

Local Education Authority  
Progress Review  
Salford City Council

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**DISTRICT AUDIT**

<b>Reference:</b>	SA002-08-2002
<b>Date:</b>	December 2002

## Introduction

The Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice requires us to review whether Salford has satisfactory arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources. In planning audit work, District Audit (DA) needs to examine, on a sample basis, aspects of services which will help us to form an overall view of the Council's performance.

The inspection of Salford Local Education Authority (LEA) was undertaken by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in conjunction with the Audit Commission in 1999, and a report of the findings was published in January 2000. The inspection report indicates that the LEA's strengths outweigh its weaknesses. It also included a number of recommendations for improvement.

The LEA was required to respond to these recommendations in the form of a Post-Inspection Action Plan as required by Section 38 of the Education Act 1997. The Post-Inspection Action Plan was submitted to the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) – now the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) – in June 2000. The LEA subsequently produced appropriate progress monitoring reports in October 2000, July 2001 and March 2002 which were reviewed during this audit.

## Background

The aim of this work was to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of Salford's Post-Inspection Action Plan in achieving the changes required, and to examine how progress is monitored and reported by the LEA. The review not only focused on each of the recommendations made in the inspection report but also explored other issues raised by inspectors in the report but not subject to formal recommendations. In addition, we investigated the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the following recent District Audit reports:

- planning school places
- school budgets
- attendance and exclusions.

The review was, therefore, necessarily broad and wide-ranging – a format which District Audit has deployed in many other LEAs.

During the initial stages of the review, issues emerged which suggested that it would be appropriate to conduct a detailed probe into the role of the Inspection/Advisory Service (IAS). This additional work was conducted with the agreement of the Authority and is the subject of a separate report to the Director of Education and Leisure. It will be considered as part of the current Best Value Review (BVR) of the Inspection/Advisory Service. Only those IAS issues identified in the original Investigation/Recommendations matrix will be commented upon in this report - see Appendix 2.

The total review can be summarised under 6 broad categories which provided the focus for the work:

- strategic planning and the LEA environment
- school improvement - raising attainment
- ICT development
- school management and governance
- SEN strategy and support (including attendance and exclusions)
- resources and services to schools.

## Audit approach

The review was undertaken by two Education Specialists and co-ordinated by the Audit Manager for Salford City Council.

The evidence base for this study was gathered through:

- focus group meetings with Headteachers
- interviews with senior staff and service managers
- review of schools' files
- document review
- data analysis (including DA's databases).

The Authority was assessed against national expectations and statutory guidance.

This report identifies where the LEA has succeeded in achieving the outcome of the recommendations made by both Ofsted and DA and, where appropriate, suggests areas which need further development. The opportunity has also been taken to identify areas which are particular strengths of the LEA. A cross reference between issues investigated during this review and Ofsted/District Audit recommendations is provided at Appendix 2.

District Audit would like to thank the officers, Members and Headteachers of Salford City Council for their involvement in this audit. Their honest comments were extremely helpful.

## Main conclusions

### Context

The Education and Leisure Directorate has experienced considerable staffing problems in the Senior Management Team for the past 3 years. At no point during this extensive period of time has the LEA had a full complement of Senior Managers. The post of Deputy Director was filled for only 11 months during this period and, in spite of going to national advert on three separate occasions, Salford City Council was unable to appoint to this post. One Assistant Director (AD) post has also remained vacant following staff promotions to other authorities and another AD has recently returned to work following extended sickness absence. The former Director of Education and Leisure left the Authority in December 2001 and Salford City Council appointed an Acting Director for one term (Spring 2002).

The newly appointed Director for Education and Leisure took up post on 25 March 2002. It was agreed by the Council that the post of Deputy Director would not be advertised again, but that an AD with responsibility for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion would be appointed instead. This post has been filled and the appointee will take up his role mid-October 2002. For the first time in 3 years, the LEA will be working with a full complement of Senior Officers in the Education and Leisure Directorate.

It is, therefore, important to recognise the difficulties caused by this staffing turbulence when considering the findings of this report.

## Strategic planning and the LEA environment

Salford City Council has made variable progress in achieving the developments recommended in the Ofsted inspection report. Overall, insufficient progress has been made and, since the time of the inspection, there has been a fundamental breakdown in relationships with Secondary schools in particular.

The newly appointed Director for Education and Leisure is strongly supported by the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Education and Leisure. They have an awareness of the challenges facing the Education and Leisure Directorate, and recognise that future success at school and LEA level will be achieved through the collaboration of all parts of the Council.

The Director for Education and Leisure has quickly established strategies to enhance relationships with schools. There is a recognition that an environment of mutual trust and respect needs to be developed quickly in order to achieve success at LEA and school levels.

In order to achieve the vision for education in Salford there is a need for Senior Officers of the Directorate to seek opportunities to work more corporately, both intra- and inter-Directorate. Currently, Senior Officers are focused on their own particular divisional developments and areas of responsibility and there is a lack of synergy.

The post of Deputy Director has been vacant for some time and the responsibilities of this post have been undertaken by the Assistant Directors. Assistant Directors have, therefore, had increased responsibilities for a wide range of tasks. Since the time of the review, the Authority has appointed an additional Assistant Director who will have responsibility for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and inclusion.

The Data Management Team is a real strength of the LEA, in particular, Salford's achievements in developing the pupil level database and populating it with data and analysing this information. Members of the IAS work closely with this team to determine the information appropriate for schools and then use it purposefully to assist schools in the target-setting process (not only to set challenging targets but identify where additional work should be focused in order to achieve the targets). This is an area where Salford is performing better than other LEAs.

## School improvement - raising attainment

Secondary schools' performance continues to be below national averages and improvement has been minimal (improving 1 point score for 5 GCSE A\*-C since 1998). Salford City Council is the lowest performer compared to its Ofsted Nearest Neighbours (ONN).

The current budget of the Inspection/Advisory Service (IAS) is approximately £1 million. £250,000 of this is delegated to schools with the rest retained for activities in connection with the Education Development Plan. There has been no increase in delegation since the inspection of the LEA in 1999.

The IAS continues to offer a range of In-service Training (INSET) which can be purchased by schools either through a service level agreement or on a 'pay as you go' basis. In line with the recommendation made by Ofsted inspectors, the LEA has succeeded in establishing collaborative arrangements with other LEAs to provide cost-effective INSET, particularly for secondary schools.

The IAS monitoring policy has not been reviewed to reflect the DfES' revised Code of Practice for LEA-School Relations (published 2001 which was after the Ofsted inspection of the LEA). IAS staff continue to undertake monitoring activities through termly visits to schools.

School visits are followed up by a written termly report which is shared with Headteachers and the Chair of Governors. The information contained in these reports is very succinct and easily understandable. The sharing of information with Governors was a recommendation made by Ofsted in its report and the LEA now meets with this requirement. However, the LEA does not publish an Annual report to the school which pulls together all of its monitoring and support activity.

The IAS has taken action to ensure that weaknesses in school management are identified and recorded consistently by the General Adviser. Appropriate intervention and support is provided in such cases. The Support for Schools Causing Concern document was updated in October 2001 and published alongside the EDP.

The DfES now requires that 'intervention should be in inverse proportion to success'. A review of LEA schools' files indicates that this concept is not always applied in practice. Those schools designated as 'light touch' still receive a monitoring visit in the autumn term and again in the summer term (they are left to self-manage for one term only).

The LEA continues to use assigned 'General Link Advisers' who are the first point of contact for schools. Primary Headteachers in particular often call their nominated General Adviser for additional support and guidance on matters of management and policy. This type of on-going support is paternalistic and inappropriate. The LEA needs to recognise that this is supporting a dependency culture which does not fit with the DfES' concept of the self-managing/self-improving school.

### **ICT Development**

The LEA has taken appropriate action to improve IAS support to schools for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to enhance teachers' professional development so that ICT is used within the curriculum to raise attainment.

Ofsted recommended that the LEA should develop a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) strategy in raising attainment. The ICT I/A and General Advisers review NGfL annually as part of their school monitoring process. The IAS is now developing an ICT self evaluation and planning model for schools which should provide appropriate tools for moderated review.

NGfL grants are appropriately linked to school level plans for the achievement of NGfL targets. Funding has been allocated on the basis of an IAS survey conducted during the Spring term each year. Allocations are linked to the achievement of the DfES Pupil: Computer ratios. It is expected that all Salford schools will meet their targets for August 2002 (1:11 for primary aged pupils and 1:7 For secondary aged pupils).

The ICT Forum fell into abeyance following the departure of the Deputy Director and was only re-established relatively recently (in Summer 2001) by the Assistant Director (Resources). The Forum now has appropriate representation and meets every six weeks. However, messages reported to these meetings do not appear to be evident to Focus Group schools used for this review. Salford City Council's Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) statement is effectively the ICT strategy which is not satisfactory. A separate and distinct strategy for ICT in education is required at a level below the corporate IT/IEG strategy to address the issues which are particular and relevant to schools in raising attainment, managing information and school improvement.

Schools report poor communication from the Council with regard to slippage in the agreed timetable for broadband installation and this has led to frustration and a great deal of dissatisfaction. Senior Officers from across the council are now working together to resolve these difficulties and have issued up-dated information to schools.

Developments to date in Information Management Systems (IMS) have been piecemeal and lacking a coherent strategy. However, the existence of an excellent ICT team within the Education Directorate has meant that the Council met the DfES targets for implementing Unique Pupils Numbers (UPNs) and Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) which has replaced the DfES Form 7 data collection system. Satisfactory progress has been made in integrating IMS at LEA and school level.

## School management and governance

There has been an improvement in the LEA's management of governor vacancies. The LEA has met its targets within the agreed timescale. Governor vacancies have been successfully reduced from 28 vacancies in March 2001 to 17 vacancies in March 2002, with the greatest reduction in these figures occurring from January 2002.

The Governor Support Service now provides induction packs for newly appointed governors in line with DfES guidance.

To date the LEA has not provided a self-evaluation audit instrument to enable governing bodies to self-evaluate their effectiveness (as detailed in the Education Development Plan). It is understood that the LEA intends a new scheme to be implemented in September 2002 which will incorporate the new Ofsted framework for the inspection of schools.

## SEN strategy and support

There has been insufficient progress made in developing strategy and support for special educational needs and inclusion. The fact that SEN remains an area which requires urgent attention was immediately recognised by the newly appointed Director of Education and Leisure. Within 6 weeks of her taking up appointment, the LEA engaged an external consultant to review and report on the current position of SEN in Salford. During the time of this review, the consultant was awarded an extension to her contract in order to implement some of the key recommendations arising from her report to the Authority.

The LEA fails to provide a sufficient detail, specificity and quantification in its statements for provision of special needs (as required by the Revised Code of Practice for Special Needs). Recommendations on provision do not quantify how much support is required (or who is to deliver it) and described it in vague terms.

Unacceptable delays accrue between receipt of a referral from a school and the issue of a notice of intention to assess. The Authority is reminded that under the new SEN Code of Practice it is required to produce draft statements within 18 weeks of receiving a parental request or a referral from a school.

By September 2002, all LEAs are required to provide appropriate full-time education (25 hours per week) for pupils who are not in school eg those pupils permanently excluded. Salford LEA has made satisfactory progress on this issue and it is expected that there will be sufficient and suitable provision available to meet statutory requirements for Education Other than at school (EOTAS).

The current role and responsibilities of the I/A for SEN and Inclusion do not reflect the intention of the original job description. The LEA has reacted to a series of internal circumstances and used this post to deliver training for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) rather than focus on the wider national agenda. Developments in special needs are behind target and it is important that the role of the I/A for SEN and Inclusion is re-focused to support the Council's broader developments.

## Resources and services to schools

The funding formula has been changed to remove the excessive protection previously afforded to some schools through the 'small schools factor'. Following consultation with Headteachers, the LEA has implemented a 3 year transitional programme to reduce the number of schools receiving this element of the funding. The level at which the small school factor is applied is now appropriate (for primary schools with 200 pupils or less, and secondary schools with 600 pupils or less) and it is 'capped' to provide a maximum of £3,000 per annum additional support for primary schools and £11,000 for secondary schools.

The further delegation of funds intended for April 2002 did not take place. Nor has there been a review or revision of existing core and traded services eg IAS.

In line with the Secretary of State's expectations, the Council advised schools of their budget allocations by the end of February 2002. The LEA also produced annual financial benchmarking information to individual school level, identifying at least 8 budget headings, which was circulated to all schools. Headteachers report that the level of information they now receive is satisfactory.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the Council and schools are now satisfactory. Schools have been provided with a clear definition and specification for each traded service which includes clear costs and options (where appropriate) as well as an explanation of the monitoring procedures.

Confusion remains in the post-inspection action plan between service plans and service level agreements with schools. The Senior Management Team will need to clarify the function and purpose of these two documents in order to make further progress.

The Authority has made excellent progress in reviewing and establishing suitable procedures to ensure that health and safety issues in schools are dealt with within an appropriate timescale. The LEA has a very comprehensive method in place which appears to be working well.

## The way forward

The findings of this review have been discussed with the Director of Education and Leisure and the Chief Executive. An agreed action plan for taking the various recommendations forward is contained within this report.

## Strategic planning and the LEA environment

### Context

1. The Education and Leisure Directorate has experienced considerable staffing problems in the Senior Management Team for the past 3 years. At no point during this extensive period of time has the LEA had a full complement of Senior Managers. The post of Deputy Director was filled for only 11 months during this period and, in spite of going to national advert on three separate occasions, Salford City Council was unable to appoint to this post. One Assistant Director (AD) post has also remained vacant following staff promotions to other authorities and another AD has recently returned to work following extended sickness absence. The former Director of Education and Leisure left the Authority in December 2001 and Salford City Council appointed an Acting Director for one term (Spring 2002).
2. The newly appointed Director for Education and Leisure took up post on 25 March 2002. It was agreed by the Council that the post of Deputy Director would not be advertised again, but that an additional AD (with responsibility for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion) would be appointed instead. This post has been filled and the appointee will take up his role mid-October 2002. For the first time in three years, the LEA will be working with a full complement of Senior Officers in the Education and Leisure Department. It is, therefore, important to recognise the difficulties caused by this staffing turbulence when considering the findings of this report.

### Strategy

3. The Council has previously focused on regeneration of the Borough through the improvement of buildings and the environment. There has been a recent change in perception which now recognises that regeneration of the area can be supported through changing parental attitudes to education and employment.
4. The current re-organisation of primary school places is being undertaken as a whole-Council issue (rather than an educational process) in recognition of the fact that schools are at the heart of local communities.
5. Salford City Council endorses the principles of Best Value to develop services where improvement may be required. The Council has recently brought forward the Best Value Review of the Inspection/Advisory Service to July 2002 to ensure that any resulting changes are embedded in the principles of Best Value. The first step has been to appoint an external consultant with national experience to provide the aspect of external challenge.
6. The Member with portfolio for Education and Leisure is involved in scrutinising the action proposed for, and progress made with, schools causing concern. However, internal scrutiny mechanisms need further development to encompass other important aspects of educational development.
7. The ICT strategy is developing belatedly. Action the LEA is planning or has taken in recent months should address the problems identified by schools and provide a satisfactory basis for development. However, the LEA's work in this area does not seem to be apparent to schools. The LEA should take action quickly to communicate its plans for ICT to schools. To achieve credibility it is important that messages on ICT come to schools in a co-ordinated manner from the highest level in Education and Corporate Services. (See Section 3 for further details on ICT strategy and development).



## The Education Development Plan

8. The Education Development Plan 2002-2007 received approval from the DfES and therefore meets requirements. It was allocated an overall grade 3 and approved without specific conditions and feedback from the DfES indicates that 'with some minor adjustments, could become a model of good practice'. However, the targets for primary schools' attendance were considered to be insufficiently challenging.
9. The Council considers education to be one of its major priorities. Senior Officers and Members recognise the need to instigate radical change to raise pupils' achievement, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. The Educational Development Plan 2002-2007 now requires LEAs to identify the activities and tasks they will deploy to raise attainment and this has assisted Salford LEA to clarify the way forward. The national EDP priorities include:
  - raising attainment at early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2
  - raising attainment at key stage 3
  - raising attainment at key stage 4
  - inclusion – narrowing the gap and tackling under-achievement.
10. Salford LEA has added an additional local priority:
  - building capacity to manage improvement.
11. The LEA considered the priorities identified in School Development Plans (SDPs) as part of its EDP consultation exercise with schools. It was intended that this strategy would strengthen the link between the EDP and local priorities at school level. Headteachers confirm that they were consulted and involved more in the development of the LEA's EDP 2002/2005.

## LEA management

12. The post of Deputy Director has been vacant for some time and the responsibilities of this post have been undertaken by the Assistant Directors. Assistant Directors have, therefore, had increased responsibilities for a wide range of tasks which has impeded progress in some areas. The Council has recognised the difficulties and since the time of the review, has appointed an additional Assistant Director who will have responsibility for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion.
13. In order to achieve the vision for education in Salford there is a need for Senior Officers in the Education and Leisure Directorate to seek opportunities to work more corporately, both intra- and inter-Directorate. Currently, Senior Officers are focused on their own particular divisional developments and areas of responsibility and there is a lack of synergy. Staff need to develop a better understanding of what is happening in related areas, for example, early years, special educational needs, social inclusion. With greater understanding, senior officers will be enabled to see beyond the difficulties and identify the solutions which come from working together. They need to recognise how all functions of the LEA are inter-related and accept a shared responsibility to raise educational standards. It is important for the LEA to present a team working approach to schools.
14. The Director for Education and Leisure is strongly supported by the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Education and Leisure. They have an awareness of the challenges facing the Education and Leisure Directorate, and recognise that future success at school and LEA level will be achieved through the collaboration of all parts of the Council.

## Management of information

15. The Data Management Team is a real strength of the LEA, in particular, Salford's achievements in developing the pupil level database, populating it with data and analysing this information. Members of the IAS work closely with this team to determine the information appropriate for schools and then use it purposefully to assist schools in the target-setting process (not only to set challenging targets but identify where additional work should be focused in order to achieve the targets). This is an area where Salford is performing better than other LEAs. Inspector/Advisers have received appropriate training from the Data Management Team to ensure that they are familiar with the information they are using with Headteachers and are confident when applying it to the target setting process.
16. At the time of the review, the Data Management Team was managed by two Assistant Directors (one over-seeing ICT developments and the other over-seeing the development of pupil level data). This temporary management arrangement (pending the arrival of the new Director) has since been addressed. The work undertaken by the team is task-driven rather than embedded in an overall strategy to inform decision-making. The relocation of the team should now clearly signal that management of data and information is a strategic role which informs all parts of the LEA decision-making process.
17. The Directorate's ability to monitor the use of time, staff and centrally-held funds is variable. Senior staff are not able to easily identify areas which are over/under budget and re-allocate resources. The IAS has completed diary records but the capacity to collate and analyse them is not available to the service. The in-house software used for data input is not fully developed and, therefore, the Data Team are not able to produce reports easily. It is understood that the IAS is considering the use of a SIMS module for the future. This decision should not be taken in isolation but should be considered as part of the Directorate's overall strategy for resource management which will assist the LEA to target resources to need.

## Relationships with schools

18. In the past there has been a breakdown in working relationships between the LEA and Secondary schools. This was recognised by the Council and the newly appointed Director for Education and Leisure has quickly established strategies to develop an environment of mutual trust and respect. Opportunities to meet with Headteachers on a regular basis are continuing and she frequently visits schools in the Borough (her target is two per week). Headteachers now report optimism about future working relationships and the development of a partnership.
19. Primary schools welcome the level of support they receive from the LEA. They report that General Advisers visit schools on a regular basis and are available for additional visits upon request. Additional visits usually focus on matters of management or policy. The LEA needs to be aware that such action is supporting a dependency culture amongst the primary school sector and needs to redress this.
20. Some service providers within the Council clearly do not perceive schools as their customers. Headteachers report incidents which indicate that some service providers still see schools as the 'captive client' which is not in the spirit of Fair Funding or the DfES' Code of Practice for LEA-School relations. The Council is aware of this and is taking steps to rectify service delivery where possible, but encourages schools to seek alternative providers where improvement is not evident. The Council is now clear that it will not protect services which do not meet schools' needs.

21. In order to further assist schools to become more autonomous and self-managing, the Council needs to provide guidance to schools on how they can become informed purchasers of services. The Council must also seek out and adopt services and practices which fully support the rights of schools to be autonomous. This has already been recognised by the LEA and is part of EDP priority 6.8.

## School improvement - raising attainment

### Performance of schools

22. Comparative statistics on the performance of schools from 1998-2001 are shown at Appendix 1.
23. The overall increase in the level of pupils attainment in numeracy Key Stage 1 (KS1) has not been significant since the time of the last inspection. Salford is the third lowest compared to its Ofsted Nearest Neighbours (ONN) and fourth lowest compared to other metropolitan boroughs. Results for 1999 were very good with Salford ranking the highest compared to ONN and sixth highest compared to other metropolitan boroughs. However, this level of improvement was not sustained in 2000 and 2001.
24. There have been similar levels of improvement in KS1 writing and KS1 reading. Steady progress was made in KS1 writing in 1998 and 1999 (with Salford ranking the highest of ONN in 1999) but the rate of progress has been slower since. The rate of progress in KS1 spelling has been slightly greater over this period of time, with Salford performing better than 10 other metropolitan boroughs but the third lowest when compared to ONN.
25. Increases in the results at KS2 are similar for English, Mathematics and Science and greater than at KS1. However, in English and Science, Salford's overall progress since 1998 is the lowest of ONN (and sixth/fourth lowest respectively when compared to metropolitan boroughs) which must give cause for concern.
26. There has been improvement in pupil attainment at KS3 in all three areas. Satisfactory progress has been made in both Mathematics and Science. In Mathematics, Salford's performance is second highest compared to both ONN and other metropolitan boroughs. In science, Salford is fourth highest compared to ONN and fifth highest compared to other metropolitan boroughs. However, the results for English are less than satisfactory with Salford ranking the second lowest of both ONN and other metropolitan boroughs.
27. At KS4 the rate of progress for pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs is unsatisfactory. This is not only the area where the least amount of progress has been made since the time of the last inspection, Salford's results are the lowest when compared to both ONN and metropolitan boroughs. There has been a steady decline in the rate of progress since 1999. By 2001, Salford was second lowest compared to ONN and fourth lowest compared to other metropolitan boroughs.
28. There is a slightly better picture for pupils achieving 5+ A\*-G GCSE passes with Salford's improvement from 1998-2001 ranking the sixth highest of ONN and average for metropolitan boroughs. The rate of progress in 2000 was good with Salford ranking second highest compared to ONN and eleventh highest compared to other metropolitan boroughs. However, this level of improvement was not sustained in 2001.

### Literacy and numeracy strategies

29. The Education and Leisure Directorate has established literacy and numeracy steering groups. There is also a Key Stage 3 Managers' Group. The Authority has 5 Key Stage 3 strategy consultants who are managed by the Senior Secondary Adviser.

30. All Salford secondary schools took part in the national pilot for Key Stage 3 (KS3) literacy and numeracy. Specific KS3 targets were agreed with schools and the LEA's progress report indicates that the use of tiered entries at KS3 has provided a significantly improved match to pupils' abilities:
- in English, a target of 60% was set for Level 5 (the expected level for average ability at age 14) – 58% actually achieved it in 2001, compared with 52% in 2000. A target of 25% was set for Level 6 (above average ability), with 26% achieving that level in 2001
  - in Maths, a target of 58% was set for Level 5, with 59% achieving this level in 2001, compared with 56% in 2000. A target of 31% was set for Level 6 and actually achieved by 33%
31. Headteachers consider that schools have benefited from increased support for Literacy and Numeracy at Key Stage 3, which might be reflected in the improved pupil results outlined above. However, Headteachers consider that the LEA is taking part in too many pilots at Key Stage 3 level, with schools also involved in pilots for Science, Teaching and Learning in Foundation subjects, Modern Foreign languages and an extended ICT pilot. Headteachers also indicated emerging difficulties in securing suitably experienced teachers at this level.

### Monitoring, challenge, support and intervention

32. The current budget of the Inspection/Advisory Service (IAS) is approximately £1 million. £250,000 of this is delegated to schools with the rest retained for activities in connection with the Education Development Plan. There has been no increase in delegation since the inspection of the LEA in 1999.
33. The IAS continues to offer a range of In-service Training (INSET) which can be purchased by schools either through a service level agreement or on a 'pay as you go' basis. In line with the recommendation made by Ofsted inspectors, the LEA has succeeded in establishing collaborative arrangements with other LEAs to provide cost-effective INSET, particularly for secondary schools. Salford LEA has developed strong and effective links with Trafford MBC and Manchester City Council which involve joint-planning and shared delivery. Additional support for subject specialisms is brokered either through costed Service Level Agreements with neighbouring LEAs or through the trading of IAS time.
34. The LEA continues to use assigned 'General Link Advisers' who are the first point of contact for schools. Primary Headteachers in particular often call their nominated General Adviser for additional support and guidance on matters of management and policy. This type of on-going support is paternalistic and inappropriate. The LEA needs to recognise that this is supporting a dependency culture which does not fit with the DfES' concept of the self-managing/self-improving school.
35. The IAS has taken action to ensure that weaknesses in school management are identified and recorded consistently by the General Adviser. Appropriate intervention and support is provided in such cases. The Support for Schools Causing Concern document was updated in October 2001 and published alongside the EDP. Schools are placed in one of four categories:
- light touch
  - supported schools
  - focussed support
  - schools causing concern.

36. The IAS monitoring policy has not been reviewed to reflect the DfES' revised Code of Practice for LEA-School Relations (published 2001). IAS staff continue to undertake monitoring activities through termly visits to schools. Those schools designated as 'light touch' still receive a monitoring visit in the autumn term and again in the summer term (they are left to self-manage for one term only). It is important for the LEA to recognise that a school visit is in itself an intervention as it prevents the Head teacher from doing something she/he would otherwise have been doing. The continuation of regular monitoring visits to all schools has a central cost implication for the IAS service which is not appropriate under Fair Funding.

**EXHIBIT 1 INTERVENTION IN INVERSE PROPORTION TO SUCCESS**
**Number of visits to schools by Inspection/Advisory Service (since September 2001)**

<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>				
High performing schools (4 reviewed)	2	3	3	4
Average school (1 reviewed)	7			
SCC to LEA (1 reviewed)	11			
SCC to Ofsted (3 reviewed)	20	53	35	
<b>SECONDARY SCHOOLS</b>				
High performing schools (2 reviewed)	12	16		
Average schools (2 reviewed)	18	23		
SCC to LEA (2 reviewed)	12	43		

*Review of LEA schools' files (May 2002)*

37. School visits are followed up by a written termly report which is shared with Headteachers and the Chair of Governors. The Assistant Director has specified her expectations of the reporting format very clearly, and the information contained in these reports is very succinct and easily understandable. The sharing of information with Governors was a recommendation made by Ofsted in its report and the LEA now meets with this requirement. However, the LEA does not publish an Annual Report to the school which pulls together all of its monitoring and support activity.
38. The Council is clearly aware of the need to review the function and costs of the Inspection/Advisory service and has elected to bring forward the Best Value Review of this service to September 2002. This decision is to be welcomed.

## ICT development

### Using ICT to raise attainment (NGfL and New Opportunities Fund)

39. The LEA has taken appropriate action to improve IAS support to schools for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to enhance teachers' professional development so that ICT is used within the curriculum to raise attainment. There is a range of In-service Education and Training (INSET) available for ICT. Inspector/Advisers offer support to schools for development planning and City Learning Centres (CLCs) are extensively used for training. The medium-term plan of the LEA is to now develop on-line support through the North West Learning Grid (NWLG).
40. Ofsted recommended that the LEA should develop a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) strategy in raising attainment. The ICT I/A and General Advisers review NGfL annually as part of their school monitoring process. The IAS is, appropriately, developing an ICT self evaluation and planning model for schools which should provide tools for schools to review the effectiveness of their application of ICT across the curriculum.
41. Inspector/Advisers view their work in ICT as a coherent approach: covering infrastructure, New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training and standards. However, there is no evidence that I/As have evaluated the impact that the use of ICT in the curriculum is having on raising standards.
42. NGfL grants are linked to school level plans for the achievement of NGfL targets. Funding has been allocated on the basis of an IAS survey conducted during the Spring term each year. Allocations are appropriately linked to the achievement of the DfES Pupil: Computer ratios. It is expected that all Salford schools will meet their targets for August 2002 (1:11 for primary aged pupils and 1:7 for secondary aged pupils).
43. All except one school signed up with a NOF approved training provider. The evaluation of the success of NOF training in Salford schools reflects the national picture of variable quality and impact. The Inspector/Adviser for ICT has provided support to resolve issues relating to the quality of training with suppliers. The experiences of schools suggest that Distance Learning courses have been less successful without mediated support.
44. The range of ICT INSET is provided through a service level agreement (SLA) for primary schools, and 'pay as you go' for secondary schools. A range of schools' staff have attended the courses offered by the LEA and delegates are invited to evaluate each course they attend. The majority of attendees have indicated that courses have been good or better at meeting their needs and expectations.
45. Headteachers report that support for the curricular exploitation of ICT (across all phases) is satisfactory, although there is some misunderstanding with regard to the staffing of the primary consultant post. IAS support at primary level was provided through an ICT consultant who has now been appointed to a Key Stage 3 ICT post. The primary ICT vacancy will remain unfilled pending the outcome of the review of the IAS. This is an appropriate action at this point in time. It is understood that the LEA will broker support from external sources or refund the pro-rata costs from the SLA where appropriate or preferred.

## Corporate ICT development to support education

46. The Original ICT Development Plan (1998-2002) was satisfactory in coverage and supported by consultation through the ICT Forum. However, the Forum fell into abeyance following the departure of the Deputy Director and was only re-established relatively recently (in summer 2001) by the Assistant Director (Resources). The Forum now has appropriate representation and meets every six weeks. However, messages from these meetings do not appear to be evident to Focus Group schools contacted as part of this study. Officers indicated that Salford City Council's Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) statement is effectively the ICT strategy, which is not satisfactory. A separate and distinct strategy for ICT in education is required at a level below the corporate IT/IEG strategy to address the issues which are particular and relevant to schools in raising attainment, managing information and school improvement.
47. Salford City Council is a member of the North West Learning Grid (NWLG) consortium and the introduction of Broadband will be implemented through these consortium arrangements which should offer good value for money. All schools will receive 10 megabits per second (mbps) bandwidth, well above the DfES minimum requirement (2mpbs), at very reasonable cost. This should provide a sound basis for broadband content delivery in the future. The Authority reports encountering some difficulties in meeting agreed installation targets because the provider (BT) has not always honoured agreements, for example, with surveys and installation.
48. Schools report poor communication from the Council with regard to slippage in the agreed timetable for broadband installation and this has led to frustration and a great deal of dissatisfaction. Senior Officers from across the council are now working together to resolve these difficulties and have issued up-dated information to schools. All schools have now been advised of the dates/phases they are in for broadband rollout and the costs likely to be incurred. Salford City Council will need to remain aware of the importance of good communication in order to develop good relationships and partnership working with its schools as it implements the broadband initiative.
49. Schools indicate that they value the advice and support provided to them by the LEA about IT security, particularly physical security, data security and the implications of the Data Protection Act 1998.
50. The Council is not supporting schools sufficiently in terms of providing advice on procurement and standards. A list of preferred providers is available but schools report incidents which indicate they often receive poor value for money. Additional advice is available to schools if they request it but the Council is not proactive in this regard.
51. Developments to date in departmental information systems have been piecemeal and lacking a coherent strategy. However, there are signs that a strategic approach is under development, following the re-establishment of the ICT strategy group. The existence of an excellent ICT team within the Education and Leisure Directorate has meant that the Council met the DfES targets for implementing Unique Pupil Numbers (UPNs) and Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) which has replaced the DfES Form 7 data collection system. Satisfactory progress has been made in implementing IMS at LEA and school level.



52. Support for schools' ICT administration and curriculum systems are currently provided by separate teams. There has been little communication or shared understanding between these teams which has resulted in schools receiving a poor service. The Council acknowledges these difficulties and now intends to provide a single network and single support team (eventually including remote technical support via the broadband network) in order to achieve an integrated service.
53. Primary school Headteachers believe that there is a policy within the LEA to give secondary schools priority ICT support. Our investigations indicate that LEA staff award priority according to the severity of the problem. Particular incidents were cited by primary school Headteachers and it is District Audit's opinion that, in view of the urgency of these cases, appropriate action was taken by the LEA. However, it is suggested that this is a further indication of the breakdown in communication and trust between the LEA and its schools.
54. Although the development of EMS and other central systems is now reported to be led strategically by the Assistant Director (Resources) there is evidence that this is not the case in practice. The LEA is reviewing its central system requirements in order to meet the Government's agenda and intends to implement further EMS modules. However, decision making about the appropriateness of EMS modules continues to be made at divisional level rather than at a strategic senior management level. It is important that the LEA recognises that the management and targeting of resources is a whole-department issue and that systems to support this should be considered and agreed as part of an overall departmental strategy.
55. There are indications that work has been undertaken to address poor infrastructure in the LEA but it is still not possible to send electronic communications to all schools.
56. The Education Directorate does not have an adequate IT service agreement with Corporate IT which means that expectations regarding levels of service and support are not clear. Officers have now recognised the problems and have planned a way forward for ICT which should prove satisfactory in addressing the lack of corporate working strategies and communication:
- there are plans to establish systems which recognise Education ICT as acting as the Education 'client'. Education ICT will then act as an advocate for schools
  - the Director of Corporate Services is currently considering out-posting staff who support Education back to the Education Directorate
  - the LEA has now established working groups with adequate Head teacher representation. The Director of Corporate Services sits on the appropriate groups.

## School management and governance

57. The IAS produces termly reports which are shared with governors (via the Chair of Governors) to assist them in their role of evaluating the work of the school. (The sharing of information with Governors was a recommendation made by Ofsted in its report and the LEA now meets with this requirement.). Copies of these termly reports are also sent to the Headteachers.
58. Governors are not engaging sufficiently with their schools to act as a 'critical friend'. It is the responsibility of the LEA to empower schools themselves to attain improvement and then sustain it. Governors' monitoring skills need to be further developed to enable them to undertake these responsibilities.
59. To date the LEA has not provided a self-evaluation audit instrument to enable governing bodies to self-evaluate their effectiveness (as detailed in the EDP). It is understood that the LEA intends a new scheme to be implemented in September 2002 which will incorporate the new Ofsted framework for the inspection of schools. The Governors' Support Service has previously provided a basic 'Governing Body Health Check' but there is no evidence that the LEA follows through and checks that governors are using it. The LEA confirms that, currently, governing bodies undertake very little self-evaluation.
60. The Governors' Support Service satisfactorily monitors the findings of schools' Ofsted inspection reports to identify which schools require additional support for management and governance.
61. There has been an improvement in the LEA's management of governor vacancies. The LEA has met its targets within the agreed timescale. Governor vacancies have been successfully reduced from 28 vacancies in March 2001 to 17 vacancies in March 2002 with the greatest reduction in these figures occurring from January 2002. The LEA's success has been achieved through a number of strategies:
  - the production of a recruitment package (including a person specification and role specification)
  - targeting recruitment on ethnic minority communities
  - actively identifying potential governors from those already supporting other community activities.
62. The Governor Support Service now provides induction packs for newly appointed Governors in line with DfES guidance. Additional Governor Training can be purchased either through the Governor training SLA which is offered by the service or through the 'pay as you go' method. Attendance at Governor Training Events is good and well received.
63. Clerking services for governing bodies can be purchased by schools through a SLA. The SLA is comprehensive and offers a full range of options to schools. The LEA provides clerks for 81 governing bodies which enables it to monitor attendance and strictly apply disqualification criteria. Where the LEA does not clerk the meetings, the Governor Support Services have issued reminders of the expectations and requirements. However, there is currently no mechanism for any further follow-up action to ensure that Governing Bodies comply with statutory requirements.

## SEN strategy and support

### Policy and strategy

64. There has been very little progress made in the area of strategy and support for Special Educational Needs (SEN) since the time of the Ofsted inspection. The inspection report suggested that the recommendations of the SEN Commission (published in January 2000) should be implemented immediately. Instead, the LEA chose to set up working parties to further discuss the issues explored by the Commission. Headteachers are clearly frustrated that this course of action has caused a further delay in enhancing provision for children with special needs. Their perception is that SEN is 'dragging on without a conclusion'.
65. The work of the SEN Commission was highly valued at the time and most of its recommendations are still relevant to the development of SEN in Salford. It is suggested that the LEA re-visits this document when planning the future strategy and framework for SEN in Salford.
66. Headteachers expressed serious concerns about the LEA's decision to amalgamate the roles and responsibilities of the AD Pupil Services and the AD Support Services. This member of the senior management team was also assigned additional responsibility as the Acting Deputy Director. All Headteachers felt that the breadth of responsibility assigned to a single individual was unrealistic and unreasonable. They see SEN as the main casualty of the lack of Senior Officers in the Directorate. Headteachers reported delays in meeting deadlines, and achieving any real progress, particularly with regard to SEN developments. The Council's decision to appoint an experienced senior officer to the post of AD SEN and Inclusion is, therefore, to be welcomed.
67. The 'SEN Strategy and Policy Document and Inclusion Statement' published by Salford LEA in December 2001 does not cover all the aspects legally required as defined in the SEN (Provision of Information by LEAs) (England) Regulations 2001. In particular, it lacks the detail about how things will be achieved, and does not specify targets and milestones for the short, medium and long-term. The document itself needs to be reviewed, revised and re-issued for further consultation. This was recognised by the external consultant for SEN and the issue given priority. DA understands that a revised document was submitted to the Cabinet in October 2002. It includes a model for the delegation of SEN funding and consultation on the document will take place up to December 2002.
68. The lack of vision for SEN in Salford is a barrier to further success. Headteachers are unsure about the LEA's plans for SEN. They feel that they are not engaged in meaningful discussions with the LEA, and that much of the work undertaken by the SEN working groups did not feature in the published strategy document. The Authority needs to take this into account when planning the way forward and ensure that Headteachers are actively engaged in discussing and debating the vision for SEN and Inclusion so that ownership of the outcomes is established.
69. There is evidence that staff in SEN and inclusion services within the Education and Leisure Directorate do not perceive links with each other - SEN is seen as separate from inclusion. In addition, there is little understanding of the overlap with other Directorates (eg Social Services). There is a need for greater synergy between all services supporting SEN and inclusion if the authority is to bring about the changes required at an appropriate rate of progress.

70. The Ofsted report recommended that monitoring and evaluation arrangements should be developed for targeting resources and intervention at Stage 3-5 of the code of practice to ensure that support at School Action Plus stage is adequate. The LEA now has a document which sets out the strategy for using IAS to monitor SEN to gather an overview of provision in schools. However, there is no strategy for monitoring the use of delegated resources or their impact. The criterion for delegating resources for Special Educational Needs/Additional Educational Needs (SEN/AEN) is free school meal (FSM) entitlement which is not appropriate. Headteachers believe that centrally-held resources are allocated inequitably to 'those who shout loudest'.
71. Headteachers report that support for pupils with physical disabilities is satisfactory but there were some concerns regarding the inequitable allocation of support for children with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD). There was a positive view of the support for Looked After Children (LAC) which Headteachers say has developed rapidly.
72. Headteachers are critical of the Learning and Behaviour Support services available at School Action Plus. They report that it is difficult to access support for pupils with learning difficulties and Primary Headteachers, in particular, say that they 'have to fight a corner' for Schools Action Plus. Their perception is that the LEA is unwilling to adopt early intervention strategies. They see that moving to formal assessment for pupils is the only way to secure appropriate additional support for pupils. Headteachers also report that it is rare for pupils to receive behaviour support in Salford and perceive the service as inadequate. Headteachers say that when they resort to excluding difficult pupils, the parents contact the LEA and outreach support is then forthcoming.
73. Of particular concern to schools is the lack of English as an Additional Language (EAL) support. Both Primary and Secondary Headteachers suggest that the situation is becoming increasingly problematic in Salford with the increase in the number of asylum seekers. Support is provided by the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Service (EMTAS) and Headteachers report that some staff:
- arrive late and/or leave early
  - do not give feedback to schools' staff
  - lose time in travelling (which is not a good use of resources)
  - are unreliable (do not arrive at the school when expected).
74. There is a willingness amongst Headteachers of mainstream and special schools to work together towards the new agenda of inclusion, with special schools becoming Centres of Excellence and providing outreach support in mainstream schools. Officers have delayed providing direction and leadership with this aspect of the inclusion agenda pending the publication of the 'SEN Strategy and Policy Document and Inclusion Statement'. Whilst it is laudable for officers to want schools to develop within the context of a SEN framework and vision for Salford, the lack of vision and strategy has served to impede schools' willingness and desire to progress the national agenda.
75. Senior officers recognise that there is good practice in some special schools but suggest that there is little cohesion and common direction. Officers, therefore, elected to identify particular groups of pupils with SEN to provide a focus for further developments. These include:
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
  - secondary age Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) – largely mainstream pupils.

76. The intention was that by focusing on particular groups of pupils, schools would generate the expertise to undertake the local and national agenda. This methodology does not have the pace and rigour which is now required in Salford. For example, it is expected to take 2 years before the first pupils in MLD special schools will be re-integrated into mainstream schools with outreach support. It is suggested that this proposal is reconsidered when reviewing and revising the 'SEN Strategy and Policy Document and Inclusion Statement'.
77. Training opportunities in SEN will also need to be considered as part of the strategy. The authority has made good progress in training SENCOs (in conjunction with Manchester Metropolitan University) but this has taken up the majority of time available. Other training has included Teacher Assistant Training (4 days) and awareness raising on the revised Code of Practice. Headteachers would welcome the LEA providing the leadership in identifying training requirements for SEN developments, as well as providing training in SEN funding delegation when this comes on stream.
78. The current role and responsibilities of the I/A for SEN and Inclusion do not reflect the intention of the original job description. The LEA has reacted to a series of internal circumstances and used this post to deliver training for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) rather than focus on the wider national agenda. Developments in special needs are behind target and it is important that the role of the I/A for SEN and Inclusion is re-focused to support the Council's broader developments.
79. The fact that SEN remains an area which requires urgent attention was immediately recognised by the newly appointed Director of Education and Leisure. Within 6 weeks of her taking up appointment, the LEA engaged an external consultant to review and report on the current position of SEN in Salford. During the time of this review, the consultant was awarded an extension to her contract in order to implement some of the key recommendations arising from her report to the Authority.
80. The external consultant was engaged to begin working on the recommendations arising from her report. In the absence of a full-time Assistant Director SEN/Inclusion (now appointed and taking up post mid-October 2002), this was an appropriate way forward for the LEA. It was recommended by the external consultant that all of the following should be completed by April 2003:
- implement staffing recommendations (including appointment of EPs)
  - the Leadership Team to agree the vision for SEN and implement a programme for dissemination/training with LEA, schools and other stakeholders
  - clarify the title and elements for delegation relating to the Learning Support Service and Behaviour Support Service
  - a communication strategy to be agreed and implemented
  - a revised policy and strategy for SEN/Inclusion to be agreed and published with appropriate action plans, including one for delegation
  - agree and implement criteria for statutory assessment
  - Council to make a decision regarding resources for Early Years and SEN
  - the delegation formula to be agreed and implemented on a devolved basis supported by a training programme
  - allocate relevant Standards Fund for 2003/2004 in line with Salford's strategy
  - plan for a Parent Partnership Service (identify the resources to support this). Revise the information for parents, complete and publish
  - plan for more transparent allocation of resources for statements.

## The statutory assessment process

81. The criteria for assessing SEN have been reviewed to provide greater clarity and provide for consistent assessment. However, there is concern amongst Headteachers that the draft criteria were embedded within an information document for parents and were overlooked by many of those who have a vested interest.
82. Senior Officers in the LEA monitor the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) 43a and 43b but the checks undertaken by DA for this review showed discrepancies between the figures reported and the actual figures. The information has been shared with the LEA to enable officers to investigate further.
83. Salford experiences the usual difficulties caused by pupils' non-attendance for medical appointments. There are also significant delays in the process caused by not receiving timely advice from Educational Psychologists (EPs). Salford City Council has faced particular problems with a few members of the EP team which have now been addressed through appropriate channels. This has resulted in Salford LEA working well under EP capacity (4.1 full time equivalent EPs in post against an establishment of 11.5). Headteachers are particularly frustrated by the delays in the statutory assessment process and report that it is not always apparent why the Statutory Assessment Panel has deferred a decision. This appears to be an issue of timely communication.
84. Headteachers are also concerned about the lack of support for parents of pupils with SEN. There is one Parent/Partnership Officer appointed to Salford LEA. The Authority will need to review this service to ensure that it meets the minimum standards as defined in the new Code of Practice for SEN.
85. The Ofsted inspection report recommended that the LEA should develop transparent and equitable criteria for allocating resources to pupils. This has not yet been achieved. A review of five files relating to recently issued statements (May 2002) indicates that the LEA fails to provide a sufficient detail, specificity and quantification in its statements (as required by the Revised Code of Practice for Special Needs). Recommendations on provision did not quantify how much support was required (or who was to deliver it) and described it in vague terms, for example:
  - 'access to a broad and balanced curriculum suitably modified to meet his requirements'
  - 'advice and guidance from a careers officer at an appropriate stage in his education'
  - on one occasion, in the proposed statement for a pupil named 'Daniel', he was referred to as 'Robert' which is likely to cause offence to parents and the schools involved.
86. Headteachers also confirmed that statements are sometimes unhelpful. They confirm that statements are very detailed for pupils with physical difficulties, but less so for other pupils.
87. The review of the files also highlighted that unacceptable delays accrue between receipt of a referral from a school and the issue of a notice of intention to assess. The Authority is reminded that under the new SEN Code of Practice it is required to produce draft statements within 18 weeks of receiving a parental request or a referral from a school.

## Attendance and exclusions

88. The Education Welfare Service has carried out inspections of grant-funded, school based Learning Support Units (LSUs). The most successful are those units which are treated as part of the school's overall inclusion strategy. A Link learning mentor is now in post and the LEA is establishing communications mechanisms between LSUs. Headteachers welcome the Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiatives in Salford and feel that they are thorough and well-resourced. However, performance monitoring, evaluation and sharing good practice requires further development.
89. Salford has established a 'Pupil Placement Panel' which includes Headteachers. This has encouraged Headteachers to take ownership of the exclusion issue rather than perceive it solely as a LEA problem. Officers have recognised that ownership and empowerment of Headteachers (through linking exclusion decisions and subsequent placements to the allocation of the Standards Fund grant) is key to changing practice in this area.
90. Headteachers are particularly critical of the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in Salford. This was identified as an area of concern in the first Educational Development Plan (Activity 5.3) and improvement was to be achieved by September 2001. However, Headteachers remain unclear about what has actually happened (although one Head teacher referred to the service having been re-organised and implementing a 2-tier system). Headteachers also referred to the poor support provided to a number of schools experiencing 'crisis situations'.
91. Authorised absence in secondary schools is Salford's major attendance problem. The LEA is encouraging schools to target short term, parent-condoned absence and holidays in term time, reminding them of the 10 day maximum term time absence which Headteachers are permitted to approve. The Authority is active in conducting 'truancy sweeps'. The LEA has a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) target to improve secondary attendance from 88.3% overall in 2000/2001 to 91.8% by 2003/2004.
92. By September 2002, all LEAs are required to provide appropriate full-time education (25 hours per week) for pupils who are not in school eg those pupils permanently excluded. Salford LEA has made satisfactory progress on this issue and it is expected that there will have sufficient and suitable provision available to meet statutory requirements for Education Other than at school (EOTAS).
93. Some progress has been made in establishing links with other LEAs to develop mechanisms for sharing information about pupils who are not accessing educational provision (eg where Salford pupils are on roll in a neighbouring Authority). Agreement has been reached with neighbouring LEAs about responsibilities for follow-up of absence by the Education Welfare Service (EWS) where either the pupils' home or school is outside the borough. However, further work needs to be undertaken to improve joint-working with health authorities. The LEA is currently seeking to establish multi-agency, team based working (eg with Mental Health) to assist all those involved in supporting disaffected or vulnerable pupils to understand, and address, the reasons for pupils' exclusions.

## Resources and services to schools

### Funding and delegation

94. The formula review is on-going but the Authority has decided against a fundamental review of funding allocations in view of the national changes planned for 2003.
95. The funding formula has been changed to remove the excessive protection previously afforded to some schools through the 'small schools factor'. Following consultation with Headteachers, the LEA has implemented a 3 year transitional programme to reduce the number of schools receiving this element of the funding. The level at which the small school factor is applied is now appropriate (for primary schools with 200 pupils or less; and secondary schools with 600 pupils or less) and it is 'capped' to provide a maximum of £3,000 per annum additional support for primary schools and £11,000 for secondary schools.
96. The further delegation of funds intended for April 2002 did not take place. Nor has there been a review or revision of existing core and traded services eg IAS. The Authority planned to implement pilot schemes for several models of SEN delegation to start in 20 schools in September 2002. The allocation of SEN resources is currently based on free school meals (FSM). The new proposals were intended to target resources based on actual PLASC data and ward level deprivation indicator. Following the recent review of SEN the Senior Management Team has decided not to initiate the pilot funding schemes. DA endorses this decision as a pilot phase will delay the implementation of a borough-wide funding model for SEN. Funding issues will be further explored during the current SEN development stage.
97. In line with the Secretary of State's expectations, the Council advised schools of their budget allocations by the end of February 2002. The LEA also produced annual financial benchmarking information to individual school level, identifying at least 8 budget headings, which was circulated to all schools. Headteachers report that the level of information they now receive is satisfactory.
98. A formal intervention framework, with clear trigger levels for funding deficits and surpluses, has now been introduced. This has been communicated clearly to Headteachers and governing bodies.
99. Following District Audit's School Budgets report, Internal Audit have appropriately introduced a system to prioritise recommendation of school audit reports according to relative severity of the issues identified, using software from Ernst & Young. The service is currently reviewing its reporting methodology and considering further improvements, such as introducing graphical reporting to improve impact.
100. The intention to undertake regular financial reconciliations of schools' records has been delayed. Although the Authority carried out a trial of the processes in January 2001, the roll-out has been delayed because of problems with the new payroll system. The Authority intends to implement the system of financial reconciliations once these problems have been resolved, but as yet there is no timetable set for this work.
101. Training courses for Headteachers and School Managers now adequately cover resource management skills. Resource management courses are negotiated individually and costs are charged to the school. The Authority also encourages Headteachers to attend Headlamp training or the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH), and encourages aspiring Headteachers to study for the National Professional Qualification for Headteachership (NPQH).



### Services to schools.

102. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the Council and schools are now satisfactory. Schools have been provided with a clear definition and specification for each traded service which includes clear costs and options (where appropriate) as well as an explanation of the monitoring procedures. A 'Services to Schools' group has been formed to discuss, devise and monitor SLAs and to obtain feedback from schools. This group has appropriate senior officer and Headteacher representation.
103. The range of financial support packages (both internal and external) has now been reviewed by the Services to Schools group to ensure that they reflect the needs of schools.

### Service plans

104. It was recommended that the LEA reviews service team plans in order to clearly identify each service's contribution to targets in key corporate and educational areas (including clear costing, together with measurable and realistic success criteria). Confusion remains in the post-inspection action plan between service plans and service level agreements with schools. The Senior Management Team will need to clarify the function and purpose of these two documents in order to make further progress.

### Building maintenance

105. The LEA has taken appropriate action to increase the level of investment in school building maintenance. As a result, the backlog has been reduced. An Audit Commission Inspector visited the Authority at the end of 2001 and was satisfied with the progress made. Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes are in place for 3 schools. The procurement approach to these has been appropriate.
106. Priorities for school building investment are now transparent and are agreed with the Property Matters group which meets termly. This group selects the priorities for investment and there is appropriate Headteacher involvement in this decision-making process.
107. The condition survey for the Asset Management Plan (AMP) was completed in May 2002. This included temporary accommodation, which is appropriately considered in the context of the LEA's overall condition profile. The breakdown of condition elements has also been completed but not yet shared with Headteachers. This is a matter which needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

### Health and safety

108. The Authority has made excellent progress in reviewing and establishing suitable procedures to ensure that health and safety issues in schools are dealt with within an appropriate timescale. The LEA has a very comprehensive method in place which appears to be working well.

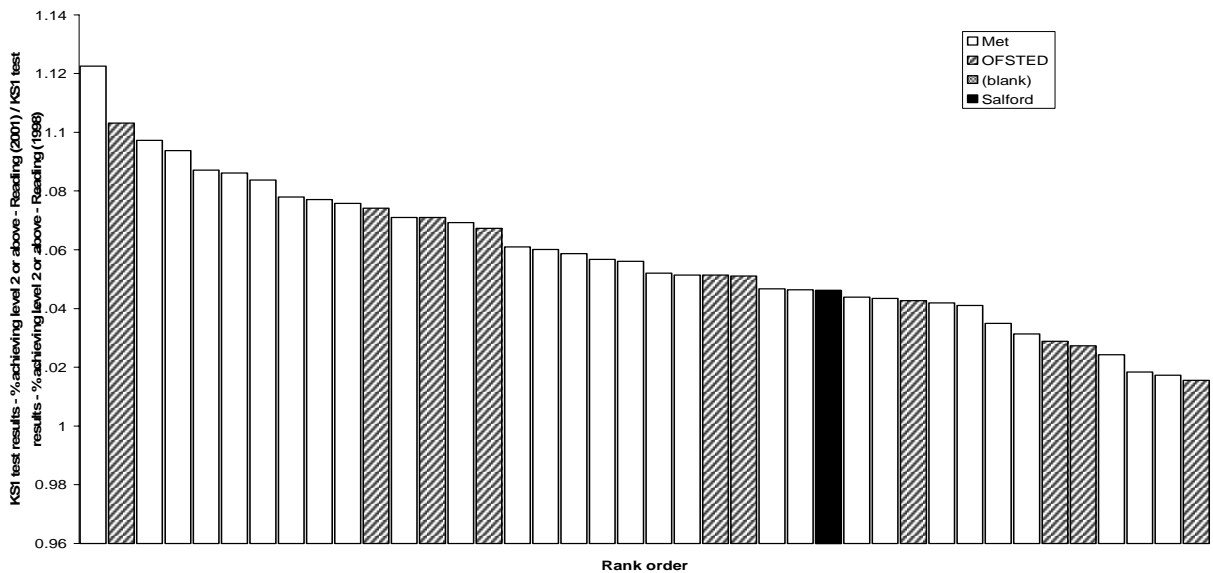
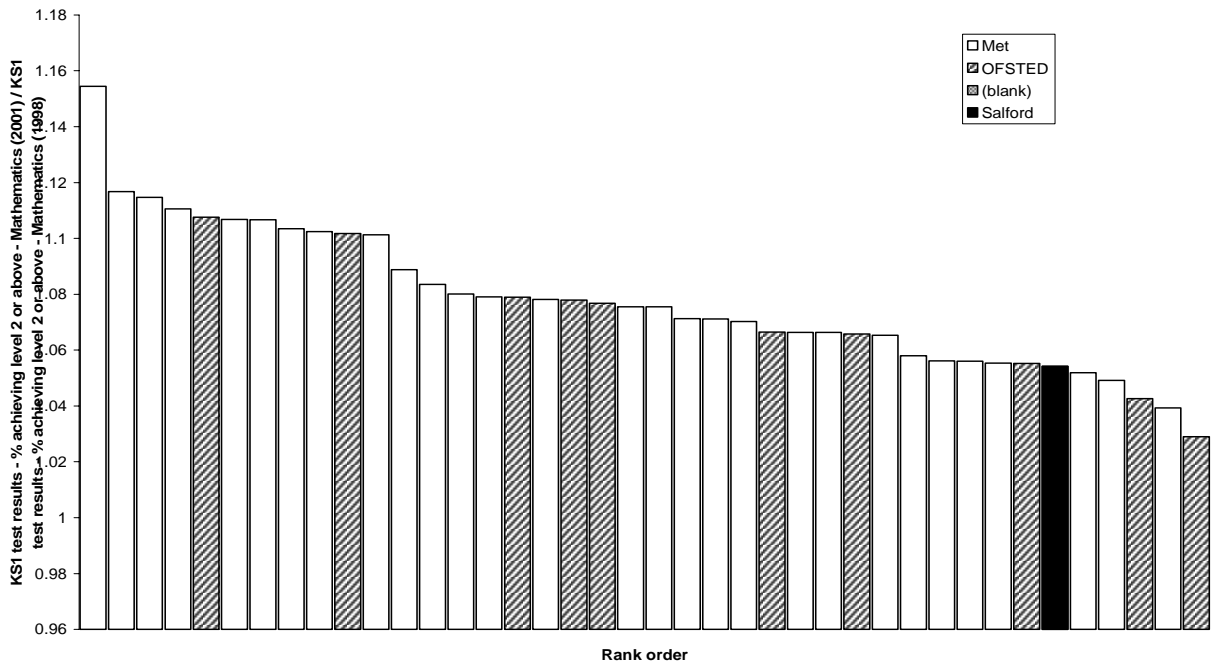
## Planning school places

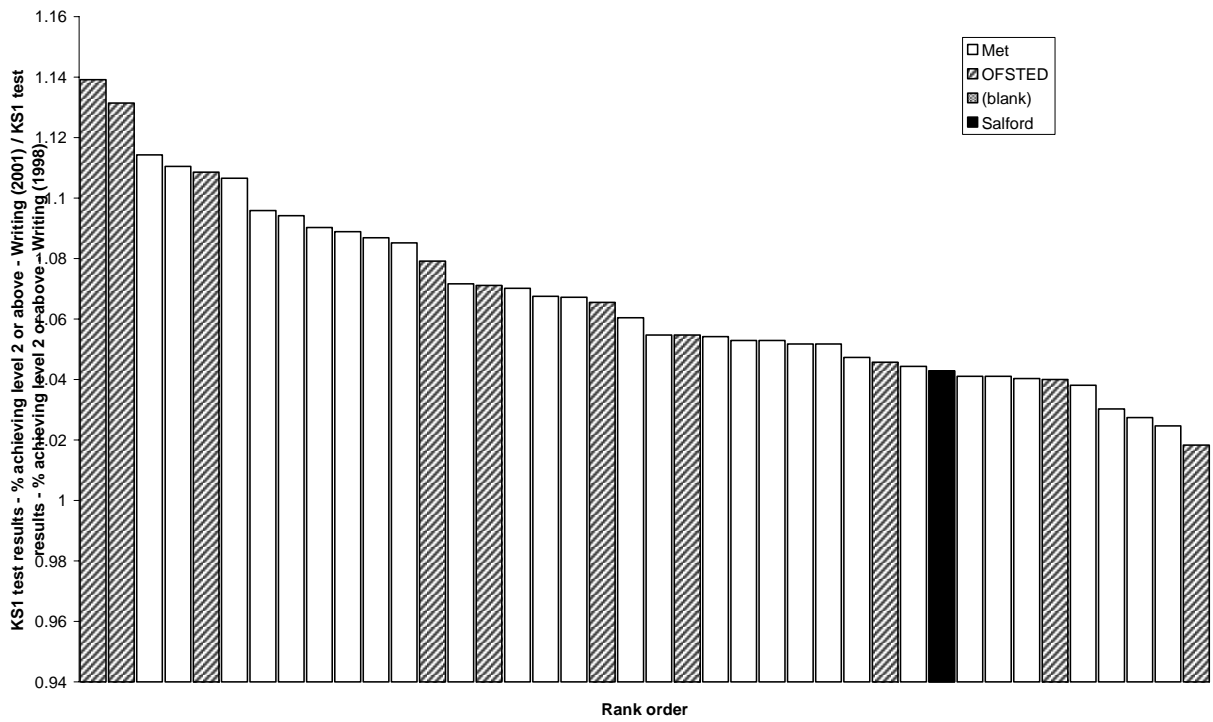
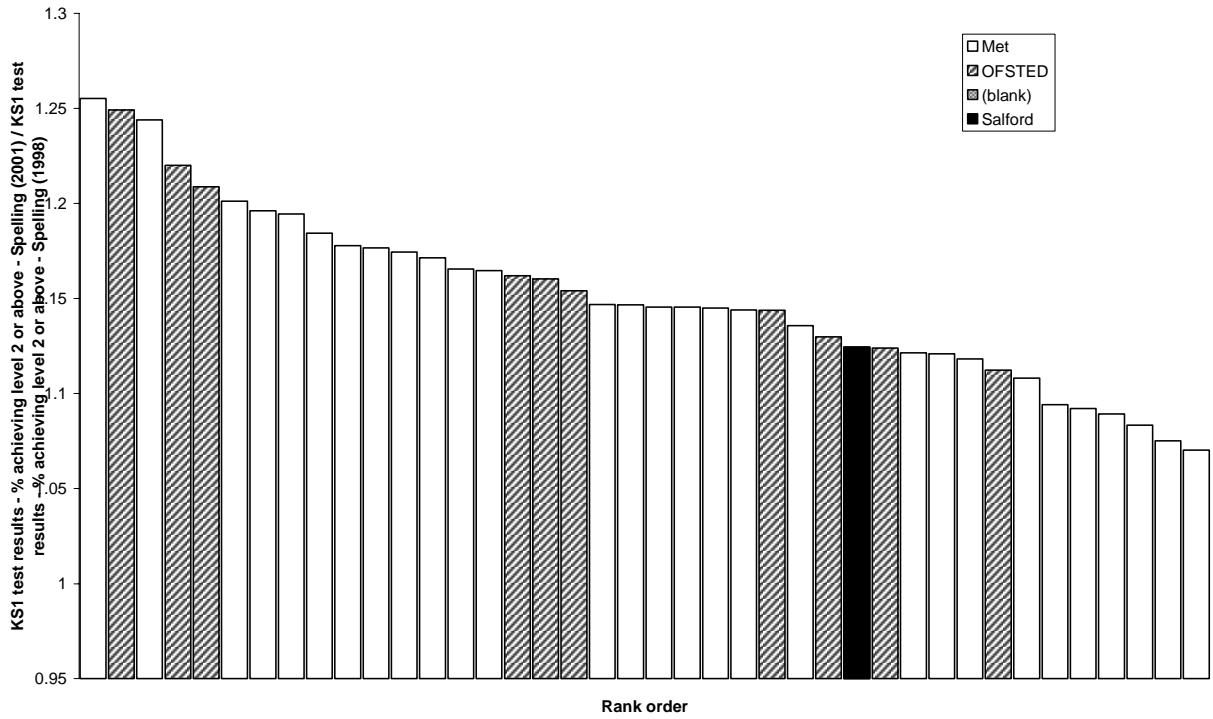
109. Some progress has been made in refining the pupil forecasting methodology. The Authority is now able to produce forecasts to ward and school level, taking account of housing developments, live births/GP registrations and cross boundary flows. However, school level forecasts have not been shared with or validated by schools and diocesan authorities as the LEA is revisiting the model used to achieve greater accuracy. School planning is currently based on cohort survival.
110. The last review of primary school places was 6 years ago. The Council perceives that there have been dramatic changes in population movements since that time. In February 2002 the Council issued a document entitled 'Strategic Review of Primary School Places'. This has been circulated to schools and other stakeholders for initial consultation. The document indicates that there are almost 3,500 surplus places across the primary sector (at September 2001) which equates to a surplus level of 15%. The primary school intake is anticipated to fall even further over the next five years. The Council projects a 4,000 surplus primary places (18% of its current capacity).
111. The deadline for the end of the consultation period was April 2002. The Council intends to issue an initial strategy document in September 2002, outlining priority options for further consultation. The Council is clear about its intention to conduct the current re-organisation exercise as a Council-wide initiative rather than an educational exercise. There is a vision amongst Senior Council Officers and Members that areas are communities, and that school closures have the potential to impact on other aspects of the City.
112. Progress with the primary school review remains on target. It is difficult, therefore, to understand the level of frustration reported by Primary School Headteachers. Some of it may be attributable to negative press coverage which is clearly beyond the control of the Council.
113. The Council reports that their relationships with Diocesan Authorities have significantly improved since the inspection, although little progress has been made in addressing levels of surplus places in voluntary aided (VA) schools in a co-ordinated manner. The LEA recognises this as a cause for concern.
114. A review of secondary school places conducted in 2000 indicated that there needed to be a reduction in the overall level of secondary surplus places to 9% by September 2001. In July 2001, one high school was closed and another two amalgamated. The reduction in secondary surplus places, although well progressed, has not yet been fully achieved.
115. Admissions booklets now indicate whether a school is likely to be oversubscribed. This is helpful to parents. The Authority has undertaken checks on the administration of admissions for oversubscribed primary schools to ensure that procedures are consistently applied.
116. The LEA's School Organisation Plan for 2001-2006 now appropriately reflects DfES good practice.

### Rate of increase in pupil attainment (1998-2001)

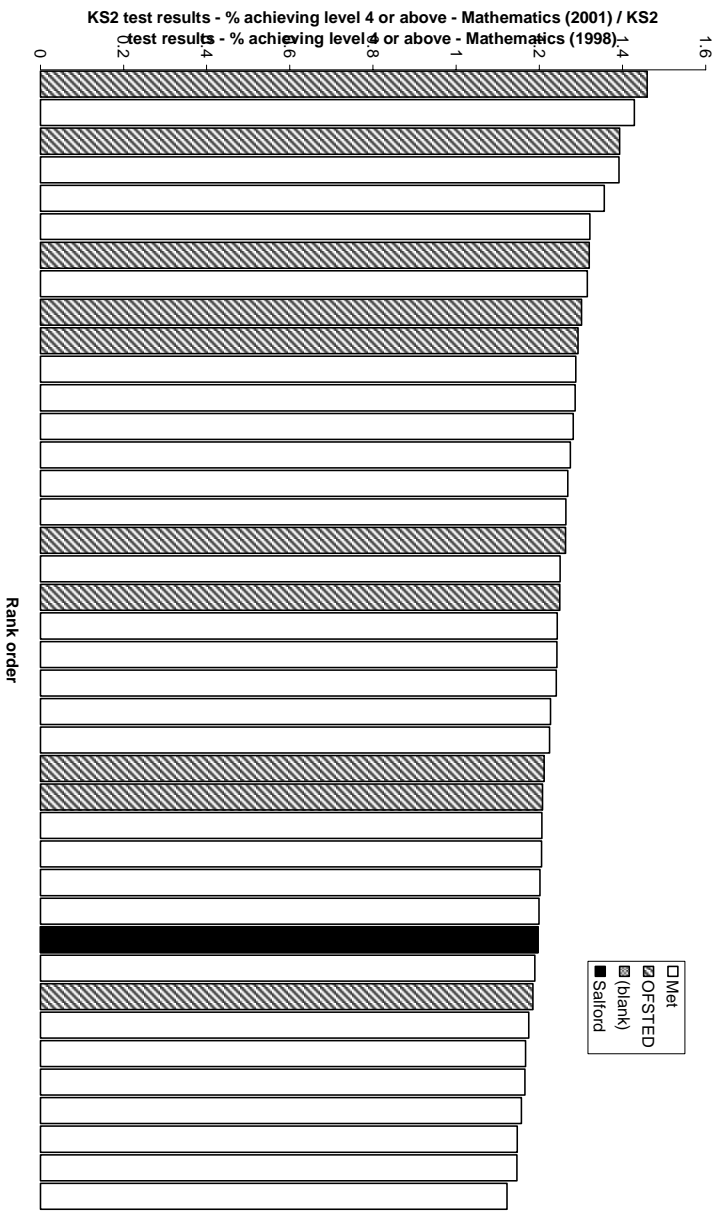
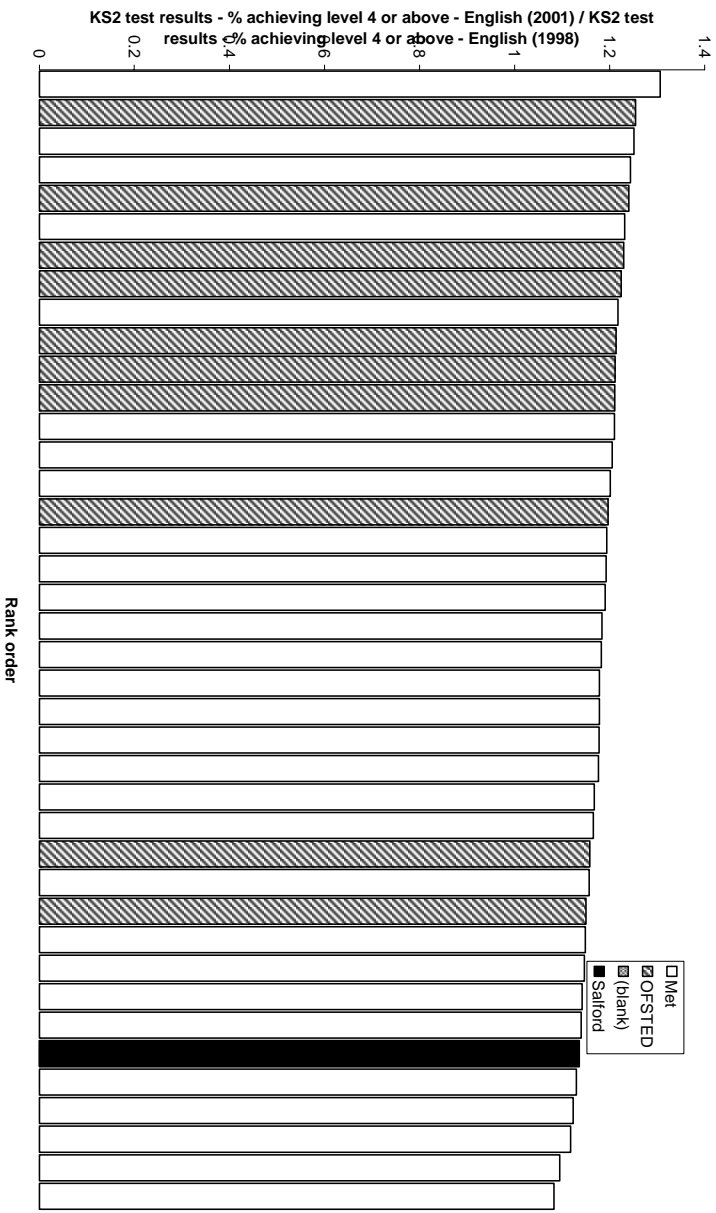
Compared to Ofsted Nearest Neighbours and other Metropolitan Boroughs

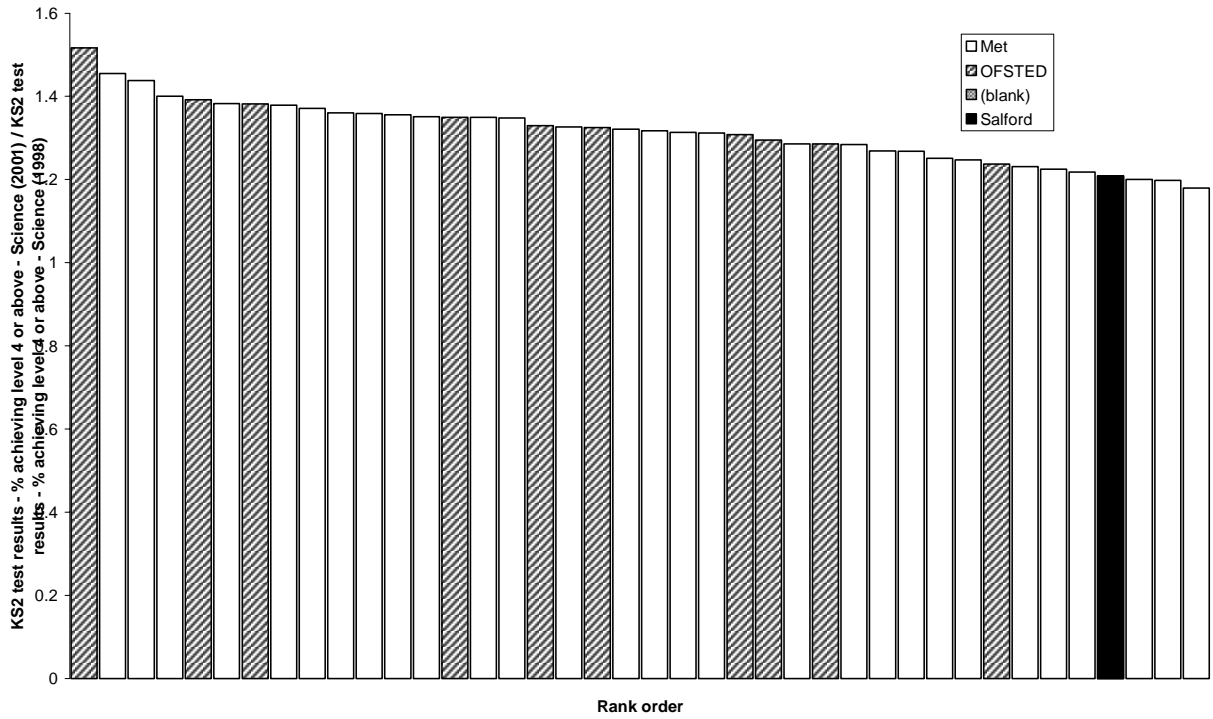
#### Key Stage 1



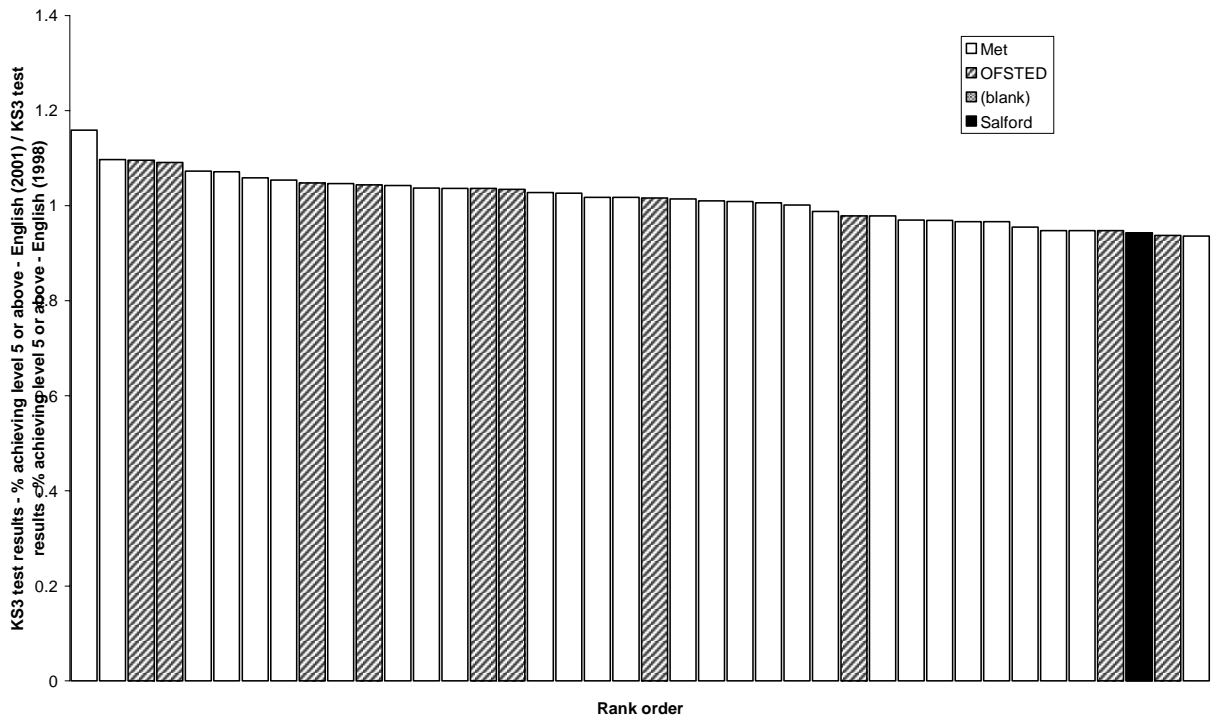


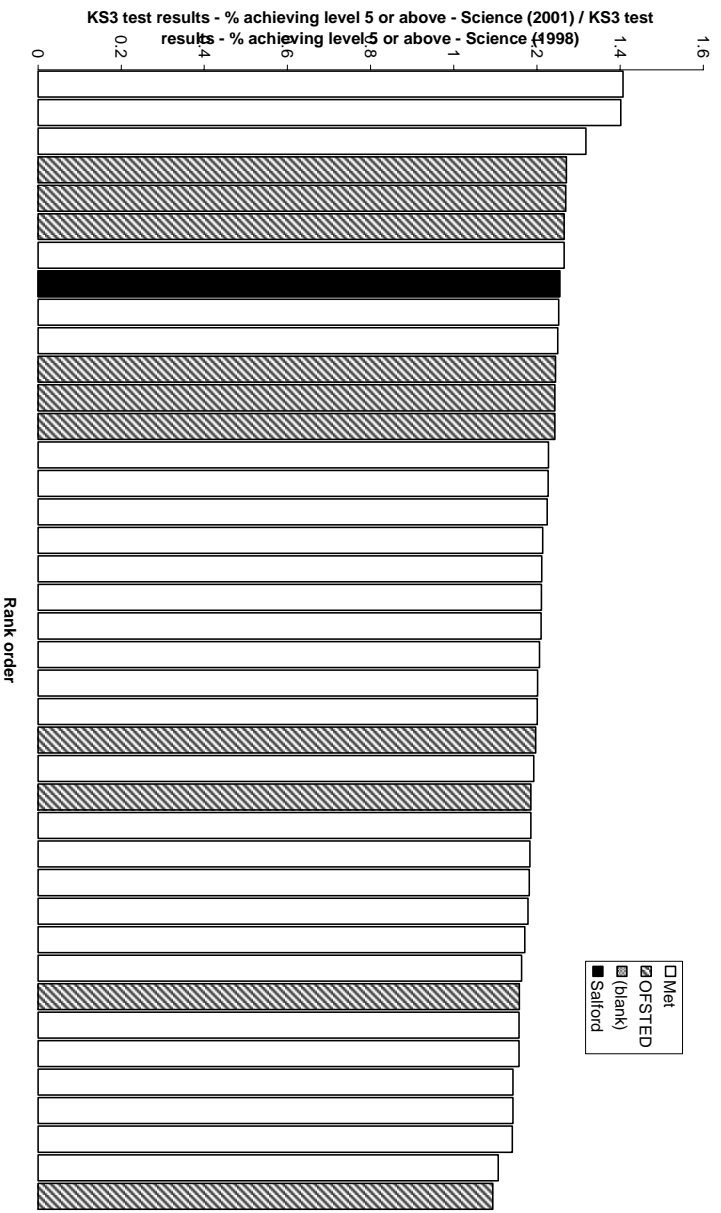
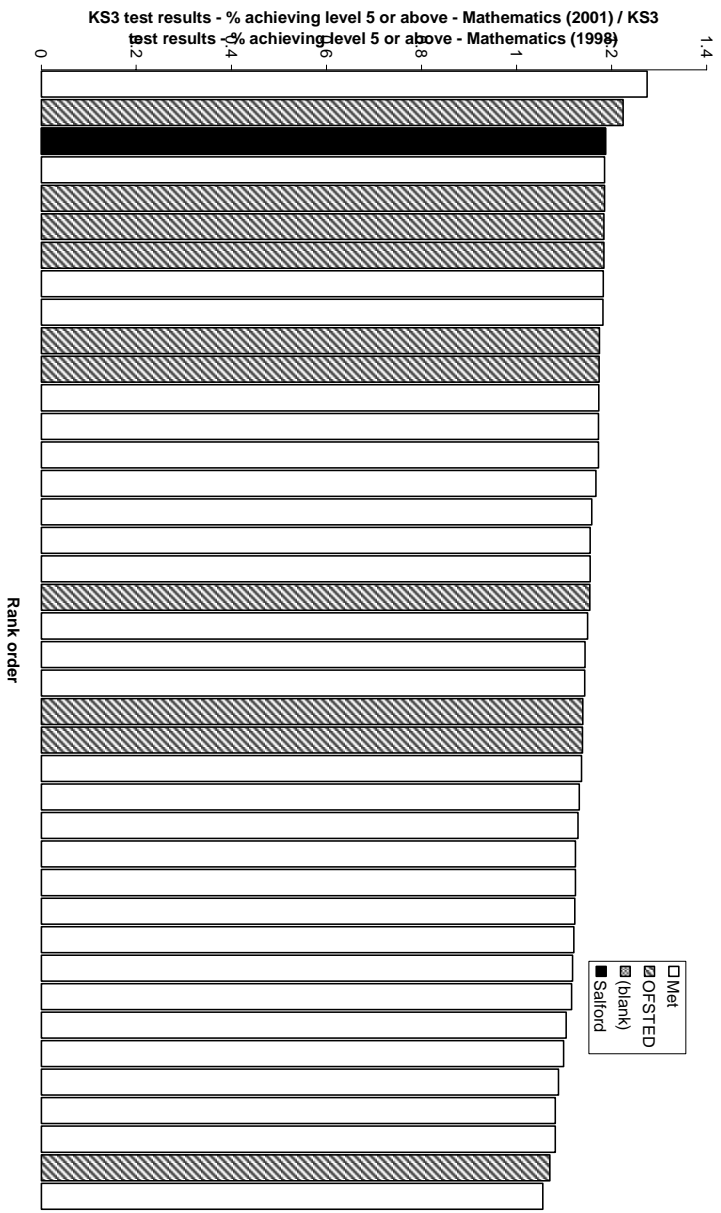
Key Stage 2



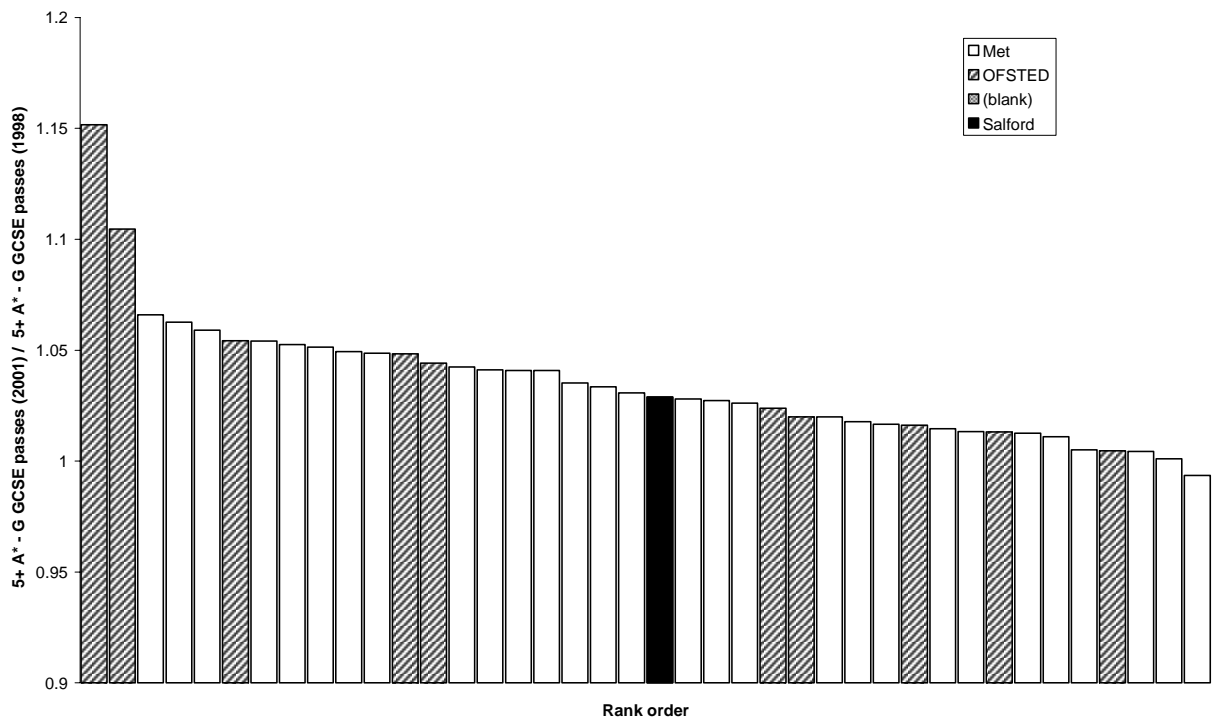
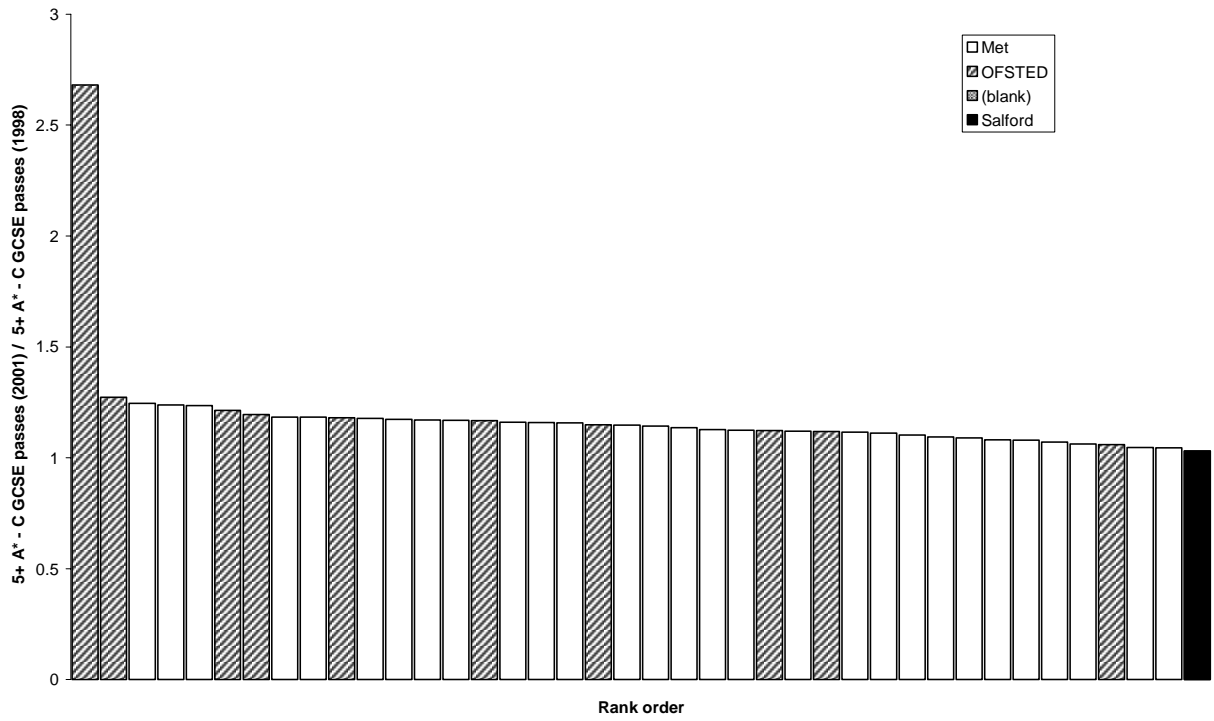


**Key Stage 3**





Key Stage 4





## Investigations/Recommendations reference – Salford LEA

Issue	Recommendation reference
<b>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – RAISING ATTAINMENT</b>	
What are the current delegation levels of IAS budget to schools, particularly in relation to training & curricular support? Has this increased since Ofsted inspection?	Ofsted report para 45
Has the IAS taken action to ensure that weaknesses in school management are identified and recorded consistently? Is appropriate intervention & support provided in such cases?	Ofsted report para 65
What action has been taken to target support and challenge to schools to raise the quality of teaching at KS3 – esp. literacy and numeracy?	Ofsted report paras 50 & 54
NNS - Has a strategy been agreed with secondary schools to ensure that standards achieved at KS2 are improved in KS3?	Ofsted report para 54
Does EDP2 appropriately reflect national priorities?	Risk based
Are EDP2 local priorities appropriate to local context?	Risk based
Has the LEA succeeded in establishing collaborative arrangements with other LEAs to provide cost-effective INSET, particularly for secondary schools?	Ofsted report para 45
Does IAS conduct an annual review of each school, pulling together all its monitoring & support activity? If so, are the results shared with schools and governors?	Ofsted report para 68
Has the IAS monitoring policy been reviewed to reflect the Code of Practice on LEA: School Relations; reflecting intervention in inverse proportion to success?	Risk based
Has the LEA developed a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of NGfL in raising attainment? If so, what impact is evident?	Ofsted report para 57
What action has the LEA taken to improve IAS support to schools for ICT (professional development; using curricular ICT to help raise attainment).	Ofsted report paras 56 & 58
Does EDP2 reflect actions to address activities in the post inspection action plan?	Risk based
<b>ICT DEVELOPMENT</b>	
Has a vision and strategy for ICT been developed which is shared with schools? Does this co-ordinate all admin and curricular ICT related initiatives?	Ofsted report para 56
Does the vision/strategy reflect, and is there evidence of, curricular support to exploit ICT to raise attainment?	Ofsted report para 56
What advice/support has the LEA given to schools about IT security, particularly physical security, data security and the implications of the Data Protection Act 1998?	Risk based
What advice does the LEA provide to schools on IT procurement and standards?	Risk based
Are NGfL grants linked to school level plans for the achievement of NGfL targets?	Risk based

Does the strategy include plans for appropriate training to enable teachers to meet government expectations? Have eligible school staff received NOF training? (para 58)	Ofsted report para 58
Are appropriate plans in place for the introduction of Broadband? Are schools aware of/planning for ongoing costs?	Ofsted report para 58.
What support is given to curricular exploitation of ICT (across phases)? Is advisory support satisfactory?	Ofsted report para 56.
What are the LEA's plans for technical support? Is an integrated service planned? Has it been developed in partnership with schools, taking their views into account?	Ofsted report para 86
What progress has been made implementing IMS at LEA and school level?	Risk based
<b>SCHOOL MANAGEMENT &amp; GOVERNANCE</b>	
Are IAS school evaluation reports shared with governors to assist them in their role of evaluating the work of schools?	Ofsted report para 68
Has the LEA provided a self-evaluation audit instrument to enable governing bodies to self-evaluate their effectiveness – as detailed in the EDP? If so, have all governing bodies completed this? What are the results?	Ofsted report para 68
What action has been taken to fill LEA governor vacancies? What target timescale was set and what progress has been made?	Ofsted report para 70
What action has been taken to encourage all governors to play a full and equitable role? (para 70; i.e. LEA governors taking an appropriate share of sub-committee work, not just attending full governing body meetings)	Ofsted report para 70
<b>SEN STRATEGY AND SUPPORT</b>	
Has an SEN and Inclusion policy been developed? Is this underpinned by principles of early identification and intervention?	Ofsted report para 87
Is a detailed long term SEN strategy in place? Has this been developed in consultation with schools? How & when will it be implemented?	Ofsted report para 87
Has SEN funding been reviewed since inspection? Have amounts delegated or devolved to schools increased as a result?	Ofsted report para 98
Have the criteria for assessing SEN been reviewed to provide greater clarity and provide for consistent assessment?	Ofsted report para 89
Do recent statements provide adequate detail, specificity and quantification, reflecting the Code of Practice?	Ofsted report para 89
How is Educational Psychologist time allocated? Has the previous system of allocation based on numbers on roll been changed?	Ofsted report para 95
Are there transparent and equitable criteria for allocating resources to pupils? Are schools aware of the criteria?	Ofsted report para 89
Have monitoring & evaluation arrangements been developed for resources/interventions at Stage 3-5 of the code of practice? Is support at School Action Plus adequate?	Ofsted report para 89
What action has been taken to manage demand for placements in independent special provision? Is the LEA working with the AGMA procurement project?	Ofsted report para 98

<b>RESOURCES</b>	
<b>Service plans, SLAs, funding formula</b>	
Have service team plans been reviewed to state clearly their contribution to targets in key corporate/educational areas? Do plans include costs, together with measurable and realistic success criteria?	Ofsted report para 78
Have schools been provided with a clear definition and specification for each traded service? Does this include costs and monitoring/evaluation methods?	Ofsted report para 84
Has the funding formula been reviewed to reduce the level of support provided by the small school protection factor?	Ofsted report para 102
Has further delegation taken place from April 2002 (eg for IAS and SEN services) or revision of existing core/traded services?	DA School Budgets R1
What progress has been made to fundamentally review the formula, in consultation with schools?	DA School Budgets R2
What action has been taken to introduce a formal intervention framework, with clear trigger levels for deficits/surpluses?	DA School Budgets R3
Have schools been advised of their budget allocations in time – by end February at the latest? Is timely periodic financial information provided?	DA School Budgets R4
Have regular financial reconciliations of school records been implemented as planned?	DA School Budgets R5
Has the LEA produced annual financial benchmarking information to individual school level, to at least 8 budget headings and circulated this to schools?	DA School Budgets R6
Has a scoring system been introduced for internal audit conclusions?	DA School Budgets R9
Has the range of financial support packages (both internal and external) been reviewed to ensure that it reflects the needs of schools?	DA School Budgets R12
What action has been taken to ensure that training courses for HTs and school managers adequately cover resource management skills? How is this implemented on an individual or group basis?	DA School Budgets R16
<b>Building maintenance, H&amp;S</b>	
What action has been taken to increase the level of investment in school building maintenance, including the use of PFI?	Ofsted report para 107
Are the priorities for school building investment transparent? Have they been agreed with schools?	Ofsted report para 102
Have H&S procedures been reviewed to ensure that health & safety issues in schools are dealt with within an appropriate timescale? What action has been taken?	Ofsted report para 106
Is AMP development & implementation on target? Has a breakdown of condition elements been completed & sent to schools?	DA Planning Places R14
<b>Planning places</b>	
Has a review of primary places been conducted in consultation with diocesan authorities?	Ofsted report para 100 DA Planning Places R3, R6
What action has been taken to significantly reduce the number of surplus places at secondary level? Has agreement been reached with diocesan authorities?	Ofsted report para 101 DA Planning Places R5, R7 R11.
Has the forecasting methodology been refined to produce forecasts to ward and school level, taking account of housing developments, live births/GP registrations, cross boundary flows?	DA Planning Places R1

Have school level forecasts been shared/validated by schools and diocesan authorities?	DA Planning Places R2
What progress has been made re location/suitability of temporary accommodation?	DA Planning Places R4
Do admissions booklets now indicate whether a school is likely to be oversubscribed?	DA Planning Places R9
Has the SOP been re-drafted to reflect the good practice checklist?	DA Planning Places R12
Have checks on administration of admissions for oversubscribed primary schools been carried out? Has any action been necessary as a result?	DA Planning Places R13
<b>Attendance &amp; Exclusions</b>	
What further action has been taken to monitor the performance of grant funded, school based LSU schemes?	DA Attendance & Exclusions follow up report
What action has been taken to encourage schools to target (short term) parentally condoned absence?	As above
Will sufficient provision be available to meet statutory requirements for EOTAS provision (25hrs/week) by September 2002?	Risk based
What progress has been made to develop information sharing about pupils not accessing provision with other LEAs and Health authorities?	As above
Has agreement been reached with neighbouring LEAs about responsibility for EWS follow up of absence where either the pupils' home or school is outside the borough?	As above
What progress has been made towards multi-agency team based working (e.g. with Mental Health) to understand/address reasons for exclusions?	As above