, some slow progress has been made but the attempts to address it are not as yet sufficient, particularly in the light of the evidence, made more clear, perhaps, by local government reorganisation, that Key Stage 4 provision often adds little, if any, value.
11. That, in turn, raises the issue of complacency. Too many schools in Leicestershire appear to be coasting, at about national averages, where they might, and should, be aiming for excellence. The LEA knows it has a major job to do in raising expectations as well as in clarifying what the schools can expect of it. In order to achieve that clarification, the LEA will need not only to explain its role and strategy better but also to address some inconsistencies in planning and in performance of staff within services. Leicestershire schools are performing adequately but they need a vigorous, effective LEA to encourage them to strive harder. This report demonstrates that the foundations have been laid and that this is attainable.

## **Recommendations**

**In order to improve the LEA 's strategic approach to school improvement, the LEA should:**

- define, in consultation with schools, the ways in which the LEA will provide support, challenge and intervention and clearly communicate these strategies to schools;
- devise, in agreement with schools, a clear planning cycle and make more fully explicit the link between the school development plan and the LEA's Education Development Plan together with the Department for Education and Employment's planning requirements such as the Behaviour Support Plan;
- review the procedures for schools requiring additional support. Clarify the criteria for intervention in schools and the place of classroom observation within the agreed procedures;
- clarify the importance of the role of the development groups in implementing and supporting the school improvement strategy and work with the less active groups to develop a better capacity to provide support;

- revise the allocation, and the support which is provided by each link adviser, so that they reflect school needs and take into account the school's capability to manage its own improvement.

**In order to improve the quality of support provided by the service units the LEA should:**

- implement a comprehensive and regular system for reviewing the
- performance of the LEA's services;
- conduct a programme of monitoring and training for instrumental music teachers.

**In order to improve school admissions and transfer the LEA should:**

- devise and, in the long term, implement an admissions policy which specifies a common age for entry to primary school;
- track the attainment of pupils through the different phases and ages and ensure that the resulting information is passed on at different points of transition;
- build on the effective practice in some development groups in order to support schools in ensuring that pupils make a smooth transition between schools not only pastorally but also in terms of curriculum continuity and progression in their learning.

**In order to improve access to education opportunities for pupils of disadvantaged groups the LEA should:**

- provide better educational opportunities for primary aged pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who are at risk of exclusion, either by providing them with more timely access to special needs services to help to prevent exclusion or, if excluded, with an appropriate full-time primary placement;
- monitor the take-up of instrumental tuition by gender and ethnicity and consider ways in which more equal take-up can be achieved for boys and girls; for all ethnic groups; and for pupils whose parents are unable to pay.

**In order to improve the quality of teaching, the LEA should:**

- explain the LEA's strategy for improving the quality of teaching in more detail to schools and include advice on the development of better procedures for the management of continuing professional development and for appraisal of teachers;

- ensure that good quality subject specialist support is available, particularly at Key Stage 4, either through the Advisory and Inspection Service or through external consultants;
- provide advice or ensure that advice is available to small schools on successful strategies for teaching in mixed-age classes and the teaching of subjects in which the school has no specialist co-ordinator.

**In order to reduce the number of vacancies for LEA governors, the LEA should:**

- improve the arrangements for recruiting LEA governors.

## **SECTION 1: THE CONTEXT OF THE LEA**

12. This is a new LEA, considerably reduced in size. Leicestershire, as it had existed since 1974, was divided into three new authorities on 1 April, 1997, establishing two other unitary authorities: The City of Leicester, and Rutland. This reduced the number of schools maintained by Leicestershire LEA by about one-third. "New Leicestershire" inherits a foundation of well-established educational philosophies, retains the traditions and most of its staff from the previous LEA, but has had to reduce the size of its services significantly. Re-organisation has also changed the socio-economic context and highlighted different issues and priorities for school improvement.

13. Leicestershire is now a largely rural county with a relatively stable population and with less cultural diversity or disadvantage, outside the four centres of population of more than 30,000 inhabitants, than is true nationally. Unemployment (January 1998) in the area is relatively low compared with national levels. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below national averages in both primary and secondary schools. Roughly five per cent of the school population is of minority ethnic origin, compared with 10 per cent nationally. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs at primary and secondary schools is lower than national averages: very few pupils attend special schools.

14. Primary and secondary schools vary in the age of admission and transfer. With the exception of seven special schools, all schools are co-educational and have comprehensive intakes. Except for two 11-19 secondary schools, schools are organised into three main phases with primary schools (5-11), high schools (11-14) and upper schools (14-18). Substantial variation in this pattern has occurred as a result of localised changes to admission and transfer ages, with six LEA maintained and three Grant Maintained high schools now catering for the age range 10-14 years and their feeder primary schools serving the 4-10 age range. In addition, some primary schools which transfer pupils to high schools

at 11 also admit pupils aged four. Leicestershire has no common admissions policy for entry into primary school. The proportion of under fives in maintained nursery and primary education is lower than the average for shire counties, although 50% of 4 year olds are in private or voluntary sector provision. More pupils are in classes with 30 pupils or fewer.

15. Just under a third (96) of all primary schools have fewer than 100 pupils. A report of District Audit (August 1 1997) noted that half of these small schools are less than 75 per cent occupied.

16. Compared with other counties, Leicestershire has the lowest education Standard Spending Assessment in 1997-1998 for both primary and secondary schools. The Council's expenditure on education has been set at above Standard Spending Assessment for the last three years. For 1997-98, it is 4.92 per cent above the Standard Spending Assessment.

17. The Potential Schools Budget per pupil for primary, secondary and overall is similar to the average for counties. In 1997/98 Leicestershire delegated 89 per cent of the Potential Schools Budget, which is lower than the average for counties of 91 per cent. Nevertheless, several services have depended on selling their services to schools on a commercial basis for more than 50 per cent of their budget, including the Advisory and Inspection Service. Central LEA expenditure for this service is comparatively low and represents 26.5 per cent of the service budget.

18. No political party has had an overall majority on the Council for 16 years but there is an agreement among all the political parties to give education a high priority. The chairmanship of the Council is shared on an informal rotational basis. The Education Committee has 19 members, two diocesan representatives with voting rights and two non-voting co-opted teacher members. The Education Committee has two sub-committees. Working parties and task groups are convened for short periods to examine issues such as special education and Local Management of Schools.

19. The Education Department has been re-organised three times in the past five years; twice (1993 and 1997) with a significant loss of posts. The senior management team includes a Director, four Assistant Directors (School and college effectiveness, School and college support, Pupil and student support, and Planning and Resources). The senior management team meets twice weekly and co-ordinates the activities of the department, monitors progress and "is the heart of the communication system for all Service Units". The Management Group, consisting of the Director, Assistant Directors, Education Officers, Heads of all Service Units and Head of the Schools' Library Service, meets once a fortnight and deals with issues of cross-departmental concern.

## **SECTION 2: THE PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS**

**20. Leicestershire LEA's pilot baseline assessment shows that two-thirds of Leicestershire primary schools have intakes with attainment which is at or above national averages:**

104 of the 154 schools which took part in the pilot baseline assessment have intakes with attainment which is at or above national averages.

**21. Attainment in all Key Stages other than Key Stage 3 is marginally above the national levels whereas attainment at A-level is marginally lower than national averages. Attainment at Key Stage 3 in all core subjects, and in mathematics at all Key Stages, is consistently significantly above the national averages:**

- results at Key Stage 3 are significantly above the national averages but results at Key Stage 4 do not maintain this positive picture;
- the relative attainment of boys and girls does not differ significantly from the national profile.

**22. Improvement in GCSE results is slower than that found nationally:**

- the percentage of pupils gaining one or more A\*-G grades, five A-G and five A\*-C grades in Leicestershire has decreased or remained static compared with a slight rise nationally;
- the trend in average points score over the last three years shows that, while Leicestershire's average point score exceeds that nationally, the gap between Leicestershire and national average points scores is closing;
- in eight upper schools the percentage of pupils gaining five or more subjects at Grade A\* - C at GCSE is below the national average. Over the past four years, in only one of these schools has the percentage improved at faster than the national rate.

**23. Rates of attendance at school are better than the national averages and behaviour is satisfactory in all schools and good in many.**

- attendance in both primary and secondary schools is 94.7% and 91.4% respectively and is marginally better than national averages. Rates of unauthorised absence are lower than those nationally;
- the increase in the rate of permanent exclusion is lower than the increase nationally and the number of exclusions has declined recently.

24. **OFSTED's inspection data shows that 60.3% of Leicestershire's primary schools are good or very good compared with 61.1% nationally; 77% of secondary are good or better compared with 67.1% nationally. Special schools are generally sound.**

- teaching is generally sound although teachers' expectations are judged good in fewer secondary schools when compared with schools nationally.
- the management and efficiency of 51 % of Leicestershire's primary schools require some improvement compared with 38% of schools nationally. In secondary schools, management and efficiency were judged good in 78% of schools compared with 68% nationally;
- the schools' climate is a strength in both primary and secondary schools and is rated good or very good in 90.3% of primary schools compared with 88.6% nationally and 88.5% of secondary schools compared with 77.2% nationally.

### **SECTION 3: LEA STRATEGY**

#### **ROLE AND PRIORITIES**

##### ***The role of the LEA***

25. Since local government reorganisation the LEA has explained its role in relationship to schools with greater clarity and focus. It has made very good progress in responding to both the spirit and the detailed requirements of new national policies. The LEA has built on some existing policies and procedures, but has also rapidly grasped the opportunities provided by the emerging national developments.

26. Responsibility for school improvement has been appropriately placed with the schools and arrangements have been agreed for providing support for schools with difficulties. At a conference held prior to local government reorganisation for representatives of all schools in "new Leicestershire," the Director of Education identified the respective responsibilities of the schools and the LEA as follows:

The school is responsible for:

- pupil achievement and improvement;
- assessing its own effectiveness;
- developing its own capacity for improvement;
- deriving and setting targets;
- being accountable to parents and the wider community.

the LEA is responsible for:

- a framework developed by Members of values, principles and policies within which maintained schools work;
- some operational support including:
  - fair and accurate comparative information to schools about their performance;
  - advice on strategies for improving the quality of education;
  - managing networks for disseminating good practice;
  - acting as a catalyst for collaborative initiatives and projects;
  - challenging poor practice or circumstances in which a school could do better;
  - supporting schools which are experiencing difficulties;
  - taking care of the interests of minorities and individuals.

27. In a recent consultation paper which outlines the future of the Advisory and Inspection Service, the Council made a commitment not to interfere with the day-to-day running of schools except where formal intervention is required

28. The LEA expects to provide schools with support, challenge and intervention, which are viewed as interdependent rather than mutually exclusive processes. Arrangements are well developed to govern the LEA's support to all schools, including schools requiring additional support, but the way in which the LEA intends to intervene and challenge schools to make continuous improvement is not developed in sufficient detail.

### ***Evidence from schools<sup>2</sup>***

29. All the schools visited have a satisfactory understanding of and express broad agreement with the role which the LEA has defined. Schools generally welcome the greater clarity and sharper focus to the LEA's role. Primary and high<sup>3</sup> schools consistently stressed that the LEA provides support, advice and guidance rather than challenge and intervention. All schools accept and understand that the LEA will monitor and support schools when there are difficulties. They recognise the purpose of additional support but are much less clear about the criteria for determining such intervention.

30. The special schools are clear about the LEA's role and expect that the LEA should assume some professional leadership for provision of special education. The debate between the LEA and schools is becoming sharper and

<sup>2</sup>From now on in this report 'schools' refers to the 33 schools (5 Upper Schools, 8 High Schools, 18 Primary Schools, 2 Special Schools) visited in the context of this inspection.

<sup>3</sup>Schools in Leicestershire are organised into three main phases with primary schools (5-11), high schools (11-14) and upper schools (14-18). Nine high schools cater for the age range 10-14 years and their feeder primary schools serve the 4-10 age range.

tougher, but there is still some uncertainty about how special schools fit into the wider LEA picture and how they can fulfil the LEA priorities.

31. Upper schools have a tradition of autonomy. All schools express the wish to work together with the LEA and welcome the greater clarity in direction. Upper schools express more uncertainty about the LEA's right and obligation to intervene, although there is a general acceptance of the schools requiring additional support procedures and of the importance of financial monitoring.

## **THE LEA'S STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### ***The LEA's Vision***

32. The LEA's vision builds on the values and priorities which were important to Leicestershire before Local Government Reorganisation. It re-affirms Leicestershire's commitment to the principles of lifelong education; to education and training of high quality; and to achieving a balance between aspects of vocational, social and personal education. It reflects the contribution of education to the people of Leicestershire's lives, to both economic and cultural development, and to the county and beyond.

### ***The LEA's policy for school improvement***

33. A draft policy for school improvement has been discussed by Members and appropriately takes into account the new national agenda. The policy places a strong and appropriate emphasis on the need to focus on working with schools and others to improve the quality of their teaching and management. It shows the respective accountabilities of schools and the LEA and identifies their implications. The LEA has helpfully identified its objectives, which are:

- to promote and support management development;
- to promote and support establishments' self monitoring and evaluation;
- to support establishments in identifying key priorities for development, in producing targets and development and action plans
- to gather and analyse assessment and value-added data and share them with schools to help with target setting;
- to review aspects of educational provision which will be identified by members;
- to provide post-OFSTED inspection follow-up advice and support for schools;
- to provide additional support to those schools identified as being in difficulties;
- to provide high quality services, in particular support for personnel and financial matters;
- to report authoritatively and objectively on the quality of education in Leicestershire.

34. The policy has not drawn together in a comprehensive and consistent way all aspects of the LEA's role in school improvement and has not helped to achieve coherence and integration between the LEA's different approaches. The policy makes reference to the role of the LEA in providing support, challenge and intervention but does not spell out how the LEA intends to do this. Links are not drawn in detail with arrangements for providing additional support for schools in difficulties. Importantly, the relationship between this policy and the strategy for its implementation, for instance, the Educational Development Plan, or the way it is to be delivered, for instance through link advisers or development groups, has not been stated.

### ***The LEA 's planning for school improvement***

35. Planning for school improvement is at a transitional stage. This section refers to LEA planning which occurred before the requirement to produce an Education Development Plan. Nevertheless, the work which the LEA has undertaken immediately before and following Local Government Reorganisation has placed it in a good position to meet and develop the new statutory responsibilities.

36. LEA plans are generally very detailed and thorough, although the planning cycle is not fully developed or wholly coherent with school development planning. Plans are defined in four categories:

- the Departmental Development Plan;
- the Education Service Development Plan;
- the schools' Development Plans;
- Service Unit Plans<sup>4</sup>.

37. The Departmental Development Plan represents a three-year strategic plan for the Education Department. This includes priorities which have relevance for all services and functions of the LEA. The priorities include a mixture of local and national priorities.

38. One aim refers to the direct work of the LEA to support school improvement and "to develop a policy for improving the quality of teaching and learning". However, despite including the priority for improving the quality of teaching in the general aim, the planned strategy for improvement is not made sufficiently clear. This aim is analysed under six general and appropriate objectives which cover:

- creating an Education Service Development Plan;
- refining the collection and use of data relating to school targetsetting;

<sup>4</sup>Service Unit Plans are discussed in Section 4 of this report.

- approving and monitoring of schools' annual plans and targets;
- developing a policy, procedure and criteria for LEA intervention where schools are deemed to be in difficulty;
- developing strategies for improvement in pupil achievement in any area identified by Members as being a matter for their concern;
- reviewing transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4.

39. The LEA has started to define a limited number of appropriate priorities in its Education Service Development Plan. These priorities are shared with schools, who are expected to engage with them and include them in their school development plan. The drafting of the Education Service Development Plan was co-ordinated by a Policy Officer and it addresses two priorities, literacy and raising the attainment of the more able, which have been agreed with Members, governors and headteachers.

40. The current approach to planning is complicated and does not help to portray a coherent and unified approach to school improvement. Both the Departmental Development Plan and the Education Service Development Plan include priorities for school improvement. The relative importance of the two plans and the relationship between the priorities are not clear. Nevertheless, the requirement for the LEA to present an Education Development Plan to the Secretary of State will help to reduce these complexities.

### ***Evidence from schools***

41. All schools are clear about the LEA priorities included in the Education Service Plan for improving standards of literacy and raising the attainment of the more able, and they agree with these priorities. Some schools also understand wider objectives, such as developing a common admissions policy and improving transition arrangements between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. All schools have, understandably in view of the national priority, incorporated literacy into their school development plans. Improving attainment of more able pupils is less consistently included except where it is identified as a key issue for action in the schools' OFSTED reports.

42. While schools clearly understand the priorities, they do not know enough about the LEA's planning cycle or the means by which the LEA has identified its priorities. In consequence, some schools have experienced difficulties in marrying the LEA's priorities with their own development planning cycle and one or two do not understand the significance of documents such as the Education Development Plan for their own school development. Generally, while the priorities are clear to schools, the mechanisms for implementation, for instance the role of development groups or link advisers, are not.

43. Developments for improving the attainment of the more able are at a very early stage. Schools are less clear what support is available to them in

developing this priority, although they recognise that an adviser has recently been allocated responsibility for this initiative.

## **Other LEA Plans**

### ***The LEA 's Literacy Strategy***

44. For the last three years, the LEA has identified literacy as a priority. Its comprehensive strategy document sets eight objectives. To date, the LEA has made considerable progress in meeting these objectives. For example, it piloted the Literacy Hour and group reading strategies in a cross-section of primary schools and has used this experience to provide valuable guidance to all primary schools as they begin to implement the National Literacy Strategy. National Foundation for Educational Research reading tests have been introduced throughout the LEA and the resulting data have been analysed and disseminated. The LEA successfully bid for Standards Funding for a Key Stage 3 literacy project. A literacy forum brings together representatives of the many groups who give direct literacy support to schools.

45. The LEA has set a realistic target of 85 per cent of its 11 year old pupils reaching Level 4 or above in National Curriculum assessments by the year 2002~ The LEA keeps its schools well informed of developments and the literacy strategy is managed effectively by a senior adviser with the English adviser coordinating the work of four literacy consultants.

### ***The strategy for special educational needs***

46. There is no policy for special educational needs, but the LEA has produced a useful and informative Special Educational Needs Service Handbook which provides guidance on the range of services available, as well as information about statutory assessment, and criteria related to the stages of the Code of Practice.

47. The LEA is currently undertaking a major review of its special educational needs strategy now that it is responsible for fewer special schools following Local Government Reorganisation. The present review seeks to undertake a full audit of special educational needs provision, and to develop an agreed strategy as part of its aim related to equal opportunities in the Education Development Plan. An officers' Steering Group has already submitted a number of separate papers on individual aspects of special needs provision to a Members' Task Group which is considering the range of special needs and provision within the LEA. Initially it was intended to develop the strategy by May 1998 but this has been delayed.

### ***The Behaviour Support Plan***

48. A draft plan has been formulated which has been circulated to schools for consultation and they are asked to respond in writing. Schools did not have a high level of understanding about the content of the plan or its implications.

### ***The Early Years Development Plan***

49. The Early Years Development Plan has been approved by the Department for Education and Employment. Its central aim for the first year is to secure a good quality, free, part-time school place for all four year olds whose parents wish it. Longer term objectives include the development of a common admissions policy.

## **CONSULTATION**

50. Schools and governors are well informed about aspects of their role and new developments. Communication within and between the LEA and its schools was a major concern raised by schools at the first LEA/schools Conference held before the inception of the new LEA. A working group has considered ways forward and has made improvements but this has not yet led to a written communications policy. The group has looked at information provided to schools and made improvements to its presentation, quality and organisation. The group also reviewed the networks for communicating with schools and has made some useful improvements.

51. Consultation is improving and is much more a part of the style of the new LEA, but practice is too variable. There are many potential mechanisms for consultation. Representatives from schools are included on LEA working groups and in addition there is a range of formal mechanisms for consultation. The Education Forum meets every six weeks and brings together the key institutional partners in the management of education. Meetings of the Leicestershire Primary and Secondary Heads Associations, special school headteachers, teachers' consultative committee and Governors provide opportunities for consultation with the Director of Education and officers.

52. Officers recognise the need to involve schools in developments and demonstrate a commitment to do so. This is spelt out in the Departmental Development Plan as an intention to develop through its working practices:

- accountability
- corporate working
- collaborative relationships
- working relationships which have an open style based on trust

53. All schools recognised improvements and the genuine intention on the part of the LEA to adopt a more open process. The attendance of link advisers and officers at development groups has been effective in promoting better communication. Some schools recognise that they have not always found the time to contribute as they would have wished.

54. Nevertheless, there is still variability in practice. There are good examples where all the working practices are developed but, conversely, examples where this is not the case. For example, representatives of schools directly participated in the process of revising the Local Management of Schools' formula but, in contrast, draft proposals to rationalise surplus places in secondary schools came as a surprise to schools. There is, however, no agreement or consistency about which issues will be routinely subject to consultation and by which groups. The reasons why a certain pattern of consultation is adopted for some issues and not for others are not clear or agreed. Common problems include short timescales; the use of different patterns of consultation, which are not understood or explained; and limited feedback on the results of consultation. This sometimes results in schools not fully understanding the reasons for the final decisions.

## **STATUTORY DUTIES**

55. The LEA fulfils its statutory duties with the exception of having an up-to-date policy for teacher appraisal and making arrangements for headteacher appraisal. The Director of Education is aware that arrangements for headteacher and teacher appraisal require attention and is awaiting guidance from the Department for Education and Employment before finalising arrangements. The number of schools where OFSTED report that Governors have not ensured appropriate provision of Religious Education and collective worship is of concern and the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education, assisted by the LEA, has taken reasonable steps to follow this up.

## **FUNDING**

56. County Council budget decisions in recent years have given priority to schools. The budget process is open to consultation at different stages. Early indicative budgets are discussed within the Chief Officer's corporate management team, which considers bids from departments and areas of growth and savings within the Council's capping limits, as well as the views of elected members and their funding priorities. A budget briefing takes place for the education spokespersons for the three major parties, from which each group forms its own budget proposals for discussion within the Council's Policy and Resources Committee, the Education Committee and the full Council. Governors are consulted about the budget in meetings of the Education Forum. Budgets are also discussed at the termly link Governors and Chairs of Governors briefings.

57. Recommendations from Member and officer groups carrying out corporate reviews are considered as part of the process. In addition, recommendations and budget considerations from departmental service reviews are discussed within the Education Department's management team.

58. The priorities contained in the Departmental Development Plan are adequately costed in terms of time, finance or both but this requires more rigorous processes to ensure that resources are adequately aligned to priorities.

59. The scheme for the Local Management of Schools has recently been the subject of a full review. The original scheme was aimed at maintaining a status quo for schools' funding at the time it was introduced. The new scheme is an improvement and was produced by a task group. Changes were made to the Age Weighted Pupil Units, particularly for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. The new arrangements reflect the current needs better.

60. The LEA makes budget statements available to schools for planning and monitoring purposes. Financial data is regarded as at least satisfactory by schools, although it provides insufficient information on trends - for instance on the effects of inflation, cost of living and teachers' pay rises - and predictions have to be made largely by schools themselves. As there is no link between school computer systems and the LEA, information is circulated on hard copy and not by disk. Where schools purchase support from the Bursar service, it is regarded as helpful.

61. At the end of 1996-1997 twenty-four schools had budget deficits which were mostly small. Financial control within the Education Department was the subject of District Audit reports (May 1 1996; March 1 1998) which found that the department's procedures for financial control and arrangements for schools were effective.

## **SCHOOL PLACES AND ADMISSIONS**

62. The organisation of schools in Leicestershire is exceptionally complicated. Admission to, or transfer between, schools can occur at ages 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11 and 14 years. This makes the task of managing the supply of school places and admissions to schools much more difficult than in most LEAs. Despite this, admissions are very well managed, and the number of appeals is low. The LEA is currently taking action to remove 950 secondary school places and will develop plans to remove 900 primary school places.

63. The LEA makes arrangements for the education of children who are excluded from school. These are more appropriate for secondary aged pupils than for primary pupils.<sup>5</sup> However, pupils up to Year 11 receive only two

<sup>5</sup>The education provided for excluded pupils is discussed in more detail in Section 5 of this report (paragraphs 169-176).

sessions of tuition every week, which is too few. Reintegration into mainstream schools has a high priority and is generally successfully achieved. A small number of pupils remain on part-time tuition for over one year, which is too long. At Year 11 the "Directions" programme plans a flexible package of education, training and support which is designed to meet individual needs and to help re-interest pupils in education and training.

## **LIAISON WITH OTHER SERVICES AND AGENCIES**

64. The Education Department maintains productive links with a range of other departments within the Council and with voluntary agencies and other external organisations such as the local health authority and the careers service. Co-operation across sectors has been a strong feature of Early Years provision. There is a good working relationship with the diocesan authorities which involves meetings on a regular basis and the LEA provides some professional advice and administrative support to the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education.

## **SECTION 4: THE MANAGEMENT OF SERVICES**

### ***The structure, organisation and management of the Education Department***

65. The structure of the Education Department is easy to understand and functions efficiently. Roles, including lines of responsibility, are clearly defined and the division of responsibilities within the LEA is logical. The Director of Education and four Assistant Directors comprise the senior management team, which is adequate for the size of this LEA. The senior management team meets regularly and has an overview of the whole work of the department. Each Assistant Director has line management responsibilities for a group of services. Services are grouped, where possible, on the basis of similar functions but also sometimes because of the workload or expertise of the Assistant Director. The four groups are:

- School and College Effectiveness
- School and College Support
- Pupils' and Student Support
- Policy and Resources

66. With the exception of a comprehensive and coherent system of performance review and staff appraisal there are suitable processes in place for Assistant Directors to set priorities, and to plan and manage developments. The services and teams have their own distinct management structures but they meet on a regular basis as groups to discuss progress and development. The respective roles of the services are well defined.

67. The LEA maintains a full range of services. Good procedures have been developed to ensure that the work of different services is well co-ordinated. The Director of Education has successfully worked to promote co-operation and joint working between the services, which extend across the groups. These joint working arrangements are fostered in many different ways. Assistant Directors assume oversight for the development of aspects of policy and for priorities in the Departmental Development Plan which require them to work with a number of services which are outside their line management responsibility.

68. Senior education officers (policy and schools) ensure good co-ordination between services and provide the flexibility to respond quickly to new priorities. Four policy officers take responsibility for the early stages of the development and implementation of policies which generally have implications for a number of services. When this work is sufficiently advanced it is transferred and becomes the responsibility of the most appropriate service. This work is thorough and detailed and there are many examples of its effectiveness, including LEA support to improving standards of literacy, the handling of complaints and the development of a health and safety policy. One of the most important roles of the three Education Officers (schools) is to identify, co-ordinate and monitor the support which is provided from a range of services to schools requiring additional support.

69. Communication within the Education Department and between services is effective. All service managers understand the LEA priorities and the contribution which their service is expected to make to departmental priorities and to the support of schools in difficulties. Considerable time has been invested so that officers are informed about developments and this has been largely successful. A large number of time-limited working groups have been formed for a variety of purposes. During the first stage of this inspection twenty-three such groups were identified. This has been justified so far, but it requires careful monitoring to see whether this continues to be beneficial to the schools.

70. The functions of the services are clear. They are described in an informative and helpful Summary of Services Booklet which is circulated to all schools. The booklet states the work of the service; the point of contact; and also whether a charge is made for the service.

71. The routine administration conducted by the Education Department is thorough, detailed and efficient. Reports to Education Committee are informative, well presented and generally cogently argued. Recommendations are explicit. The Education Department makes genuine efforts to reflect the best intentions of local democracy by being responsive to the issues raised by

informed and the work of the parent officer assists parents to understand their rights and duties. The investigation of complaints, in particular, is very thorough.

### ***Service Planning***

72. Services have development plans but the overall quality of the plans varies considerably, as does their format. Some of the better plans incorporate targets for the improvement of the service, through which the service can be monitored. For instance, the Arts In Education Service has targets for three aspects of its work - instrumental tuition, curriculum advice and performance. Plans establish priorities for development which attempt to incorporate the LEA's objectives, as well as the priorities which have a specific importance for the services. The understanding of LEA objectives was rather better developed in discussions with officers than had been expressed on paper and demonstrates that the process of development planning has proved more important than the written product.

### ***Service budgets; regulation and control***

73. Service budgets are clearly defined and procedures are in place to monitor expenditure regularly. This provides a good foundation for beginning to consider the value for money which the services provide.

74. Some other services depend on selling some of their service and are generally successful at doing so. For instance, 92% of primary schools, 100% of high schools, 94% of upper schools and 100% of special schools subscribe to the Local Education Authority Management Information Systems standard subscription service. About two-thirds of the schools subscribe to the Advisory and Inspection Service in 1997-98, and almost all make use of one or more aspects of it.

75. The commercially orientated services demonstrate the capacity to be flexible and responsive to need and to use a variety of methods to stimulate demand. The LEA maintains that the high percentage of income which depends on selling services has limited the strategic capacity to promote school improvement. For example, the Advisory and Inspection Service LEA cost is very low by national standards or by comparison with comparable LEAs. However, this is not a reliable indicator of the extent of advice and support available to Leicestershire schools, either from the Advisory and Inspection Service itself or from a combination of other services, notably from the School Effectiveness Group and Education Officers. The evidence from school visits shows that the LEA can and does work in a strategic way with schools. It has successfully identified schools requiring additional support and it provides some support to most schools. A very low number, only three of the schools visited, have not received sufficient support to improve unsatisfactory practice in one of the aspects inspected.

### ***Staffing and deployment***

76. Services and aspects of services which are centrally funded use many different methods of identifying the needs of schools but the criteria for deployment of staff are not always sufficiently explicit to, or understood by, schools. Some services, such as the Educational Psychology Service, have a mechanism for determining deployment to schools but, in view of the number of statements of special educational needs in some schools, the allocation seems low. Entitlement for the support to the Advisory and Inspection Service is clearly spelt out. Nine hours is the minimum entitlement which is allocated annually for link adviser visits (increased in 1998-99 to 12 hours). There is a carefully defined agenda for the use of this time with a further allocation of time for pre- and post-OFSTED support. This represents a substantial commitment, which is irrespective of the schools' phase, size or effectiveness. In this respect the allocation differs from the Government's stated policy of "intervention in inverse proportion to success". Evidence from the school visits shows that the support is not required by some schools and its effectiveness varies.

77. The LEA provides timely and expert support to schools in crises. The operation of procedures governing the schools which require additional support has helped to establish co-ordinated support for those schools which have particular difficulties.

78. The services are generally staffed by appropriately qualified personnel. The Advisory and Inspection Service can cover the basic curriculum, although advice and training for the subjects of the curriculum is in short supply. Despite several efforts at recruitment, there is no adviser for mathematics in secondary schools. There is a good balance in the secondary, primary and special educational experience of link advisers. Generally schools recognise that there are staff in all services who are expert. Schools report on a variation in the responsiveness and helpfulness of LEA staff but even in the best services there is room for greater consistency. Staff appraisal has not yet taken place in all services but will be undertaken by April 1999.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation of the work of services***

79. The Education Department is in the early stages of developing a coherent departmental policy for the review, monitoring and evaluation of services. The Local Authority has embarked on a corporate review process. This is a recent development. The Advisory and Inspection Service and Community Education have been identified for review, and in the case of the former, this has been completed and the recommendations have been agreed by the Education Committee. The review has involved members in discussions on the functions of the service and proposals for the development of its role and provision. In

addition, departmental reviews of areas such as special educational needs are taking place.

80. Different services have procedures for monitoring and evaluation in place but they lack coherence and consistency. A thorough audit of the arrangements illustrates that most services use more than one method. Most services survey customer satisfaction and customer perceptions of quality; a few services monitor contact with schools. Some services use performance indicators which generally provide information on the frequency and the extent of contact with schools. Developing an accepted set of performance indicators has been a target for development since before Local Government Reorganisation but it is still incomplete. In addition Assistant Directors meet the managers of the whole group of services on a regular basis. They review the progress in implementing the service and the Departmental Development Plan.

81. A Service User Group provides a mechanism to receive the views of schools but opportunities for schools to contribute to reviewing the performance of LEA services are not sufficiently regular or systematic. The group was originally established as a consumer group which reviewed a proportion of services annually and conducted an annual survey of services. The last survey was conducted in 1996/97; it was not conducted this year because of this inspection. The group has recently reviewed its functions and held a workshop on monitoring and evaluation.

82. The LEA does not have procedures for advising schools on the availability and quality of externally available services. However, the LEA has contracted some support, particularly for schools requiring additional support, from independent consultants. The Student Support Service make good use of other providers for training and work-based placements for disaffected Year 11 pupils in the "Directions" programme. Under the competitive principle inherent in procedures for Best Value, the LEA will need to review other providers and assess how far its services offer at least a competitive service.

## **SECTION 5: LEA SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT IN STANDARDS, QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

83. The findings are based on the evidence of visits to 33 schools. Visits were made to all the schools to inspect general aspects which included LEA support to improve:

- the use of data to set targets;
- the quality of teaching;
- school management and efficiency;
- the work of governors;
- pupils transition between the different phases.

84. Fifteen schools, which had at some time been identified by the LEA for additional support, were visited to inspect LEA support to schools with weaknesses or requiring special measures. LEA support to small primary schools was inspected in five schools. Specialist visits were made to nine schools to inspect LEA support to improve standards of literacy; to eight schools to inspect LEA support to improve standards of numeracy; and to 10 schools to inspect LEA support to Arts in Education together with three visits to the Arts in Education centre.

85. Twenty-three schools had made at least satisfactory improvement on all the five general aspects. Only two schools had not made satisfactory improvement on more than three. In all schools there was more improvement in the use of data, in management and efficiency, and in the work of governors, than in the other aspects.

86. A very low number of schools, only nine, had not received any support for one or more of the aspects. This included three of the five upper schools. In addition to other aspects, all nine schools had not received any support to improve pupils' transition from one phase of education to another. In part, this is because the schools had not requested support but overall it reflected the lack of strategic direction which is provided to transition.

87. The effectiveness of support varied between the different aspects. The support to governors and to school management (88% and 74% respectively) was judged effective in a higher percentage of schools than for the other aspects inspected. The support for the use of data for target setting (38%) was judged ineffective in a higher percentage of schools than other aspects inspected.

88. A very low number of schools, only three, had not received sufficient support to improve an aspect of unsatisfactory practice. About 20% of the support in all schools was judged to have had some effect but was insufficient to meet the schools' needs. Apart from a lack of attention to pupil transition, this was attributed to four main factors. Either there was inconsistency in the effectiveness of the support that was provided by, for instance, the link adviser; or there was an unwillingness on the part of schools to pay for the support. Support was not provided in a sufficiently timely way, sometimes following a critical OFSTED report or because the school had not recognised the areas which required improvement.

89. The LEA's contribution represented an acceptable use of public money in two-thirds of the schools. Where it was less satisfactory, it was generally because support had not proved effective and in most cases this was because it had not been sufficiently sharply focused on the issues which required improvement.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE USE OF PERFORMANCE DATA AND TARGET SETTING**

### ***The LEA 's contribution to improvement***

90. The collection and use of data relating to school improvement and target-setting have a high priority. The Birmingham Baseline criteria are included in the Leicestershire Early Learning Profile as a basis for judgements of added value in Key Stage 1.

91. The LEA circulates a satisfactory variety of data and its usefulness has improved recently. In both phases, the comparative data provided is not well calculated to challenge under-performance or tackle low expectations. Nor does it assist schools to build better systems of progression and continuity in pupils' learning by becoming more familiar with overall patterns of attainment of schools in the development groups. The recent data circulated to primary schools includes a good deal of comparative management data which schools have found interesting but are uncertain how to use. It provides comparisons with schools of the same size, but it does not compare schools serving similar catchment areas.

92. Link advisers have an important role in helping schools make use of the data for target setting and ensuring that they set challenging targets which will enable the LEA to meet its own targets. The evidence is that this has been successful in literacy, since the aggregation of the schools' literacy targets is only two percent short of the LEA's overall target.

### ***The effectiveness of LEA support***

93. The schools visited vary in the extent to which they have begun to use performance data to raise attainment, although all but one school has made satisfactory improvement in the use of the data. LEA support is effective in only 18 of 316 schools. Schools have generally welcomed and benefited from LEA in-service training and from discussion with link advisers but in the schools where support has not been effective there is a lack of awareness of the full potential of the data and how to use it effectively to identify areas for improvement. These schools also demonstrate confusion between using data to predict results and to set challenging targets.

<sup>6</sup>on of data for target setting; teaching; management and efficiency; governors and pupil transition, but, for many reasons, in some schools inspectors could not make judgements on the effectiveness of LEA support. Hence this number reflects the number of schools where judgements were made.

94. The LEA has been slow in providing leadership to help upper schools and their feeder high schools and primary schools devise common procedures for collecting data and setting targets and has not given a sufficiently early lead on value-added analysis. At least a third of all schools felt that there were weaknesses in the LEA-produced data. Secondary schools are unhappy about the late availability of the analysis of examination results.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING THE STANDARDS OF LITERACY**

### ***The LEA 's contribution to improvement***

95. Three years ago, the LEA saw basic skills as the key to improving GCSE results and a conference for headteachers early in 1997 made literacy one of the LEA's two overarching objectives in the Education Services Development Plan. Led by a senior adviser, the English adviser and four literacy consultants provide training and support for schools as they implement the National Literacy Strategy, set targets and seek to improve standards at all stages. There are meetings for co-ordinators in primary schools and for heads of department in secondary schools. Curriculum guidance to supplement the National Literacy Strategy's Framework has proved to be particularly helpful and a number of secondary schools are receiving support as they develop strategies for improving standards of literacy in Key Stage 3. Most schools subscribe to the Library Service. This provides a good basic service which includes loan stock, project boxes and professional advice, including help with the use of resources to promote literacy.

### ***The effectiveness of LEA support***

96. All but one of the nine schools visited for this aspect have made improvements since their Section 10 inspection and, despite some minor fluctuations in a few cases, the standards of attainment have risen. In the other school, the weaknesses have not yet been tackled.

97. The contribution of the LEA to improvements in literacy was sound in almost all the schools visited. The LEA has given adequate support in relation to need in five of the schools visited, but the other four would have benefited from further help. The support that has been given has provided satisfactory value for money in all but one school. The LEA has consulted widely on its definition of, and rationale for, literacy and as a result there is a high level of consensus among schools on the importance of literacy in improving pupils' learning.

98. Training by the LEA's literacy consultants in the Summer term has ensured that all primary schools are aware of the National Literacy Strategy. Schools involved in the five days' intensive training in the Autumn term clearly benefited. Written guidance, help with target-setting and attendance at

meetings for co-ordinators have all helped to promote improvements and schools receive helpful data on their performance. Perhaps inevitably, some schools have needed more support than has been easily available, and this has been particularly true for schools not involved in special projects.

99. The LEA link adviser is the main source of guidance but many schools would benefit from regular specialist monitoring and advice. Schools are not always aware that they need help on aspects of the literacy strategy, for example ways of giving due attention to extended writing, noting individual pupils' progress in reading and improving teachers' knowledge of word level work, including teaching of phonic skills. Schools that have identified specific needs have often been able to buy additional time from LEA staff or consultants

100. In high and upper schools, many of the improvements were generated from within. For example, staff saw the need to improve the support given to low attainers and took action. In one school, a supported self-study option provided additional help. One school sought the LEA's help in reviewing policy and practice and the LEA was able to recommend a consultant. Heads of English attend regular meetings arranged by the LEA to discuss important developments in the curriculum and its assessment. A conference on Key Stage 3 literacy was well attended and raised awareness of the need to extend the National Strategy to secondary schools. One of the schools visited had made a good start in implementing the LEA's own Key Stage 3 strategy. Not all schools felt able to afford to send English staff to LEA courses but at least they received some training and advice, albeit more limited in scope, through their subscription to the Library Service. Local development groups were often useful for discussing transition arrangements and general aspects of literacy; however, they were not felt by upper schools to provide an effective forum for discussing the educational needs of older students.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPROVING THE STANDARDS OF NUMERACY**

### ***The LEA 's contribution to improvement***

101. Leicestershire, like most other LEAs which have not been involved in the National Numeracy Project, has placed less emphasis on the development of numeracy than of literacy in its schools. Although attainments in mathematics are generally above national norms in the LEA's schools, Leicestershire has been more active than many LEAs in providing a strategic direction for the implementation of the national initiative by preparing itself and its schools to engage in the National Numeracy Strategy in 1999. Members have funded an appropriate three-year programme to raise awareness and undertake development work. This represents important preparatory work but it is unlikely, of itself, to be sufficient to tackle other fundamental issues such as the significant proportion of pupils who mark time when they transfer to new schools.

102. Using the experience it has gained from its literacy work, the LEA has established a suitable numeracy team which includes advisers and teacher representatives from different types of schools, including special schools. The numeracy team has met regularly to produce a detailed action plan. The plan falls short of identifying firm targets for improvement in numeracy standards at this stage, but it is reasonably ambitious in its scope. It recognises the need for the LEA to challenge schools; initially to prioritise numeracy and then to evaluate their own effectiveness in terms of the impact on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. However, an important omission is any clear steer to schools to improve pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 4.

103. The LEA has been unsuccessful in recruiting a specialist mathematics adviser to help its work with schools despite several attempts. It has, however, organised awareness-raising conferences for schools which have explained how it will provide support and help to schools to make the necessary management decisions to accommodate focused work on numeracy skills. It also attempts to keep schools up to date with developments through special numeracy newsletters. Good links have been established with Nottingham University and the LEA plans to trial numeracy project materials during the present year, prior to evaluating and disseminating the findings.

### ***The effectiveness of LEA support***

104. Overall standards in the schools visited are mostly sound, and often good compared to national expectations, but there is wide variation between schools in National Curriculum and GCSE results. There is also clear evidence that many pupils mark time in mathematics when they transfer between schools. Some aspects of mathematics, such as mental skills, are often under-developed. In all the schools visited some good work was taking place but in nearly all schools there was also evidence that a significant minority of pupils are not being sufficiently challenged in mathematics.

105. The LEA has had very little impact on improvements in numeracy to date. At least half of the schools are not aware of anyone in the LEA whom they could contact or who might be responsible for developments in numeracy. The schools have not identified improvements in numeracy as an area for development and they have no plans to seek LEA support in this area.

106. Several schools felt that, whilst the LEA had actively promoted in-service training on mathematics in the past, it had not been doing sufficient since local government reorganisation. However, the LEA is organising training related to the numeracy project for the Autumn term. Appropriately, one of the planned courses focuses on the development of mental strategies and oral work, which are relatively weak in schools.

107. Two of the primary schools visited are beginning to implement rigorously the approaches advocated by the National Numeracy Project in lessons. In these schools mathematics has a greater focus and there is significantly more pace in the lessons than elsewhere. The LEA's preparedness to support this approach suggests that its schools will be better placed to respond to the National Numeracy Strategy next year as a result.

108. In the Year 7 and Year 10 classes observed, following admission to high school or upper school, a significant minority of pupils are often unnecessarily working on familiar concepts in mathematics. The LEA has yet to challenge schools to address this aspect of under-attainment in numeracy following the transfer of pupils between schools. Schools themselves do not make full use of the performance data provided by the LEA, nor do they make systematic use of transfer information to ensure that effective continuity and progression of learning are secured across the key stages.

## **SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS REQUIRING SPECIAL MEASURES AND SCHOOLS WITH SERIOUS WEAKNESSES**

### ***The LEA 's contribution to improvement***

109. Support for schools in difficulties is a priority both in the Departmental Development Plan and in the service plan for the Advisory and Inspection Service. Schools requiring additional support may be identified as a result of a proposal from the link adviser based on the LEA's own monitoring agenda, by the headteacher, governors, parents or teachers, or an OFSTED inspection. Schools fall into four categories of concern: those in special measures; those with serious weaknesses; schools the LEA considers in danger of falling into one of these two categories; and schools which, though improving, need additional monitoring or give rise to potential concerns and are placed in the LEA's safety net.

110. The initial responsibility for supporting schools in special measures and with serious weaknesses resides with the link adviser, who attends the feedback to the governing body. For the most part, however, responsibility is shared by the link adviser and an education officer. The education officer coordinates and monitors support as indicated in view of the issues identified, by appointing a support team and team leader and ensuring that appropriate inter-service action is taken.

111. The main principle underlying the LEA's support is that the school should be encouraged to manage its own improvement and to emerge from dependency. Support, through advice, consultancy and in-service training may come from the various LEA services or from headteachers or other staff in other schools. An overview of policy is taken by the Schools Requiring Additional

Support group which is drawn from the School Effectiveness Team and School/College Support Group.

### ***The effectiveness of LEA support***

112. The LEA provides effective support to schools with weaknesses. Support to schools with the most serious difficulties is timely, well planned and monitored. The identification of schools is appropriate and in most cases the procedures are understood by the schools.

113. Three schools have been placed in special measures. HMI has noted progress in all three, and in all cases schools special measures are no longer required. One further school has been placed in special measures recently. At the time of conducting the first stage of this inspection, nine schools had been identified as having serious weaknesses.

114. Fifteen schools were visited which are either currently receiving or at some time had received additional support. Three of these schools had been identified as having serious weaknesses. All but three schools were clear about the reasons why they had been identified for additional support. However, there was a hazy, understanding of when and how the school would come out of the LEA's "safety net" category.

115. In four schools, provision of additional support was either minimal or unclear; in one it had not been provided in a sufficiently timely way; in another, the school had not received the basic entitlement of link adviser time. However, despite this, these four schools, with the existing support combined with their own efforts, were generally making some improvements in key aspects of teaching and management. In two of the schools despite the absence of additional support the improvements were considerable.

116. Ten schools received substantial additional support. Support to a further school had been agreed comparatively recently. All but two had made at least a satisfactory degree of improvement. The support provided by a range of services or consultants and the LEA officers constituted the main element in the cost. In general the effectiveness of the support was closely monitored and in three schools had also included reviews by the Advisory and Inspection Service. As a rule the support focuses on improving the capability of the senior management team and in one school this relied too heavily on the confidence and ability of senior staff to effect improvement. Weaknesses in classroom practice did not receive enough attention.

## **SUPPORT FOR ATRS IN EDUCATION**

### ***The LEA 's contribution to improvement***

117. The Arts in Education Service aims:

1. to offer on a trading basis high-quality teaching in music, dance and drama to pupils, schools and colleges and community groups in Leicestershire and Leicester City;
2. to provide quality performance opportunities to Arts in Education students in a wide range of professional and non-professional venues;
3. to offer on a trading basis curriculum support and expertise in music, dance and drama to schools and colleges;
4. to provide value for money to [its] customers within the parameters of the budget and core funding.

### ***The effectiveness of the LEA 's support***

118. This large, well-organised service provides a wide range of performance opportunities in music, dance and drama. These include some prestigious central bands and orchestras. The rehearsals that were observed during the inspection, of the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra and Big Band 1, were directed very effectively, and led to high attainment in music. The service also provides other performance opportunities which, during 1 997-98, involved approximately 18,000 pupils. Some schools have built on these opportunities to raise pupils' attainment within the curriculum, and have sustained this attainment once the project has ended. For example, a class music lesson was observed in which Year 6 pupils who had participated in a project based on the work of Ligeti applied and further developed their skills as open-minded and confident composers.

119. The instrumental teaching provided by the service is variable in quality. Less than a third (9/29) of the teaching seen was good, and a fifth (6/29) was unsatisfactory. Some of the unsatisfactory lessons were not planned. The service should take steps to increase the proportion of good instrumental teaching, for example through improved monitoring and an appropriate programme of training. The service is concerned that instrumental teaching is not always available to pupils whose parents cannot afford to pay, but does not monitor take-up effectively. In addition to the instrumental lessons, three lessons in ballet or contemporary dance were observed. These were taught very effectively.

120. Curriculum support, provided by a team of advisory teachers in dance, drama and primary music, is more consistently effective. Most of the performing arts teaching (14/26) observed in schools that had received curriculum support was good or very good. The schools used their curriculum

support to raise attainment in the curriculum. For example, several schools had improved the standard of boys' singing, and one had introduced dance at Key Stage 4.

## **SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING**

### ***The LEA 's contribution to improvement***

121. As a proportion of the core-funded activities of the Advisory and Inspection Service, the work allocated to improve the quality of teaching is not substantial, but this is consistent with the LEA's strategy that the onus for improvement in this respect lies primarily with the schools. The LEA is moving away from an emphasis on short, issues-related courses (though not abandoning them). It takes the reasonable view that, if improving teaching is a function of headship, work should begin with the headteachers. Central to this strategy is improving the approach of senior management and governing bodies to monitoring and evaluation, the setting of clear objectives and the precise use of information. The main vehicle for this is development groups of headteachers researching teaching issues of common interest to their schools, with the LEA supporting and, ultimately, disseminating the outcomes.

122. Other, more traditional, means of developing teaching and learning, such as subject advice and in-service training, however, are available to schools through purchase. This is in addition to work on literacy and numeracy, and the teaching of the more able and SEN pupils, all of which have a pedagogic element.

123. The LEA has for several years provided guidance on the induction and mentoring of initial teacher training students in school. Guidance on the induction of newly qualified teachers is currently being revised. The course booklet sets out the in-service courses which are available for new teachers, senior managers and mentors.

### ***Appraisal***

124. A policy for teacher appraisal is not followed by schools and arrangements for headteacher appraisal are not consistently in operation. A recent report to Committee states that appraisal of headteachers has been scaled down owing to limited resources. OFSTED school inspection findings show that teacher appraisal is not taking place. A representative working group has been convened to look at the possibility of reinstating appraisal. Documents on both teacher and headteacher appraisal have been drafted. The LEA is awaiting the guidance which is expected from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) before finalising the arrangements. The LEA's strategy for improving the quality of teaching makes these developments particularly important.

### ***The effectiveness of LEA support to schools***

125. Of the 28 schools in which this aspect was evaluated, all but three were clearly improving, though only two were improving markedly. The LEA is promoting an appropriate strategy for improving teaching, but nevertheless the schools often do not understand the policy and there are rather too many examples of "support" which have been largely ineffectual.

126. Schools have made use of the LEA's monitoring and evaluation guidelines to improve systems. Sixteen schools have made a start at developing teaching and learning policies and others have developed better policies and practices for continuing professional development. In five schools, the senior management team has developed effective school systems which provide a sound framework to improve and maintain the quality of teaching throughout the school. In two of the schools, managers have defined clearly their requirements and astutely targeted the support which the LEA could provide; the other three schools are largely making progress without, or with a limited amount of, LEA support. One of the schools has used teacher-led projects which have been stimulated by the LEA to research and find ways of improving children's writing and reading. Both these projects have been successful.

127. In all other eleven schools, LEA guidance, support and advice have not been effective in developing sufficiently rigorous systems for identifying and planning to meet staff development needs. This is reflected in the findings of Section 10 school inspection reports. In consequence, the improvements in teaching have been patchy rather than providing a sustained approach to developing and maintaining quality overall. Some improvements have been made through staff changes and there are one or two good examples where link advisers have provided very effective support to individual teachers. Pace, expectation and challenge and standards for the more able continue to be issues for action.

128. In the schools which required additional support, three had received a substantial contribution to improving the quality of teaching. One school received fifteen hours of support in English, which had been effective in bringing about improvement. In a further two schools, the support had been concentrated too heavily on improving management systems and insufficient support had been provided for classroom teachers.

129. The LEA's programme for 1997/98 offered courses on its identified priorities. There is a weakness in the extent to which schools make use of subject advice and training. Upper schools hardly used the LEA at all to provide subject advice and training whereas there is a more variable picture in high schools. In primary schools, the national priority for literacy and baseline assessment has concentrated both schools' and LEA's efforts. The schools which contribute to active development groups are best served where there are

opportunities for teachers to meet to share ideas and to benefit from the in-service training which is arranged for the groups.

130. The schools' use of the LEA programme for the induction of newly qualified teachers varies. Schools using the LEA's programme have found it useful. Others have developed their own while continuing to make some use of the LEA guidance.

## **SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF SCHOOLS**

### **Support to Senior Management**

#### ***The LEA 's contribution to improvement***

131. The assessment of need for management support is predicated on analysis of OFSTED school reports. Monitoring and evaluation and middle management are the main focus of the LEA's provision. The Departmental Development Plan contains a number of elements designed to improve management in general, and strategic planning in particular.

132. Along with the LEA's work on schools requiring additional support, the emphasis has been on reinforcing schools' ability to evaluate themselves and thus manage their own improvement. The main focus is on development and strategic planning, and the central principle is that school managers should be reflective, self-critical and intellectually rigorous in defining what they wish to achieve in their planning and in their use of information to monitor performance.

133. The LEA has produced a series of management guidelines mainly for primary schools. The first of the series offers a rigorous model of school self-evaluation and makes use of the OFSTED criteria for planning and evaluating present practice. The helpful and comprehensive guidance has been developed by the LEA and a research group involving primary headteachers. The materials were trialled and evaluated in selected development groups. Other more recently completed guidelines include school development planning and target setting which has, as yet, not been circulated. Much of the entitlement to support provided by the link adviser has developed the management of the schools' approach to monitoring and evaluation and to the use of data and target setting.

134. Training directed at a number of different groups is co-ordinated by the Framework Group. This group, chaired by an Education Officer, plans a comprehensive programme, including an annual conference which invites distinguished speakers. The group has co-ordinated national training initiatives such as the Headteachers' Leadership and Management Programme and the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers. Conferences and

an advice pack are provided for new heads, and a large number of courses on development and post-OFSTED action planning have been held.

### ***Headteacher Appointments***

135. Careful procedures and advice to governors have been produced to assist with the appointment of headteachers. The process is very thorough and on appointment leads to plans for induction. New headteachers have an induction programme supported by specially produced information packs and guidance from headteacher mentors.

### ***The evidence of LEA support to schools***

136. The LEA provides effective support to improve the management of schools. Only three out of the 32~ schools have not made sufficient improvement in management and efficiency. All three schools have aspects of school management which are unsatisfactory and all are identified by the LEA as requiring additional support. These schools are obtaining support and are monitored regularly by the LEA.

137. Two of the schools were able to improve management largely as a result of their own efforts. Support was effective in 24 schools. In four, the support was very effective and demonstrated a very high level of expertise. These four included two schools which had been identified by procedures as schools requiring additional support. In the six schools where support had not proved effective, two schools had made very little progress and in one this was in spite of the high quality of the support. Three of these schools were small schools which required a different pattern of support which took into account the particular needs of small schools.

138. The support provided to all but two of the 15 schools identified by the LEA as requiring additional support had been effective. In four schools facing serious management problems, objective evaluation provided by education officers had enabled governors and senior managers to make difficult decisions and also to devise and implement better systems of management which encouraged the fuller contribution of school staff. Where support had not been sufficient to lead to improvement, it was because the problem was intractable or because staff had proved unable to make use of the support which had been provided. The effectiveness of the support was closely monitored to ensure that it led to the necessary improvements.

<sup>7</sup>Thirty three schools were visited to inspect LEA support to provision of data for target setting; teaching; management and efficiency; governors; and pupil transition but for many reasons, in some schools, inspectors could not make judgements on the effectiveness of LEA support. Hence this number reflects the number of schools where judgements were made.

139. The link advisers have a regular termly contact with all schools which is the LEA's chief means of regular monitoring of schools. In practice it provides support to senior management. There is some variability in the quality and effectiveness of this support. Most link advisers provide satisfactory support and this is valued. It is particularly effective when a school faces difficulties. Gaps in, and changes of, LEA staffing have reduced the effectiveness and led to a considerable delay in four schools receiving the required support. The recent appointment of a 14-19 adviser has helped to meet the needs of Upper Schools; in particular to support the headteacher to make better use of performance data and in the development of the school's strategy for monitoring and evaluation.

140. Schools make good use of LEA guidance and model policies, for instance in health and safety. These had proved effective and were used widely, especially when combined with advice and help from the link adviser. Training is less well co-ordinated and structured and, as a consequence, there is much less evidence of its effectiveness. Secondary school managers receive good and informative support from the Curriculum and Assessment Group. There is very little evidence of take-up or training for middle management.

141. Within the last year, an effort has been made to give greater coherence to management provision in the authority. The LEA sees itself as having a coordinating role, not simply making provision itself, but acting in a brokering role and involving others, including Higher Education and independent consultants. It has, therefore, set up a Management Steering Group, headed by an Assistant Director, supported by a wider reference group, including headteachers, which considers and ratifies any proposals. While schools do not always take up some potentially very valuable training opportunities, as yet there is little evidence of the impact of this important and necessary work. While much of the support is effective, and some of it highly expert, the structure of the support which is provided to schools, and how it interrelates to provide a comprehensive approach is unclear. Schools requiring additional support are the notable exception to this.

### ***Support to the appointment of headteachers***

142. LEA support to governing bodies on the appointment of headteachers is comprehensive, thorough and well regarded. New headteachers' experience of induction varied. Most were well served by visits from link advisers combined with the support of a peer mentor; one or two new headteachers were more isolated.

### ***Support to schools for OFS TED inspection and school action and development planning***

143. Support to schools for drafting and monitoring the action plan is very variable in both quality and effectiveness. In all but two schools, action and development plans are thorough and well-constructed documents. Schools received support when it was either requested or required. However, despite the entitlement to centrally funded link adviser time which is provided to all schools, very few schools receive any first hand support in monitoring the implementation of the action plan. Some link advisers discuss progress with heads, but, even in some schools where there have been critical OFSTED reports, the heads' perceptions of progress are frequently taken at face value.

144. New LEA guidelines on school development planning drawn up by LEA advisers and officers with contributions from a small number of schools and colleges were circulated to schools in September. The guidance includes reference to the LEA's Education Development Plan in the planning cycle but places insufficient emphasis on explaining the significance of the Education Development Plan in schools' own planning requirements. Most of the schools visited felt that the guidelines were of limited value. Schools have been required to draft development plans for several years. In consequence, their own planning strategies are well developed.

145. Appropriately, the LEA does not offer pre-OFSTED support unless this is specifically asked for and bought in by schools. About half the schools had received some briefing which they found helpful and appropriate.

### **SUPPORT TO SCHOOL GOVERNORS**

#### ***The LEA 's contribution***

146. Support, advice and information to assist governors in carrying out their roles in Leicestershire schools are provided from a number of LEA services and sources. Governor Support is the major provider of services. The functions of the service are to provide suggested agendas for termly governing body meetings and briefings for clerks, chairs of governors and link governors, to establish temporary and permanent governing bodies and co-ordinate the appointment of all governors, organise area meetings for chairs of governors with the Director of Education, support education forums, and provide information, resources and training for governors. The functions of the service are clear, and suitable information is circulated to schools and governors in the service handbook.

147. The LEA's gross and net costs per pupil are in line with other LEAs where comparative data is available.

148. Senior staff have specific management responsibilities and all staff have defined functional and operational responsibilities, which in the main are clear and well organised. The organisation and deployment of the staff is flexible in that staff work on all aspects of the service according to need. Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the support provided to governors are satisfactory, though there is no systematic assessment of governors' needs through any formalised process, such as an annual review or discussion with schools or a specific survey. In addition, whereas, for example, analysis of OFSTED school inspection reports highlights specific and serious governor issues — where action by the LEA is well organised and effective — it is not as thorough at revealing broader needs, for example the financial management and efficiency in primary schools.

149. LEA governor vacancies are high. Governor Support endeavours to provide a quick turn-round on governor appointments by monitoring how long each governor post has been vacant on its governors' appointments database and providing encouragement and support to fill vacancies, particularly for LEA governor vacancies. The systems for alerting governor vacancies are generally timely and efficient, and for LEA governors, Governor Support provides lists of vacancies at regular intervals.

#### ***The effectiveness of the LEA support***

150. LEA support to governors is effective. In general, governors felt well informed and had suitable opportunities for consultation. The findings of Section 10 school inspections supported this. The LEA's contribution to these findings is considerable. Information and resources such as the "Leicestershire Governor," the yearly planner and briefing notes on topical and pertinent issues are of high quality and used well by Governors to keep them very well informed. All clerks to governors are trained and invited to attend useful briefing sessions. The briefings for link governors are regular and helpful.

151. Governor Support gives speedy, prompt and helpful advice which enables Governors to play an effective role in schools. In schools, governors are now involved with a monitoring role and structured classroom observation. This reflects changes in the training programme, which is more focused on school improvement, for example through courses such as the governors' role in monitoring and evaluation and through an increase in the number of training packages tailored to individual governing bodies. Course evaluations for 1997/98 show high levels of satisfaction. Governor Support has taken steps to improve attendance at training and has increased the proportion of courses and briefing sessions for governors delivered at different locations and times within the county. However, this has not gone far enough; in 1998/99 about half the courses were still located at County Hall and only a third were conducted in the evening.

152. The support which is provided to governors by other LEA services is effective. Guidance from the Personnel Service on staffing issues and the procedures for appointing senior staff is appropriate, comprehensive and effective. Financial support is satisfactory.

## **SUPPORT TO IMPROVE TRANSITION BETWEEN DIFFERENT PHASES OF EDUCATION**

### ***The LEA 's contribution to improvement***

153. The LEA realises that the transition between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 needs improvement because of the disparities between the higher than national average results in National Curriculum assessments at Key Stage 3 and the attainment at GCSE, which is closer to the average. Currently a review of transition between Key Stages 3 and 4 is being conducted by the 14-19 adviser. The review intends to publish a report and a handbook of good practice relating to Key Stage 3/4 liaison and Key Stage 4 induction. It has involved representatives from schools in a steering group and intends to conduct a detailed analysis of pupils' standards of attainment at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The project is planned in detail and work was conducted in the Spring term 1998.

154. A working group established a common transfer record for pupils at Key Stage 2. The record consists of a Pupil's Folder; a personal record containing biographical information; and a summary curriculum record. This record has recently been evaluated.

155. The major vehicle for promoting liaison between schools is the development group structure which was set up by the LEA in 1989, originally to implement the requirements of the 1988 Education Act, including the National Curriculum. The development groups are cross-phase associations of schools serving particular geographical areas. In most cases the schools are represented at development group meetings by the Headteacher, although other staff attend as appropriate.

### ***The effectiveness of the LEA 's contribution***

156. Although administrative arrangements for transfer are mostly sound, there is substantial variation in the quality of liaison between schools, particularly concerning arrangements to secure effective continuity and progression of learning as pupils move through schools serving different age groups. In several schools there is inconsistent or poor practice in relation to the transfer of information about pupils between schools, and in others there is insufficient curricular liaison to secure proper continuity and progression of learning. An example of this is in the development of pupils' mathematical skills

where pupils were sometimes set work which they had already completed in their previous schools.

157. The LEA's support to transition is effective in 17 out of 29 schools but, in 19 out of 29 schools, LEA support was judged as insufficient in relation to schools' needs. In these schools, developing greater continuity and progression required greater leadership and strategic direction.

158. There is very little evidence in schools of the use of a common transfer record. One hundred and seventy-eight schools responded to the LEA's recent evaluation. Fifty schools use the published record, about half as it was published and another half in some modified form. Seventy-six schools did not use it because they already had a similar system in place. Other schools cited cost and transfer to Rutland, which uses a different system, as major reasons against using it. Several primary schools felt that the record was costly and doubted that they should shoulder the burden without any contribution from the high schools.

159. The LEA seeks to remain involved in the development groups through the attendance of senior officers. Where this occurs on a regular basis, it is recognised as a useful means of communication and consultation between the schools and the LEA. Attendance by the LEA officers at development group meetings is by invitation, however, and not all of the groups invite an LEA presence.

160. The LEA is not, therefore, in a position to challenge and monitor the effectiveness of the development groups in promoting successful transition between schools. The LEA has encouraged the development groups to become self-organising and independent. Over time this has led to substantial diversity in practice. Some of the groups are very active, with 87 per cent said to be meeting more than half-termly. Several groups have improved the transfer of pupil information between schools by drawing up their own common transfer documents. Other development groups have a more restricted agenda. In these areas there is often less effective liaison, with more reliance being placed on individual schools taking the initiative.

161. Procedures to ensure continuity across the Key Stage 3 and 4 boundary between development groups vary from good to problematic. Therefore, gaining agreements on issues of curriculum continuity is particularly difficult when upper schools receive students from several high schools which have different policies and practices. This is exacerbated when a high school feeds two or more upper schools. Some upper schools have not been able to gain agreement with high

8Thirty three schools were visited to inspect LEA support to provision of data for target setting; teaching; management and efficiency; governors and pupil transition but, for many reasons, in some schools, inspectors could not make judgements on the effectiveness of LEA support. Hence this number reflects the number of schools where judgements were made.

schools on the most profitable use of the time following the completion of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum assessments. Pupils in the high schools do not always have the opportunities to commence GCSE courses following completion of National Curriculum assessments at the end of Year 9.

162. The lack of a common age of admission to primary schools results in differences in the access which pupils have to education as in some areas, pupils start school in the term of their fifth birthday, whilst in others, they all start at the beginning of the year in which they are five. Where pupils transfer to the high school at age ten, the primary schools do not feel as responsible for the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Assessment results as they do in the primary schools which keep pupils to age 11. Similarly, pupils who transfer to high schools at 10 are not always set literacy targets in their primary schools.

## **LEA SUPPORT TO SMALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

### ***The LEA 's contribution to improvement***

163. Responsibility for conducting a review of surplus places and developing a small schools policy has been assigned to a Policy Officer. A target date of September 1 1998 was set for presenting a report to Committee.

164. District Audit (1997) recommended removing 900 primary school places. The report noted that half of the small schools are less than 75% occupied, but the 37 smallest schools are designated village schools, where there is a Ministerial presumption against closure.

165. Nevertheless the following progress has been made:

- terms of reference have been agreed;
- the Members' task group has received detailed data on both primary and secondary schools;
- detailed plans and consultation to close the smallest village school have been deferred until the results of the review have been determined; preparation and verification of data on school capacity, pupil forecasts and small schools protection are under way;
- a decision has been made to consult on the broad principles of a small schools policy - a questionnaire has been sent to schools which asks for views and information on school support and school facilities.

166. The additional support which the LEA provides currently to 96 primary schools is the small schools' protection which amounts to £2,222,143 for 8,177 pupils.

### ***The effectiveness of LEA support***

167. Specific support was effective in only two of the five small schools visited. In both these schools, the Section 10 inspection report had not identified difficulties which are specifically related to the size of the school. In the other schools visited, where LEA support was ineffective, issues of curriculum planning, weaknesses in specific subjects and the teaching of mixed age classes had been identified.

168. The additional budget allocated for small schools is used well by the schools to purchase additional support, extra teachers or ancillary support. However, there is little evidence of specific guidance, advice and support to address the particular curriculum, resources and social issues of small schools. Guidance on target setting does provide some advice to small schools and advises them to use individual pupil data to set targets. However, the guidance has still to be circulated and therefore is a little late to help schools with the early stages of this development. The development groups vary in the extent to which they can support the schools, although subscription to one group is reduced for small schools because it is based on pupil numbers. One school belongs to a mutual support group for small schools but this group had received no help from the LEA.

169. All small schools were asked to respond to a consultation document to assist in the development of the small schools policy. The schools' responses to this document have provided the basis for drafting a policy. This draft policy now awaits Members, agreement before it is circulated to schools for further consultation.

## **REDUCING SCHOOL EXCLUSION AND PROVISION FOR EXCLUDED PUPILS**

### ***The LEA 's contribution to school improvement***

170. Exclusions are carefully monitored by the Access and Welfare Service, which also provides schools with advice on the legal implications of exclusion. Provision for pupils who are at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded is made in four different ways:

- primary aged pupils are supported by the Educational Psychology Service through one of its specialist services, Young Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (YEBD). This provides specialist support where there is an urgent need to support pupils with behaviour problems at Key Stage 1.

the Teaching Service of the Student Support Service makes provision for primary and secondary aged pupils who have been excluded from school, supports pupils with behavioural difficulties in mainstream primary and secondary schools, and provides education for "looked after" children in social services establishments.

- the “Directions” team of the Student Support Service also works with the careers and youth service and with a wide range of employers and training schemes to provide a flexible package of support to re-motivate Year 11 pupils in training and education.
- residential support is provided at Moel Lllys, the LEA’s residential centre for pupils who have low self-esteem, poor social skills and are poor attenders. The centre was visited briefly and at a time when pupil numbers were low owing to structural work and staff illness. Therefore an evaluation of the effectiveness has not proved possible.

### ***The effectiveness of the LEA ‘s support***

171. An Annual Report to the Education Committee provides an opportunity for reviewing the effectiveness of services which work with schools to prevent exclusion and provide education to pupils who are excluded from schools. This report points to some success. In particular, the LEA is able to show a reduction in permanent exclusions and in primary exclusions and low levels of repeat exclusions, and a high success rate in reintegration of permanently excluded pupils. A high level of pupils gain places in training, further education, employment and sixth forms.

172. Visits to two YEBD schools illustrate that the service is effective, well managed and professional. Both the schools provided evidence of effective specialist advice which has resulted in a marked improvement in the behaviour of pupils who would have faced exclusion if the support had not been available. Contracts are devised for individual pupils and the aim is to help schools find their own solutions. However, the support in addressing the individual pupils’ problems does not always extend to reviewing the schools’ approaches to behaviour management.

173. Visits were made to both county area bases of the Teaching Service. Pupils of all ages who are excluded from school are supported by teachers from the service. The teachers also provide some in-school support for pupils at risk of exclusion. Pupils receive at least two sessions of tuition each week. Pupils’ progress is reviewed every six weeks and there is an appropriate focus on reintegration into school. Arrangements whereby teachers transport the pupils to the county base are unsatisfactory, not only because of the inefficient use of teachers’ time but also for safety reasons as teachers transport the children without escorts.

174. Teachers' relationships with the pupils' and levels of pastoral support, are very good. Teachers sensitively rebuild the self-esteem and confidence of the pupil. Nevertheless, the difficulties of ensuring that pupils have access to appropriate education in two weekly sessions cannot be over-stated. Teachers struggle to maintain continuity and progression in pupils' learning. However, pupils have an appropriate opportunity to extend their basic skills. Reintegration into school is achieved for most pupils in a timely way but seven pupils are in their second academic year where this part-time provision is their only access to education.

175. The placement of primary aged children who have very different needs and who sometimes attend at the same time as the older, disaffected pupils is unsuitable. One base has no toilet or washing facilities that are appropriate for young children.

176. The "Directions" Programme aims to develop individualised packages of pastoral support, careers guidance, training and education for each young person. The programme works with a wide variety of educational providers and work placements. The programme has marked strengths.

177. Good and appropriate use is made of the combined professional skills of the multi-disciplinary team. Relationships with students are very good, expectations and aspirations for the young people are high. The flexible packages of support are individually designed and meet students' needs. They all include mainstream education and training opportunities which frequently lead to permanent employment or training opportunities. Students compile a portfolio which reflects their achievements. Suitable developments are being planned to accredit the pupils' educational and training experience with a view to future routes of progression. A great strength of the programme is that the dangers of a group of disaffected pupils attending one class or site and mutually reinforcing a sub-culture of low expectations are avoided.

## APPENDIX I CONTEXT OF THE LEA

### (a) Characteristics of the pupil population

Indicator	Date	Source	LEA	National
1. Number of pupils in LEA area of 1997 compulsory school age	1998/9	DoE SSA Education formula		
Nursery			174	
Primary			48,008	
Secondary			39,238	
Special			416	
2. Percentage of pupils entitled to 1997 DEE free school meals	1997	DfEE Form 7		
i. primary			10.2	22.8
ii. secondary			8.0	18.2
3. Percentage of pupils living in households with parents/carers	1991	ONS Census of Population		
(i) with Higher Educational qualifications			13.5	13.5
(ii) in Social Class 1 and 2			38.5	31.0
4. Ethnic Minorities in population aged 5-15. Percentage of ethnic group:	1991	ONS Census		
Asian			0.2	0.5
Bangladesh			0.4	0.8
Black African			0.1	0.6
Black Caribbean			0.1	1.1
Black Other			0.2	0.8
Chinese			0.2	0.4
Indian			3.2	2.7
Other			0.6	1.1
Pakistani			0.1	2.1
White			94.7	89.9
5. Percentage of pupils:				
(i) with a statement of SEN	1997	DfEE		
primary			2.2	2.6
secondary			3.0	3.9
(ii) attending special school				
primary			0.4	1.1
secondary			0.5	1.6
6. Participation in education:				
(i) % pupils under 5 on the roll of a maintained school	1996/97	Audit Commission	38.0	All English councils
(ii) % pupils aged 16 remaining in full time education.	1996/97		51% in schools	60.0

## (b) Organisation of schools

### Types of school

Nursery schools	1
Infant schools	8
Junior schools	7
Junior and Infant schools	213
Secondary schools 10-14	6
Secondary schools 11-14	27
14-18	16
11-18	2
Special schools	7
GM schools 10-14	3
GM schools 11-14	1
Pupil Referral Units	-

### Surplus places

% Surplus	Year	LEA	National
Primary	1996/7	3.0	10.0
Secondary	1996/7	11.0	16.7

### Pupil/teacher ratio

	Year	LEA
Primary	1997/8	25
Secondary	1997/8	17.2
Special	1997/8	8.6

Source: DfEE

### Class size Rate per 1000 classes

Size of class	Year	LEA	National
31 or more KS1	1997	253.8	289.6
KS2	1997	385.6	379.0
36 or more KS2	1997	45.6	22.9
32 or more KS2	1997	47.1	35.0

Source: DfEE

## c) Finance

### Services maintained by the LEA

Service	£ Service Budget Actual expenditure 1996/97 (1)	£ Budget 1997/98 TRADED	£ Budget 1997/98 CORE	£ TOTAL BUDGET (2) 1997/98
<b>A INSPECTION ADVICE CURRICULUM SUPPORT SERVICES</b>				
Advisory and inspection	2,456,224	1,062,138	384,540	1,446,678
Governor support	337,545	156,200	81,810	238,010
LEA MIS	763,863	330,036	-	330,036
<b>B SERVICES WHICH PROMOTE ACCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT</b>				
Learning Support Service				
Educational Psychology Service	1,698,862	37,786	958,050	995,836
Student support	2,299,745	-	1,263,846	1,263,846
Specialist teaching support	2,718,225	240,358	1,351,090	1,591,948
SEN administration	518,521	-	377,660	337,660
<b>C MANAGEMENT SERVICES</b>				
Personnel services	512,773	133,450	155,290	288,740
Premises	213,083	-	116,210	161,210
MIS	1,270,590	-	-	-
Finance	968,386	273,180	421,910	695,090
<b>OTHER SERVICES –please specify</b>				
Arts in education	2456709	1596490	635110	2231600
Transport	276412	-	202246	202246
Awards	586104	-	353400	358400
Youth and community	641676	-	410320	410320

(1) Refers to service budget before Local Government Reorganisation

(2) Refers to total service budget after Local Government Reorganisation

## APPENDIX 2:

### THE PERFORMANCE OF MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

#### PUPILS' ATTAINMENT

##### 1. Attainment at age 7 KSI tests/tasks

	Year	% of pupils achieving Level 2 or above					
		Teacher Assessment			Tasks/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1996	81.7	79.3	2.4			
	1997	82.7	80.4	2.3			
English (reading)	1996	80.6	78.6	2.0	78.0	80.3	2.2
	1997	82.1	80.1	2.1	80.1	82.3	2.2
English (writing)	1996	79.4	76.6	2.8	79.7	82.0	2.3
	1997	80.0	77.5	2.5	80.4	82.4	2.0
Mathematics	1996	85.3	82.2	3.1	82.1	86.1	4.0
	1997	87.2	84.2	3.0	83.7	86.9	3.2
Science	1996	87.6	84.1	3.5			
	1997	87.9	85.5	2.3			

Source: DfEE

##### 2. Attainment at age 11 KS2 tests/tasks

	Year	% Pupils achieving Level 4 or above					
		Teacher assessment			Task/tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1996	58.0	60.1	-2.1	59.2	57.1	2.1
	1997	61.6	63.4	-1.8	65.8	63.2	2.5
Mathematics	1996	61.0	59.9	1.1	58.5	53.9	4.6
	1997	64.8	64.1	0.7	65.3	62.0	3.4
Science	1996	65.6	65.1	0.4	67.8	62.0	5.8
	1997	72.0	69.5	2.5	73.6	68.8	4.8

Source :DfEE

### 3. Attainment at age 14      KS3 tests/tasks

	Year	% Pupils achieving Level 4 or above					
		Teacher assessment			Task tests		
		LEA	National	Difference	LEA	National	Difference
English	1996	63.8	60.3	3.5	68.8	56.6	12.2
	1997	61.2	60.2	1.0	62.7	56.6	6.1
Mathematics	1996	67.7	61.5	6.1	66.8	56.7	10.1
	1997	70.2	64.0	6.2	69.5	60.7	8.8
Science	1996	69.7	59.7	10.0	66.4	56.4	10.0
	1997	71.7	62.2	9.5	73.5	60.8	12.7

Source :DfEE

### 4. Attainment at age 16      GCSE results in maintained schools

Level achieved	Year	LEA	National	Difference
1 A*-G	1995	94.7	93.5	1.1
	1996	94.6	93.9	0.7
	1997	93.9	94.0	0
5 A*-C	1995	44.4	41.2	3.2
	1996	43.8	42.6	1.2
	1997	44.9	43.3	1.6
5 A*-G	1995	89.3	87.5	1.8
	1996	89.5	88.1	1.4
	1997	89.1	88.5	0.6

Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the school year and on the roll in January of that year      Source: DfEE

### Attainment at age 18      A level results      Average point score per pupil

Number entered	Year	LEA	National	Difference
2 or more	1995	15.5	15.9	-0.4
	1996	16.3	16.8	-0.5
	1997	16.9	17.1	-0.2
Less than 2	1995	3.1	2.7	0.4
	1996	3.0	2.7	0.3
	1997	2.6	2.7	0.1

Source: DfEE

## 6. Vocational qualifications of 16 to 18 year olds in maintained schools

Level achieved	Year	LEA	National	Difference
Pass entries	1995	90.3	80.2	10.0
Pass entries (Advanced)	1996	92.2	92.2	12.8
	1997	67.8	67.8	-7.6
Pass entries (Intermediate)	1996	78.9	78.9	9.8
	1997	77.1	77.1	8.2

Source: DfEE

The percentage of students who were in the final year of a course leading to approved vocational qualifications who achieved them on the basis of the work done in that year.

## 7. Attendance

Percentage of pupil sessions	Year	LEA	National	Difference
Attendance in primary schools	1996	94.4	93.4	0.9
	1997	94.7	93.9	0.8
Attendance in secondary schools	1996	91.2	90.5	0.8
	1997	91.4	90.9	0.6

Source: DfEE

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