

Ofsted

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2003/04

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and care



Better education and care through effective inspection and regulation



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and care

Laid before Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills
pursuant to Section 2(7)(a) of the School Inspections Act 1996

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February 2005

David Bell
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP
Secretary of State for Education and Skills
Department for Education and Skills
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2003/04

I am pleased to submit to you my Annual Report as required by the School Inspections Act 1996. This report covers the period 2003/04.

The report begins, as usual, with my commentary on education and childcare in England. The remainder of the report presents evidence from the year's inspections across the range of matters that fall within my remit, but in a different form from previous reports. Each chapter includes a brief overview of a phase or sector, followed by more extensive comments on particular, often topical, issues.

As last year, I have prepared a summary of the report. I am sending a copy of the summary to every maintained school and college, together with a CD-ROM which includes the text of the full report and our findings on school subjects and curriculum areas in colleges.

The summary report includes a list of those schools and colleges inspected in 2003/04 that I am very pleased to identify as being particularly successful. I am also pleased to recognise those schools that have been removed from special measures, and colleges and school sixth forms that have improved so that their provision is no longer inadequate.

I hope the report will be of wide interest and that it will contribute to the public debate on standards and quality in education and childcare.

Yours sincerely
David Bell

David Bell

Preface

David Bell



This report covers a year of change, and preparation for change, in inspection. In September 2003 Ofsted introduced its fourth framework for the inspection of schools and new arrangements for inspecting independent schools were put in place in response to new regulations. Revised frameworks were also introduced for the inspection of local education authorities, teacher training, local authority youth services and 14–19 area provision.

Ofsted has a duty to keep the system of school inspections under review, but we also review regularly our other inspection arrangements. This means learning from the past in planning for the future. After 12 years of inspection it is right that we should expect the quality of education to be higher than it was. Our latest framework for the inspection of schools sets new expectations for them.

During the year, we published our proposals for revised arrangements for inspecting childcare and early learning, as well as schools. These new arrangements, legislation permitting, will come into effect in 2005. They will involve substantial change, but will ensure that inspection remains a powerful tool, alongside self-evaluation, in promoting improvement. Early indications are that the changes will be widely welcomed.

This report provides overviews of the areas covered by Ofsted's remit, followed by – for the first time – extended reports on particular themes and issues. These have been selected because they continue to attract interest, for example, behaviour in secondary schools or the development of post-16 education and training, or because they have been particularly important during the year, for instance the implementation of new regulations for independent schools.

As in previous years, evidence from a variety of sources contributes to my commentary and to the analyses and conclusions in the report:

- the regulation and inspection of childcare and early learning in the independent and voluntary sectors carried out by Ofsted childcare inspectors
- the inspections of maintained schools carried out by registered inspectors
- inspections undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), additional inspectors and colleagues from other inspectorates.

I am pleased to identify particularly successful schools and colleges inspected in 2003/04, and those that have improved significantly so that they no longer require special measures or, in the case of colleges and school sixth forms, no longer make inadequate provision. These are listed in the summary that accompanies this report.

The summary also includes the main points from each of the chapters and a CD-ROM that includes reports on individual subjects in schools and curriculum areas in colleges, as well as additional statistical data.

David Bell

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

Commentary

David Bell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

Introduction

Near the end of the 2003/04 school year, I had the pleasure of speaking at the annual prize giving of Prince Henry's School in Evesham. Such an event gave me an opportunity to meet confident and articulate young people who were a credit to their school and the state education system more generally.

It also gave me an opportunity to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievement across the whole of a school's life and work, while testing me to find words that would resonate with pupils and teachers alike.

One section of the speech proved more straightforward than the rest, not least because it was expressed on my part with some passion:

Your work represents genuine achievement. I say that with some feeling because, just occasionally in this country, there's a tendency to rubbish the achievements of young people. In fact, at times it feels like a depressing summer ritual when the celebratory voices of young people are drowned out by the doomsayers shouting, 'It's not like the old days.' No it isn't; and thank goodness too.

All the evidence we have, and in Ofsted's case that's a lot, suggests that although young people are studying different things from what they studied in the past, standards are being maintained. At the same time, more and more young people are achieving better and better results. We can say, with confidence, that more is also better.

The school's headteacher, Bernard Roberts, voiced similar sentiments to the audience of parents and friends of the pupils:

...(it) would be easy for the general public to assume that the education system is in crisis. This is not the case and there are many outstanding and very successful schools in this country, although not yet enough of them.

Such views, expressed by one of the country's most distinguished school leaders, are no mere wishful thinking on his part. They reflect accurately the *evidence* gathered by Ofsted, not just over the past 12 months but over the last few years. I am confident now to argue that we have in England an improving system of education, as well as one that has in place many of the preconditions for further improvement.

We have in England an improving system of education, as well as one that has in place many of the preconditions for further improvement.

Measuring improvement

Any claim that a system is improving invites the question, 'By what measure?' This is a topical issue, not least because of the work being done by Sir Tony Atkinson, warden of Nuffield College, who has been looking at measures of productivity and output in the public services. His final report is likely to be published in early 2005 after this commentary has gone to press.

In his interim report published in July 2004 Sir Tony wisely concluded that there could be no *single* measure of productivity. However, he did acknowledge that Ofsted's data, looked at over time, could be helpful in coming to conclusions about the progress being made in English education.

Against that background, this year's report highlights a significant number of important 'gains' for our system including:

- improved quality of care and education for young children
- a strong cadre of headteachers in schools
- improvements in school self-evaluation
- improved flexibility in the curriculum for 14 to 16 year olds
- the continuing success of sixth form colleges.

Equally though, I would also highlight the following points of concern in the 2003/04 'report card':

- the continuing difference in progress between different groups of pupils
- slow progress in reducing the gap in achievement between schools with high and low levels of disadvantage
- no reduction in the proportion of schools where behaviour overall is unsatisfactory
- the quality of assessment continuing to be the weakest part of teaching.

A simplistic approach might have us attempting to weigh up the pluses and minuses for the year gone by. If we could factor in some financial measures so much the better, some critics might argue. Of course, all that would do is tempt us to the single measure, preferably a number or, to satisfy the educationalists, a grade such as C+ or A-. But that is to fall into the trap identified by Sir Tony Atkinson. Furthermore, and to some extent understandably as chief inspectors report annually, it can overstate the significance of changes from one year to the next and understate deeper, longer term trends.

To address these methodological issues, I am assisted by the formidable research and analytical capability that Ofsted has at its disposal. But it is also important that I subject our data to a 'reality' test, drawing upon the unique perspective that I have as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in overseeing the inspection and regulation of almost all aspects of education and care in this country.

I see childminders at work in their homes, sometimes with only one or two children, which contrasts markedly with the further education college of 10,000 students. I watch trainee teachers in action. I talk to youngsters on programmes for the excluded and to students doing A levels. I visit schools of all shapes and sizes, quite literally in the four corners of England and most areas in between. And wherever I go, I talk to children and young people because they often provide the sharpest insights of all.

The perspective of parents is also vital. I am always at pains to seek the views of parents in this country, the vast majority of whom depend upon the state education system for their children. Here I can combine my discussions in schools with Ofsted's evidence, which includes information derived from parental questionnaires completed in advance of inspection. Inspectors judge that parents are very or highly satisfied in over 80% of primary schools, 76% of secondary schools and 90% of special schools. As with the comments of Bernard Roberts above, these data stand as a useful corrective to some of the more apocalyptic views expressed about state schools.

Through visits and in other ways, week in and week out, I get to speak to those with an interest in education and care: from those at the national level all the way through to those who are passionately involved locally, whether as employers or those running voluntary services dealing with disengaged young people.

Accepting that improvement cannot be measured by any single criterion and that Ofsted evidence is not the final word, it is even more important to combine the 'hard' evidence of regulation and inspection with the 'soft', but no less vital, perspective that I derive from my day-to-day work. I believe

too that the independence of my position, which is well demonstrated and respected, ensures that my opinions are not distorted by political considerations.

It is against this background that I draw the broad conclusion that the system is improving and has in place some of the preconditions for further improvement. There are four factors that make me cautiously optimistic. Equally, there are two major issues that continue to cause me concern and which, if not addressed sufficiently, may mean that our education system fails to realise the full potential of every learner.

Education: an end in itself?

The first factor underpinning improvement is the recognition that education, as far as possible, needs to be broad and balanced, not just to serve some utilitarian end, but as an end in itself. In discussions about the productivity of education, it would be tempting to conclude that the only purpose of education is to contribute to economic well-being. Given that we spend over £50 billion each year on schools and colleges, it would be irresponsible *not* to consider the extent to which our education system is taking account of the needs of our economy and helping to prepare our young people for working life.

Education, as far as possible, needs to be broad and balanced, not just to serve some utilitarian end, but as an end in itself.

Failing to consider our economic needs would also be inconsistent with what I myself have argued on the back of Ofsted reports that have been critical of the lack of a vocational dimension in too much secondary and post-compulsory education. However, I believe that education has a value beyond merely the instrumental, a value that makes it quite hard to measure purely in 'output' terms. In fact, I would go further and argue that in a democratic society a broad and balanced education is a moral imperative.

We should want our young people to make things, to experience the finest music, to read a wide range of enjoyable and difficult books, to know how to conduct a fair experiment and to understand what constitutes a sound argument, based on evidence and not assertion or prejudice. We should also want them to understand the past and know about this nation's place in the world. We should want all of these things for our young people, not only because they are 'useful', but because they go to the heart of what it is to be educated.

This is not doe-eyed sentimentality. Rather, such an education has never been more important as it teaches our children what makes them special and unique as individuals. At the same time, it will assist them in facing up to their responsibilities and understanding the opinions of others, including those with whom they disagree, while at the same time cherishing the openness and freedom of our society.

I would go further and say that in these troubled times internationally, it is our duty to provide our young people with an education that teaches them to appreciate diversity and be aware of the dangers of extremism and fundamentalism. If we achieve this, our education system will truly have helped to build a better society.

In these troubled times internationally, it is our duty to provide our young people with an education that teaches them to appreciate diversity and be aware of the dangers of extremism and fundamentalism.

More and more, our schools are ensuring that this is the entitlement of all young people. But beyond that, I see in the vast majority of our schools substantial efforts being made to prepare young people to be good citizens, giving them a sense of responsibility, pride and ownership. This is why I have been, over the past three years in this post, such an advocate of the 'symbols of belonging' such as uniform, outdoor pursuits, active citizenship and teamwork, both for the purposes of collaboration *and* competition.

None of this is inconsistent with what I have always believed or practised in a wide-ranging career across the education service. My own longstanding beliefs about the value of a rounded education are based on the superb grounding that I received as a pupil in a comprehensive school. Ofsted's evidence demonstrates conclusively that commitment to curriculum breadth and balance, as well as personal opportunity and responsibility, is increasingly the norm in our state schools. For me, this commitment is the bedrock of further and future success.

It is a legitimate desire and ambition to want the best and to extend this to every aspect of public, private and voluntary provision for children. The Children Act 2004 seeks to improve the coordination of services for children and young people. My department, as the inspectorate leading the development of a single inspection framework for children's services, will monitor and report on progress in this area in the future.

A firm foundation in the early years

The second factor underpinning improvement is the work being done in childcare and education for the very young. I have been impressed by the efforts that the government has made to boost investment in this area in recent years. The numbers are significant. Ofsted registers around 20,000 new providers each year, while, on average, three quarters of that number leave the sector. As a result, by September 2004, just under 1.5 million childcare places were available in England, of which over a million were in day-care settings and almost a third of a million with childminders.

This represents a growth of 15% since Ofsted established the first national database of childcare providers in March 2003. In addition, a range of other programmes exist for young children and their families, many of which have been targeted at those living in poorer households.

As this expansion has continued, Ofsted has been regulating and inspecting the sector in all its diversity. In terms of the quality of provision, the picture is encouraging:

- almost all childcare is at least satisfactory and more is being judged good as the inspection programme moves into its second year. Well over half of nurseries and playgroups provide good quality care
- over a half of day-care providers are also funded by the government to offer free early education for 3 to 4 year olds, most to a standard that is generally good, with nearly a third being very good.

Overall, there is a good story to tell with an expansion in quantity being matched by improvements in quality. The vast majority of those who register to provide childcare meet the national standards and go on to provide a service that is at least of an acceptable standard and in many cases of a good standard.

And this matters because the foundations laid in the earliest years will have future benefits. Recent studies have shown that 2 year olds and above, particularly from the poorest backgrounds, who experience high quality care and education even for just a few hours each week, are better able to make friends, work and play independently, and concentrate when they start school.

Other work, however, suggests that young children placed full time in large nurseries before they are 2 appear to be more at risk of developing behavioural problems. This is by no means conclusive but it should give us pause for thought.

All this suggests that the care and education of young children is a subject not without controversy. There continues to be a lively public debate about the appropriateness of very young children being looked after in day-care settings and the amount of time that new parents should stay at home to look after young children.

These are decisions made on a family-by-family basis, often determined as much by economic imperative as by active choice. I believe strongly that government policy to promote childcare should be *more than matched* by support to enable parents to look after their children at home. While there are economic benefits in encouraging parents, particularly mothers, to return to work, it is right to seek to support those parents who would like to look after their children longer at home.

As is often the case in complex areas of social policy, there is no clear-cut answer, but we can say with increasing confidence that high quality care and education for young children make a difference to their future educational prospects. I would encourage the government to continue its work in this area, at the same time as allowing parents real choice when making difficult childcare decisions about the youngest of our children.

An ambition to do better

The third factor I would identify relates to the ambition of the education system to do better. It is perhaps here more than anywhere else that it is important to take a longer term perspective.

I make no apology for drawing comparisons with what students previously achieved in our education system, nor for going back well beyond the short history of Ofsted. As I said at Prince Henry's School, commentators are too often wont to describe the present against some mythical golden age. The *facts* tell a very different story.

Of course, the changes in education systems and examinations over the last 40 years mean that direct comparisons are not altogether secure. Equally, one can point to a number of 'blind alleys', particularly in relation to some methods that ignored the importance of good, systematic teaching based on secure subject knowledge. But overall, the data, I believe, show a general trend of improvement.

The percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE passes or 5+ GCE O level passes has risen from under 17% in 1964 to over 50% in 2004. At A level, the percentage of pupils achieving 2+ A level passes has risen from just over 8% in 1964 to just under 40% in 2004. Over the same period, the overall pass rate has risen from under 70% to around 95%.

Moving on to further education, and again expressing some caution about like-for-like comparisons, the participation rates have risen from less than a quarter of 16 year olds on full time courses in 1964 to almost three quarters today.

The history of the last 10 or so years is particularly relevant as successive governments have turned their attention to the underperformance of primary age children in the essentials of English, maths and science. That focus on the 'basics' has been an important success story for the education system, although it is one of the ironies of the past few years that the story has often turned on the government's 'failure' to meet its ambitious targets for a further improvement in standards.

But we should not lose sight of the fact that standards in English and mathematics in primary schools improved significantly from the mid-1990s onwards. The test results for 2004 show that this progress has been maintained at the same time as other improvements in primary schools have been noted.

These data suggest that the English education system has not stood still, but instead has continued to strive for further improvement.

Tackling failure

The fourth factor that demonstrates underlying improvement is the English education system's willingness to tackle failure. In this area Ofsted has made a vital contribution through its work in identifying schools that require special measures. Over the past 12 years, just under 1,800 such schools have been identified. The vast majority have improved, with some schools now identified in this Annual Report as being highly effective. Overall, of those schools that have been reinspected since coming out of special measures, just under six out of ten have become *good* schools by the time of their reinspection. This outstanding progress is far too little recognised.

The clear identification of failure, followed by vigorous improvement measures, demonstrates that the English education system is not prepared to stand idly by and let schools wallow for years in failure, thus depriving pupils of a decent education.

However, this year's Annual Report does highlight a rise in the number of schools identified as requiring special measures. During the 2003/04 school year 213 failing schools had been identified compared to 160 during 2002/03. In July 2004, therefore, 1.5% of all schools in England were in special measures compared to 1.2% in July 2003.

At first sight this might suggest that schools in England are getting worse and the education system is less good at recognising and dealing with failure. This is not the case. The criteria for identifying schools that might require special measures were strengthened at the beginning of the 2003/04 school year. Some suggested that this was unfair and that it was not legitimate for me to 'raise the bar' of expected performance. I would refute this charge strongly. As the performance of schools has improved over the years, it is only right that we should have higher expectations. Not to do so would be to condemn youngsters to a standard of education that might have been acceptable 10 years ago but is clearly no longer so.

As the performance of schools has improved over the years, it is only right that we have higher expectations. Not to do so would be to condemn youngsters to a standard of education that might have been acceptable 10 years ago but is clearly no longer so.

The *real* story is that the majority of schools that underwent inspection in 2003/04 performed well. They had risen to the challenge and were determined to keep improving their performance. They recognise, as the system as a whole does, that standing still is not an option because it inevitably leads to complacency and decline. The demand on my part to drive up expectations is also a key feature of the proposed new inspection arrangements that will come into effect from September 2005, legislation permitting.

However, it is worth entering a note of caution about further education. It remains a cause for concern that around 12% of colleges inspected last year were declared as inadequate. Equally though, failure is being tackled as colleges previously designated as inadequate have been improving rapidly. Of the nine colleges inspected during the year that had previously been found to be inadequate, all but one have improved on the back of regular monitoring by Her Majesty's Inspectors.

So, taken together, these four factors do give me grounds for optimism about where the education system stands now and about its prospects for the future.

Social class and educational achievement

There are, however, two significant issues that stand in the way of consistent improvement across the whole of the education system. The first is the impact of social class on educational achievement.

Nearly 60% of the population is from non-professional backgrounds. Yet in 2004 only 18% of young people from these backgrounds were in higher education. The principal cause of the gap is *attainment*. Only 23% of students from non-professional backgrounds gain two or more A levels, compared with 53% from professional backgrounds. And of course this gap in performance is already evident when children are younger, hence the need to focus on early intervention.

There is also an issue of *aspiration*. Around 35% of students with three grade As at A level do not apply to the 'top' universities. Students from higher social classes are more likely to apply for places in these universities than those from the lower groups. We also know that one in four working class young people who achieve eight good GCSE passes do not end up in higher education. So more needs to be done to raise aspirations.

Even international comparisons, while generally painting a more positive picture about the achievement of English pupils, do highlight the impact of social class on educational achievement, a factor more prominent here than in other countries.

There are no simple solutions to deep-seated social and economic inequalities. However, providing a good education remains the most important contribution that teachers, lecturers and others make to those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

I myself benefited from the post-war drive to improve social and educational opportunities. As a result, I was the first from my family to attend university. I find it troubling that over 25 years later many of our least advantaged young people still believe that higher qualifications, such as an advanced technical qualification or a degree, are beyond their reach.

I was the first from my family to attend university. I find it troubling that over 25 years later many of our least advantaged young people still believe that higher qualifications, such as an advanced technical qualification or a degree, are beyond their reach.

But there are some grounds for optimism. A number of pilot projects across the country are demonstrating that a more vocationally orientated curriculum can help to engage the 'missing 40%' of youngsters who do not achieve the 'benchmark' qualification of 5+ GCSEs at grades A*–C but who are capable of much, much more. Mike Tomlinson's proposals for 14–19 education, published in October 2004, also have the potential to address the education system's historic imbalance towards the more 'academically' able.

Variability of performance

The second issue that concerns me is the variability in performance of schools and colleges. This is best illustrated by the lack of progress being made by a substantial minority of schools.

Inspectors make a judgement about how a school's effectiveness has changed since it was last inspected. This includes consideration of changes in the school's performance over time, the effectiveness of actions taken as a result of the previous inspection judgements, and recommendations that have not been implemented. Over the last three years, 10% of secondary and 9% of primary schools inspected have demonstrated a level of change that has been judged as unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. In other words, about 1,000 schools are not making sufficient progress. This remains an issue of significant concern.

About 1,000 schools are not making sufficient progress. This remains an issue of significant concern.

It also presents policy makers with a dilemma. Do they on the one hand continue to exhort schools to do better, providing support as appropriate, but ultimately accepting that in a decentralised system the power of intervention continues to be used sparingly? Or on the other hand should government – local or central – intervene more quickly and apply tried and tested methods and leadership that work elsewhere?

At present, the latter approach seems to be applied only when schools are designated by Ofsted as failing or having serious weaknesses. That may be appropriate but it is a matter worthy of further debate if we are going to bring about a step-change in our educational performance as a nation.

It is not as if we do not understand what makes schools successful, particularly those that seem to have the odds stacked against them. Strong leadership, good teaching and excellent communication with parents are all critical to a school's effectiveness. To repeat again the characteristics of such schools is to be open to the accusation that this merely restates the obvious. It does, but what is not so obvious is that schools everywhere follow these principles and translate them into practical action.

I have been more and more struck by a sense of moral imperative and high ambition that characterises the work of successful schools in all circumstances. It is particularly notable in headteachers who believe that their pupils can *and must* succeed. This positive attitude has resonance with the mental strength of top athletes and their sports coaches, who have long understood that the difference between a true champion and an also-ran is not just extra skill or strength, but conviction and belief.

High expectations are infectious as they enthuse and motivate teachers, parents and – crucially – pupils. Unless and until that sense of ambition permeates every school in England, we will be destined to condemn too many young people to a life of unfulfilled potential and even failure.

High expectations are infectious as they enthuse and motivate teachers, parents and – crucially – pupils. Unless and until that sense of ambition permeates every school in England, we will be destined to condemn too many young people to a life of unfulfilled potential and even failure.

Conclusion

In attempting to provide this ‘balanced scorecard’ on the performance of education and care in England, I recognise that I will not persuade everyone. For some, more inevitably means worse and no amount of evidence will be sufficient to demonstrate the opposite. Such people, while paying lip service to having an education system that meets the needs of all, are really interested only in those at the top end of the academic scale and see any change to the curriculum and qualifications as a further example of ‘dumbing down’.

I have no truck with this body of opinion because I believe that in a modern democracy it is essential that the education system maximises the talent of all for social, cultural and economic reasons. Nor do I believe that we are incapable of offering more challenge and rigour to the most academically able *at the same time* as ensuring that a vocationally relevant curriculum becomes a genuine alternative for many. Equally, though, I am suspicious of those who would argue that the battle is won and that we are on an inexorable upward curve of educational improvement. Those schools that are failing to improve and those young people whose ambition is capped by virtue of their background should also temper such hubris.

Parents in England can and should take heart at the considerable improvements in our education system over recent years. We have made a move from a system that educated a few superbly and the rest indifferently to one that is attempting to educate everyone very well. However, these improvements remain patchy in parts and in some areas the system is not improving fast enough to keep pace with the rising expectations and increasing demands of the world in which we live. The task now is to ensure that substantial improvement for the majority is followed by successful achievement for all.

Childcare and funded early education

Main findings

- The number of childcare places available in England is increasing and grew by 15% between April 2003 and September 2004.
- Almost all childcare is at least satisfactory, with more than half of full day-care and sessional day-care settings being of good quality.
- Good settings of all kinds meet the requirements of the national standards very well, particularly in the areas of: care, learning and play; partnership with parents; behaviour management; and the provision of appropriate equipment.
- Day-care providers who are satisfactory overall often have weaknesses in relation to some individual standards. These frequently include the deployment of staff and organisation of resources to support children's development and learning. In addition, they often have inadequate documentation, policies and procedures.
- Over a half of group day-care providers are funded by the government to offer free nursery education to 3- and 4-year-old children. Most of this provision is generally good and over a third of it is very good.



1 Overview

¹ Ofsted has a duty to regulate childcare for children under 8 years old. Its work is underpinned by a set of national standards which providers must meet to look after children.

² This regulatory work includes: **registering** providers who are suitable to provide childcare; **inspecting** the quality and standards of the care they provide; **investigating complaints** where they raise concerns that the provider may no longer meet the national standards and be qualified for registration; and taking **enforcement** action (see publication ii, p17).

³ Ofsted registers the following types of childcare:

- **Childminders**, who look after children on domestic premises (other than children's own homes) for more than two hours a day, for reward. Many adapt their service to parents' working hours and some offer overnight care. They often take children to and from school and care for them during school holidays. They can provide continuity from a child's very early years into early education.
- **Full day-care** providers, who offer care in non-domestic settings for four or more hours a day, usually in day nurseries or children's centres.
- **Sessional day-care** providers, also based in non-domestic settings, who offer five or fewer sessions of over two and under four hours each week. These are often known as 'playgroups'.
- **Out of school care** providers, who offer services for children from three years old for more than two hours daily on more than five days each year. Holiday play schemes and after school clubs fall into this category.
- **Crèches**, which provide occasional care for more than five days per year. Some are in permanent premises and provide care while parents are involved in training, leisure or entertainment activities.

The numbers of providers and available places are shown in Figure 1. Although two thirds of providers are childminders, they provide under a quarter of childcare places.

⁴ The growth in childcare is considerable, with a rise in the number of places overall by 15% since the first national database of providers was established at the end of March 2003 (see Table 1). This growth, which is most marked in nurseries providing full day care, has come at the same time as a significant increase in funding for childcare generated by the government's childcare strategy. The number of out of school clubs and crèches is increasing rapidly while the number of childminders is also growing significantly. However, the availability of sessional provision is reducing due, in part, to some playgroups expanding their services to provide full day care, while the number of new applicants wishing to offer sessional care is relatively low compared with other types of day care.

Figure 1. Registered providers and childcare places.

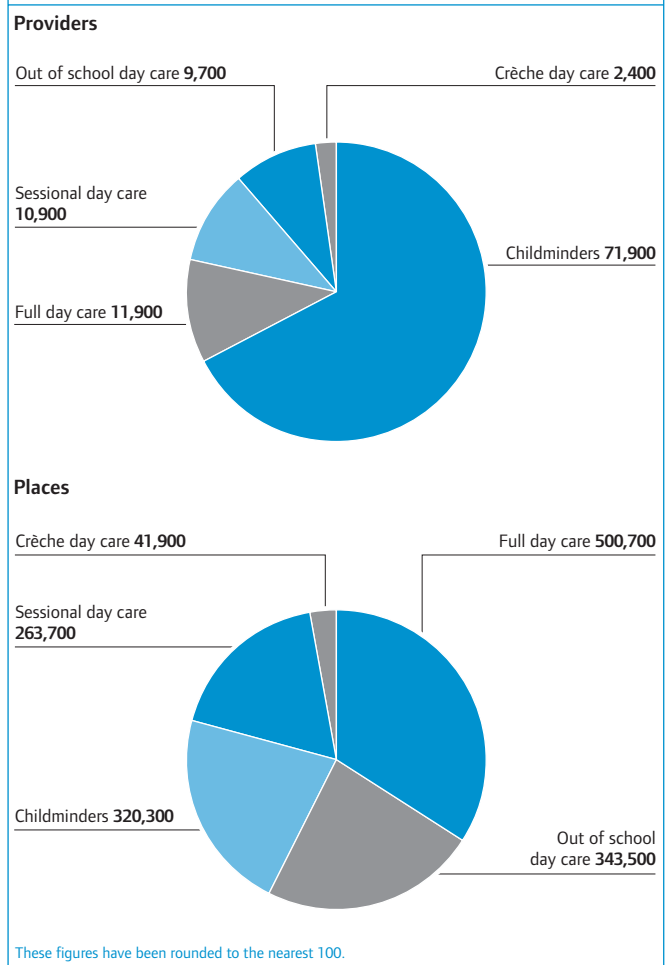


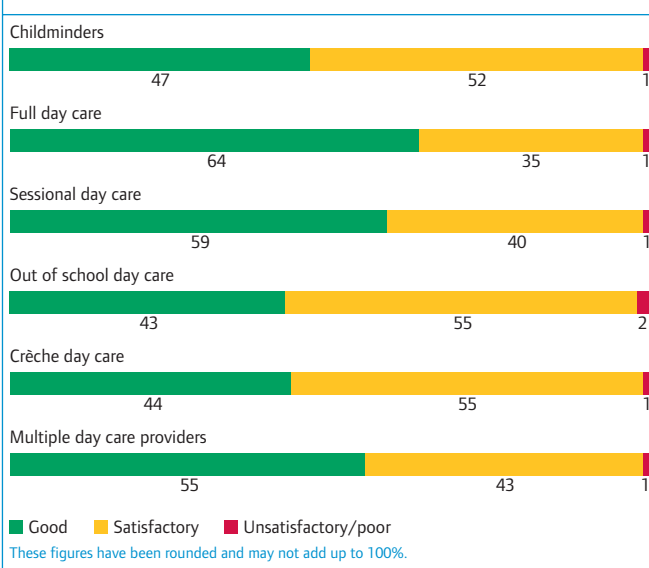
Table 1. Changes in childcare provision between April 2003 and September 2004 (percentage changes).

Provision types	Change (registered providers)	Change (places)
Childminders	+7%	+7%
Full day care	+20%	+27%
Sessional day care	-4%	-2%
Out of school care	+18%	+16%
Crèches	+21%	+22%

⁵ Almost all childcare providers (inspected between 1 October 2003 and 30 September 2004) offer at least satisfactory care and about half (more in the case of full and sessional day-care providers) offer good quality care (see Figure 2).¹ This is a better picture compared with a year ago, with an increase in good quality provision across almost all provider types.

¹ Inspectors make overall judgements on the scale: good (grade 1), satisfactory (2) and unsatisfactory (3). Judgements on each of the 14 national standards are made on the same scale, except for that relating to 'suitable person' where the judgement is 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Figure 2. The quality of care by type of provider (percentage of providers).



6 Ofsted sometimes requires satisfactory providers to carry out specific actions by an agreed date in order to meet one or more of the national standards. Although this means they have been judged as unsatisfactory against that particular standard, fewer than one in a hundred settings provides unsatisfactory care overall (see Figure 3).

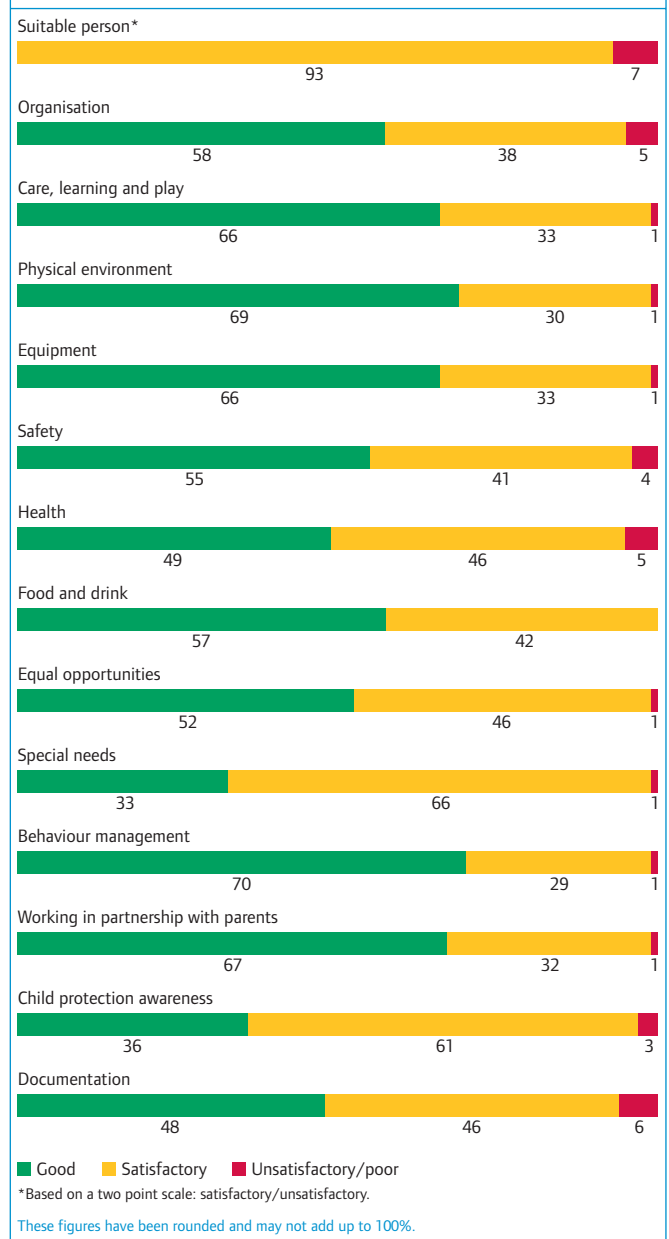
7 Both satisfactory and unsatisfactory day-care settings commonly have shortfalls in how they organise their provision. Problems relate to insufficient or inadequately trained staff which, in the worst cases, lead to poor management of children’s behaviour or to very young children receiving poor levels of care.

8 One in ten of these providers has shortfalls in: maintaining adequate documentation; promoting children’s health; keeping children safe. Some common examples are:

- unclear processes for gaining parents’ permission to administer medicines or first aid
- inadequate records about children’s accidents or attendance
- day-care settings with no trained first aiders
- unhygienic or dirty conditions.

9 Unsatisfactory providers normally have a range of significant shortcomings. These may include putting children’s health at risk by having dirty toilets, using unhygienic areas for preparing food, or providing environments for children which are poorly arranged, unwelcoming or even dangerous. In such circumstances, Ofsted takes immediate action: enforcement action may be imposed or, at least, unsatisfactory providers are required to agree with Ofsted an action plan setting out what must be done and by when. In addition, Ofsted will arrange an inspection to take place within a few months, and inspectors will visit regularly in the interim period.

Figure 3. The quality of provision by national standards (percentage of providers).



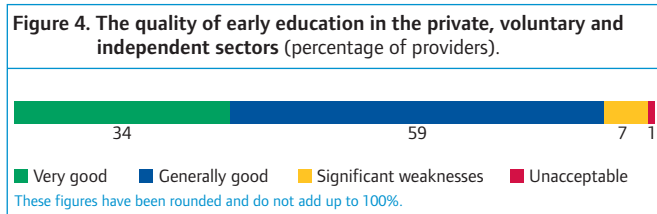
10 If these unsatisfactory providers continue to operate without making the necessary improvements, then Ofsted follows up swiftly with enforcement action. This enforcement action might impose new conditions on their registration or, in the most serious cases, cancel it.

11 Following an inspection, about half of unsatisfactory childminders make improvements to the standards of care they provide and remain registered. About one quarter resign and the remainder have their registrations cancelled by Ofsted. Most unsatisfactory day-care providers make sufficient improvements to become satisfactory.

1 Early education

¹² More than a half of day-care providers now offer government-funded part time nursery education for 3- and 4-year-old children. Ofsted inspects the quality and standard of this nursery education and usually combines the inspection of care and nursery education into a single inspection event.²

¹³ During 2003/04 Ofsted inspected nearly 9,000 funded settings. A large majority are good or better and about a third are of high quality, a better picture than last year (see Figure 4).



¹⁴ In the best settings, children make very good progress in all six of the Foundation Stage areas of learning.³ The quality of teaching is very good and staff involve parents well in their children's learning. About half of the providers of nursery education who are good overall promote the personal, social and emotional development of children well. They set clear rules for children's behaviour and staff operate them fairly. Children are treated as valued members of the setting and staff encourage them to care for one another.

¹⁵ In poor settings, the quality of teaching is almost always poor, the leadership and management are weak, and the majority show little improvement since their previous inspection. Such settings must have an agreed action plan for improvement. Ofsted inspects the settings again after six months. If the quality is still unacceptable, the provider is likely to be removed from the local authority's list of settings eligible to provide nursery education and can reapply only after a year.

Theme

¹⁶ Good quality childcare makes a difference to children's early lives. The following section reports on the characteristics of [good and outstanding practice in childcare](#).

Making a difference for children: good quality childcare

Key points

Good quality provision is usually characterised by:

- plenty of opportunities for children to experience stimulating activities
- strong links with parents, including keeping them up to date with what their children are doing and making arrangements for advising parents on how they can support their children's learning at home
- effective management of children's behaviour to help them become confident, independent and able to differentiate right from wrong.

¹⁷ The majority of settings that provide good quality childcare make a considerable difference to children's security, well-being and early development. A small proportion of these settings have some aspects of outstanding practice. Some of these are used in this section to illustrate how providers can make a difference for children.

¹⁸ Good settings are generally strong at providing for children's care, learning and play, using activities effectively to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Other areas of particular strength are working in partnership with parents and behaviour management.

¹⁹ For [childminders](#), most aspects of outstanding practice support children's care, learning and play. Many childminders attend regular training courses and learn about different approaches to education through play. They take a thorough approach to planning a wide variety of activities. These include indoor activities such as painting and reading together, and outdoor activities including outings to local libraries, parks or playgroups. These visits add to the richness of children's daily lives. Good childminders often adapt their own household routines so that children can learn about tasks such as cooking and shopping, and they follow up children's own ideas for new activities.

²⁰ Good childminders have warm relationships with the children they care for and the children benefit from high levels of individual attention in a calm and homely environment. One childminder presents each new child with their own cup, bowl, spoon, knife, fork, towel, beaker or bottle, and a 'comfort toy'. Another plays relaxing music while children play. These good childminders are resourceful

² Early education provided by private, voluntary and independent sector organisations is inspected under Section 122 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Early education provided within maintained schools and nurseries is inspected as part of the full school inspection, and Ofsted's findings are reported on pp23–24.

³ The six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

in rewarding good behaviour and in finding ways to ensure that children feel safe and calm. They make sure that children know the standards of behaviour they expect and how misbehaving can upset other children. They encourage children to understand that how they feel can affect their behaviour.

²¹ The best childminders have sensible methods for keeping parents informed about their children's progress. Many run diary systems about what the children have been doing and how their attitudes and behaviour are developing. Some have information packs which give details about their own qualifications, policies and information about the national standards. Some also include references and items such as sample menus.

²² Childminders who offer unsatisfactory care may have few toys and games, expect children to sit still for too long, often in front of the television, and use punishments that are not appropriate to a child's age or understanding. Others are not willing to spend time explaining to parents what their children have done during the day.

²³ Most good **day-care settings** have high quality operational plans and comprehensive policies and procedures. They are organised well and use their resources and space to great effect by providing a stable and nurturing environment that stimulates confidence and creativity from the earliest possible age. They keep up to date records of children's progress and use these to plan the next steps for the children's play and learning. In such settings, within the structure of a familiar daily routine, children are fully involved and busy, and make their own choices from a wide variety of high quality play materials and activities. Staff encourage children to bring to the setting objects that they are interested in, such as family photographs, and use these to support children's development.

²⁴ In the best day-care settings, staff are effective in working with parents. They ensure that parents feel welcome to visit the setting, sometimes through a rota so that they can spend some time there, if they choose to, at least once a term. Many settings also make arrangements for parents to support their children's learning at home. This can be especially beneficial for parents who have less knowledge of what works well in education and care.

²⁵ Good day-care providers show strengths in managing the behaviour of large numbers of children. Staff have high expectations, a consistent approach and spend more time praising good behaviour than dealing with bad. One nursery has a 'kindness tree' where children observed being helpful are 'rewarded' by a description of the good deed being pinned to the tree. In the best day-care settings, staff know their children well, and spend a lot of time talking with and listening to them. They use discussion to help children

understand the effects of their behaviour. This promotes a happy, informal and relaxed atmosphere which helps children become confident, independent and able to differentiate between right and wrong.

²⁶ In poor quality day-care provision, staff may over-direct children and not foster independence, expecting all children to carry out the same activities, regardless of their ability and interest. They may use poor quality techniques to manage behaviour such as use of 'naughty chairs' or demeaning language, or do little to help parents to feel welcome in the setting.

Ofsted publications (2003/04) relevant to childcare and funded early education

i. *Children at the centre: an evaluation of early excellence centres* (HMI 2222), 2004

ii. *Early Years: protection through regulation* (HMI 2279), 2004

All listed publications are available on www.ofsted.gov.uk

Nursery and primary schools

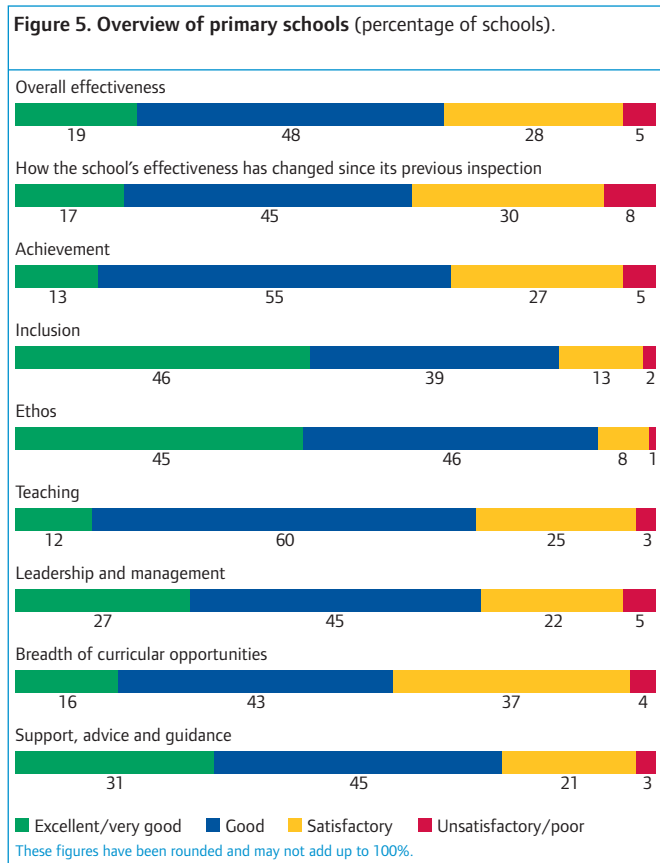
Main findings

- Two thirds of primary schools are good or better and about a fifth of them are highly effective. A small proportion, one in twenty, is not sufficiently effective.
- After several years in which results in National Curriculum tests have been static, results at both Key Stages 1 and 2 show a little improvement.
- The gap in good or better achievement between the core and other foundation subjects remains. Information and communication technology (ICT) continues to improve, but it is still the subject where there is most underachievement.
- Leadership by headteachers is very good or better in almost half of schools and this has a direct impact on how well their pupils achieve. Management is not as good as leadership and is very good in only a quarter of schools. Monitoring and evaluation are not yet strong enough.
- Teaching and learning are good or better in just under three quarters of schools; the challenge remains for the rest to improve their teaching from satisfactory to good. Better use of assessment would help many schools to do this.
- Schools regard positively the vision expressed in *Excellence and enjoyment*, the government's strategy for primary education, but they have been cautious in acting on it.
- Attendance has improved a little, but it is unsatisfactory in a quarter of schools; often, this is where they are not supported sufficiently by parents in ensuring their children attend regularly and punctually.
- Most schools have a commitment to inclusion and provide equality of opportunity for most groups. However, many schools find it a challenge to meet the needs of pupils with complex special educational needs.
- Arrangements for the welfare and health and safety of pupils are generally good and four out of five schools have effective links with parents. Schools have good pastoral arrangements for pupils during transition, but more needs to be done to promote curricular continuity and progression from one school to the next.
- In the Foundation Stage children learn successfully in a variety of settings, particularly in terms of their personal and social development.
- The Foundation Stage Profile has provided a common mechanism for assessing pupils' progress from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1, but teachers are generally not clear enough about the Profile's purpose and value.



Overview

²⁷ Two thirds of the 3,520 primary schools inspected in 2003/04 were found to be good or better, although the proportion of schools that were very good or excellent – a fifth – was lower than last year (see Figure 5). In most schools pupils achieve well, reflecting generally good teaching and, in a very large majority of primary schools, a strong ethos. The majority of schools have shown good improvement between inspections, but just under one in ten has not improved enough.



Achievement

²⁸ Achievement is stronger in the Foundation Stage than in subsequent stages. This is particularly so for children's personal, social and emotional development. More girls than boys achieve well and go beyond the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

²⁹ After several years in which results in National Curriculum tests at Key Stages 1 and 2 have been static, there was a slight improvement in 2003/04. More can still be done to reduce variations in achievement between schools in similar contexts, for example in reading. Further, the gap in achievement between boys and girls remains significant and there is more to do, particularly in helping boys to improve their writing and in ensuring girls make sufficient progress in mathematics through Key Stage 2. Too many girls who attain level 2 or

level 3 in mathematics in Key Stage 1 do not go on to get level 4 or above at the end of Key Stage 2.

³⁰ Achievement is not as good in the foundation subjects as in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is particularly the case in geography and religious education (RE). Achievement continues to improve in ICT, but it is still the subject where there is most underachievement. In the small number of schools where the teaching of modern foreign languages was seen, pupils were achieving well in listening and speaking, but less so in reading and writing.

³¹ **Attendance** rates have improved a little from last year, but unsatisfactory or poor attendance remains a concern in a quarter of schools. Often this is where schools are not supported sufficiently by parents in ensuring their children are punctual and attend school regularly. Most schools strive to promote good attendance.

³² Pupils' **attitudes to school** are almost always positive and **behaviour** is good. Schools generally work hard to promote good relationships and almost all deal successfully with bullying and racism.

³³ Schools are very successful in helping pupils to learn right from wrong, to respect the feelings of others and to develop an awareness of social responsibilities: **social and moral development** are strengths in most primary schools. **Spiritual and cultural awareness** remain the weaker elements of personal development. There is more to do to ensure pupils are prepared effectively for life in a culturally diverse society and appreciate a spiritual dimension in their lives.

Teaching and assessment

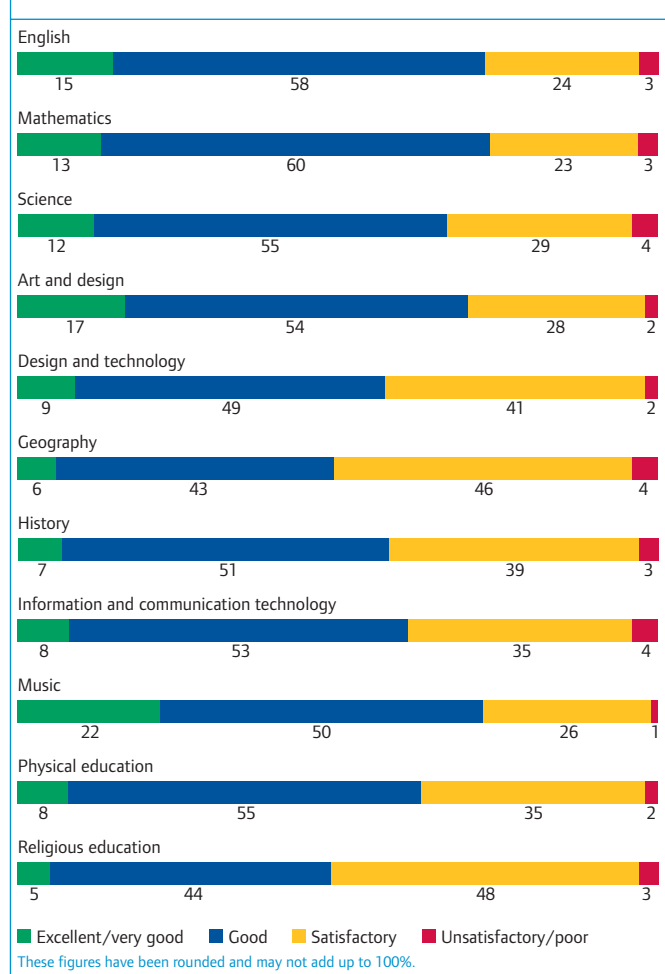
³⁴ Teaching continues to be strongest for nursery-age children and pupils in Year 6; it is weakest in Years 1, 3 and 4, and there is too much variation in the quality of teaching across subjects (see Figure 6).

³⁵ Teachers are generally adept at engaging pupils' interest, developing a good rapport with them and managing their behaviour effectively. Pupils learn best when they are clear about what is expected of them and their learning is stimulated further when they have opportunities to ask questions, talk about their ideas and work collaboratively. Teachers do not always provide enough opportunities, however, for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in this way or to enhance their creative thinking by testing out ideas with others and listening to their responses.

³⁶ Teachers are starting to consider pupils' preferred learning styles in line with the thrust of personalised learning. However, work on this is piecemeal and there is little to indicate that schools have built in any rigorous evaluation of its effects.

³⁷ Lesson planning is good in two thirds of schools, at best including opportunities for pupils to practise and apply new learning and build on what has gone before. Mostly, teachers make good use of unit plans and other guidance, but in a minority of cases they follow them too rigidly. Often, the teaching is focused on covering all the objectives in the guidance at the expense of meeting pupils' needs. Inflexibility in using the guidance remains a sticking point in improving still further the teaching of English and mathematics.

Figure 6. The quality of teaching by subject (percentage of primary schools).



³⁸ Teaching assistants generally have the skills they need for their work and they are mostly deployed well in supporting pupils effectively. They know what they have to teach, but are sometimes not involved enough in discussing outcomes with teachers. In a minority of schools where assistants work mainly with less able groups, teachers are not always fully aware of what these pupils are achieving. There is a risk of such pupils becoming too dependent on help from the teaching assistants and also of the assistants simply keeping pupils engaged rather than helping them to make good progress in their learning.

³⁹ The proportion of schools where teaching is only satisfactory or unsatisfactory is slightly higher than last year at just over a quarter of schools. Improving this is crucial to boosting achievement further. Unsatisfactory teaching often stems from weak assessment and planning so that lessons are poorly matched to what pupils need.

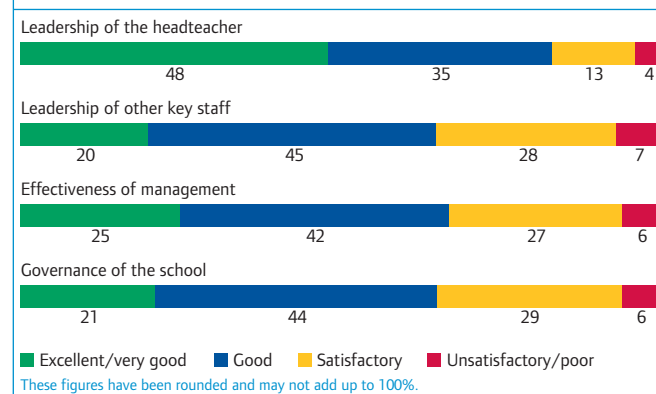
⁴⁰ High quality assessment across all subjects is a challenge for a primary class teacher, but assessment – particularly formative assessment – is still the weakest element of teaching, especially in subjects beyond English and mathematics. It is weak in over a quarter of schools in design and technology and geography. Other foundation subjects fare only slightly better.

Leadership and management

⁴¹ Leadership and management overall are good or better in the large majority of schools, but are unsatisfactory in one in twenty schools.

⁴² The **leadership of headteachers** is strong in most schools and is characterised by purposefulness and clarity of vision. Typically, headteachers' leadership is significantly better than that of other staff (see Figure 7): there are often fewer opportunities for other staff to demonstrate leadership. In a minority of schools, purpose and vision are not communicated effectively enough. Weak leadership has an effect on pupils' achievement: schools in which achievement is weak are likely to be those with unsatisfactory or poor leadership and management. Widespread underachievement is extremely rare when schools are led and managed effectively.

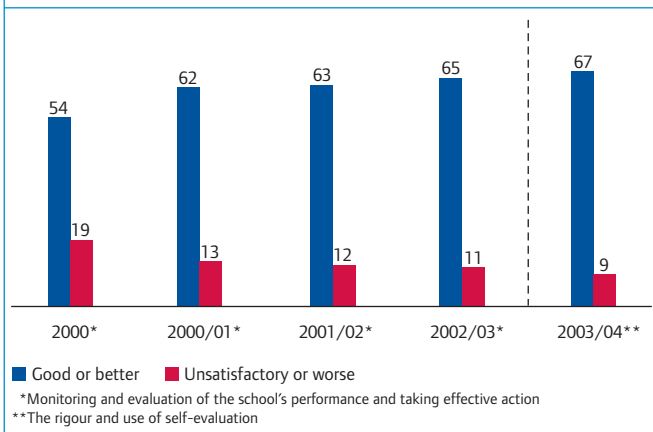
Figure 7. The effectiveness of leadership and management (percentage of primary schools).



⁴³ The effectiveness of **management** presents a less positive picture than the leadership of the headteacher (see Figure 7). This is usually because elements of management such as monitoring and evaluation lack rigour. These elements have improved in recent years, but the rigour and use of self-evaluation are unsatisfactory in just under one in ten schools (see Figure 8).⁴ This is a concern since self-evaluation is such an important lever to improvement.

⁴ 2002/03 is the latest year for which these figures are available. In the framework for inspection from September 2003, there is no judgement of the quality of monitoring and evaluation. The new judgement is of the rigour and use of self-evaluation.

Figure 8. The quality of monitoring and evaluation/self-evaluation: 2000 to 2003/04 (percentage of primary schools).



⁴⁴ Schools whose leadership and management are good overall are more able to evaluate their own performance accurately. However, schools are better at judging the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement than at judging the quality of the curriculum and assessment.

⁴⁵ **Governors** contribute effectively to leadership in the majority of schools. Increasingly, they are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the schools they govern and play an important part in helping to shape their direction. However, in a few schools, their support and role as 'critical friend' are unsatisfactory, often because their knowledge of the school is patchy and so they are not in a position to challenge or encourage as they should.

Other aspects of the quality of education

⁴⁶ The majority of schools offer a broad **curriculum**. This is the case even in small schools, which often provide a broad and rich curriculum, despite having fewer people to share subject leadership roles. Where curricular planning is most effective, the full range of subjects is properly represented, secure links are made between them and pupils are taught to apply basic skills in other subjects.

⁴⁷ Although the curriculum is broad, the depth and richness of some subjects, such as geography and RE, are often weak. Time for practical work and field work is threatened when there is a heavy emphasis on content and knowledge at the expense of opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills. Many schools have developed effective school councils involving pupils but there is little evidence of other work in citizenship.

⁴⁸ Other weaknesses in the curriculum include:

- an over-reliance on extra literacy lessons, such that literacy dominates timetables instead of being integrated more into the teaching of other subjects
- insecure provision for some foundation subjects. The humanities in particular are undervalued in many schools.

⁴⁹ **Accommodation** is inadequate in almost a tenth of schools and slightly more so for children in the Foundation Stage. Although more schools and settings have created outdoor learning areas for the youngest children, this is not always possible. In some cases the space is used merely for recreation or letting off steam. In schools where there are inadequacies such as a lack of suitable space for PE, outdoor areas or ICT resources, this has an adverse effect on the range and quality of the curriculum. Access for disabled pupils is still a problem for many primary schools, despite the increased funding available to them to meet their legal obligations. Learning **resources** are rarely inadequate.

⁵⁰ Provision for **pupils' welfare, health and safety** is a strength. Pupils usually have easy access to well informed guidance from a range of trusted adults.

⁵¹ Schools are generally successful in forging strong **links with parents** in relation to children's learning. They offer a range of useful information, including how parents can help their children at home. Parents' contributions to shaping their children's attitudes to reading are important and influence their enjoyment and success as readers. In a survey of reading undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), the less effective schools did not take enough notice of reading matter brought from home. Thus, some pupils were avid readers of comics or non-fiction at home, but lacked interest in their prescribed reading book at school (see publication ix, p28).

Themes

⁵² The following section includes more extended commentaries on current issues in primary education:

- how schools have implemented the vision expressed in *Excellence and enjoyment* and its effects on the quality and range of the curriculum that pupils experience⁵
- the use of **assessment** for learning to improve the quality of teaching and its match to pupils' needs
- **educational inclusion**
- the effectiveness of **transition** between phases of education, including transition into secondary school.

Commentary is also included on the **Foundation Stage**, focusing particularly on LEA maintained provision.

Foundation Stage

Key points

- Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well, taking account of their starting points.
- Teachers are generally not clear enough about the purpose and value of the Foundation Stage Profile and it has not been successful in contributing to a smooth transition for pupils from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.

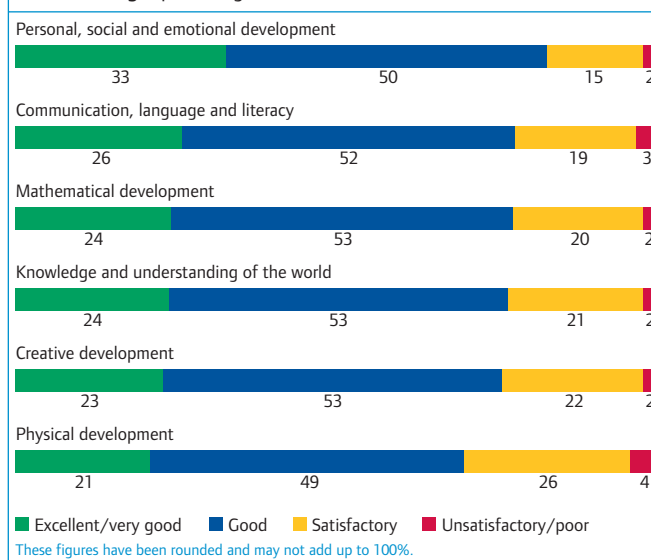
⁵³ The Foundation Stage focuses on young children acquiring the key learning skills to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Ofsted inspects the quality of and standards in nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes in maintained schools. It also inspects the quality of government funded nursery education for 3 to 4 year olds in the private, voluntary and independent sector, including childminding networks, but under different legislation from the inspection of schools (see p16). This section focuses on the Foundation Stage in schools and settings with LEA maintained provision.

⁵⁴ In almost all settings, the curriculum covers all the areas of learning and makes a good contribution to children's personal development. Early years practitioners recognise that children's personal, social and emotional development is a vital element in learning; they understand its significance not only as a discrete area of learning, but also its contribution to developing children's confidence across other areas of learning (see Figure 9).

⁵⁵ In most settings, provision for **communication, language and literacy** is good. Staff understand the value of this area of learning and teach speaking and listening very well. In the best teaching, children's language is extended through thoughtful interaction and genuine dialogue. In these settings, staff are also attuned to the hierarchical development of reading and writing and teach these early skills sensitively so that children enjoy their work. However, there are still

instances of inappropriate teaching, such as colouring in worksheets of letter shapes and an undue haste for children to write a sentence before they can say one.

Figure 9. The quality of provision by area of learning in the Foundation Stage (percentage of schools).



⁵⁶ **Mathematical development** is fostered well and staff are usually adept at using rhymes to aid counting and to make lessons enjoyable. Good use of the outdoor environment contributes strongly to developing children's **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Opportunities for them to observe things at first hand, build on different scales, and discover more about their environment promote learning very well. However, provision to develop children's sense of time and place is not as good.

⁵⁷ Children's **physical and creative development** are well represented in the curriculum. Links with specialists such as physical education teachers, sports coaches or professional artists provide a valuable dimension to the provision in some schools and settings.

⁵⁸ In most schools, the Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Features of successful leadership and management, which apply across all types of provision, include:

- a carefully organised learning environment that promotes independent learning and fosters the children's enthusiasm and interests
- regular monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that they are effective
- rigorous self-evaluation and action to rectify weaknesses
- successful procedures to promote children's welfare
- effective partnerships with parents and carers.

Even in those schools that are judged to be unsatisfactory overall, the Foundation Stage is frequently the strongest phase.

⁵ *Excellence and enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools* (ISBN 1841859931), DfES, 2003.

⁵⁹ Children generally make very good strides toward the early learning goals across all six areas of learning, although many struggle to overcome low starting points. They make particularly good progress in early excellence centres where they are encouraged to be very confident and independent with a zest for learning, even though they have the extra challenge of a low starting point.⁶ These centres often offer outstanding services to support families through highly effective liaison with a range of other professionals.

⁶⁰ The Foundation Stage Profile has provided a common mechanism to enable schools to assess children's progress in relation to the areas of learning, but it has not been successful in helping teachers to ensure a smooth transition for all children between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. It has created further assessment demands and teachers are generally not clear enough about its purpose or value (see xviii, p28).

Excellence and enjoyment

Key points

- While the literacy and numeracy strategies continue to play an important part within the Primary National Strategy, few schools have made substantial changes to develop the distinctive character of their schools in response to *Excellence and enjoyment*.
- Support from LEAs for the developments arising from the Primary National Strategy is mostly good, but there is too much variation.
- The first year of the Primary Leadership Programme has had a positive impact on strengthening schools' collaborative leadership, but it is too early to trace this through to improvements in standards.

⁶¹ The main aim of *Excellence and enjoyment* is for every school to combine excellence in teaching with enjoyment in learning. Headteachers welcome its encouragement to innovate and be creative, but so far their response has been cautious. Although they support the ideas, teachers are generally less well informed about *Excellence and enjoyment* than headteachers and have been insufficiently involved in thinking about how it might influence teaching and learning.

⁶² So far, schools have made only limited progress in plotting a coherent creative dimension across the whole curriculum. In some schools with strong leadership and high standards, there has been a more innovative response, involving a more substantial reorganisation of the curriculum, such as allocating a day a week to teaching by subject specialists, or implementing subject or theme weeks, which broaden the curriculum and enhance the opportunities for pupils' learning. However, the depth and richness of some subjects, such as geography,

design and technology, and RE, often remain unexploited because teachers have neither sufficient enthusiasm nor the robust subject knowledge to develop these areas. Rightly, many schools are concerned not to lose their focus on raising standards in English and mathematics and they need support to be innovative within that context.

⁶³ LEAs have committed themselves to the Strategy through their educational development plans. However, the main challenge in implementing it successfully is to ensure coherence across the range of LEA services to schools. The concept in *Excellence and enjoyment* of an LEA's primary strategy manager acting as a 'one stop shop' for primary schools is far from being realised. Strategy managers' influence is limited when they do not hold senior roles within the LEA.

⁶⁴ The [Primary Leadership Programme](#) was introduced in the autumn of 2003 to support lower performing schools in raising standards in English and mathematics. The programme focuses on strengthening collaborative leadership and it has had a positive impact on broadening schools' leadership teams to include subject leaders of English and mathematics. Despite its speedy introduction, it has helped schools to recognise their strategic role in improving standards and quality. It is too early, however, to trace the effects of these benefits on improved standards. The programme has also been found useful by newly appointed headteachers, who have valued advice from more experienced headteachers acting as primary strategy consultant leaders.

Assessment

Key points

- Assessment remains the weakest aspect of teaching. It is unsatisfactory or poor in one in seven schools.
- About half of schools have good procedures to help pupils know how they are getting on and what they need to learn next. However, there are still too many occasions when pupils do not know how they can improve.

⁶⁵ For a number of years, assessment has been highlighted as one of the weakest elements of teaching. It remains so.

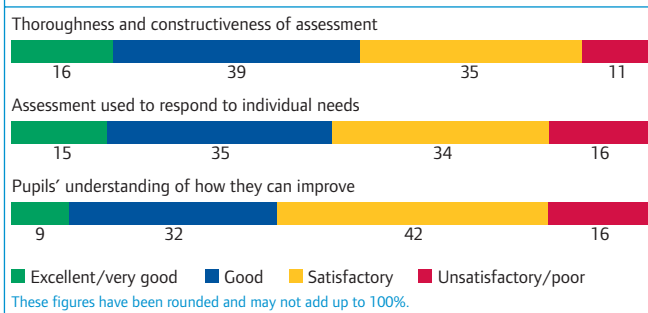
⁶⁶ Assessment is better in the Foundation Stage than elsewhere. Staff in this stage often make judicious use of observations to record what children know and can do. However, practitioners in the Foundation Stage have seen the introduction of the Foundation Stage Profile as bureaucratic. It has not been helpful enough in making judgements about children's progress or in supporting their transition to Year 1 (see xviii, p28).

⁶ Early excellence centres are a government initiative to provide high quality integrated education and day care for children aged 0 to 5 years, together with other services including additional services for parents and promotion of social inclusion (see i, p28).

67 In Key Stages 1 and 2, weaknesses in assessment (see Figure 10) are characterised by:

- inadequate procedures to ensure that pupils' progress is measured reliably and regularly
- insufficient emphasis on assessment for learning
- lack of involvement of the pupils themselves
- marking that fails to provide pupils with enough guidance on how to improve. It is too frequently confined to ticks and comments about effort, rather than pinpointing what has been done well and what needs improvement.

Figure 10. The quality of assessment (percentage of primary schools).



68 Where teachers lack suitable knowledge of the subject they are teaching, their ability to assess what has been learned is generally weak. The thoroughness and impact of assessment continue to be better in English and mathematics than in other subjects. However, even in the former subjects, there are weaknesses, such as the lack of assessment for learning during the lesson itself, or failure to identify and act on pupils' misconceptions. Lower performing schools often do not identify the pupils who have difficulties in reading early enough and then act on the information. Records of pupils' reading are too frequently merely a list of which books have been read rather than an informed record of the pupils' progress and what they need to learn next.

69 Assessment for learning in science and the foundation subjects reflects the low priority given to it, as well as the extensive demands on teachers' knowledge of subjects across the primary curriculum. As a result, there is a tendency for teachers to focus on what has been covered at the expense of assessing how much pupils have learnt. The quality of assessment influences how well pupils achieve. If teachers know pupils' strengths and weaknesses, they are better placed to plan work that takes these into account in order to help them achieve well.

70 Schools where leadership is very strong usually also have good or better procedures for assessment. Headteachers in these schools ensure that systems for assessing pupils' work across the curriculum are manageable, reasonable and make a difference to pupils' learning.

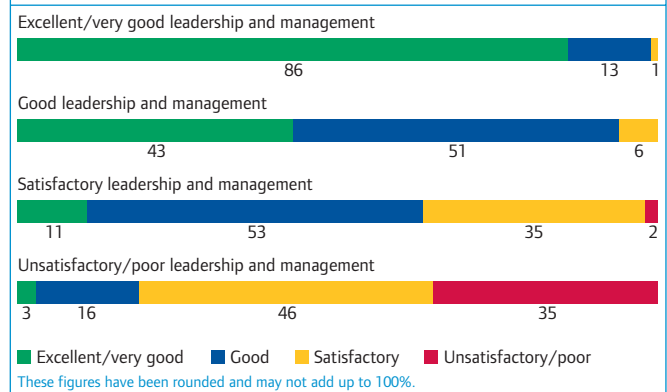
Educational inclusion

Key points

- Most schools are committed to inclusion and provide equality of opportunity for most groups.
- Well trained staff are a significant factor in raising achievement for all groups.

71 The most successful schools identify the needs of different groups of pupils effectively and then determine and implement appropriate support strategies. Effective inclusion is very closely associated with strong leadership and management and an underpinning commitment to translate policy into practice (see Figure 11). LEAs play an important role in this (see p81).

Figure 11. The quality of inclusion by the effectiveness of leadership and management (percentage of primary schools).



72 Some of the national initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect. For example, the Excellence in Cities programme is providing schools with the impetus and funding to meet the needs of **gifted and talented**, as well as vulnerable, pupils. The School Sport Partnerships programme has increased the breadth and balance of curricular opportunities for targeted groups, for instance by providing multi-skills camps. These are residential courses where talented pupils can develop and refine their skills. They also learn how to improve the quality of their work by developing their skills of observation and evaluation (see xvii, p28). In addition, teachers are increasingly harnessing the potential of ICT through specific initiatives to motivate different groups of pupils.

Special educational needs

⁷³ The provision for pupils with **special educational needs** (SEN) is good or better in most schools and very good in almost a third. Aspects of this effective provision include strong leadership from SEN coordinators who monitor pupils' progress through a range of strategies. Nevertheless, provision for pupils with SEN and disability is not evaluated consistently against the progress they make. Schools make insufficient use of pupil level data and generally do not monitor or evaluate progress accurately enough.

⁷⁴ The most effective SEN coordinators are influential in training staff and use their own time and expertise very efficiently to support pupils and staff. In a small minority of schools, however, they are not deployed efficiently or effectively and are not well enough prepared to take on the extra demands of coping with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties or complex needs (see xi, p28).

⁷⁵ SEN provision is effective both in withdrawal groups and in whole classes. Successful schools ensure that, where pupils are withdrawn from lessons, they have equal access to the rest of the curriculum. In a minority of schools, pupils' entitlement to a broad curriculum is compromised by taking them out of the classroom for extra support for literacy or numeracy. This is exacerbated when pupils miss the same lessons each week.

⁷⁶ Best practice in the Foundation Stage identifies children's individual needs early, so that parents can be involved straightaway. Such good practice is not consistent across the country: the variation disadvantages some pupils at primary school and then for the rest of their school career.

⁷⁷ In many schools, there is close liaison between teachers, teaching assistants, SEN coordinators and external specialists to ensure that pupils receive the right support from the start. In effective schools and settings, therapists are an integral part of the services offered. Parents appreciate the convenience of having such expertise available on the doorstep and there is less likelihood of appointments not being kept.

⁷⁸ When the provision for pupils with SEN is not good enough, work is poorly matched to the pupils' needs and their progress is insufficiently monitored. Individual targets do not align with curriculum priorities and are too general to be of value. In a focused HMI survey (see xi, p28), expectations of pupils' improvement in reading and writing over time were too low in many schools. Sometimes, because they did not know what progress to expect, schools were easily satisfied with slow progress. Associated with this was a weakness in evaluating fully the effects of the provision on pupils' progress.

English as an additional language

⁷⁹ In the large majority of schools, **pupils for whom English is an additional language** (EAL) are provided for well. However, only the most effective provision analyses fully and meets the needs of more advanced bilingual pupils as writers in Key Stage 2 (see v, p28). In many schools pupils are supported effectively alongside their peers by bilingual staff. Teachers adapt literacy lessons appropriately to ensure all pupils are fully involved. They are sensitive to the needs of these pupils and encourage dialogue through questioning and non-verbal communication. The use of dual language books to extend children's understanding of English is a strong feature in Foundation Stage settings. In the most effective schools, EAL coordinators are well trained, provide good leadership and play an important role in developing the expertise of other staff. In these schools the needs of the more advanced bilingual pupils are fully analysed and met.

Gifted and talented pupils

⁸⁰ In six out of ten schools, the achievement of **gifted and talented pupils** is good or better. Teachers are becoming more attuned to pupils' capabilities and are beginning to plan more challenging tasks for them. Activities for pupils are provided in most areas of the curriculum but tend to be more focused on literacy and mathematics than sport, the arts or other areas of the curriculum. Some useful work is being done using expertise from local secondary schools to enable these pupils to have access to stimulating resources and expert tuition.

Asylum-seeker pupils

⁸¹ The proportion of schools with **asylum-seeker pupils** is higher in London than elsewhere in the country.⁷ Many of these pupils make good progress after a relatively short time in the school, particularly where the difficulties that they face are understood and recognised, and where schools have committed time, effort and resources to integrating them in a positive and supportive manner. Staff funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) make a vital contribution in supporting asylum-seeker pupils and in providing valuable training in schools. The quality of teaching for the great majority of the asylum-seeker pupils is at least satisfactory and is most effective where there is close collaboration, planning and support between class teachers and EMAG staff.

⁷ A survey published in 2003 noted that in schools outside London, the percentage of asylum-seeker pupils on roll ranged from 2% to 26%. The average was around 7%. In schools in London, the average was around 20% (see xiv, p28).

Traveller pupils

⁸² Traveller pupils also make satisfactory progress in lessons, but this is not sustained over time. This is because their attendance rate is low, the worst for any minority group. This has a negative impact on their performance, which is lower than the national average. The majority of Traveller education services provide at least satisfactory, and often very good, support for schools, Traveller families and pupils. These arrangements facilitate positive relationships, based on trust between schools and parents, and help pupils to settle quickly. Nevertheless, poor attendance levels remain a cause for concern, and one for which schools struggle to find solutions (see p80).

Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds

⁸³ Schools are starting to use the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) to identify and track the achievement of pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds. In the best practice, such schools are able to set more specific targets to promote and monitor pupils' achievement.

⁸⁴ The best achieving groups are those from Chinese backgrounds, followed by pupils of Indian, then Irish heritage. The pupils who perform consistently below the national average are of Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage, although Bangladeshi pupils are closing the performance gap more rapidly.

Transition

Key points

- Transition arrangements are mostly good, reflecting the priority that most schools give to their pupils' welfare.
- Arrangements to promote curricular continuity and progression in pupils' learning are not as strong as other aspects of transition.

Entering the Foundation Stage

⁸⁵ In Foundation Stage settings, induction arrangements are usually very effective and children are well prepared for their first days in school. Home visits and links with early childhood settings help them to make a happy and settled start. A strong feature of the best provision is the encouragement to parents and carers to participate in induction arrangements. This helps children at the point of transfer and also contributes to an ethos of consultation and partnership. In the best practice, close links with other agencies ensure that groups of children with different needs, such as those at an early stage of learning English, are properly supported.

Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1

⁸⁶ The transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 is usually effective in introducing the pupils to their new teacher and helping them to settle in their new class. Arrangements are often flexible so that younger ones can attend part time for the first few weeks where necessary. This helps them to adjust to full time schooling.

⁸⁷ Schools are aware of the varied pre-school experiences of their pupils and place suitable emphasis on supporting their social and emotional needs during transition. In the best examples, this pastoral element is enhanced by arrangements to promote progression in teaching and continuity in pupils' learning. In these schools, the teachers in Year 1 take account of assessment information to help them build on what the pupils already know and can do. However, the teaching in many schools does not do this well enough, nor does it consider pupils' differing levels of maturity. Additionally, the urgency felt by schools to ensure that pupils make swift progress in the early stages of the National Curriculum programmes of study leads to abrupt curricular transitions at the start of Year 1.

⁸⁸ Curricular plans between the areas of learning and the National Curriculum programmes of study for the foundation subjects are often not aligned well. Consequently, progression from one stage to the next is not as smooth as it should be. Many subject leaders do not know enough about the Foundation Stage curriculum and are unable to provide effectively for a smooth transfer into Year 1. Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in plans for transition and many teaching in Key Stage 2 lack experience of working with younger pupils (see xviii, p28).

Year 6 to Year 7

⁸⁹ Most primary and secondary schools work well together to give pastoral support to pupils moving from Year 6 to Year 7. Visits by secondary school staff to see prospective pupils and 'taster' days for pupils in the secondary school help them to become familiar with their new school. However, preparations for transition often do not go beyond this and contact between schools is limited to the summer term. Insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' skills of personal organisation to help them settle confidently into a different school.

⁹⁰ Generally, schools make successful arrangements for the transfer of pupils with SEN, often helped by teaching assistants. Learning mentors in the Excellence in Cities programme have helped some of the most vulnerable pupils to transfer smoothly to the next stage of education. Initiatives such as this often have a positive effect on pupils' experiences during transition. This is because most activities are well structured, suitably funded and coordinated effectively to promote liaison between schools in a geographical area.

However, high pupil mobility or large numbers of schools spread over a wide geographical area are significant barriers to effective transfer.

⁹¹ An HMI survey found that the transition into Year 7 was unsatisfactory in one in six secondary schools and academic continuity was weak in half of the schools inspected. These schools made poor use of primary school data. Information about pupils' attainment was usually limited to that on the core subjects and was often incomplete or arrived too late to be useful. There are still too many instances of pupils repeating work in Key Stage 3 that they have covered successfully in Key Stage 2.

⁹² Transfer arrangements can be very effective when, for example:

- secondary schools offer master classes or specialist teaching throughout Year 6 to support continuity in the curriculum
- summer schools are used to provide support for the pupils that most need help
- curricular bridging projects ensure that pupils begin secondary school at an appropriately challenging level.

Specialist schools in particular have enhanced their links with primary schools by sharing their expertise and facilities.

Evaluation, monitoring and training

⁹³ There is too little evaluation or monitoring by schools of the quality of pupils' experience during transition or the impact that transition has on learning. Equally, there is little evidence of in-service training activities in order to improve the quality of transition when pupils move from one phase to another.

Ofsted publications (2003/04) relevant to nursery and primary schools

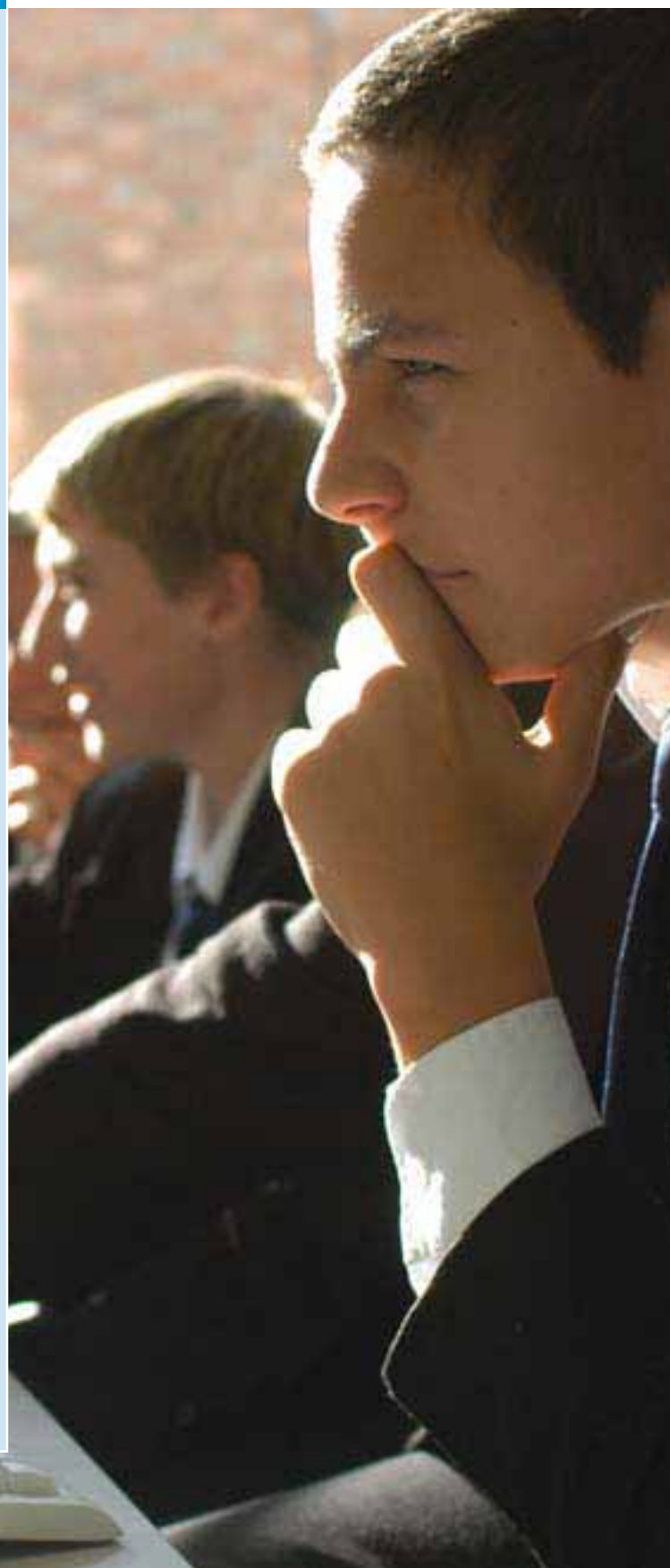
- i. *Children at the centre: an evaluation of early excellence centres* (HMI 2222), 2004
- ii. *Excellence clusters: the first ten inspections* (HMI 1732), 2003
- iii. *Excellence in Cities: City Learning Centres* (HMI 1655), 2003
- iv. *ICT in schools: the impact of government initiatives five years on* (HMI 2050), 2004
- v. *Managing the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant: good practice in primary schools* (HMI 2072), 2004
- vi. *Primary modern foreign languages in initial teacher training: a survey* (HMI 1768), 2003
- vii. *Provision and support for Traveller pupils* (HMI 455), 2003
- viii. *Provision for gifted and talented pupils in physical education: 2003/04* (HMI 2149), 2004
- ix. *Reading for purpose and pleasure: an evaluation of the teaching of reading in primary schools* (HMI 2393), 2004
- x. *Setting targets for pupils with special educational needs* (HMI 751), 2004
- xi. *Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools* (HMI 2276), 2004
- xii. *Special educational needs in the mainstream* (HMI 511), 2003
- xiii. *Starting early: food and nutrition education of young children* (HMI 2292), 2004
- xiv. *The education of asylum-seeker pupils* (HMI 453), 2003
- xv. *The national literacy and numeracy strategies and the primary curriculum* (HMI 1973), 2003
- xvi. *The primary leadership programme 2003-04* (HMI 2301), 2004
- xvii. *The School Sport Partnerships Programme: evaluation of phases 3 and 4 2003/04* (HMI 2150), 2004
- xviii. *Transition from the Reception Year to Year 1: an evaluation by HMI* (HMI 2221), 2004

All listed publications are available on www.ofsted.gov.uk

Secondary schools, including sixth forms

Main findings

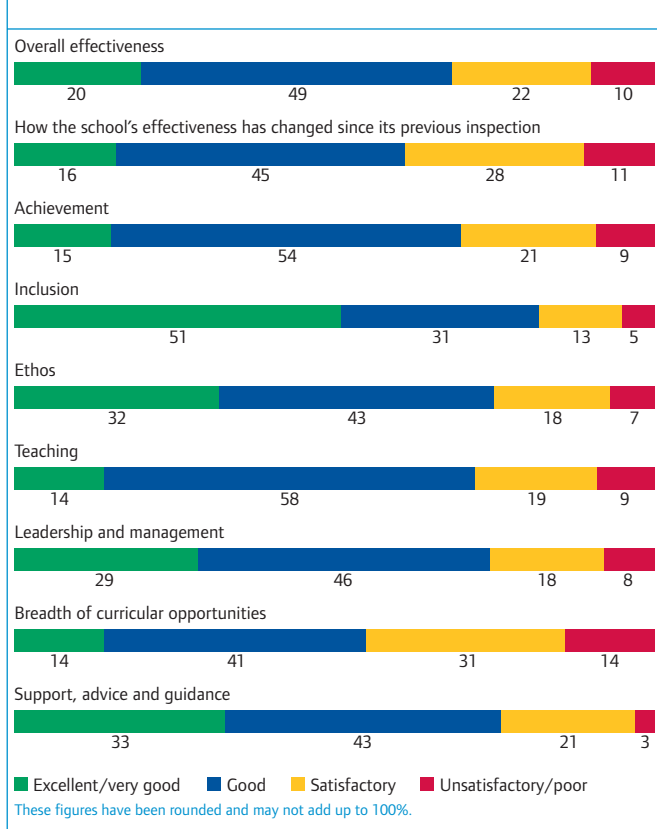
- Pupils' achievements in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests have improved, but unevenly, and there has also been a slight improvement in GCSE results.
- There is a pressing need to take effective steps to improve the literacy and mathematics skills of pupils who enter Year 7 with attainment below the expected level.
- The number of successful schools in disadvantaged areas has increased, but the gap in achievement between schools with high and low levels of disadvantage remains wide.
- Almost all school sixth forms are effective and provide successfully for their students, especially those taking A level courses.
- Behaviour is unsatisfactory in just under one school in ten, mainly because of low level disruption in lessons.
- Attendance has risen slightly overall but, despite increased efforts, is still unsatisfactory in just over a quarter of schools.
- Teaching is good or better in almost three quarters of schools but unsatisfactory in nearly a tenth. Often these schools face particular challenges in recruiting and retaining well qualified teachers, particularly in mathematics and science.
- The use of assessment in meeting individual pupils' needs remains a weakness generally and is unsatisfactory in well over a tenth of schools.
- Most schools are committed to providing well for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), but many find that enabling these pupils to participate fully in school life and to achieve their potential are significant challenges.
- Leadership and management overall are good or better in three quarters of schools. The leadership by heads of department and other key staff remains weaker than the leadership by headteachers and aspects of management, particularly self-evaluation, need more improvement.
- Greater variety in Key Stage 4 programmes, particularly in the provision of vocational courses, is increasing pupils' motivation, but assessment, guidance and progression to post-16 courses need to be improved.
- Aspects of the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4, especially citizenship, religious education (RE) and information and communication technology (ICT), cause concern, as does the decline in the take-up of modern foreign languages (MFL) and geography in Key Stage 4.



Overview

⁹⁴ Figure 12 shows the main inspection judgements from the inspections of 627 secondary schools in 2003/04; 303 schools had sixth forms. Overall, the proportion of good or better schools was similar to last year, but a smaller percentage was very good and the proportion of ineffective schools was higher. Most schools have a strong ethos and a positive approach to inclusion.

Figure 12. Overview of secondary schools (percentage of schools).

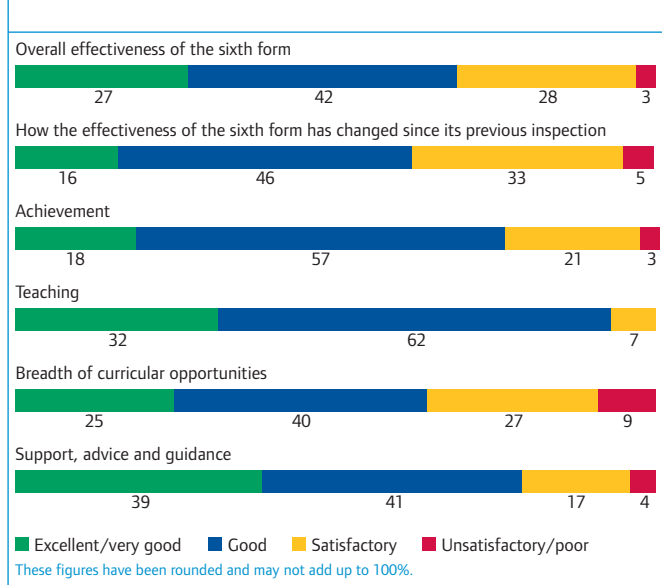


⁹⁵ Almost all of the 294 school sixth forms inspected are effective and provide successfully for their students, especially those taking A level courses (see Figure 13).

Achievement

⁹⁶ In 2004 the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 3 was 71% in English, 73% in mathematics and 66% in science. Changes from 2003 were mixed. While the proportion rose a little in English and mathematics, it fell in science. At level 6 or above results rose by three percentage points in mathematics, but fell by one percentage point in English and six percentage points in science. Girls still outperform boys, greatly so in English and slightly in mathematics and science.

Figure 13. Overview of sixth forms in schools (percentage of sixth forms).



⁹⁷ There remains a pressing need to take effective steps to improve the literacy and mathematics skills of pupils who enter Year 7 with attainment below the expected level. The proportion who enter with attainment below level 4 in English and mathematics and go on to achieve level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 3 continues to be small.

⁹⁸ At the end of Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE (or equivalent) grades A*-C in maintained secondary schools increased by 0.8 percentage points from 2003 to 52.3%. GCSE results continue to show boys lagging behind girls, though the gap narrowed slightly in 2004.

⁹⁹ Results from 2003, the latest to have been analysed in relation to different groups of pupils, show that disparities in performance across ethnic groups remain distinct.⁸ Pupils of Chinese and Indian heritage continue to be the best performing minority ethnic groups, while those of Black Caribbean and Pakistani heritage do much less well. A recent survey by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) of the achievement of Bangladeshi heritage pupils found that, although their attainment is below the national average at all key stages, once they have become fluent in English, they can match the attainment of other groups in similar circumstances (see publication i, p39).

¹⁰⁰ Schools that are effective in raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils analyse performance data systematically and deploy their resources well to meet the needs of these pupils. A clear stand on race equality, understood and appreciated by pupils and parents, contributes to a productive climate for learning, enabling minority ethnic and bilingual pupils to achieve well. An HMI survey of schools that made the best use of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant

⁸ National Curriculum assessment and GCSE/GNVQ attainment by pupil characteristics, in England, 2002 (final) and 2003 (provisional), (SFR 04/2004), DFES, 2004.

showed that effective partnership teaching between a mainstream teacher and a specialist in **English as an additional language** (EAL) was a key feature in raising pupils' attainment and contributing to teachers' professional development (see x, p39). High quality assessment, target-setting and tracking of pupils' progress characterised the best provision for pupils with EAL.

¹⁰¹ The achievement of **gifted and talented** pupils is good in the majority of schools. At best, schools identify these pupils early in Year 7 and provide a rich diet of work that interests and challenges them, including enrichment activities, such as clubs, trips and project work. However, this kind of provision is still rare and teachers generally give too little attention to the needs of gifted and talented pupils in their planning.

¹⁰² HMI evaluated the summer school courses run by the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. Over 1,000 pupils attended these in 2004, twice as many as in 2003. The quality of courses has improved and was mostly excellent. Pupils responded well to the very good teaching, which was generally more demanding and engaging than their usual lessons. However, links between schools and the Academy are underdeveloped in relation to the information the Academy receives before pupils attend and feedback to schools on the progress pupils make.

¹⁰³ Achievement is good or better in the large majority of sixth forms. Results in A level examinations have continued to improve. However, standards in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are unsatisfactory in a few schools. Students are still being recruited to courses that are inappropriate given their previous performance and this contributes to absenteeism and low attainment for these students at the end of their courses.

¹⁰⁴ At 91.94%, **attendance** in secondary schools in 2003/04 was a little better than in the previous year. However, unauthorised absence also rose slightly to 1.14%. In just over a quarter of schools attendance was judged to be unsatisfactory or poor; it was good or better in only slightly more than two fifths. Where attendance is poor, it is often associated with poor achievement overall.

¹⁰⁵ Schools that have been able to improve attendance make concerted and persistent efforts to stress to pupils and parents the importance of regular attendance; they take an uncompromising and dogged approach to unjustified absence; and they maintain strong links with education welfare services to track and support attendance and to reintegrate pupils who have been away from school frequently. Differences in attendance between schools in similar areas show that action by schools, in conjunction with education welfare services, can have an impact on the attitudes of pupils and parents to casual absence.

¹⁰⁶ The great majority of pupils continue to behave well, but behaviour overall is unsatisfactory in just fewer than one school in ten. Taking account of patterns over the last five years, the proportion of schools where behaviour is unsatisfactory shows no sign of reducing. Behaviour in secondary schools is reported in more detail on pp34–35.

Teaching and assessment

¹⁰⁷ The quality of teaching in the schools inspected in 2003/04 was good or better in a large majority of schools, but unsatisfactory in almost one in ten (see Figure 12). This is a less favourable picture than last year. Schools with high levels of disadvantage continue to have a higher proportion of unsatisfactory teaching than other schools. Often this is associated with staffing difficulties.

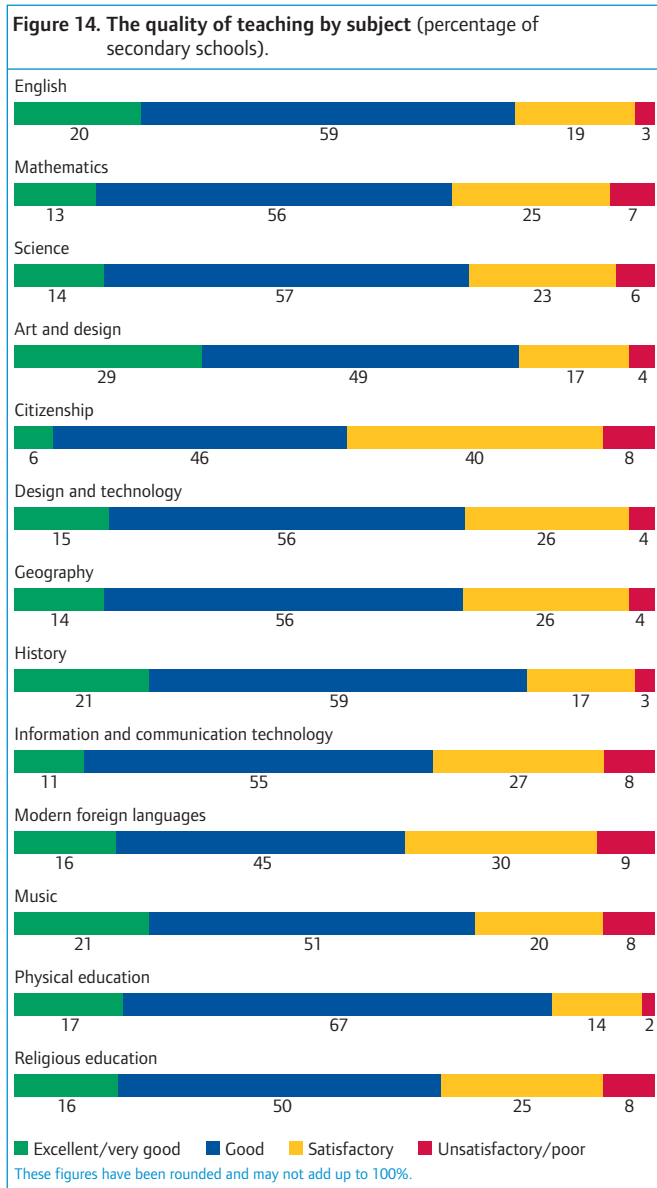
¹⁰⁸ Considerable differences persist between subjects in the quality of teaching (see Figure 14). The weakest teaching is in citizenship at both key stages; schools are seldom judged to have very good teaching in this subject. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining well qualified staff impinge particularly strongly on mathematics, science and RE. Achievement is unsatisfactory in almost half the schools that are seriously affected by difficulties in matching specialist teachers to the curriculum.

¹⁰⁹ The most effective teaching continues to be by specialists who use their subject knowledge well to extend pupils' understanding and engender enthusiasm for the subject. Extensive and well planned use of ICT is also an important and improving feature. An HMI survey found that the quality of teaching in lessons where ICT is used has improved and is good or better in the majority of lessons (see vi, p39). The use of ICT has, for example, enabled more active approaches to learning and the development of thinking skills.

¹¹⁰ In most subjects the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 continues to lag behind that in Key Stage 4, although the gap varies. In mathematics the quality of teaching was, until recently, better in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3. But the position is now reversed and mathematics is among the least well taught subjects in Key Stage 4. With a lesser margin, teaching is also better in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4 in science and physical education (PE).

¹¹¹ A survey by HMI of the implementation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy showed that it continues to have a generally positive effect on teaching approaches, although inconsistently across the foundation subjects. Where the strategy has had the greatest effect, senior managers and heads of department have worked in a concerted way to promote school-wide improvements in teaching. Leadership and management of the strategy are good or better in three fifths of schools. Continuing weaknesses in planning,

coordination and monitoring hinder implementation in other schools. Weaknesses in continuity in the curriculum from Key Stage 2 to 3 remain a general concern (see pp27–28).



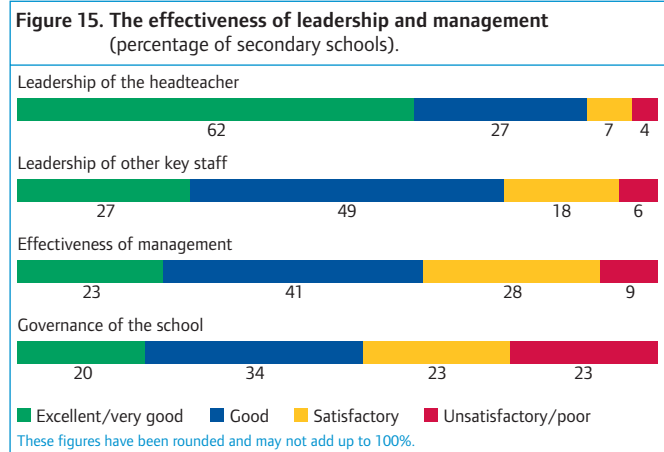
¹¹² The use of assessment remains a weakness in both key stages and varies across subjects. Schools with good or better assessment are still in a minority. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory in one school in ten, with the schools affected lacking an effective whole school framework for analysing and tracking pupils' progress. Even schools with good procedures for making and recording assessments do not always use the information effectively to plan learning activities, although the Key Stage 3 Strategy is leading to some improvement in this respect. Overall, the use of assessment in responding to individual needs is unsatisfactory in well over a tenth of

schools. This weakness in teaching is seen in other phases (see pp20–21, 24–25 and pp42–43).

¹¹³ Teaching is good or better in a large majority of sixth forms (see Figure 13). Teachers' specialist knowledge and students' motivation are consistently high. In the best lessons a close rapport between students and teachers builds on shared, high expectations. However, more needs to be done to monitor performance and identify underachievement. Further, an HMI survey found that the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in vocational A level (AVCE) courses is much higher than in established A level courses (see xxi, p39).

Leadership and management

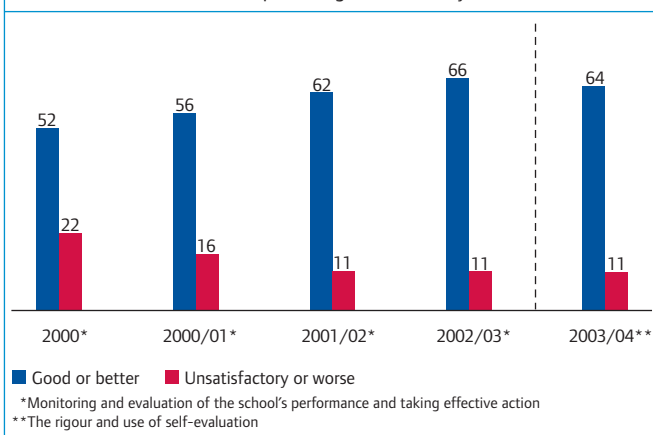
¹¹⁴ Leadership and management overall are good or better in three quarters of schools. The effectiveness of the leadership of headteachers continues to be strong. Two features, in particular, continue to need improvement, sometimes even in the more effective schools; one is the leadership by heads of department and other key staff; and the other is self-evaluation, which is a hallmark of effective management (see Figure 15). The management of schools is generally less effective than leadership. These are both features, also, of primary schools (see p21).



¹¹⁵ There is still considerable variability in the effectiveness of heads of department and other key staff within individual schools, and too little is being done in schools to make their effectiveness more consistent, for example in improving teaching or applying school-wide policies concerning assessment or homework. The Key Stage 3 Strategy has prompted schools to focus on departmental strengths and weaknesses, and this has improved their planning. However, few schools have a convincing, systematic programme for developing middle managers. Without such a programme, schools find it difficult to improve the consistency of leadership and management, and to support career development.

116 The capacity of schools to improve is heavily dependent on how well they know themselves, recognise their strengths and weaknesses and what accounts for them. Monitoring and evaluation have improved in recent years (see Figure 16).⁹ In the schools inspected in 2003/04, the rigour and use of self-evaluation are good or better in almost two thirds of schools, but unsatisfactory in more than one in ten. They vary markedly with the effectiveness of the school and its leadership. Unsatisfactory practice is concentrated in the least effective schools, but it is also evident in about one in five schools the overall effectiveness of which is satisfactory. This is a barrier to their improvement.

Figure 16. The quality of monitoring and evaluation/self-evaluation: 2000 to 2003/04 (percentage of secondary schools).



117 Comparison of inspectors' judgements about the school with those made by the school itself shows that, in the most effective schools, there is a reasonably close match. The match is greater for judgements about teaching and achievement than for the curriculum, where schools tend to be more generous.¹⁰ The match declines with the effectiveness of the schools; the weakest schools tend not to recognise or acknowledge their deficiencies.

Other aspects of provision

118 The breadth of the curriculum is more often very good or better at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3, but also more often unsatisfactory. Weaknesses usually relate to the relative time available for subjects, how well the programmes of study are covered and what subjects are offered. Most schools enrich the curriculum through additional activities, for example sports and the arts. These contribute strongly to pupils' experience and enjoyment of school.

119 Some schools are experimenting with a two-year version of the Key Stage 3 curriculum for some pupils, or with a redesign of Year 7 programmes. The most significant curriculum changes are in Key Stage 4, where increased flexibility has led to greater diversification in programmes, usually through the introduction or extension of vocational courses. Greater choice for pupils is usually consistent with higher achievement in Key Stage 4. Well managed vocational courses are proving beneficial, although there is a need to improve the progression to more advanced courses beyond 16.

120 Particular problems affect curriculum provision for ICT, citizenship and RE. One in seven schools does not cover the requirements for ICT in Key Stage 3 and nearly a quarter in Key Stage 4. The curriculum for RE is inadequate in over a quarter of schools in Key Stage 4, while the provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory in about a quarter of schools in both key stages. Schools that have incorporated citizenship into their programmes for personal, social and health education without increasing the time available have not had much success in meeting the requirements. Attempts to provide citizenship in tutor periods or through an ill-defined cross-curricular approach result in provision that is insubstantial or even invisible.

121 A decline in the number of pupils studying MFL in Key Stage 4 is marked and the number of those studying two languages after 14 is also shrinking. Boys do not do well enough at languages. Within this bleak picture, there is a growing gap between schools with low and high levels of disadvantage in the take-up of and performance in languages in Key Stage 4, based on 2003 examination data. In schools with the lowest levels of free school meals (under 5%), the take-up of languages in Year 11 is 77%, with 12% studying two languages. In schools with more than 35% of pupils eligible for free school meals, the continued study of languages in Key Stage 4 is much lower at 44%, with very few pupils studying two languages.

122 There has also been a continuing decline in the numbers of pupils who pursue geography into Key Stage 4. There is emerging evidence that, for many pupils, the subject lacks relevance and appeal in Key Stage 3.

123 Most sixth forms offer a curriculum that is appropriate for students' needs. However, the requirement to provide RE is not met in over half of sixth forms and over three quarters do not have a daily act of collective worship. While schools are increasingly offering vocational courses, take-up is low, often because of timetabling restrictions and a lack of information about the new courses.

⁹ From September 2003 inspectors have made judgements specifically about the rigour and use of self-evaluation; before this inspectors judged monitoring and evaluation and the actions that resulted from them.

¹⁰ A summary of a school's self-evaluation is completed before inspection; this includes making judgements on key aspects of the school using the same judgement scale as inspectors.

¹²⁴ Although in secondary schools generally there has been increased spending on **accommodation**, shortcomings remain in about a quarter of schools, for example, in facilities for practical work, the size of some teaching rooms, small libraries and resource centres, and poor maintenance of older premises. Science accommodation has improved steadily over the years, but it is still unsatisfactory in around one in six schools. On the other hand, facilities for PE have improved in some schools, particularly those with specialist sports status, although they remain unsatisfactory in a quarter of schools.

¹²⁵ **Learning resources** to support teaching are at least satisfactory in the large majority of schools. In ICT, for example, resources have improved greatly as a result of major spending programmes: they are good or better in more than half of schools, compared to about one third in 1996/97. Computer suites have increased in number and capacity and interactive whiteboards in classrooms are becoming more commonplace. However, as expectations in the use of ICT rise, provision is still judged to be unsatisfactory in well over one in ten schools. Pupils' ability to use the school library to aid their work is hindered in a significant minority of schools by book provision that is insufficient to underpin study in a range of subjects.

Themes

¹²⁶ The following section includes more extended commentaries on particular issues in secondary education, including areas of continuing concern or new developments:

- the **behaviour** of some pupils
- the **gap in achievement** between schools in different circumstances
- **14–19 initiatives**, including diversification at Key Stage 4, vocational courses and work experience.

The great majority of schools are committed to the inclusion of pupils with **SEN or disabilities**. This section also explores the challenges still to be met if the achievement of these pupils is to improve further.

Behaviour

Key points

- Behaviour remains good or better in most schools, but it is unsatisfactory in just under one in ten.
- Incidents of serious misbehaviour remain rare; most unsatisfactory behaviour involves low level disruption in lessons.
- The association between good teaching and good behaviour in lessons remains very strong.
- Consistent application of school policy by all staff is the key to the general maintenance of good behaviour.
- The government's Behaviour Improvement Programme is proving beneficial in the large majority of schools in which it is running.

¹²⁷ The great majority of pupils enjoy school, work hard and behave well. A strong sense of community and positive engagement with parents are features of schools where behaviour is good. However, the proportion of schools in which behaviour overall is good or better has fallen from over three quarters five years ago to just over two thirds in 2003/04. Over the same period, the proportion where behaviour is unsatisfactory, at just under one in ten schools, has not reduced.

¹²⁸ Serious incidents remain rare. The rate of permanent exclusions as a proportion of the school population was much the same in 2002/03 as in the previous two years.¹¹ The rate of exclusion is highest for pupils aged 14, with around one in 250 pupils of this age being excluded. Pupils with SEN and those of black or mixed ethnic origins are more likely to be excluded than others, but the relative rates have reduced.

¹²⁹ Most unsatisfactory behaviour involves low level disruption in lessons. It increases through Key Stage 3. A recent HMI survey confirmed that the most common forms of misbehaviour are incessant chatter, calling out, inattention and other forms

¹¹ *Permanent exclusions from schools and exclusion appeals in England 2002/03 (Provisional)*, (SFR 16/2004), DFES, 2004.

of nuisance that irritate staff and interrupt learning. A good number of the pupils involved are doing badly at school and have poor communication and social skills. Where pupils have little respect for or interest in the school, they refuse to follow instructions and argue, both with one another and with staff. Learning takes second place to gaining status with their peers.

¹³⁰ Behaviour is worst where teachers have low expectations of pupils, lessons lack challenge and classroom management is weak. In schools where unsatisfactory classroom behaviour is prominent, movement around the school is also often noisy and some pupils show little consideration for others. Inadequate supervision by staff can mean that not enough is known or done about what happens in corridors and corners of the school.

¹³¹ The association between good teaching and good behaviour in lessons remains very strong. In some schools, the behaviour and attitudes of a minority of pupils alter markedly between different lessons. Higher rates of unsatisfactory attitudes develop during Key Stage 3, notably in mathematics, science, music and MFL; with the exception of music and the addition of RE, these persist into Key Stage 4.

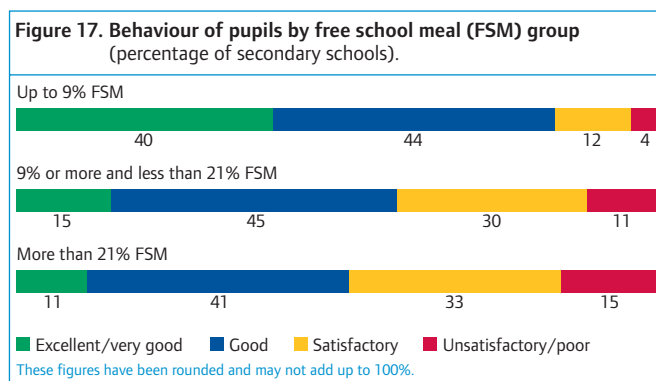
¹³² In most schools where behaviour is unsatisfactory, there is little difference between Key Stages 3 and 4. Behaviour policies are often sound, but inconsistent application undermines them and allows pupils – boys more often than girls – to exploit loopholes. Senior managers and other key staff often need to deal with behaviour issues that should have been resolved by the class teacher or the department. Schools with high staff turnover struggle to maintain consistency of approach.

¹³³ Very few schools are immune from incidents of bad behaviour. In almost all schools there are pupils who have a tendency to behave badly on a repeated basis. However, the profile of schools in which behaviour is unsatisfactory aligns broadly with their socio-economic context, as indicated by eligibility for free school meals (see Figure 17). Such schools often also have high levels of pupil mobility.

¹³⁴ Pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties can often respond well to specific, well targeted and well managed support. When learning support units provide a curriculum and tuition that meet individual needs, combined with close attention to preventing and controlling outbursts, they make an effective contribution to ensuring that pupils succeed in mainstream lessons. Pupils who spend time in these units often feel better understood and supported; as a result, they become less anxious, less volatile and less prone to being riled by others. Practice is less successful when the work of subject departments is poorly integrated with the work of the learning support units.

¹³⁵ The government's [Behaviour Improvement Programme](#) is proving effective in the large majority of schools in which it is in place. One of its features is close connection between school staff and multi-agency consultants on behaviour and attendance. Where the programme is being used successfully, headteachers focus the use of the additional resources on improving attitudes, attendance and attainment, and not simply on behaviour management. Monitoring has been refined so that schools use information about interventions to guide future developments. In the small minority of schools where the Behaviour Improvement Programme is ineffective – often where there is weak leadership and management – the additional funding is used to prop up poor organisation and mask poor teaching.

¹³⁶ Alternative programmes in Key Stage 4 have improved the attendance and participation in learning of pupils at risk of disaffection, disengagement from learning and exclusion. Many of the pupils involved have also been successfully supported through Key Stages 3 and 4 by learning mentors and, increasingly, by staff employed through local authority Behaviour and Education Support Teams. Among other things, the use of these teams has helped to establish better systems of referral and fuller communication between schools and parents.



Educational inclusion: special educational needs and disability

Key points

- Most schools are committed to providing for pupils' special educational needs. A minority respond very well and others are becoming better at doing so, but, for many schools, ensuring that pupils with SEN participate fully in school life and achieve their potential remain significant challenges.
- An HMI survey found that a significant proportion of pupils with SEN do not make the progress they could. Schools' expectations of their achievement are often neither sufficiently well defined nor pitched high enough.
- The availability and use of data on the progress of pupils with SEN continue to be limited. Few schools evaluate their provision for pupils with SEN systematically enough to know how effective it is.
- Plans for access to education for disabled pupils are limited and lack breadth.

¹³⁷ Good provision for pupils with SEN is almost always associated with strong leadership and management, and effective teaching and learning across the school.

¹³⁸ Most schools have a clear commitment to meeting SEN, which is reflected in sound practical arrangements and adequate resourcing. However, without very careful planning and the full engagement of all staff, schools find it difficult to meet the needs of pupils with complex or pronounced needs and ensure that the range of pupils with SEN participate fully in the life of the school and achieve their potential.

¹³⁹ While in most schools the overall achievement of pupils with SEN is good, an HMI survey found that a significant proportion of pupils was not making the progress needed over time (see xvi, p39). Schools do not always appreciate the extent of progress that is possible for pupils with SEN.

¹⁴⁰ Data about how well pupils with SEN progress remain difficult to obtain, with local information not always available in a form that allows schools to compare how well their lowest attaining pupils are doing in relation to those in other schools. In the absence of suitable yardsticks, schools find it difficult to judge what constitutes reasonable progress and so expectations vary widely. The data that are available are not always used well. Few schools consider pupils' progress towards targets specifically enough or make enough use of the data they gather. In general, there is too little systematic evaluation of the link between provision and achievement for pupils with SEN.

¹⁴¹ In the minority of schools where the provision for special needs pupils is very good, there is strong leadership and deliberate management by special educational needs coordinators who have a high profile and a well established position in the school's management structure. SEN policies are clear and are consistently applied across departments. Support staff are deployed effectively and the impact of their work is monitored thoroughly.

¹⁴² In these schools, assessment of pupils with SEN is integrated within whole school systems for analysing and tracking achievement. Changes in pupils' attitudes or achievement are recognised and responded to quickly. Pupils follow an appropriate curriculum that, in Key Stage 4, often includes college placements, extended work experience and additional emphasis on basic skills. The contribution of learning mentors and learning support units leads to improvement in behaviour and reduction in exclusions.

¹⁴³ Schools are required to plan for increased access to education for disabled pupils. Over half the schools in the HMI survey had no disability access plans and, where they existed, the majority of plans focused only on accommodation. In too many cases, plans were paper exercises and did not demonstrate a clear commitment to improving access generally.

Achievement gap

Key points

- The gap in achievement between schools with high and low levels of disadvantage continues to be wide.
- A minority of schools with high levels of disadvantage markedly reduce their adverse effects. These schools demonstrate what can be done through high calibre leadership and management that promote and support high expectations and insist on consistent, high quality practice.

¹⁴⁴ Overall, the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than that of other pupils. The gap in achievement between schools with high and low levels of disadvantage remains wide.

¹⁴⁵ Attainment in secondary schools serving disadvantaged areas has improved in the past ten years, but still fewer than a third of pupils in these schools leave with five or more A*-C grades in GCSE (or equivalent), compared with about half in other schools. Compared with schools nationally, almost twice as many pupils from schools in disadvantaged areas leave without any GCSE grades A*-G at all.

¹⁴⁶ Many children from lower socio-economic groups suffer educational disadvantage because they lack well informed family support, financial backing, benign peer pressure and

a healthy lifestyle. These causes of disadvantage can be compounded by other factors, such as racial inequality, mobility or family disruption. Common effects include:

- low educational ambition
- attitudes to learning that lack determination and resilience
- gaps in cultural knowledge relevant to the school curriculum
- weaknesses in useful academic skills, especially in language and independent learning.

¹⁴⁷ Poor attendance is both a cause and a symptom of low achievement. The gap in achievement between those who attend regularly and those who do not widens as pupils move through the school.

¹⁴⁸ Many schools in urban areas have benefited, like others, from strategies for school improvement that have developed over the past few years. Specific initiatives, such as Excellence in Cities, have been introduced to help schools in urban areas to tackle disadvantage, to provide positive opportunities for young people and to raise their achievement (see iv and v, p39). When well planned and managed, programmes like these have brought about distinct improvements in pupils' attendance, motivation and achievement.

¹⁴⁹ About a third of schools with high levels of disadvantage continue to show that very good provision can markedly reduce the potential adverse effects of disadvantage on pupils' achievement. These schools demonstrate the strong link between regular attendance, positive behaviour and high achievement. Behaviour is good or better in about three quarters of these schools (similar to that in all schools), compared with just over a third of other schools in disadvantaged circumstances.¹²

¹⁵⁰ The key factor is high calibre leadership and management. Leadership and management are almost twice as likely to be very good or excellent in more effective schools serving disadvantaged areas than in all schools.

¹⁵¹ A recent HMI study highlighted what effective schools in more disadvantaged areas have done to establish and secure improvement (see x, p39). The schools have very capable leaders who are clear what needs to be done about fundamental issues of performance and take action in a straightforward way. Among other steps, the schools:

- take care to win the support of pupils and parents, to view school life from their perspective and to celebrate success
- help teachers to improve their work and maintain a sharp focus on the quality of learning
- provide close monitoring and high levels of support, insisting that pupils behave well and work hard and that every lesson counts

- connect action to improve attitudes, behaviour and personal development with action to improve attainment
- rigorously scrutinise and evaluate their provision and performance.

¹⁵² The success of effective schools underlines the importance of action that focuses precisely and practically on tackling disadvantage through work in five key areas:

- improving teaching
- coherent curriculum planning, with an emphasis on language skills and independent learning
- well planned activities to extend pupils' experience, widen horizons and develop cultural knowledge
- deliberate support focused on attitudes and achievement
- close engagement with parents.

Basic to their success is that they build and maintain coherence, consistency and continuity in what is provided in order to keep attention on meeting educational needs at the high level required.

14–19 initiatives

Key points

- The Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) for 14–19 year olds has encouraged partnerships between schools and colleges and promoted greater diversity in programmes at Key Stage 4.
- The programme is bringing benefits, but improvements in attainment have yet to be achieved through better assessment and guidance that helps pupils to identify suitable progression routes.
- The introduction of GCSEs in vocational subjects has motivated pupils and broadened options for them, but teaching and achievement on the courses are not as good as in established GCSE subjects. Well developed links with industry are unusual.
- Effective arrangements for work experience are now common, but more needs to be done so that employers understand their role and links are made with work back in school.

Increased Flexibility Programme

¹⁵³ The IFP has led to widespread collaboration across further education colleges, schools and a small number of work-based training providers (see vii, p39). It has supported diversification of the curriculum and the provision of a broader range of qualifications. Pupils' responses have been positive, such that numbers enrolling on programmes have exceeded initial forecasts by about a third. There have been encouraging benefits in terms of attendance, social skills and the application of knowledge and understanding in vocational situations. However, for several reasons, the effect on achievement has not been as great as it could be.

¹² Inspection data over the period 2000/01 to 2002/03.

3 ¹⁵⁴ Only a few of the partnerships inspected are ensuring that information about pupils' prior attainment is shared between providers, which means that pupils are sometimes placed on courses at the wrong level. There are too many instances of expectations of pupils being set too low. Assessment is unsatisfactory in nearly half of partnerships inspected and pupils need more effective support in developing and maintaining their coursework files than they are getting. Pupils' understanding of qualification routes is often shaky. Careers advice and guidance need to be strengthened so that pupils can explore ways of achieving their aspirations through progression to appropriate courses and other opportunities. Although the IFP supports a range of qualifications, it has made little impression on the choice of courses typically made by girls and boys.

Vocational GCSEs

¹⁵⁵ An HMI study of new **GCSEs in vocational subjects** showed that the new qualifications are bringing about diversification in the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and are making it more vocationally relevant to pupils (see ii, p39). The new courses have improved pupils' motivation and behaviour largely because of the relevance to career interest, the emphasis on practical activities and, in many lessons, better relationships. However, there are weaknesses to overcome.

¹⁵⁶ Examples of high achievement are seen in all the vocational GCSE courses, but there are considerable differences across subjects. Achievement is often good in engineering and applied business, and in applied science it is higher than in traditional GCSE science. Overall, though, achievement is not as good as in longer established GCSE courses. In some schools where the target group for vocational GCSE courses is mainly lower attaining pupils, achievement is unsatisfactory, especially in leisure and tourism.

¹⁵⁷ Teaching is not as good as on traditional GCSE courses. In a significant minority of schools the development of the vocational dimension of the courses is restricted by limited time. Most schools try to make relevant links to industry but the gap between the most and least effective schools in this respect is very wide. Schools that have good links with local industry and employers are in the minority. Too few schools make enough use of visiting speakers or case studies to bring the vocational dimension of the courses to life. Links between GCSE courses on the one hand, and work experience and enterprise activities on the other, are weak.

Work experience

¹⁵⁸ Good practice in **work experience** is spreading. Most schools have an established network of employers willing to provide placements. Employers are generally committed to the broad aims of work experience, though many are not briefed well enough fully to understand their role or the purpose of the placement and its contribution to school studies (see viii, p39).

¹⁵⁹ The best experiences are carefully planned to give pupils opportunities to develop a wide range of new skills. Most placements make a distinctive contribution to enhancing pupils' communication and social skills. Often, the support of employers enables vulnerable young people to increase their confidence. One in 20 extended work experience placements was highly successful in improving motivation and attendance among pupils who were losing interest in school. However, extended placements are often not linked firmly enough to the acquisition of approved qualifications, so do not capitalise on the better motivation pupils show.

¹⁶⁰ In general, links between work experience and school courses are not sufficiently well made. Most pupils feel that work experience helps them to understand the world of work and develop work related skills, but some point, rightly, to the lack of connection between the work experience placement and school courses. Pupils are often not informed effectively about career opportunities in the field in which they have their placement.

Enterprise learning

¹⁶¹ Development of a systematic approach to **enterprise learning** is at an early stage, though there were examples of schools that have taken it on in a deliberate and comprehensive fashion across the curriculum. Effective use was made of local businesses and the wider community to engage pupils in real issues. In the best lessons, pupils were challenged to tackle relevant problems for themselves. Good practice of this kind is far from widespread and in half the schools visited in a recent survey there is a need for a clearer understanding of the forms that enterprise learning can take (see ix, p39).

Ofsted publications (2003/04) relevant to secondary schools, including sixth forms

- i. *Achievement of Bangladeshi heritage pupils* (HMI 513), 2004
- ii. *Developing new vocational pathways: final report on the introduction of new GCSEs* (HMI 2051), 2004
- iii. *Education Action Zones: tackling difficult issues in round 2 zones* (HMI 1711), 2003
- iv. *Excellence Clusters: the first ten inspections* (HMI 1732), 2003
- v. *Excellence in Cities: City Learning Centres* (HMI 1655), 2003
- vi. *ICT in schools: the impact of government initiatives five years on* (HMI 2050), 2004
- vii. *Increased flexibility programme at Key Stage 4: evaluation of the first year* (HMI 2074), 2004
- viii. *Increased flexibility programme: improving work experience* (HMI 2220), 2004
- ix. *Learning to be enterprising: an evaluation of enterprise learning at Key Stage 4* (HMI 2148), 2004
- x. *Managing the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant: good practice in secondary schools* (HMI 2172), 2004
- xi. *Outdoor education: aspects of good practice* (HMI 2151), 2004
- xii. *Pathways to parity: a survey of 14–19 vocational provision in Denmark, Netherlands and New South Wales* (HMI 2124), 2004
- xiii. *Provision and support for Traveller pupils* (HMI 455), 2003
- xiv. *Provision for gifted and talented pupils in physical education 2003–04* (HMI 2149), 2004
- xv. *Setting targets for pupils with special educational needs* (HMI 751), 2004
- xvi. *Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools* (HMI 2276), 2004
- xvii. *Special educational needs in the mainstream* (HMI 511), 2003
- xviii. *The education of asylum-seeker pupils* (HMI 453), 2003
- xix. *The Key Stage 3 Strategy: evaluation of the third year* (HMI 2090), 2004
- xx. *The School Sport Partnerships Programme: evaluation of phases 3 and 4 2003/04* (HMI 2150), 2004
- xxi. *Vocational A levels: the first two years* (HMI 2146), 2004

All listed publications are available on www.ofsted.gov.uk

Special schools and pupil referral units

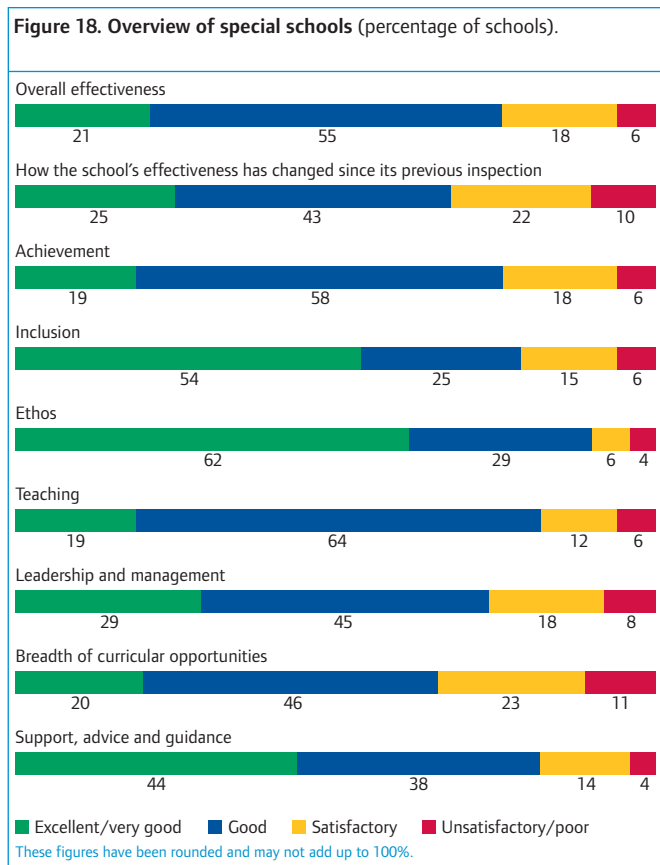
Main findings

- Most special schools provide good quality education and are well led. A large majority have improved significantly since their last inspection.
- Schools for pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBSD) continue to be less effective than other special schools. They constitute almost half of the special schools that have not improved enough.
- In three quarters of special schools, pupils achieve well in relation to their abilities and difficulties. The quality of teaching is good or better in most schools, but assessment is still not being used well enough.
- The accommodation in a third of schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and EBSD is inadequate for teaching practical subjects that need specialist accommodation.
- Leadership by headteachers is good or better in a very large majority of schools, but the quality of management is not as good. Self-evaluation is improving, but is not yet sufficiently well founded and rigorous.
- Weaknesses in the governance of special schools persist, particularly in schools for pupils with EBSD.
- Forward-looking special schools are taking steps to manage changes in their roles. A small minority have developed successful outreach support for mainstream schools, but this kind of provision is not yet sufficiently developed.
- There has been a growth in the number of pupil referral units (PRUs). Most of the units inspected in 2003/04 were new units being inspected for the first time.
- Almost all units now provide a full time programme. The effectiveness of most PRUs is at least satisfactory, but a disproportionate number have important weaknesses.



Overview

¹⁶² Most of the 196 special schools inspected in 2003/04 provide good quality education and are generally well led.¹³ Pupils respond well to good teaching and a supportive ethos, which is created by most schools (see Figure 18).



¹⁶³ Although many schools have improved since their last inspection, nearly half of the schools which have made insufficient improvement are those catering mainly for pupils with EBSD.

Achievement

¹⁶⁴ Almost all pupils enter special schools with attainment below that expected of pupils nationally. In three quarters of schools, they generally achieve well in relation to their abilities and difficulties (see Figure 18). Achievement in schools catering for pupils with EBSD is more varied and overall is not as good as in other special schools.

¹⁶⁵ In two thirds of schools, [pupils' attitudes to learning](#) are very good. They respond well to a broad, engaging and relevant programme of activities.

¹⁶⁶ Schools use different ways to develop pupils' self-confidence and responsibility, including school councils and other activities run by pupils themselves. Increasingly, schools are consulting pupils and involving them in decision-making.

For example, in the most effective schools for pupils with EBSD, behaviour policies are developed and reviewed by the whole school community. This has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour because they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and of the benefits of a consistently applied policy.

Teaching and assessment

¹⁶⁷ Teaching is good or better in most schools, but varies across year groups and between types of school; it is best in the Foundation Stage and for students in post-16 departments, although fewer than half of the schools inspected included these age groups. As last year, a relatively high proportion of schools for pupils with EBSD has unsatisfactory teaching compared with other special schools and a much smaller proportion has very good or better teaching.

¹⁶⁸ In general, few special schools have difficulties in engaging pupils and planning appropriate lessons, although such difficulties are more prevalent in schools for pupils with EBSD. Key factors in schools' success are high expectations of what pupils can achieve, effective planning and consistent approaches across the school. There is a strong association between good teaching and good behaviour.

¹⁶⁹ The quality of teaching is best in English, mathematics, physical education (PE), music, art and design; it is worst in geography, information and communication technology (ICT), science and religious education. Inadequate learning resources, a narrow range of teaching methods and lack of opportunities for independent learning are common weaknesses.

¹⁷⁰ The teaching of ICT has significant weaknesses, particularly so in schools for pupils with the most severe disabilities. A survey by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) found that, while the availability of equipment continues to improve, teachers' expertise, imagination and confidence in the use of ICT to support learning remain underdeveloped (see publication ii, p46).

¹⁷¹ There are encouraging signs of improvement in the use of assessment, notably in the way teachers incorporate targets for individual pupils in their planning. In the best practice, assessment information guides the style and the content of teaching.

¹⁷² In the most effective schools, analysis of performance data is becoming more sophisticated and staff use comparative data to help them to understand why some pupils are not making the expected progress and what can be done to challenge them further. However, the use of assessment data to inform whole school target-setting is still too variable. Nearly half of schools are still not making good use of assessment data to improve teaching overall, particularly

¹³ This chapter reports on LEA-maintained and non-maintained special schools and PRUs. The chapter on independent schools (see pp55–60) reports on provision in independent schools catering wholly or mainly for pupils with SEN. Non-maintained special schools continue to be inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996.

at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in almost half of schools pupils do not have a sound understanding of how they can improve their work.

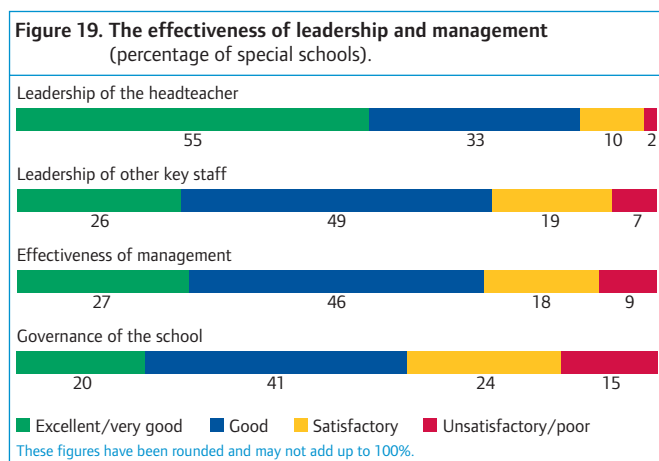
173 Assessment is weakest in schools for pupils with EBSD. Failure to use assessment to plan work for pupils with different abilities and attainment levels is often associated with a lack of subject knowledge or teaching approaches that are not matched well enough to pupils' needs. It is compounded by difficulties with staff recruitment and retention, leading to staff teaching subjects in which their expertise is limited.

174 The use of teaching assistants in special schools has increased and in most they are used well. In schools that have experienced difficulties with teacher recruitment, teaching assistants have provided valuable continuity for pupils. However, in a few schools teaching assistants are unclear about their roles so, for example, their support is too intensive, causing individual pupils to become excessively dependent on their help.

Leadership and management

175 Leadership is generally effective, although, consistent with the pattern of achievement and teaching, there is less good leadership in schools for pupils with EBSD than in other types of schools. Most headteachers have a clear vision for the school and motivate their staff so that they share ownership of development. They give direction and establish senior management teams committed to school improvement.

176 As in primary and secondary schools, leadership by subject and curriculum area leaders lags behind that of headteachers (see Figure 19). They do not always exercise rigorously enough their responsibility for reviewing and improving subject work (see pp21 and 32).



177 Although schools are getting better at self-evaluation, there is room for improvement. It is good or better in two thirds of schools and unsatisfactory in one in eight. The best schools involve all staff in close monitoring both of individual pupils' progress and whole school development. New headteachers, intent on improving underperforming schools, rightly tend to make rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning a key priority. Approaching two thirds of schools use performance data well to determine future priorities, but they are used ineffectively in about one school in six. While special schools have a fairly accurate picture of the quality of teaching and leadership, they tend to overrate the quality of their assessment procedures and the effectiveness of their management. Frequently, criteria used in development planning to measure success do not make clear the expected impact on attainment.

178 Weaknesses in the governance of special schools persist, particularly in schools for pupils with EBSD. In over a third of schools for pupils with EBSD the work of governors is unsatisfactory. Some governing bodies are still unclear about the strengths and weaknesses of their schools. By contrast, governors who take part in training and have first-hand knowledge of their schools through regular, focused visits develop their understanding, which enables them to take an active part in shaping the school's direction. Clear and comprehensive termly reports from headteachers can assist governors in debating and challenging progress and overseeing a school's improvement.

Other aspects of provision

179 Two thirds of schools provide a broad curriculum and very good or excellent enrichment of the curriculum through additional activities, for example in sports and the arts, is offered in almost a half. Schools that cater wholly or mainly for pupils with SLD and moderate learning difficulties (MLD) are particularly successful at creating opportunities to consolidate learning throughout the school day. The greatest variation in curriculum provision is found in EBSD schools; a third of them have a curriculum that lacks sufficient breadth and depth. There is a link between ineffective use of assessment and curriculum provision: in over a quarter of schools where assessment lacks rigour, the curriculum is also inappropriate.

180 A small minority of schools do not meet National Curriculum requirements fully, mainly in Key Stage 3; this usually relates to coverage of ICT and music, and sometimes modern foreign languages and design and technology (D&T).

181 Over a third of schools that cater wholly or mainly for pupils with SLD and EBSD have accommodation that is not adequate for teaching practical subjects requiring specialist accommodation.

¹⁸² Appropriate external accreditation at age 16 and beyond is now available in most schools, although some need to extend what they offer to meet the wider ability range of pupils for whom they now cater. A few schools do this through partnerships with mainstream schools and colleges. In the most effective provision for 14–19 year olds, pupils are offered an individualised timetable with a balance between core academic skills and vocational learning.

4 ¹⁸³ **Care and guidance** continue to be strengths of special schools. In almost all schools pupils benefit from trusting relationships with staff and volunteers. The great majority of schools provide a safe and secure environment for their pupils. However, risk assessment and recording are sometimes not in line with national or local guidance and, on occasions, the dignity of pupils is not respected as well as it should be.

¹⁸⁴ Admission and induction arrangements for new pupils are good in most schools. Effective practice is characterised by careful consideration of pupils' needs. Where individual needs are complex, effective schools ensure that decisions about admission and induction are fully supported by the placing authority and that appropriate provision is in place before pupils arrive.

¹⁸⁵ Most schools establish good **relationships with parents**. Some schools benefit from having learning mentors who help to develop links with parents. In three quarters of schools links with parents contribute significantly to learning at school and at home. In a few schools information to parents is unsatisfactory so that they are unclear about what the school is providing and the progress their children are making.

¹⁸⁶ Most special schools have good links with the community. Schools for pupils with the most severe disabilities are particularly well supported by the local community. This is not the case in schools for pupils with EBSD. Only a small minority of schools use their links with the community very well to support the curriculum, for example through visits and by making use of the expertise of local people to run work-based activities in school.

Themes

¹⁸⁷ Distinctions between different categories of special school are becoming less straightforward, reflecting the changing nature of these schools. The following section provides a commentary on the **changing population and role of special schools** and how well schools are responding. An overview of provision in **pupil referral units (PRUs)**, the numbers of which have grown significantly, is also included.

Changing population and role of special schools

Key points

- Local education authorities (LEAs) are becoming clearer about the changing role of special schools, but have yet to translate this into supporting the development of outreach work and encouraging partnerships between special and mainstream schools.
- While many special schools have links with mainstream schools, they rarely have much influence on whole school policies that concern the curriculum and teaching.

¹⁸⁸ One in six of the LEA maintained schools inspected in 2003/04 had been or was involved in reorganisation. Maintained special schools are gradually changing how they are organised and trends include:

- amalgamating into fewer but bigger schools
- widening the range of disabilities that individual schools serve
- sometimes relocating to the sites of mainstream schools.

The number of pupils placed in separate provision, including independent and non-maintained special schools, has risen significantly. There has been little change, however, in the number of pupils moving from special provision into mainstream schools.

¹⁸⁹ Over half of the LEA maintained special schools inspected cater for pupils of both primary and secondary age. Nearly a quarter are experiencing a change in their pupil population, taking pupils with a wider range of ability and more complex needs, particularly in the primary phase. All schools designated as providing for pupils with MLD continue to meet a very wide range of needs.

¹⁹⁰ Schools are becoming more aware of the training and support that staff require and the need to adapt the curriculum for pupils with a wider and complex range of needs. Where these steps are not taken, schools find themselves admitting pupils before they are able to provide adequately for them.

¹⁹¹ In schools that have catered for pupils with complex and diverse needs for some time, pupils are generally making good progress. In the best practice, teachers receive extensive training and are well supported by teaching assistants so that pupils can have access to the full curriculum. Where other professionals, such as speech and language therapists and physiotherapists, are involved, they work well with teachers and support staff in drawing up programmes which contribute to the progress of vulnerable pupils.

¹⁹² Over three quarters of schools have at least some links with local mainstream schools and colleges and the management of linked or shared provision is often good. However, only one in five of the schools inspected in 2003/04 is involved in providing outreach services to mainstream schools. Staff in mainstream schools value the support, which typically includes:

- training for teachers and teaching assistants
- sharing resources or helping schools to produce resources
- advice and guidance on specific disabilities and difficulties
- advice on programmes for individual pupils
- support for individual pupils, including those special school pupils moving back into mainstream schools or on to further education.

¹⁹³ However, the provision of support of this kind is not monitored or developed well enough. A recent survey by HMI found that, while special schools are effective in supporting individual pupils, they generally have little impact on the mainstream curriculum and teaching at whole school level (see iv, p46). Links between schools benefit pupils in both mainstream and special schools, but developing and maintaining them can have an adverse effect on special school provision because they are not always centrally resourced. Overall, effective partnerships between special schools and mainstream schools are the exception rather than the rule.

¹⁹⁴ Although LEAs are now beginning to be clearer about the changing role of their special schools, this has yet to translate into well established planning, funding and evaluation to support the development of outreach work (see p81).

Pupil referral units

Key points

- The number of PRUs has grown significantly.
- More than five out of six of the units provide a full time programme. The effectiveness of almost half of PRUs inspected is good or better, but a relatively high proportion are subject to special measures or have serious weaknesses.
- In the majority of PRUs, teaching and achievement are good or better, but teaching is unsatisfactory in one in ten of those inspected.
- Leadership by heads of units is good or better in over two thirds of PRUs, but unsatisfactory in one in six of those inspected.
- Many pupils in PRUs improve their attendance significantly, but the poor attendance of a few in most units reduces the overall attendance rate.

4

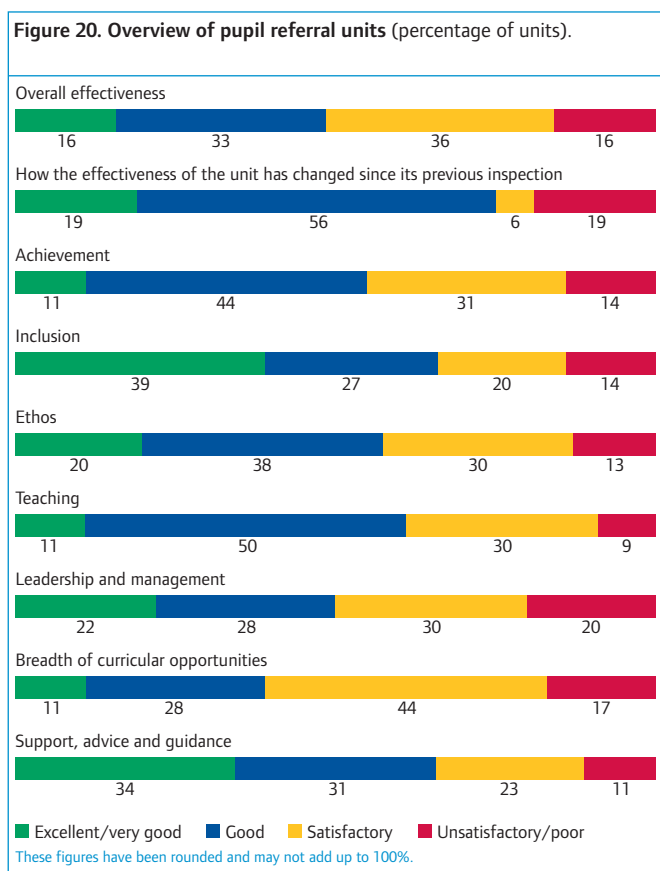
¹⁹⁵ The number of PRUs increased in 2003/04 by just over a quarter and the number of pupils in them by almost a tenth. This growth is largely because of two factors. First, units were established or reorganised by LEAs, particularly unitary LEAs, that had reviewed their provision for education out of school. Second, LEAs responded to prompting by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to register as PRUs provision that was previously unregistered. The growth in provision means that a large proportion were inspected for the first time. Of the 64 units inspected, 48 had not been inspected previously.

¹⁹⁶ All but 11 of the units inspected broadly complied with the requirement to provide a full time programme. In a further two units that provided a full time programme, this was not available to all pupils on the roll.

¹⁹⁷ While the effectiveness of most PRUs was satisfactory or better, nine were judged to require special measures and a further five had serious weaknesses. In most of the units that were inspected for at least a second time, improvement since the previous inspection was good or very good (see Figure 20).

¹⁹⁸ Almost all pupils are admitted to PRUs with attainment below that expected for their age. Contributing to this is pupils' poor attendance at their previous schools, often because of repeated fixed-term exclusions, truancy or medical difficulties. Pupils' **achievement** was satisfactory overall in 20 units, good in 28 and very good in 7. Emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy to remedy long-standing difficulties, sometimes previously unidentified, was often the key to good progress. All the nine units in which achievement was unsatisfactory or

poor were judged to require special measures. In the five units with serious weaknesses, achievement was judged to be satisfactory.



¹⁹⁹ Nearly all units gave high priority to improving **behaviour** and **personal development**, and the great majority were achieving success in these. Behaviour was good or better in more than half of the units (36) but it was unsatisfactory in 8. Given that many pupils have been or are at risk of being permanently excluded from their schools, improved behaviour is a significant achievement.

²⁰⁰ Many pupils in units improve their attendance significantly, but the poor **attendance** of a few in most units reduces the overall attendance rate. The average attendance in the units inspected in 2003/04 ranged from an extremely low 41% to a creditable 94%; attendance reached 90% in only a very few units.

²⁰¹ The **quality of teaching** was good or better in the majority of units but unsatisfactory in six. Weaknesses were often linked to teachers' lack of subject knowledge, poor planning and poor assessment (including the use of assessment information to guide planning). The employment of more part time specialist subject teachers has had benefits. Teaching assistants frequently make a significant contribution

to teaching and learning by supporting pupils, keeping them on task and challenging them to think about and improve their work.

²⁰² The quality of **leadership and management** in the units inspected is shown in Figure 20. Although leadership by heads of units was good or better in over two thirds of PRUs (45), leadership and management as a whole – taking account of the contribution of key staff and governors and management processes – were weaker; governance was unsatisfactory in almost one in three units. Even in the nine units where the leadership of the headteacher or teacher in charge was satisfactory, this was undermined by unsatisfactory governance by the LEA or the management committee, which failed to monitor, support or challenge the unit sufficiently. At a time when the number of pupils in PRUs has been increasing, those in charge of units have responded well to the challenge to increase the teaching time.

²⁰³ PRUs are not required to provide the full National Curriculum, but the requirement on them to provide a full time programme for pupils who are permanently excluded from other schools has led to extended coverage of the **curriculum**. Many units have become more flexible in their provision for pupils in Key Stage 4, especially of work-related and other vocational courses. More pupils are able to achieve nationally recognised accredited qualifications, enabling them to go on to further education, training or employment. Most provide a curriculum that is satisfactory or better, but in 11 of the PRUs inspected it was unsatisfactory.

²⁰⁴ **Accommodation** remains inadequate in about a quarter of units (18), usually because of poor facilities for practical work, especially in science and D&T, and a lack of space generally. Some units lack space for PE or recreation but compensate for this by making good use of local leisure facilities. Resources, overall, are satisfactory in most PRUs, but good in fewer than half.

Ofsted publications (2003/04) relevant to special schools and pupil referral units

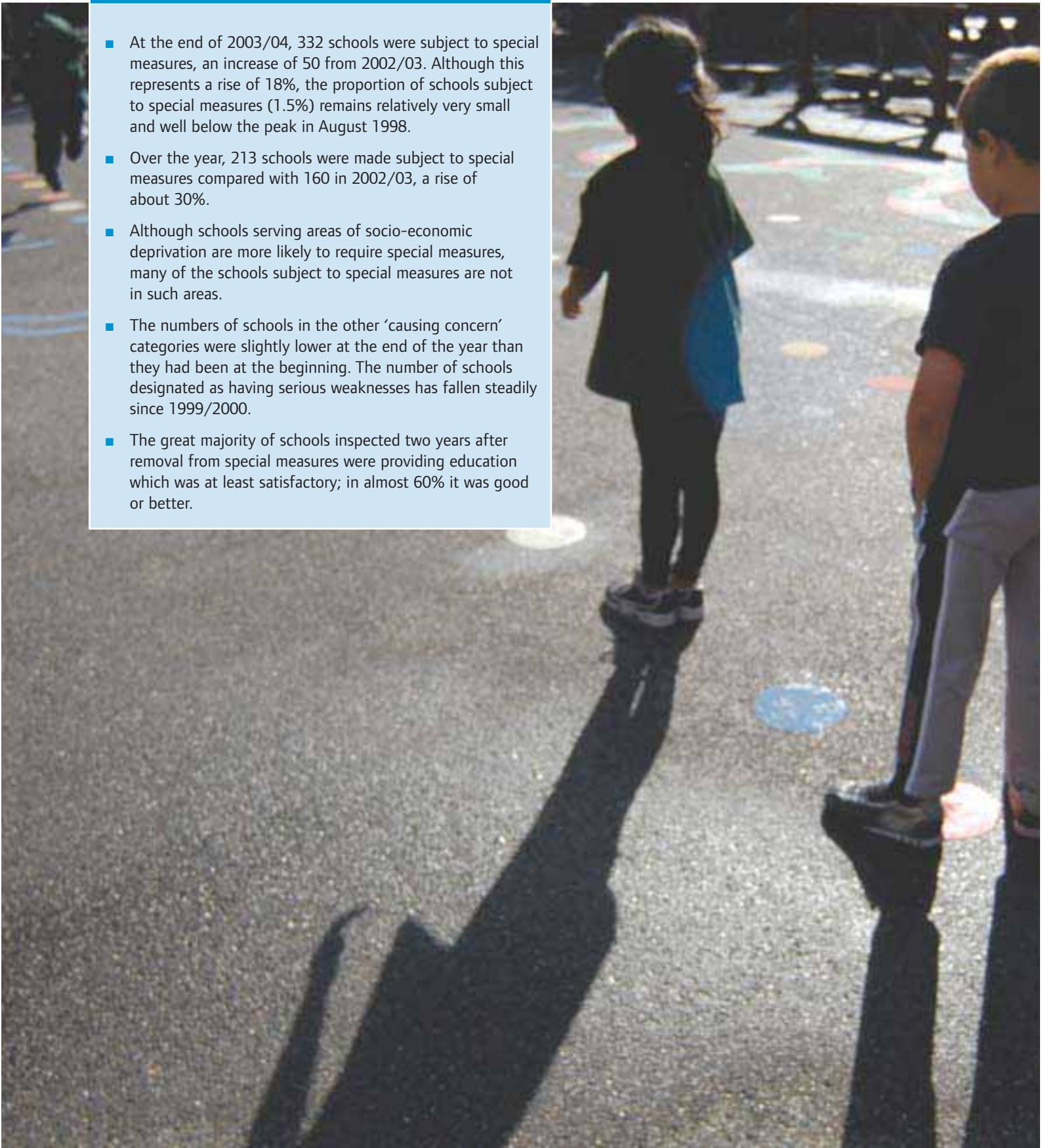
- i. *ICT in schools: the impact of government initiatives five years on* (HMI 2050), 2004
- ii. *ICT in schools: the impact of government initiatives: special schools* (HMI 2219), 2004
- iii. *Setting targets for pupils with special educational needs* (HMI 751), 2004
- iv. *Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools* (HMI 2276), 2004

All listed publications are available on www.ofsted.gov.uk

Schools causing concern

Main findings

- At the end of 2003/04, 332 schools were subject to special measures, an increase of 50 from 2002/03. Although this represents a rise of 18%, the proportion of schools subject to special measures (1.5%) remains relatively very small and well below the peak in August 1998.
- Over the year, 213 schools were made subject to special measures compared with 160 in 2002/03, a rise of about 30%.
- Although schools serving areas of socio-economic deprivation are more likely to require special measures, many of the schools subject to special measures are not in such areas.
- The numbers of schools in the other 'causing concern' categories were slightly lower at the end of the year than they had been at the beginning. The number of schools designated as having serious weaknesses has fallen steadily since 1999/2000.
- The great majority of schools inspected two years after removal from special measures were providing education which was at least satisfactory; in almost 60% it was good or better.



Overview

²⁰⁵ Although the majority of schools are effective, a very small proportion are a cause for concern. There are currently four formal categories of such schools:

- schools subject to **special measures**, because they have been judged to be failing, or likely to fail, to provide an acceptable standard of education for their pupils
- schools with **serious weaknesses**
- **underachieving** schools
- secondary schools with **inadequate sixth forms**.

²⁰⁶ By the end of 2003/04, 50 more schools were subject to **special measures** than in 2002/03 (see Table 2). Although this represented a rise of 18%, the proportion of schools in the category (1.5%) remained relatively very small and well below the peak in August 1998. During the year the number of schools placed in the category was about 30% higher than in 2002/03, while the number removed was similar; 30 schools closed (see Table 3).

		Primary		Secondary		Special		PRU		Total	
		03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03
Special measures	No.	201	185	94	58	22	25	15	14	332	282
	%	1.1	1.0	2.8	1.7	1.8	2.2	3.3	4.5	1.5	1.2
Serious weaknesses	No.	246	253	47	64	15	16	9	5	317	338 ¹⁴
	%	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.9	1.2	1.2	2.0	1.4	1.4	1.5
Underachieving schools	No.	66	74	12	15	–	–	–	–	78	89 ¹⁴
	%	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	–	–	–	–	0.4	0.4
Inadequate sixth forms	No.	–	–	8	10	–	–	–	–	8	10
	% ¹⁵	–	–	0.5	0.6	–	–	–	–	0.5	0.6

		Primary		Secondary		Special		PRU		Total	
		03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03
Special measures	In	130	99	61	35	13	18	9	8	213	160
	Out	100	95	19	26	9	7	5	2	133	130
	Closed	14	14	6	3	7	3	3	0	30	20
Serious weaknesses	In	151	123	33	28	11	8	5	4	200	163 ¹⁴
	Out	148	221	45	37	9	17	1	6	203	281
	Closed	10	11	5	3	3	1	0	4	18	19
Underachieving schools	In	35	34	6	6	–	–	–	–	41	40
	Out	43	91	9	15	–	1	–	–	52	107
	Closed	0	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	3
Inadequate sixth forms	In	–	–	4	6	–	–	–	–	4	6
	Out	–	–	4	4	–	–	–	–	4	4
	Closed ¹⁷	–	–	2	0	–	–	–	–	2	0

²⁰⁷ The increase in the number of secondary schools made subject to special measures was marked. In contrast, the number of special schools placed in the category was lower than in 2002/03. The number of pupil referral units (PRUs) subject to special measures remained disproportionately high.

²⁰⁸ Most schools have improved, often very significantly, after being in one of the categories of schools causing concern. Nevertheless, a small minority of schools, designated as having serious weaknesses or underachieving in their previous inspection, did not improve enough and had to be made subject to special measures. In 2003/04, 51 schools previously with serious weaknesses became subject to special measures, compared with 43 in 2002/03. Ten schools that were underachieving became subject to special measures, compared with four in 2002/03.

²⁰⁹ By the end of 2003/04 the number of schools with **serious weaknesses** was lower than at the end of 2002/03, although the number put into the category during the year was over 20% greater than in 2002/03. The reason for the overall fall was that more schools were removed from the category or closed than went into it. The fall to 317 continued an uninterrupted decline since August 2000 when the number of schools in the category stood at 864.

²¹⁰ The number of schools placed in the **underachieving** category in 2003/04 was almost the same as in 2002/03. By the end of the year, the number in the category remained relatively small and was lower than it was in August 2003. Only four secondary schools were judged to have **inadequate sixth forms** in 2003/04, compared with six in 2002/03, and the number remaining in the category at the end of the year fell from ten to eight.

²¹¹ Several factors may have contributed to the increase in the number of schools made subject to special measures. The figures could reflect a general deterioration in the quality of education, but this is not borne out by the findings from inspections. A second possibility is that the number and nature of schools inspected played a part. A third is that the inspections were more rigorous.

²¹² More inspections took place in 2003/04 than in 2002/03 and the sample of secondary schools inspected in 2003/04 included more that, on the basis of their previous inspection and test and examination results, might be considered weak than in 2002/03. This may help to account for the increase in the number of schools, and secondary schools in particular, made subject to special measures in 2003/04.

²¹³ A new framework for inspection was introduced in September 2003. Rightly, it raised expectations of the performance of schools, consistent with the aspirations of the government and parents for better standards of education. The increased number of section 10 inspections resulting in special measures may reflect more detailed and systematic guidance, supported by training given to inspectors, resulting in greater consistency in judging teaching, achievement and leadership and management.

¹⁴ The figure for 2002/03 is revised from that in *Standards and Quality 2002/03: The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools* (ISBN 0102926778), Ofsted.

¹⁵ As a proportion of secondary schools with sixth forms.

¹⁶ Figures differ slightly from the aggregates of those published termly owing to late notifications and changed designations.

¹⁷ These figures relate to the closure of the sixth form only.

214 The guidance for inspectors suggests that a school may require special measures if the teaching is unsatisfactory in 10% or more of lessons, not an unreasonable benchmark given that the quality of teaching has improved significantly over the years and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching nationally is about 5%. Importantly, though, the decision about whether a school requires special measures is a professional judgement that takes account of factors relating to the school as a whole.

215 Judgements by registered inspectors and their teams that a school requires special measures or has an inadequate sixth form must be corroborated by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI). In 2003/04 almost all such judgements were corroborated, although there were a few more instances than in 2002/03 when HMCI was not able to do this: five compared with one. In the great majority of instances, inspectors made the right judgements. It is possible that, in the past, fewer schools were made subject to special measures than should have been.

216 Previous Annual Reports have commented extensively on why schools become a cause for concern. In 2003/04 the key factors in nearly all cases remained:

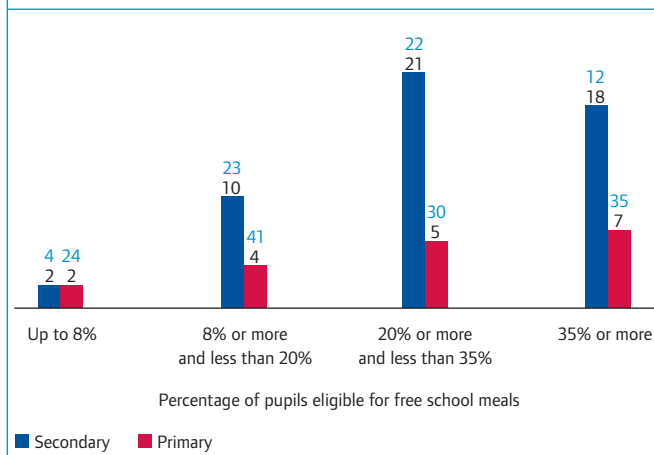
- weaknesses in leadership and management, or in one of these
- unsatisfactory or poor teaching
- underachievement by pupils.

In a significant number of the schools, these factors were accompanied by others, most commonly poor attitudes and behaviour among pupils, and poor attendance. In special schools for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and in PRUs, all these factors tended to be present, along with weaknesses in the curriculum.

217 Schools made subject to special measures in 2003/04 were distributed across all free school meal bands. The proportions in relation to the schools inspected in each free school meal band are shown in Figure 21. They are broadly similar to those in previous years. While schools in areas of socio-economic disadvantage are more vulnerable to failure because they face greater challenges, failure or success is not determined by the school's context alone – far from it.

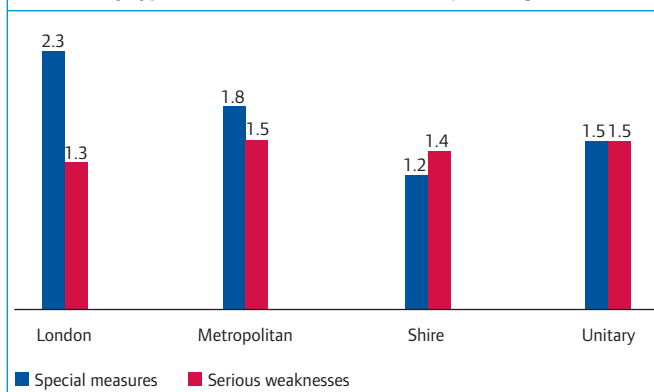
218 Schools with higher proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals tend to remain subject to special measures for longer, although there are many exceptions and the overall trend is more pronounced for secondary than for primary schools. They are also more vulnerable to repeated failure: the number of schools judged to require special measures for a second time is very small, but, of these schools, all had higher than average proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Figure 21. Schools inspected in each free school meal band made subject to special measures in 2003/04 (percentage of schools, number of schools).



219 The distribution of schools subject to special measures varied considerably across local education authorities (LEAs) (see Figure 22).¹⁸ Although shire authorities generally had the lowest proportions of schools in categories of concern, one shire authority had 5.7% of its schools either in special measures or serious weaknesses. Of the 150 LEAs, 37 had no schools – primary, secondary or special – or PRUs subject to special measures or designated as having serious weaknesses.¹⁹

Figure 22. Schools subject to special measures or with serious weaknesses by type of LEA at the end of 2003/04 (percentage of schools).



220 It is important to recognise that the distribution of schools in categories of concern across LEAs has changed considerably over time. In 2000 and 2002 some of the LEAs that now have several schools in these categories had none, and in others the position is reversed.²⁰

¹⁸ Two very small LEAs are excluded from the analysis.

¹⁹ This position is at the end of August 2004.

²⁰ Care is needed in interpreting the LEA comparisons because of the varying numbers of schools in each LEA that are inspected each year.

Themes

²²¹ The following section considers three significant aspects of school improvement and how they make a difference to the quality of education:

- how and to what extent special measures lead to **sustained improvement** through the identification of concerns, the provision of support and the monitoring of progress
- the **Fresh Start initiative** and its impact
- the impact of **external support** as a vital element in improving provision.

The section considers how schools develop the capacity to sustain their improvement.

Special measures and sustained school improvement

Key points

- Since 1993 almost 60% of schools from which special measures were removed became good schools by the time they were inspected two years later.
- Becoming subject to special measures can be painful, but is the first step in a school's improvement. Special measures concentrate minds and bring external support and monitoring.
- A school's leadership and its ability to monitor, analyse and evaluate the school's performance accurately are central to its capacity to sustain its improvement.
- In most schools previously subject to special measures that go on to be good or better schools, sustained improvement is seen in the quality of teaching, in leadership and management, and in the standards achieved by the pupils.

Process of special measures

²²² Improvement in schools results from the efforts of those who work in them, but special measures undoubtedly help. What is it about the process that has such a significant impact? Are special measures a 'quick fix' or do they have a more lasting impact, enabling schools to sustain their improvement?

²²³ Special measures are a wake-up call. They are sometimes criticised as being draconian. Undoubtedly, becoming subject to special measures can be painful and demotivating, but it is the first step in the school's improvement. It sets a baseline, concentrates minds and establishes an imperative for all involved to tackle the school's weaknesses. The stakes are raised and the school is under considerable pressure to improve. However, special measures also bring support from the school's LEA or other external partner.

²²⁴ Additionally, special measures bring regular monitoring by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). This provides objective and rigorous external evaluation of the standard of education in the school and, over time, charts the school's improvement. HMI assess the impact of the actions taken by the school and evaluate the progress made, visit by visit.

²²⁵ HMI help the school to develop the capacity to evaluate its own performance and progress, seek to promote further improvement by helping to set the agenda for what needs to be done next and, using knowledge of schools in similar circumstances, describe successful improvement elsewhere. With frequent visits, factors that may be hindering progress can be identified rapidly; equally importantly, recognising and acknowledging the school's progress helps to raise the morale and self-belief of staff and contributes to the growing momentum of improvement.

Developing the school's capacity to sustain its improvement

²²⁶ Developing the school's capacity to sustain its improvement with lower levels of external support and monitoring is a crucial element of special measures. Effective leadership and management at all levels are key elements in a school's capacity to continue its progress. The leadership of the headteacher is central in:

- defining an unequivocal and clearly understood direction for the school, based on a secure understanding of its current strengths and weaknesses
- building positive relationships
- creating a judicious balance between urgency and manageability when determining priorities.

²²⁷ In most schools that have successfully sustained improvement, leadership has been developed at all levels – senior and middle managers, and governing bodies – and accountability for implementing policies and procedures is shared by all staff.

²²⁸ By contrast, in the small number of schools that have faltered after the removal of special measures, the school's overdependence on the impact of a headteacher who subsequently moved on was often the key factor that meant that it was unable to sustain its progress.

²²⁹ A school's ability to monitor, analyse and evaluate its performance is central to its capacity to sustain improvement. When schools became subject to special measures, these aspects of their work were often weak. Data were analysed defensively to justify the school's performance rather than to identify where and how it could improve. The evaluation of teaching was often over-generous and tended to focus on superficial features rather than on its impact on the pupils' learning and achievement. Self-evaluation was frequently

descriptive and complacent, and, consequently, strategic planning failed to engage with the matters that most required improvement.

²³⁰ When special measures are removed, schools' ability to evaluate their performance accurately and rigorously has usually developed significantly. Strategic planning has become more focused and the skills of analysing data have been honed in accounting for the school's progress in achieving the targets in its action plan. In a small pilot survey, headteachers of schools formerly in special measures felt that a key contribution of HMI in their monitoring inspections was to develop their schools' capacity for self-review and evaluation (see publication i, p53). One described this as a 'lasting legacy'.

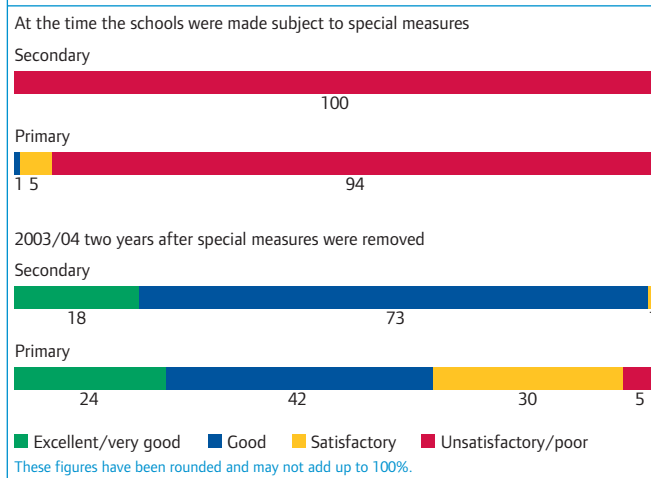
Impact of special measures: sustained improvement

²³¹ Special measures are a success story. Not only do they enable the schools that have been through the process to achieve rapid, short term improvement, they also enable most of them to sustain their progress and achieve further improvement.

²³² Between the introduction of special measures in 1993 and the end of 2003/04, over 1,200 schools that have been subject to special measures have been removed from the category. Of the schools reinspected after coming out of special measures, almost three fifths had become good, or even very good or outstanding. Successful and sometimes innovative practice has put some of these schools at the leading edge within their LEAs. Although of concern, only a small number of schools (36) have been made subject to special measures for a second time.

²³³ The improvement in the great majority of the schools formerly subject to special measures in aspects such as the effectiveness of their leadership and management, and the quality of teaching, has been well illustrated in previous Annual Reports, and continues (see Figure 23). Other aspects of these schools improve too. For example, the involvement of parents in their work improves significantly, demonstrating clearly the vital role of partnership with parents in the process of recovery. As a consequence of these improvements, achieved as a result of special measures, hundreds of thousands of pupils are now benefiting from a better education.

Figure 23. The improvement in the effectiveness of leadership and management in schools, formerly subject to special measures, inspected in 2003/04, two years after special measures had been removed (percentage of schools).



5

Fresh Start schools

Key points

- The majority of Fresh Start schools have had successful section 10 inspections, although for a minority progress was not easy or rapid enough at first.
- Overall, the Fresh Start initiative has been a success.

²³⁴ A minority of schools do not make enough progress after they are made subject to special measures because of the intractable problems they face. The Fresh Start initiative was introduced in 1998 to help pupils in these schools. It was a radical solution to failure: the existing school would be closed and a new one opened on the same site. In 2003/04 it was modified to include a Collaborative Restart strategy for secondary schools working in partnership with successful schools in their areas.

²³⁵ By the end of 2003/04 there were 37 Fresh Start schools; 4 opened in 2003/04 (2 primary and 2 secondary).²¹ Seven have not yet had their first section 10 inspection, which takes place during the third year of the school's existence, but their progress is being monitored by HMI. All are making at least reasonable progress.²²

²³⁶ Other Fresh Start schools (26) have had a section 10 inspection and in some cases more than one. For the majority (21) the first section 10 inspection was successful and the school was not placed in any of the categories of concern. For the remainder, progress was not rapid enough or easy at first. One secondary school had been placed in the serious weaknesses category and two had been judged to have inadequate sixth forms. Their progress was reasonable. Six Fresh Start schools had been made subject to special

²¹ The figures are slightly different from those in last year's Annual Report because of a redefinition of Fresh Start schools.

²² Judgements about the progress of schools causing concern are made on the scale: good; reasonable; limited.

measures. However, three of these subsequently had successful section 10 inspections, one had closed, and the two that remained subject to special measures were making reasonable and limited progress respectively.

237 The Fresh Start initiative was particularly successful where a number of features were present:

- the lead-in time was used productively to appoint a headteacher, establish a shadow governing body and plan for the new school
- full advantage was taken of the opportunity to appoint new staff
- senior staff and governors worked with the community to develop a unique vision and ethos for the school
- there was a keen awareness of the need to strike the right balance between involving new staff in developing policies and providing them with a clear framework from the start
- the LEA played a lead role at the start of the process but encouraged the school to assume increasing responsibility and provided high quality support.

238 The characteristics of successful leadership in Fresh Start schools are similar to those in schools subject to special measures. To raise standards, headteachers focused on a few key priorities that were communicated effectively, including:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning
- improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour
- establishing secure and rigorous management systems
- enthusing staff with their vision.

239 Middle managers, too, have played a key role in leading improvements in their areas. With senior managers they:

- established a professional dialogue with staff
- raised expectations about teaching and learning
- monitored teaching regularly
- provided well focused training.

240 In successful schools, work with pupils concentrated on improving their skills and attitudes to learning, raising their aspirations and developing their self-esteem. The views of pupils and parents were actively sought and they contributed to the development of the school's ethos. Substantial building work was carefully managed in a phased way to minimise disruption. Improvements to the buildings raised the morale of staff and pupils, and enhanced the status of the schools in the community.

241 In a sense, the Fresh Start initiative has been a hostage to the over-ambitious claims made for it in its initial stages. It was damaged by well publicised failures when a few Fresh Start schools were made subject to special measures. These distracted attention from the important successes achieved by the initiative. Some schools needed more time than others, as well as the additional support and monitoring provided by special measures, to succeed; but almost all have done so and

have not looked back. Overall, the Fresh Start initiative has been successful because the great majority of the schools which had previously caused considerable concern are now doing well.

External support

Key points

- External support for schools causing concern is most effective when it is grounded in knowledge of the school, is targeted well and seeks to develop the school's capacity to sustain its own improvement.
- The impact of external support depends upon the school's capacity to make the most of it; sometimes the support needs to focus on developing that capacity.
- Collaboration between schools can often, but does not always, promote improvement.

242 Support from external partners is a vital element of school improvement. The usual provider or broker of such support is the LEA and most LEAs perform this role effectively (see p79). For schools subject to special measures and with serious weaknesses, the LEA is required to draw up a statement of action showing how it will support the school. The impact of the support is evaluated by HMI.

243 Support does not have to be provided solely or mainly by staff in the LEA; LEAs increasingly draw on the help of practising headteachers, senior and middle managers and others, such as advanced skills teachers, non-teaching staff and governors. In a few instances, some or all of the LEA's support is managed and provided by or in partnership with another organisation.

244 National initiatives (including Excellence in Cities and the national Key Stage 3 Strategy), networks such as Leadership Incentive Grant Collaboratives, and formal and informal federations, also make valuable contributions to improvement in some schools. Specialist schools and a small but increasing number of independent partners, such as consultants and sponsors, are also beginning to play a part.

245 The external support received by schools is most successful when it is grounded in good knowledge and understanding of the school and is matched precisely to the school's immediate and longer term needs.

246 Several features characterise effective support:

- it is sharply focused on clear priorities, with actions linked to specific outcomes (particularly in relation to achievement) to which all partners subscribe

- people with appropriate expertise are used and support is carefully coordinated and targeted to meet the needs of the school as a whole, specific areas in the school and the teacher in the classroom
- priority is given to enhancing the school's capacity to improve with lower levels of intervention and support is adjusted over time in line with the school's progress.

²⁴⁷ The impact of external support depends on the capacity of the school to make the most of it. It is greatest when leadership is effective, important initiatives are given a high profile and parents, pupils, staff and governors are fully involved from an early stage. At best, senior managers adeptly harness various initiatives and funding streams into a cohesive strategy for improvement that complements and extends the school's continuing work to raise standards. At worst, the school is distracted from its most important priorities by a welter of piecemeal developments.

²⁴⁸ Where schools show insufficient capacity to secure rapid improvement and to manage and use external support effectively, a priority for the support is often to develop that capacity. As an interim measure, LEAs frequently use senior managers or other staff to provide strategic leadership within the school and to enhance the skills and expertise of the existing staff by modelling good practice. A complementary or alternative strategy is for advisers or consultants to perform these roles by working closely with those in the school, modelling rigorous analyses of performance data and evaluating teaching in a way that complements monitoring visits by HMI.

²⁴⁹ In a few instances, partnerships or federations between schools have brought notable success. However, these arrangements are not always effective; in one example, the leadership of the federation focused on long term issues and did not recognise the depth of the weaknesses in the school that were most in need of improvement.

²⁵⁰ There are examples of informal collaborative arrangements that have worked well. These are when the partners understand how each school can contribute and benefit and when they focus on each other's needs. Schools benefit from joint professional development, such as leadership training for middle managers, and shared curriculum planning including collaboration over provision for 14–19 year olds. Staff are increasingly willing to move between schools to help those causing concern, especially where there are gaps in staffing or expertise. One city school, for example, seconded its head of mathematics for a year full time to a school subject to special measures; others have released deputy headteachers, subject specialists and advanced skills teachers.

²⁵¹ Effective external support, including but not confined to that provided by the LEA, complements external monitoring by HMI and plays a key role in speeding the progress made by schools causing concern in improving the education they provide for their pupils.

Ofsted publications (2003/04) relevant to schools causing concern

i. Improvement through inspection – an evaluation of the impact of Ofsted's work (HMI 2244), 2004

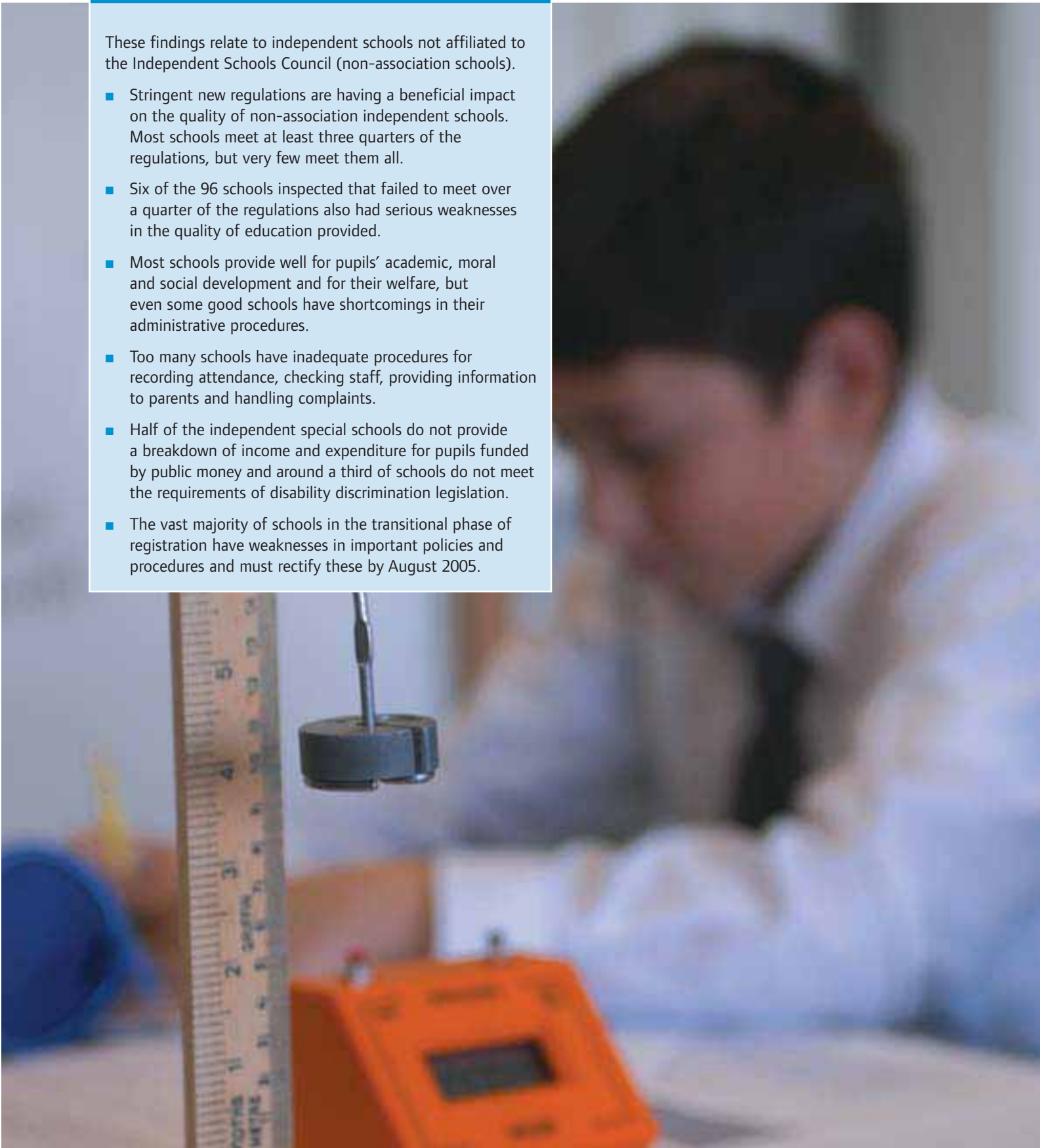
This publication is available on www.ofsted.gov.uk

Independent schools

Main findings

These findings relate to independent schools not affiliated to the Independent Schools Council (non-association schools).

- Stringent new regulations are having a beneficial impact on the quality of non-association independent schools. Most schools meet at least three quarters of the regulations, but very few meet them all.
- Six of the 96 schools inspected that failed to meet over a quarter of the regulations also had serious weaknesses in the quality of education provided.
- Most schools provide well for pupils' academic, moral and social development and for their welfare, but even some good schools have shortcomings in their administrative procedures.
- Too many schools have inadequate procedures for recording attendance, checking staff, providing information to parents and handling complaints.
- Half of the independent special schools do not provide a breakdown of income and expenditure for pupils funded by public money and around a third of schools do not meet the requirements of disability discrimination legislation.
- The vast majority of schools in the transitional phase of registration have weaknesses in important policies and procedures and must rectify these by August 2005.

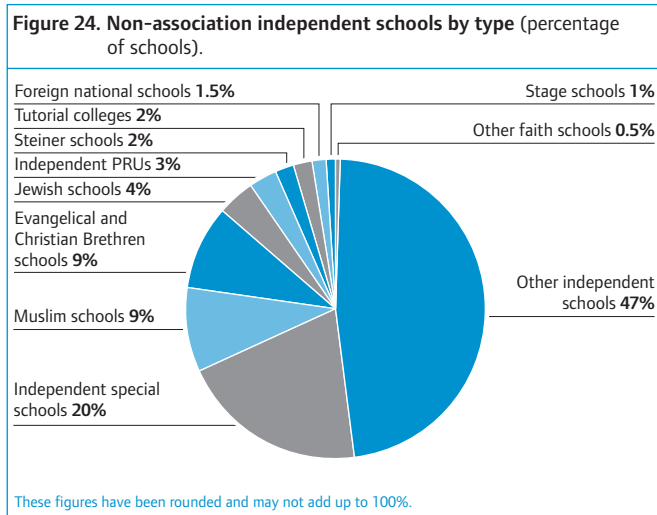


Overview

²⁵² The Education Act 2002 radically changed how independent schools are regulated and inspected. Since September 2003, all schools have been inspected regularly and inspection reports published. Fees are charged for inspection. Schools must meet a set of standards to become registered or remain so.²³ New schools must meet these standards before they open.

²⁵³ Almost 2,300 independent schools in England cater for about 7% of the school population. About half of these schools belong to associations affiliated to the Independent Schools Council and are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. The remaining 'non-association' schools, which educate around 125,000 pupils, are inspected by Ofsted. [This report relates to these schools.](#)

²⁵⁴ Non-association schools are diverse in size and character (see Figure 24). Around 13% take boarders or have pupils in residential care. Non-association schools include tutorial colleges, stage schools, special schools and those that serve particular faith communities or groups including foreign nationals resident in the UK.²⁴ Over a fifth of the non-association schools have a distinctive religious character. This year, as last, has seen a growth in the number of schools of this type catering for both the Muslim and Evangelical Christian communities.



²⁵⁵ Just under a quarter of schools have a wide age range, while about half are preparatory or junior schools. Pre-school education in independent schools is growing and around a third also cater for children aged under 3. Often the provision is supported by the local authorities.

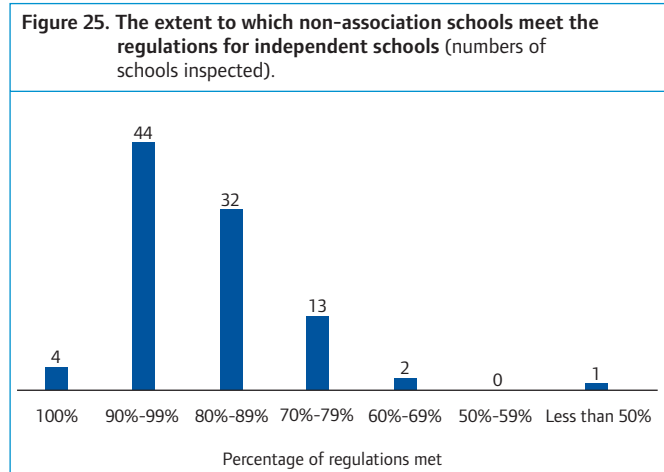
²⁵⁶ A fifth of non-association schools cater mainly or wholly for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The number of new special schools applying for registration and wishing to expand has grown. This largely reflects the increasing

number of pupils with SEN being placed in the independent sector by local education authorities (LEAs). The majority of these pupils have behavioural difficulties or autism.

²⁵⁷ Some schools, many set up by faith groups, charge very low or even no fees at all. Often these schools face problems of high staff turnover, poor accommodation and inadequate resources. By contrast, the fees of many independent special schools are very high.

²⁵⁸ Schools need to meet around 100 regulations. These cover: the quality of education; the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; welfare, health and safety; the suitability of proprietors and staff; premises and accommodation; provision of information to parents; and procedures for handling complaints.

²⁵⁹ In 2003/04, Ofsted inspected 96 non-association schools.²⁵ Given the number, newness and detail of the regulations, it is no surprise that only four of the schools met them all. However, half the schools met 90% or more of the detailed regulations and most schools met at least 75% of them (see Figure 25).



²⁶⁰ Failure to meet all the regulations is not necessarily indicative of poor provision. Some schools that offer an excellent quality of education have some shortcomings in their administrative procedures. However, the six schools that failed to meet over a quarter of the regulations also had serious weaknesses in the quality of teaching and curriculum planning. Where regulations are not met, schools must produce a plan of action, which is followed up by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) as the registering authority.

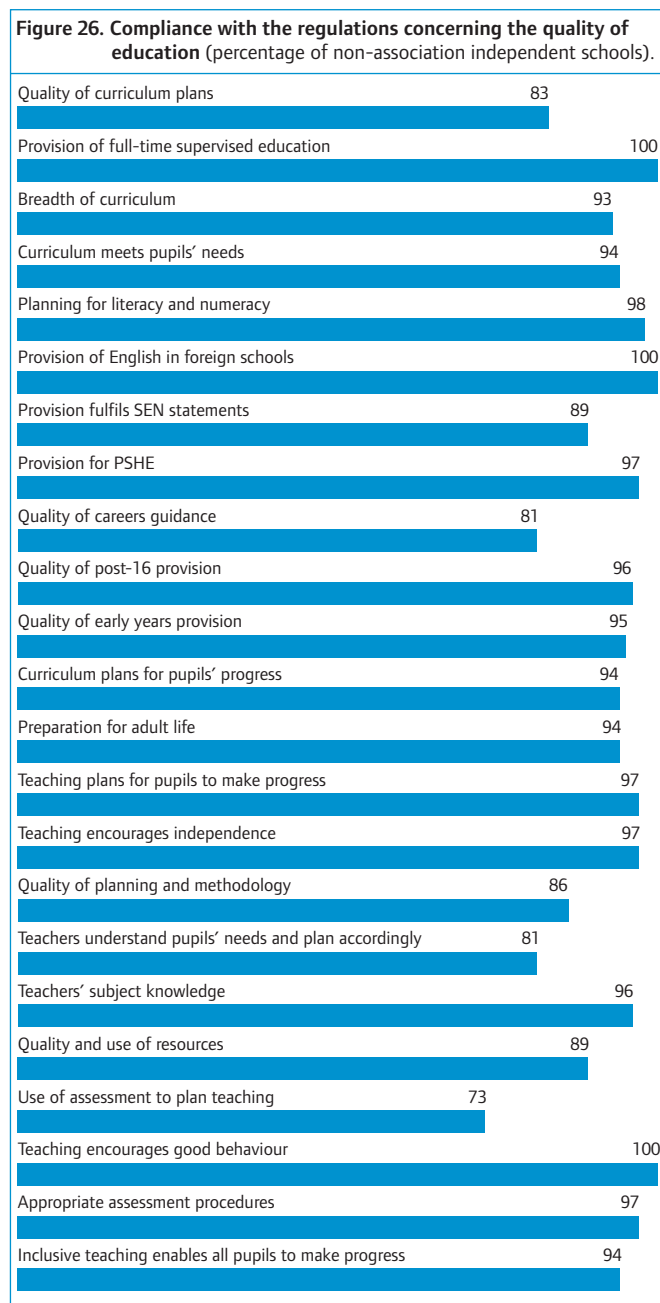
²⁶¹ The majority of schools met all of the regulations concerning [the quality of education](#), covering the quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment. They provide a suitable programme of personal, social and health education

²³ The standards are set out in the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

²⁴ Only those tutorial colleges with five or more students of compulsory school age on roll are included.

²⁵ Inspections to the new framework began part-way through 2003/04. All schools will be inspected within a six-year period.

(PSHE) and a broad curriculum suited to the pupils' ages and aptitudes, which enables pupils to make progress. Schools serving the Muslim and Jewish communities are developing well the relationship between the religious and secular curriculum. The extent to which individual regulations were met is shown in Figure 26.



²⁶² The quality of **teaching** was good in over half the lessons seen compared with 69% in maintained primary and secondary schools.²⁶ One in twenty lessons was unsatisfactory.

²⁶³ Of the schools that did not meet all the regulations for the quality of education (40%), the overwhelming majority failed to make enough use of **assessment** in lesson planning. In almost half of them, a weakness was in teachers' understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of pupils in order to plan teaching that would challenge them. A similar proportion had neither a curriculum policy nor appropriate schemes of work. A third had inadequate resources for learning.

²⁶⁴ **Behaviour** was good or better in more than nine out of ten schools, including those for pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBSO).

²⁶⁵ The best schools were all characterised by consistently good teaching and a broad and interesting curriculum well suited to the needs of their pupils. Three of the most effective schools were residential schools that catered for pupils with SEN.

²⁶⁶ Just three schools met fewer than 65% of the regulations concerning the quality of education. Their curriculum was narrow, poorly planned and ill-suited to pupils' needs, in particular to those of the youngest children. Teaching was dull, tasks routine and pupils made little progress. Like all schools where regulations are not met, the action to improve will be monitored. These schools are likely to be brought forward for early reinspection.

²⁶⁷ A strong feature of most schools was the provision they made for pupils' **moral and social development**. Pupils were generally self-confident, courteous and responsible in their attitudes to study. They made a good contribution to their schools and wider communities.

²⁶⁸ Faith schools were particularly successful in providing clear moral guidance for their pupils and encouraging them to put their beliefs into practice. Special schools, particularly those catering for pupils with EBSO, also promoted pupils' moral development well, for example, through well planned lessons in PSHE and consistently implemented reward and incentive systems.

²⁶⁹ Pupils' **cultural development** was promoted satisfactorily in nine out of ten schools through, for example, exploring world faiths and cultures in subjects such as art, religious education, history, literature and music. The best schools organised an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities, invited speakers, put on plays and concerts, and organised trips that complemented effectively work done in class. A few schools had weaknesses in this area of their work, in particular, failing to make pupils aware of the multicultural nature of the wider world.

²⁶ The quality of teaching in lessons in independent schools is judged on a three-point scale: good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory.

270 Most schools met the regulations regarding pupils' **welfare, health and safety**. Where this was not so, it was often because they did not have detailed policies, for example, for safeguarding pupils from abuse or for educational visits. Some schools had not undertaken an adequate fire risk assessment. Around 15% of schools had a variety of health and safety hazards, some serious; these are followed up by the DfES, if necessary involving Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

271 Over a third of the schools were careless about keeping **admission and attendance registers**. Too many schools did not take sufficient care in distinguishing, for example, between authorised and unauthorised absence. Even some of the schools that provided a very good quality of education had shortcomings of this nature.

272 About a quarter of schools had not conducted all the required **checks on staff** before confirmation of appointment. Mostly these related to medical fitness. Of most concern, almost one in five schools had not carried out Criminal Records Bureau checks. In some cases this was because schools were unaware that the regulations applied to auxiliary staff and volunteers as well as teaching staff.

273 Schools generally met the regulations for the quality of **premises and accommodation** by providing safe and stimulating learning environments. Problems occurred where there were inadequate washroom facilities or poor outdoor recreational space without suitable alternative arrangements. The latter was a common issue in tutorial colleges.

274 Around a third of schools did not meet the requirements relating to disability access. Most were unaware of their duty to do so and had not considered how they would respond.

275 Just under a third of schools did not supply all the required **information to parents**. Frequently, omissions were about provision for pupils with SEN and those who speak English as an additional language, admissions policies, discipline and exclusions, and complaints procedures. Just over a quarter of them did not supply enough details about their proprietors.

276 Half of the special schools inspected did not provide a breakdown of income and expenditure for pupils funded by public money, for example through LEAs. This reduced accountability for a considerable sum of public money.

277 Only two thirds of the schools had formal procedures for **handling complaints** and, among those that did, some did not provide the level of detail required by the new legislation.

Themes

278 The following section reports on:

- **new schools and those in the transitional phase**
- **faith schools**, which represent a sizeable proportion of non-association independent schools
- **independent special schools**, which cater for some of the most vulnerable young people, especially for children with EBSD and autism.

Some types of school have grown rapidly in numbers. These include faith schools, including many in the transitional phase of registration, and independent schools catering wholly or mainly for pupils with SEN.

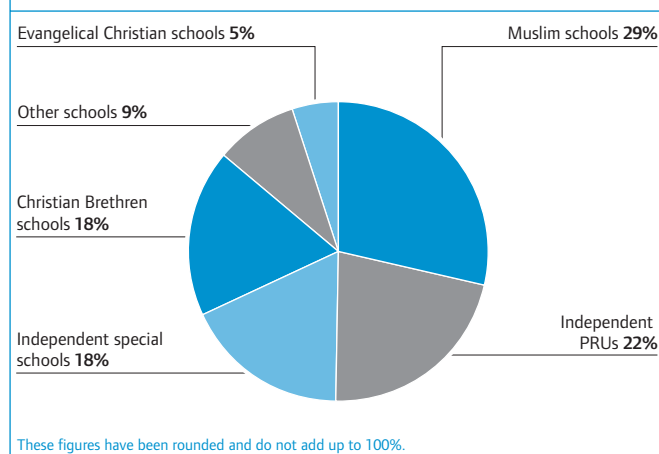
New schools and those in the transitional phase of registration

Key points

- The vast majority of schools in the transitional phase lag well behind the registered schools in their ability to meet the regulations.
- Some schools make poor educational provision, which is often linked to poor resources and high staff turnover.
- Regulations have had a positive effect on new schools.

279 At the end of 2003/04, 175 schools had not reached the standard required for final registration, in some cases because they had been established shortly before the deadline of 31 August 2003 (see Figure 27). They have been given a transitional period in which to meet the regulations; this will end in August 2005. HMI visited them all in 2003/04.

Figure 27. Schools in the transitional phase by type (percentage of schools).

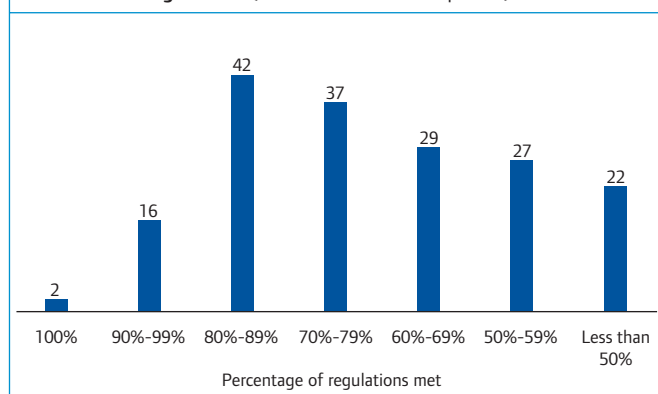


²⁸⁰ Predictably, schools in the transitional phase lag well behind registered schools in meeting the new regulations (see Figure 28). In most cases, schools did not have the required detailed documentation and fewer than half had plans to meet the legal requirements regarding disability discrimination. Many important regulations were not met by over half of these schools. These included weaknesses in:

- curriculum planning
- provision for children with special needs
- important policies to safeguard pupils' welfare, including those on bullying, behaviour, child protection and health and safety.

A minority of schools make poor educational provision. This often occurs where resources are poor and staff turnover is high. All these schools have substantial work to do in the coming year if they are to meet the standards before the transitional phase ends.

Figure 28. The extent to which schools in the transitional phase meet the regulations (numbers of schools inspected).



New schools

²⁸¹ HMI inspected 72 schools that had applied for registration; about half were recommended for registration. The introduction of the new regulations has reduced significantly the number of schools opening without appropriate educational provision.

Faith schools

Key points

- Faith schools provide well for pupils' moral and social development, but cultural development requires improvement.
- Muslim and Jewish schools are developing well the relationship between the religious and secular curriculum.
- Many Muslim schools in the transitional phase require significant improvement.

²⁸² Over a fifth of non-association independent schools are faith schools. There are over 100 **Muslim schools**, a significant number of which are in the transitional phase. They educate over 14,000 pupils. Most Muslim schools serve ethnically diverse communities in inner city areas; 4 had full inspections and a further 50 had transitional phase visits in 2003/04.

²⁸³ Many new schools are being opened by a younger generation of British Muslims, who recognise that traditional Islamic education does not entirely fit pupils for their lives as Muslims in modern Britain. Several schools use English as the medium of instruction for aspects of the Islamic curriculum, and are exploring how the Islamic and secular curricula can complement each other more effectively. However, planning and schemes of work often require further development, and many schools must adapt their curriculum to ensure that it provides pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England and helps them to acquire an appreciation of and respect for other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony. Two thirds of the weakest schools in the transitional phase serve Muslim communities.

²⁸⁴ The Association of Muslim Schools is reviewing its role in order to support schools more effectively. Many schools are considering working towards acquiring voluntary-aided status or other government funding. A high staff turnover, poor accommodation and resources continue to be barriers to continuity and quality in some Muslim schools.

²⁸⁵ The number of **Jewish schools** has remained constant. Currently 51 Jewish schools cater for around 9,500 pupils.

²⁸⁶ Six Jewish schools were inspected in 2003/04. They covered the whole spectrum of observance. The mainstream schools met almost all the new regulations and one school was about to enter the maintained sector. Of the other four, all of which were strictly observant, none met all the new requirements, but they were providing a generally good quality of education. A considerable strength of these schools was their provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In schools catering for a homogeneous religious community, Jewish education was a strong feature, but some also provided well for pupils' multicultural education.

²⁸⁷ There are around 85 registered independent **evangelical Christian schools** educating about 5,000 pupils.

²⁸⁸ In 2003/04, four evangelical Christian schools were inspected; all but one are members of the Christian Schools' Trust. Of these schools, two made good or very good provision for their pupils. Strong features of the schools were: the way in which the distinctive Christian culture underpins their curriculum and ethos; the high level of parental involvement and support; the promotion of good behaviour

and sound relationships that help pupils to develop into mature and confident young adults; the generally good quality of teaching; and committed leadership.

²⁸⁹ The Focus group of schools (called Focus Learning) is owned and maintained by local [Exclusive Christian Brethren](#) communities throughout the UK. The total number of children being educated in these schools, all of which cater for 11–17 year olds, is around 1,400. There are 31 schools, all of which are in the transitional phase. In most cases these schools had previously operated as tuition centres that brought together pupils who were otherwise being educated at home.

²⁹⁰ Focus Learning provides good support to its schools and has developed a number of common policy documents that are of very good quality. These schools are developing their provision to offer full time education from September 2004. The quality of teaching, most of which is done by experienced practitioners, is generally good, but the amalgamation of small schools has caused problems in finding suitable accommodation.

Independent special schools

Key points

- Most independent special schools provide well for pupils.
- Accounting for expenditure on publicly funded pupils is a common weakness.
- Half of independent schools that fulfil the role of pupil referral units (PRUs) have significant weaknesses in educational provision.

²⁹¹ Ofsted inspected 22 [independent schools catering wholly or mainly for pupils with SEN](#) (independent special schools) in 2003/04. The quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils were at least satisfactory in all of them and in more than a half they were good or very good.

²⁹² Most of the schools provide a curriculum that is well or very well matched to pupils' needs and they track pupils' progress clearly. A lack of provision for music is a common weakness, even in schools where the breadth of pupils' experience is otherwise good. Schools are generally well equipped; teaching and boarding accommodation is at least satisfactory. A few schools have adopted unusual approaches to their organisation and curriculum in order to follow a specific educational philosophy, to meet specialised needs or to cope with limitations of premises or staffing. These approaches led to surprisingly few conflicts with the regulations and in most cases provided benefits for the pupils.

²⁹³ The numbers of pupils being placed in independent special schools continues to rise. Fifteen new schools were established and visited during the year. Children's homes must now register if they provide education for one or more pupils with a statement of SEN or in public care. The number of homes in this position is not known accurately, but it may run into several hundred. So far, very few have applied to register.

²⁹⁴ The insight into educational matters shown by the proprietors of these schools and homes varies widely. A few of the larger organisations and some individual proprietors have proved capable of planning and establishing successful schools that meet the regulations and promise to provide a high quality of education. In contrast, others have shown little insight initially into what is appropriate in terms of premises, staffing, curriculum and resources.

²⁹⁵ Almost a fifth of schools in the transitional phase cater wholly or mainly for pupils with SEN. A concern is that two thirds of these schools did not record the income and expenditure for publicly funded pupils. The fees charged by such schools are frequently high, and this impedes accountability for a substantial amount of public money.

Independent pupil referral units

²⁹⁶ HMI visited 38 independent schools which fulfil the role of PRUs, all in the transitional phase. The nature of independent PRUs varies widely, although most aim to provide education and vocational training in settings that are intentionally different from the schools in which pupils have not been successful. Examples of the diverse premises include: community centres; church halls; units on industrial estates; an upstairs floor of a public house; temporary buildings on a farm; and an urban terraced house. Some premises are pleasant and suitable, but a small number have serious health, safety and welfare hazards. Most have sufficient teaching accommodation, but fewer than half have safe outdoor recreational space. Two thirds of them have inadequate resources.

²⁹⁷ Curriculum policies and schemes of work are inadequate in more than half of PRUs. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are poorly developed in two thirds. This is particularly serious as staff turnover in PRUs is often high and many teachers are unqualified.

²⁹⁸ All of the units are successful in helping pupils to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills, but they need to broaden the range of curricular experiences they offer. More than half of PRUs include pupils with statements of SEN, but frequently the units fail to meet the requirements of the statements, generally those relating to the provision of the National Curriculum. Most PRUs provide effective careers guidance.

Post-compulsory education in colleges and other provision

Main findings

- Educational provision for 14–19 year olds in areas – part or whole of a local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area – remains too variable. But there are signs of increased commitment to collaboration on the part of local LSCs and local education authorities (LEAs), emerging strategies, increased flexibility at Key Stage 4 and a broader range of provision post-16.
- The quality of provision was slightly better in the colleges inspected this year than last, but it is a concern that the proportion of inadequate colleges rose. Overall, the pace of improvement is slow.
- Sixth form colleges continue to be highly successful in almost all aspects of their work.
- More good and outstanding work, including excellent leadership and management, was seen in general further education (GFE) colleges this year, but more work that was unsatisfactory was also seen.
- Eight of the nine previously inadequate colleges reinspected during the year had improved to the point that they were offering generally satisfactory provision.
- Courses offered by colleges match employers' needs at least satisfactorily, but only about half of GFE colleges assessed employers' training needs in a substantial way; the impact on courses in sixth form colleges is slight.
- The quality of advice and support provided to young people across the sector is generally good, but that for young people leaving custody is a notable exception.
- Connexions partnerships generally carry out all aspects of their remit at least satisfactorily.
- The quality of youth service provision is very mixed, reflecting a failure by some local authorities to give it sufficient priority. The best services make an important contribution to the overall success of council policies on inclusion.
- Provision in independent specialist colleges continues to give cause for concern.
- Inadequacies in the vocational curriculum continue to constrain post-16 provision, particularly for less well qualified young people.
- The most vulnerable young people continue to receive the least effective provision post-16.



Overview

²⁹⁹ In response to government policy, the provision of education and training for 14–19 year olds is experiencing a slow, but historic, shift in focus. For an increasing number of young people, contact with a sector involving colleges and training begins at 14, rather than 16.

³⁰⁰ Institutions are increasingly thinking of themselves as elements within a local system serving the social, economic and cultural needs of young people and adults in a community, rather than as free-standing businesses. In some parts of the sector, there are signs of improvement in quality and standards. These are reasons for qualified optimism. But developments remain fragile and too slow, and too much provision for the most vulnerable young people continues to be unsatisfactory.

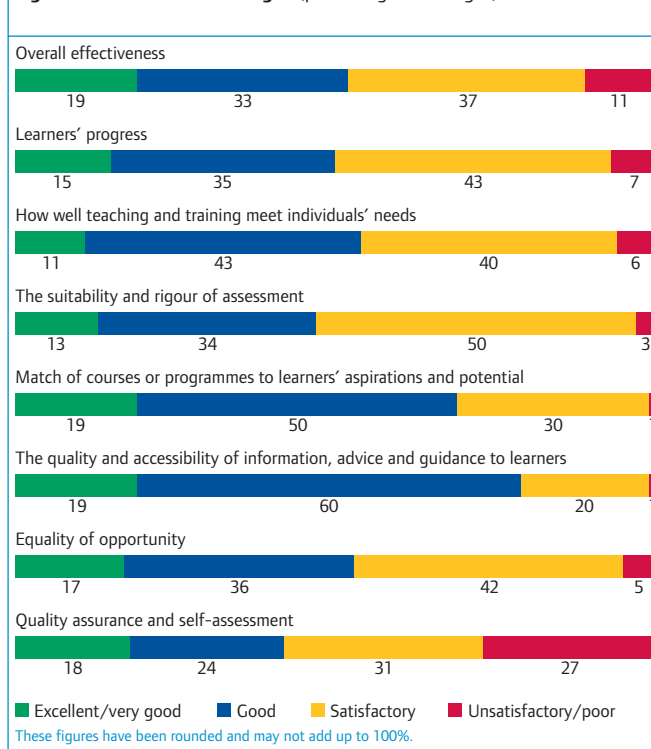
³⁰¹ Inspections of 14–19 provision in areas reveal a mixed picture. A commitment on the part of LEAs and local LSCs is leading to:

- progress on agreeing key principles
- enhanced collaboration between schools and colleges
- the emergence of a recognisable joint strategy for 14–19 provision.

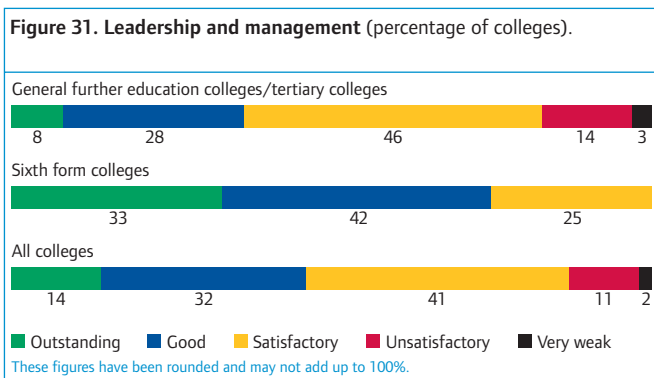
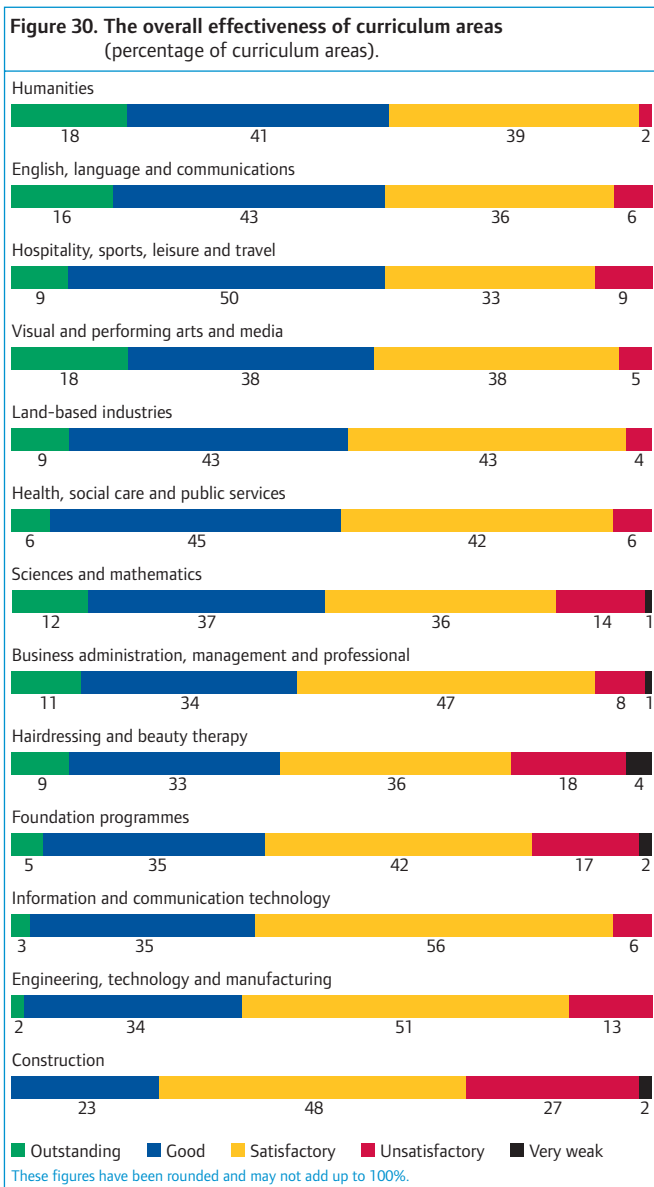
Although only relatively few areas are taking the radical steps needed to secure significant change, benefits to young people are accruing from a great deal of activity across the country. There has been progress in increasing the flexibility of provision at Key Stage 4 (see p37) and, in the better areas, the range of post-16 provision has also improved. The number of young people not in education, training or employment has fallen.

³⁰² Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) inspected 82 GFE, tertiary and specialist colleges and 24 sixth form colleges (SFCs). An overview of the judgements made about them is shown in Figure 29. The overall picture is slightly better than that seen previously. There was a little less unsatisfactory leadership and management, and provision in curriculum areas was slightly better. Overall, the pace of improvement is slow. The better provision was in SFCs, several of which are outstanding in many ways. Figure 30 shows the overall effectiveness of curriculum areas in all colleges inspected in 2003/04.

Figure 29. Overview of colleges (percentage of colleges).



³⁰³ More of the GFE colleges inspected in 2003/04 were well managed, including some which were outstanding in this respect. Quite exceptional qualities of leadership are needed to achieve this in these complex institutions. At the same time, there was also more unsatisfactory provision and more colleges with unsatisfactory leadership and management (see Figure 31). The number of inadequate colleges, excluding independent specialist colleges, was 13, compared with 10 in 2002/03. If the present rate of inadequacy continues, the proportion of colleges judged to be inadequate will exceed 10% by the end of the four-year inspection cycle. Given the critical importance of further education (FE) colleges to provision within an area, this is far too high, and, worryingly, shows no sign of falling.



304 Overall, there is evidence of polarisation, with effective institutions becoming ever more so, and a minority struggling to achieve mediocrity at best.

305 There are many reasons for endemic inadequacy. Among them are: the reluctance of the best managers to take on the most difficult colleges; staffing difficulties; and structural features of areas, in particular where there is strong competition from local schools with sixth forms. In addition, weaknesses on the part of local LSCs in holding colleges to account for their performance, as well as weak governance, are contributing to the failure of some colleges.

306 Fortunately, inadequate colleges and unsatisfactory provision can be turned around. Of the nine colleges reinspected during the year which had previously been found inadequate, all but one had improved sufficiently to be judged adequate. In over 100 colleges that had previously had one or more areas of unsatisfactory provision, the vast majority had successfully identified what they needed to do to improve and had done it.

307 Employers occasionally express the view that FE colleges do not make provision that sufficiently meets their needs. A survey by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) suggests that this is not entirely supported by evidence (see publication v, p68). GFE colleges offer an extensive range of courses which provide at least a satisfactory match to the needs of employers in an area and the range of activities is usually adequate to enhance the general employability of learners. About three fifths provide a significant amount of training for individual employers, often tailoring it to meet their needs. Colleges usually consider employer and labour market needs as part of their review of course portfolios, but in the survey only about a half assessed employers' needs in a substantial way. Few sixth form colleges did this, and labour market information has little impact on their course provision.

308 Ofsted and ALI inspected the provision of FE in higher education institutions this year for the first time. Almost all of it was at least satisfactory and about two thirds was good or better. Support and guidance were particularly good and students on vocational courses (especially in art and design and hospitality) benefited from working alongside degree students, as well as from good specialist resources and the opportunities for progression available in the same institution.

309 The quality of education in the 19 independent specialist colleges inspected in 2003/04 remains a cause for concern. These colleges provide effective personal support and guidance to students, but the quality of teaching, although better than previously seen, is too often unsatisfactory. The provision for literacy and numeracy in particular was unsatisfactory in half the colleges.

310 Twelve Connexions partnerships were inspected in 2003/04. All were at least satisfactory, one was outstanding, one very good and six good. The partnerships were well led and managed, and highly effective in fulfilling their remit to

provide support and guidance to all 13–19 year olds, while giving particular help to the most vulnerable. The quality of the practice was good and the proportion of young people participating in education and training was increasing. The support given to the most vulnerable is often of critical importance to them. Young people are not, however, usually sufficiently involved in determining the priorities of services or in assessing whether they have been achieved.

³¹¹ Ofsted introduced a new framework for the inspection of **youth services** in 2003/04 and is committed to inspecting all services over a four-year period. The 18 inspections undertaken so far reveal a very mixed picture, reflecting the varying levels of commitment of local authorities to this provision.

³¹² Four services were judged to be good, nine satisfactory, four unsatisfactory and one poor. Underfunding, poor management and difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff are at the heart of weaknesses which are far too widespread. Where senior officers and elected members give due emphasis to the service, it frequently makes an important contribution to the overall success of council policies on inclusion and community cohesion. A good proportion of services inspected have been exemplary in promoting young people's involvement in local decision-making and democracy.

³¹³ The experience of learners in **young offender institutions** varies very widely. Some establishments have difficulty in recruiting teaching staff or cannot provide facilities suitable to allow young people to follow an adequate range of vocational and work-related options. Most face problems in meeting the needs of students at level 2 or above. Critically, many young people are poorly prepared for the transfer from custody back into the community.

³¹⁴ Young people in **local authority secure children's homes** experience much the same level of variability: from excellent to poor. In one establishment, three quarters of the teaching was excellent, pupils were offered a broad range of courses leading to external accreditation, support and guidance were very good and relationships between staff and students were a real strength. In other homes, however, little attempt was made to manage behaviour, resources and the learning environment were poor, and little of value was achieved. LEAs provide effective support to most, but not all, establishments and the support offered by Connexions is generally satisfactory.

Themes

³¹⁵ The following section includes further commentary on specific aspects of 14–19 and post-16 provision:

- **14–19 provision in areas**
- **support and guidance for post-16 students**, including the work of Connexions services
- **the vocational curriculum**, including the findings of a survey on the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE)
- **educational inclusion**, which is central in the drive for 'success for all'.

They include features that represent relative strengths in post-compulsory education and training and also areas where improvement is needed.

Area inspections 14–19

Key points

- Of the 15 areas inspected, provision is good overall in four, but unsatisfactory in three.
- There are signs of increasing commitment and collaboration between LEAs and local LSCs, and of emerging strategies for 14–19 provision in areas.
- Radical changes to bring about significant improvement, requiring challenge to vested interests, are rare.
- There is increasing flexibility of provision at Key Stage 4.
- In the more effective areas inspected, the range of post-16 provision is increasing and more young people are involved in education, employment or training.
- Access to an appropriate curriculum is often limited, particularly for the less well qualified.

³¹⁶ The 15 areas inspected ranged from largely rural counties to large towns and cities, and included two London boroughs. As in previous years, the findings were mixed, although there were some encouraging signs, including good provision overall in four areas. By contrast, the provision in three areas was unsatisfactory, and too many areas had no adequate strategy for driving improvements, or for ensuring that the provision available for young people met their needs, or the needs of the local communities. Where there was such a strategy, it was rarely implemented with sufficient vigour. Radical strategies requiring a determined stance in the face of vested interests, such as the merger of underperforming colleges, the closure of ineffective small sixth forms or the development of shared vocational skills centres, are uncommon. Only about a third of LEAs and local LSCs show strong, determined leadership.

317 Nevertheless, in most areas, a strategy for 14–19 education, shared by the LEA and local LSC and understood by a wide range of partners, is at least emerging. Commitment to developing more effective structures for implementation and agreement on principles are usually evident. Collaboration between institutions is increasing and is leading to increased flexibility of provision at Key Stage 4. In the better areas, the range of post-16 provision has also improved and more young people are involved in education, employment or training. Despite this, access to and participation in the curriculum are often unsatisfactory. The problems are familiar:

- narrow range of choice in some sixth forms
- lack of provision other than advanced level courses
- poor progression routes for young people with special educational needs
- poor progression to appropriate work-based learning.

318 The achievement of learners was satisfactory in most areas, but good in only two. Achievement in colleges was improving and the proportion of young people achieving five GCSE grades A*–C was also rising. In several areas point scores on A level programmes were low, including low scores in some schools. There was recurrent underachievement by young white British males from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and students from Pakistani and African Caribbean heritage, although, in one area, attainment of the latter two groups had improved. Achievement in work-based learning was generally poor.

319 Teaching and learning were good in almost half the areas, particularly in schools, and satisfactory in all but one of the rest, although arrangements to support the development of key skills were not always effective. Good use was being made of funding for 14–19 developments, although there were concerns about the long-term sustainability of such developments. Advice and guidance for learners were satisfactory or better in all areas, and pastoral support and careers education were generally good. Nevertheless, limitations remain. Learners and their parents rarely have adequate information and advice about the full range of opportunities available in an area post-16, particularly about work-based learning, which is still too often considered to be provision of last resort.

Support and guidance for students post-16

Key points

- FE colleges generally provide good support and guidance to learners.
- Where GFE colleges include units or centres for 16–19 year olds, support and guidance are good, but not better than in colleges generally.
- The support and guidance provided often include highly focused and effective academic monitoring.
- Connexions services carry out their remit effectively.
- The support and guidance provided for young people leaving custody are often inadequate.

320 Young people 16–19 are faced by many demands and difficult choices, often critical to their future, from what most often appear to be a bewildering range of alternatives. They need support and advice which are both impartial and expert. Although there are worrying gaps in provision for some of the most vulnerable young people across the post-16 education and training sector, learners broadly get the support and advice they need.

321 FE colleges, including independent specialist colleges, provide consistently high standards of guidance and support for students. This is as true of GFE colleges as it is of sixth form colleges or school sixth forms. Four fifths of colleges provide good or better information, advice and guidance to learners, with an even higher proportion demonstrating effective support on personal issues.

322 For learners on advanced courses (but increasingly also for those on vocational courses) support includes the highly detailed setting of targets for success in the achievement of qualifications based on previous attainment. In the better-run colleges, learners know from the start of their courses the final points score they can reasonably expect to achieve and the levels of success to which they can aspire, given efforts from learners and staff. This calculation of ‘value added’ underlies not only the guidance and support offered to students, but also the performance management of staff. It has proved, in the colleges where it is most expertly used, to be a highly effective mechanism for raising achievement post-16.

323 All FE colleges recognise that young people aged 16–19 have different needs from adults. Some choose to meet their needs by providing ‘centres’ for 16–19 year olds in an effort to establish, to some extent, a different ethos within the overall institution, although not usually a distinctive approach to teaching and learning. Initial advice and guidance are generally good; particular attention is given to monitoring attendance and punctuality; there are generally good

arrangements for identifying and providing for additional support needs; tutorial systems are generally well used to support progress; and there is a strong emphasis on reporting progress both to learners and their parents. All these are strong features of centres, but examples are equally to be found in FE colleges without centres (see i, p68).

³²⁴ Connexions services are fulfilling their remit effectively. In particular, they are helping increasing numbers of young people from diverse backgrounds by developing programmes that are successfully responding to the needs of local groups, individuals and their particular circumstances. Connexions services also offer generally satisfactory support to young people in secure children's homes and work effectively with Youth Offending Teams. The quality of work with young people leaving custody, however, is generally inconsistent and often ineffective. A survey of provision for girls in prison found that the quality of careers information, advice and guidance was mostly inadequate. This, combined with the poor quality of educational provision while in custody, did nothing to equip them to resist pressures to reoffend.

Vocational curriculum post-16

Key points

- The success of the post-16 sector continues to be constrained by inadequacies in the vocational sector.
- Learners' experience of vocational education is insufficiently distinctive.
- Vocational qualifications continue to lack sufficient esteem.
- The structure of vocational qualifications is excessively complex.

³²⁵ Commentaries on 14–19 education have strongly argued that the development of a more attractive, coherent and comprehensive vocational curriculum is essential to the creation of an effective 14–19 phase. The evidence of area inspection 14–19 bears this out, as does that of college inspections and, this year, the findings of a survey on the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) (see vi, p68).

³²⁶ The AVCE, which has now been revised and renamed, exemplified much of what is wrong. Much of the work seen was satisfactory or good, but the qualification itself was poorly designed. The survey report concluded that it was 'neither seriously vocational, nor consistently advanced'. The course specifications lacked vocational content or clear relation to the world of work. Little use was made of work experience.

³²⁷ In countries where vocational learning enjoys high esteem, the qualifications achieved are recognised as a clear route into employment (see iii, p68). That was not the case with the AVCE or many other vocational qualifications. In essence, the course was not sufficiently different from A level. Too often, learners' experience of vocational alternatives can consist of the same teachers, teaching in the same way, but from a different textbook.

³²⁸ The AVCE exemplified another typical feature of the vocational curriculum: it was highly bureaucratic. The assessment regime, in particular, was rightly regarded by both students and teachers as excessively complex, bureaucratic and hard to understand. During the short history of the qualification, those arrangements were subject to repeated amendments. These changes, together with lateness in the original specifications, undermined confidence in the qualification.

³²⁹ 'Excessively complex, bureaucratic and hard to understand' is a phrase that may be properly applied to the vocational curriculum itself. There are more than 4,000 separate post-16 qualifications. Young people seeking an alternative to A level, usually those who lack sufficiently high qualifications, generally face one of two problems, often depending on where they live. Their natural route of progression may be to a large GFE or tertiary college offering a wide range of programmes leading to an equally broad choice of qualifications, in which case they face a considerable challenge in arriving at the 'best fit' to their needs. It is just conceivable that 4,000 educational qualifications are needed for 16–19 year olds, but for each young person the choice may appear so daunting that there is no rational way of making it. Alternatively, most of the provision in an area may be of advanced courses, and other choices may be both limited in number and an idiosyncratic outcome of decisions made by different institutions at different times.

³³⁰ It is an important function of FE to offer effective provision for young people who have enjoyed limited academic success at school. That cannot be achieved unless that which is offered by colleges is different from what young people have already experienced. At the same time it must be attractive to the young people themselves and to employers, clearly aligned to need and rigorous in both assessment and the demands made. Too often, few of these conditions apply. The traditional remedy for inadequacies in the vocational offering has been to invent further qualifications. What is needed is rigorous pruning, combined with a determined drive to ensure that, within areas, all young people have access to alternatives that meet their needs.

Educational inclusion post-16

Key points

- FE colleges are having some success in widening participation.
- Colleges are responding well to recent equal opportunities legislation.
- There has been some success in involving 'hard to reach' groups in education and training.
- The teaching of basic skills to adults continues to give cause for concern.
- A survey of language provision for bilingual learners reveals a mixed picture.
- The needs of young people in or leaving custody are poorly met, so that their chances of reoffending remain high.

³³¹ The principal government policy relating to FE is 'success for all', and this neatly encapsulates the purpose of the sector, while leaving open the possibility that individuals and some groups will interpret 'success' in different ways.²⁷ Young people and adults come to FE for a variety of motives: economic, social, cultural, academic. Many wish to satisfy a love of learning; many wish to gain qualifications en route to higher education, more advanced learning or a job. The two motives are not mutually exclusive.

³³² In that sense, FE is necessarily inclusive: it provides for all sorts of people, and meets an almost limitless variety of needs. FE colleges are generally very conscious of this function and carry out many aspects of it well. In 2003/04, there were signs of particular progress. Colleges were drawing strongly on effective local partnerships and links with local communities to widen participation among under-represented groups. They used community venues to attract learners, and designed curricula and progression routes to give them the best possible chance of success.

³³³ Colleges had made good progress in revising their equal opportunities and diversity policies to reflect legislation. All colleges inspected, for example, had race equality policies, although not all had made significant progress in implementing them. Colleges had also carried out audits and taken action to anticipate the needs of students with disabilities, although some problems of access remained difficult to resolve.

³³⁴ More generally, inspections of provision in areas and of Connexions partnerships showed signs of success in involving groups of young people who are traditionally hard to reach in education and training post-16. When young people enter the college sector they can expect, in almost all colleges, effective guidance and support, tailored to their needs.

³³⁵ Despite this real progress, there are limitations to the extent to which 'success for all' is being achieved. Colleges are more successful at promoting social inclusion than educational inclusion. It remains broadly true that the better qualified a young person is at 16, the better the provision he or she is likely to receive post-16. As in previous years, a number of particularly vulnerable groups far too rarely receive the quality of education they need.

³³⁶ The teaching of literacy and numeracy to adults continues to be a cause for concern. Despite much attention, the proportion of good provision in this area of learning remains well below the average for the sector as a whole. A survey of literacy, numeracy and language provision in young offender institutions, moreover, revealed in more acute form the same endemic problems that are apparent in colleges: staff shortages; weak individual learning plans; and the underuse of information and communication technology (ICT). The teaching of literacy and numeracy was unsatisfactory in half the independent specialist colleges inspected.

³³⁷ A survey by HMI of the responses of schools and colleges to raising achievement for bilingual learners following courses at levels 2 and 3 showed a mixed picture. Some schools and colleges were able to provide targeted support and mentoring to improve language and independent learning skills. Others were simply insufficiently aware of the needs of young people who had attained a certain competence in English, but still lacked the language needed for success at the higher academic levels. Colleges were usually better able to fund specialist support than schools, which had little targeted language support post-16. Where learners moved from one institution to another, either at 16 or 14–16, there was little continuity of language support because of insufficient sharing of information.

³³⁸ As in the past, tensions between the demands of the criminal justice system and the need for continuity in learning often make the provision of education and training for young people in custody a very difficult task. To some extent this is understandable; what is less so is the lack of adequate support when young people leave custody. The inspection of secure learning centres revealed that access to education, training or employment for young people leaving custody, particularly those on detention and training orders, was uncertain, with very little effective joint working between Youth Offending Teams and local colleges.

²⁷ *Success for all: reforming further education and training*, DFES (ISBN 184185851X), 2002.

³³⁹ A survey of girls in prison, conducted jointly by HMI and HM Inspectors of Prisons, illustrated the extent to which education and training post-16 fail to provide a fresh start for a minority of young people whose experience of school has been unsuccessful.²⁸ The quality of provision for the girls was generally inadequate; it failed to provide them with the support needed to start a new life free from crime. At best, a custodial sentence gave them a period of respite and a feeling of safety. The teaching they received was often poor, the curriculum inadequate and the provision of advice and support insufficient. The girls were nevertheless clear that, inadequate though it was, the education they received in prison was better than that which they had experienced in the school system. That perception starkly illustrates the difficulty of the task that post-16 education too often faces.

7 Ofsted publications (2003/04) relevant to post-compulsory education in colleges and other provision

i. *Focused provision 16 to 19: a survey of colleges with sixth form centres* (HMI 2277), 2004

ii. *Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages: a survey of current practice in post-16 and adult provision* (HMI 1367), 2003

iii. *Pathways to parity: a survey of 14–19 vocational provision in Denmark, Netherlands and New South Wales* (HMI 2124), 2004

iv. *The initial training of further education teachers* (HMI 1762), 2003

v. *The responsiveness of colleges to the needs of employers* (HMI 2358), 2004

vi. *Vocational A levels: the first two years* (HMI 2146), 2004

All listed publications are available on www.ofsted.gov.uk

²⁸ *Girls in prison: the education and training of under 18s serving detention and training orders* (ISBN 184473191X), HMIP, 2004.

Teacher training, development and supply

Main findings

- Providers of initial teacher training (ITT) have increased the effectiveness of management and quality assurance, leading to improvements in the quality of training.
- Most primary and secondary courses are well designed and enable the great majority of trainees to meet the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at a good level.
- Primary courses pay good attention to training in the core subjects, but time for training in the foundation subjects and religious education is limited, particularly for trainees on one-year programmes.
- A lack of flexibility in applying the Key Stage 3 Strategy results in a high proportion of satisfactory but unimaginative teaching by secondary trainees, particularly in the core subjects.
- ITT courses focusing specifically on citizenship prepare trainees well to teach the subject. Schools in which trainees are placed benefit from involvement with ITT course tutors.
- Designated Recommending Bodies (DRBs) have demonstrated that they can provide good quality employment-based training. However, half of those inspected were weak in the crucial areas of planning for individual training needs and quality assurance.
- In the first year of the national agreement on workforce reform, most schools have made satisfactory progress in releasing teachers from administrative and clerical tasks, but there is still much to do if the reform is to have a significant effect on teaching and learning.
- Schools are increasingly creative in the ways in which they deploy teaching assistants.
- Schools that experience difficulties in recruiting suitable teachers are becoming increasingly innovative in their approaches to recruitment and reducing the use of supply teachers.
- Mandatory qualification courses for specialist teachers of pupils with hearing, visual or multi-sensory impairment contribute to improving the academic achievement of such pupils and their mobility, communication and life skills.



Overview

³⁴⁰ Table 4 shows the numbers of teacher training providers and trainees. Mainstream ITT courses include those based on higher education institution (HEI) providers and school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) partnerships. DRBs are partnerships of schools, LEAs, ITT providers and providers of other educational services that deliver the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP).

Providers		Trainees	Primary	Secondary
Mainstream primary	85	Undergraduate	6,665	1,266
Mainstream secondary	98	Postgraduate	9,201	17,227
DRBs	92	GTP	1,870	3,312

Initial teacher training

³⁴¹ In 2003/04, 35 primary ITT courses and 60 secondary courses were inspected; 67 were partnerships based on HEIs and 28 were SCITT partnerships.

³⁴² About three quarters of partnerships are managed well or very well, an improved picture since last year. More effective management and quality assurance have improved the quality of training.

³⁴³ Procedures and practices for recruiting trainees are strong, including selection procedures and provision of clear information to applicants. Increasingly, school staff are involved in interviewing candidates, particularly school-based providers. Many providers set pre-course tasks for successful candidates, such as reading about teaching particular subjects. Some course leaders ensure a smooth start to their course by tailoring these tasks carefully to meet trainees' individual needs, but many providers could improve this.

³⁴⁴ The number of trainees is higher than last year and providers generally recruit close to their target in most subjects. Trainees are well qualified and have suitable personal qualities.

³⁴⁵ Providers are committed to equal opportunities and racial equality, reflected in their efforts and results in recruitment from minority ethnic groups. There has been a significant increase in the number of such trainees, but the picture is uneven and their recruitment is more successful in some subjects than others. Unfortunately, few providers investigate the reasons for the variations across subjects.

³⁴⁶ The management and training in many secondary SCITT programmes have improved, although primary SCITTs are not as effective overall as HEI-based providers. The weakest SCITTs often use staff who are not well qualified or have limited experience of ITT to lead the subject training. Consortia that use HEIs for subject training are usually more successful.

³⁴⁷ School staff make an essential and positive contribution to training. They give it considerably more time than the funding allows because of the school's commitment to teacher training and the benefits for teachers' professional development. Most mentors understand their role clearly, are well suited to it and are supported effectively by providers. Their work is most effective when a clear framework links school-based training to central work. New providers rarely appreciate the value of this kind of framework; it explains some of the difficulties they encounter initially in ensuring that training is coherent.

³⁴⁸ **Quality assurance** of courses has improved. The great majority of providers monitor and evaluate their training effectively and act quickly when problems are identified. The assessment of trainees is moderated satisfactorily, although procedures in a minority of providers are not robust enough. Worryingly, about a third of the courses that were only adequate at their last inspection have not improved because of shortcomings in quality assurance, namely:

- data are not analysed to identify trends and tackle weaknesses
- tutors' teaching is not observed by course leaders
- good practice is not shared to enhance the work of trainers who need support.

³⁴⁹ Most courses are well designed to enable trainees to meet the standards for QTS at a good level.³⁰ Trainees have secure subject knowledge, plan effectively and most manage their classes well. However, a significant number of trainees lack confidence in teaching and assessing pupils for whom English is an additional language. Some trainees' expectations of higher-attaining pupils are not high enough and few secondary trainees are prepared well to teach vocational courses.

³⁵⁰ **Primary courses** place a strong emphasis on teaching the core subjects. Trainees' knowledge of the Primary National Strategy and of wider cross-curricular issues is developed effectively, but one-year postgraduate courses are not able to give enough time to training to teach the foundation subjects and religious education. Trainees need to recognise this in their induction year.

²⁹ Trainee Number Census, TTA.

³⁰ Standards are set out in *Qualifying to teach – professional standards for qualified teacher status and requirements for initial teacher training*, DfES/TTA, 2003.

³⁵¹ **Mathematics** training programmes are structured well and training is very good in nearly one third of providers. The effective linking between mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is a strength. In **English** the quality of training is less consistent. It is well sequenced in most courses, with a balance between training to teach speaking, listening, reading and writing. But it is unsatisfactory in a minority of providers because of weak links between central and school-based training. Centre-based training in **science** is well planned and has a clear emphasis on investigation, but trainees do not always have sufficient opportunities to consolidate their learning during their school placement. Trainers make very good use of ICT resources and inspire trainees to use ICT to support teaching and learning.

³⁵² The number of early years courses has increased, although providers have difficulties in finding sufficient nursery placements for trainees. Restructuring courses to meet the requirements of *Qualifying to teach* has also put pressure on providers to find sufficient Key Stage 1 placements. This has led, however, to some innovative practice, such as increasing the amount of paired teaching.

³⁵³ **Secondary teacher training** has improved in a number of areas. Trainees are now better prepared to use ICT in their teaching. In 11–18 courses, opportunities for trainees to teach and assess post-16 students have also improved, although a significant number of providers, recognising the difficulties of offering post-16 experience to all trainees, have redesignated their courses 11–16. This situation needs to be monitored carefully to ensure that sufficient new teachers are trained to teach post-16.

³⁵⁴ Most courses are now designed better to meet trainees' individual needs and recognise their prior experience. School-centred schemes are better than others at this. Practice remains variable and it is rare to find specific individual training plans on mainstream courses.

³⁵⁵ The Key Stage 3 Strategy receives appropriate attention and has helped to improve aspects of trainees' teaching, for example, planning in subjects such as ICT. In contrast to primary training, where trainees' teaching has improved because of increasingly flexible approaches to the literacy and numeracy strategies, there is a tendency towards safe, unimaginative teaching, particularly in the core subjects. This is partly because trainees use the structure and content of the Strategy too rigidly. Almost always, they follow the practice of their placement schools and do not always have opportunities to apply the approaches promoted in their central training.

³⁵⁶ In 2004 Ofsted completed the first year of a three-year programme of inspections of **DRBs**. DRBs recruit trainees, match them with schools, and design and deliver individual training programmes. DRBs recommend successful trainees

for QTS. Most trainees achieve the QTS standards, about half at a good level. The GTP is helping recruitment in secondary shortage subjects and attracts trainees from under-represented minority ethnic groups.

³⁵⁷ The teaching of most GTP trainees is at least satisfactory by the end of their training, but there are fewer examples of very good teaching and more of unsatisfactory teaching than would be expected from trainees following more conventional training routes. This is because training is not always matched well enough to trainees' needs and the systems for monitoring and evaluating training are not secure in almost half of the DRBs.

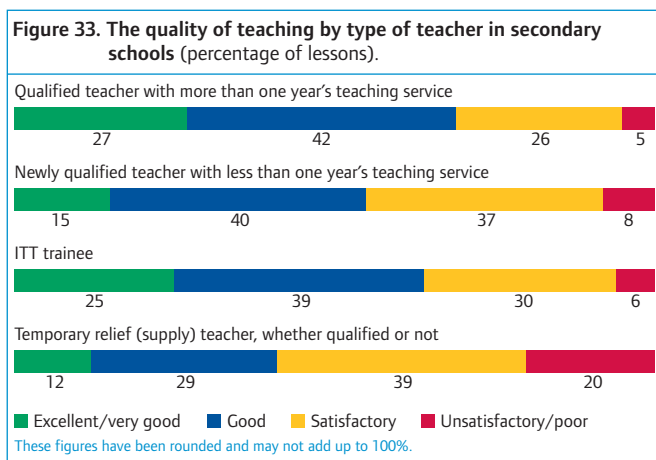
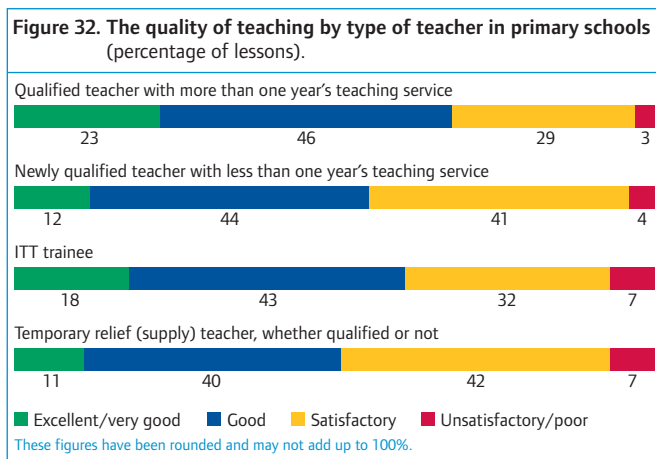
Supply and deployment of teaching and support staff

³⁵⁸ The management of the recruitment, retention, deployment and workload of staff is good or better in two thirds of primary and secondary schools. It is unsatisfactory in only a very small minority of schools.

³⁵⁹ Many schools are able to recruit suitable teachers and support staff without too many problems, and turnover is relatively low. However, in London, the South East and in high-cost housing areas schools still experience difficulties, as do schools in challenging circumstances. Schools are increasingly innovative about recruiting in these areas, with improved support from LEAs (see p80). Some schools aim to meet the immediate needs of prospective teachers, for example, by providing accommodation, additional remuneration or a nursery place for their children. Others aim to meet longer term needs by offering incentives linked to teachers' roles and responsibilities or specific professional development.

³⁶⁰ Despite such incentives, management posts are often hard to fill. Schools requiring special measures often have difficulty in recruiting good quality senior staff. Shortages of specialist teachers persist in particular subjects, especially mathematics.

³⁶¹ Schools with staffing difficulties often make significant use of supply teachers. In general, supply teachers lack sufficient specialist subject knowledge, adequate classroom and behaviour management skills, and the ability to plan and teach stimulating lessons; along with newly qualified teachers they tend to teach the smallest proportion of good or better lessons (see Figures 32 and 33). However, many of the difficulties that supply teachers experience are exacerbated by schools' poor management of them. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons taught by supply teachers in secondary schools is almost three times that in primary schools. In the London area, many schools depend on overseas teachers, some of whom do not have QTS in England.



³⁶² Many schools are adopting strategies to reduce their reliance on daily or weekly supply teachers. Some appoint additional teachers to provide cover for absence: these teachers are used to support permanent staff at other times. Others use support staff to coordinate and supervise the work planned by teachers.

³⁶³ The national agreement on workforce reform has led to changes in the ways that support staff are used. There is a small but increasing use of teaching assistants to teach groups in the absence of regular staff. Few teaching assistants teach whole classes; in the main, they work with groups of five pupils or fewer. In each phase and type of school, the quality of their work is generally good.

Themes

³⁶⁴ The following section reports on three relatively new areas of teacher training and deployment that have been inspected for the first time:

- the quality and standards in the work of DRBs, which are responsible for the [GTP](#)
- the impact of the national agreement on workforce reform – [remodelling the workforce](#) – introduced in January 2003
- the quality of [training to teach citizenship](#) – in response to citizenship becoming a statutory part of the curriculum in secondary schools in 2002.

In addition, although [mandatory qualifications for specialist teachers of pupils with sensory impairment](#) have been required for some time, inspection evidence about the training leading to them has not been available until now.

Employment-based teacher training: the Graduate Teacher Programme

Key points

- The GTP attracts good quality applicants and is helping to recruit teachers for shortage subjects in secondary schools, as well as trainees from groups under-represented in the profession.
- Although almost all GTP trainees achieve QTS, a smaller proportion teach very well compared with trainees on conventional training routes. The proportion whose teaching is satisfactory or good is similar to that of trainees on conventional routes.
- Only half of DRBs tailor their training effectively to the individual needs of trainees.
- Although DRBs are based on strong partnerships, almost half of them do not have secure quality assurance systems.

³⁶⁵ In September 2003 Ofsted began a three-year programme of inspections of DRBs. These bodies are responsible for the GTP where schools employ teachers who are not yet qualified and train them 'on the job'. The programme has expanded rapidly and this is forecast to continue. There were 92 DRBs in 2003/04; 46 were inspected, all in their second year of operation.

366 DRBs vary considerably in size and experience in training teachers. As well as mainstream ITT providers, they include LEAs, schools and providers of other education services. The quality of provision is unrelated to the size or type of organisation. Some LEA- and school-led DRBs are very successful, especially when energised by the need to provide teachers in the local area. Others have built productively on established ITT courses. However, a few, experienced in providing ITT, have not appreciated the extent to which they need to adapt their current training to provide the flexibility that employment-based routes require.

367 The GTP scheme attracts good quality candidates and contributes significantly to recruiting teachers for shortage subjects in secondary schools and from under-represented groups. Trainees come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring useful experience from their previous careers to teaching.

368 Almost all trainees achieve the QTS standards and the overall quality of the teaching and subject knowledge of about half of them is good by the end of their training. Their main strengths are their professionalism, their classroom organisation and management, and their use of ICT. They are committed strongly to social and educational inclusion and raising pupils' achievement. Most have secure knowledge of the national strategies, although the specialist subject knowledge of a few secondary phase trainees is not good enough for them to teach effectively across two key stages. The most common weaknesses in teaching are a lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils, poor evaluation of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, and insufficient use of assessment to plan lessons.

369 The proportions of GTP trainees whose teaching towards the end of training was satisfactory or good were broadly similar to those of trainees on mainstream courses at the same point. Smaller proportions of GTP trainees taught very good lessons and more teaching was unsatisfactory. A few trainees were poor at planning lessons and assessing pupils because training fails to compensate for weak practice in school.

370 Most ITT coordinators and mentors in schools work hard to support GTP trainees and to train them effectively to meet the QTS standards. However, a minority do not recognise fully that they may need to look beyond their own school to prepare trainees thoroughly to teach across the full age and ability range for which they are seeking qualification. Consequently, the second school placement is not always used profitably.

371 Although the success of the GTP scheme depends on a thorough analysis of trainees' individual needs, only half of the DRBs tailor their training effectively to take account of prior learning and tackle individual needs. Training is significantly weaker when trainees do not have a clear professional development plan. While most trainees receive a training salary, a few are not supernumerary to a school's staffing and their teaching timetable does not allow them sufficient time for training.

372 Most DRBs are based on strong partnerships with schools; teachers are actively involved on management committees and the DRB supports schools effectively. Some partnerships are weak and a large minority of mentors, especially in primary schools, are inadequately trained for their role in the GTP scheme.

373 One of the principal reasons for establishing DRBs was to improve the quality assurance of the GTP scheme. Managers of DRBs who have a clear understanding of what makes good training have a positive impact on quality. However, quality assurance in DRBs is weaker than that in other ITT routes and almost half of them do not have secure systems to monitor and evaluate provision. Procedures to moderate the assessment of trainees need strengthening in a large minority of DRBs.

374 Many staff working within the GTP programme do not understand the respective roles of DRBs and schools in quality assurance. Schools do not understand that the DRB is responsible for checking that they are capable of providing a suitable training programme and DRBs do not give schools feedback on the quality of their training. Senior managers in schools do not always recognise the importance of monitoring their own GTP provision. While most DRBs listen to the views of trainees and schools, they do not involve schools sufficiently in evaluating the training, or use evaluations effectively to improve provision.

Remodelling the school workforce

Key points

- In the first year of the national agreement, schools focused on releasing teachers from routine administrative and clerical tasks.
- Despite the progress made, staff still feel overworked and headteachers feel that their own workload has increased.
- Support staff make a significant contribution to raising standards.
- Staff in schools do not yet recognise fully that the agreement aims to raise standards as well as reduce workload.

375 The national agreement on workforce reform was signed in January 2003 and the first phase of changes came into force in September 2003. The first year of implementation aimed to reduce teachers' workload and raise educational standards by transferring administrative responsibilities from teachers to other professionals. It also sought to ensure a reasonable work/life balance for staff and that staff with management responsibilities had time for this work. An overarching aim is to enhance the status of the profession to improve recruitment and retention.

376 An evaluation by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) of the implementation of the agreement in 2003/04 showed that most schools had made satisfactory progress in releasing teachers from clerical tasks, but little progress with the other first-phase objectives (see publication vii, p76).

377 The majority of secondary and special schools had already begun to remodel their workforce before the agreement was signed, although primary and middle schools had made less progress. Most schools employed teaching assistants to provide learning support; additionally, secondary schools increased their administrative staffing.

378 By September 2003 schools were at very different stages of readiness to implement the first phase of the agreement. Partly, this was because of differences in funding. Some schools benefited from specific grants for national initiatives and used them to employ support staff, for example, as learning mentors or attendance officers. On the other hand, some schools, notably those with falling rolls, faced budget difficulties which they resolved, in extreme cases, by reducing staff. Differences in readiness also reflected the varying perceptions of headteachers. While some had anticipated the reform and had been gradually modernising the staff structure over a number of years, others had not prepared so well.

379 While most clerical and routine tasks have been successfully taken away from teachers, it has proved difficult to transfer a few others. This is partly because teachers choose to retain responsibility for them. Primary teachers, for example, often display pupils' work themselves; secondary teachers are reluctant to give up responsibilities such as examination administration when they have been given responsibility allowances to take on these tasks. Further, many headteachers are unconvinced that certain tasks, such as organising supply cover, can be carried out effectively by anyone other than a teacher.

380 Despite the progress with transferring administrative tasks, staff still feel overworked. Although schools use information technology to reduce their workload, for example to generate reports and letters, its potential is far from being fully realised. Most have made little progress in reducing bureaucracy and providing time for teachers with management responsibilities. Headteachers perceive that their workload has increased since the national agreement; many primary headteachers, for example, have taken on additional administrative tasks themselves or increased the amount they teach. Although headteachers try to shelter teachers from external bureaucracy, many make other, sometimes unnecessary, demands.

381 The workload of support staff has increased. Although most have welcomed additional responsibilities, in a minority of schools the changes have not been managed well, and contracts and job descriptions have not been updated.

382 Support staff contribute significantly to raising standards. Where they work on a clearly defined area of school improvement, they are often very effective. In many schools, for example, they have helped to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance. Those who provide support in the classroom, particularly when the school identifies and uses their expertise, contribute to better teaching and learning, for instance, by helping the teacher to provide work matched to pupils' different needs. However, the number of support staff and their deployment vary considerably, both in and between schools.

383 Although the first year of the reform has been marked by clear successes, some significant challenges lie ahead. School staff do not yet recognise that the workforce reform agreement aims to raise standards as well as to reduce workload. Most schools do not integrate their plans for implementing the national agreement with their improvement plans and few evaluate the impact of their restructuring on workload or standards. Managers of schools with tight budgets fear that some requirements in the agreement, such as providing time for planning, preparation and assessment, will prove difficult without better funding or more radical changes to staffing.

Training to teach citizenship

Key points

- Courses which specialise in the teaching of citizenship alone, as opposed to those which combine it with other subjects, prepare trainees well.
- Trainees show a high level of commitment to the subject.
- Centre-based training is good and occasionally inspirational.
- Citizenship as a subject is still being developed in schools, so trainees' experience of teaching it is often limited.
- Trainees have insufficient opportunities to work with teachers who demonstrate good practice.

384 Citizenship became a statutory part of the National Curriculum in secondary schools in September 2002. ITT courses in the subject were introduced in 2001. In 2003/04 Ofsted inspected five of the sixteen courses: three which provide training in citizenship alone, and two which provide it in combination with another subject.

385 The courses which provide citizenship alone prepare trainees well to meet the challenges of teaching a subject that is often misunderstood or poorly developed in schools. Trainees make a significant contribution to planning and teaching citizenship in the schools in which they are placed. The schools also benefit from their involvement with course tutors and the professional development that they sometimes provide for school staff.

386 The courses are oversubscribed. They recruit well qualified trainees, many with higher degrees, from a wide range of subject specialisms. All trainees show an unusually high level of commitment to teaching the subject and most find suitable posts.

387 Courses providing citizenship alone are designed well and provide a thorough grounding in citizenship education. Those which combine citizenship with another subject, however, do not provide enough subject-specific training. Most tutors are experts in particular aspects of citizenship and have a strong theoretical or research background. Since there is no shared understanding of what trainees need to know in order to teach citizenship effectively, tutors design courses which reflect their own particular perspective. This results in some inconsistency in the design and content of courses.

388 Centre-based training is good and occasionally inspirational. Trainers make good use of visual aids, including ICT, to support their teaching.

389 School-based training is less effective. Because the subject is still being developed in many schools, providers have difficulties in finding sufficient suitable school placements, so trainees' experience of teaching citizenship is limited. Most providers can guarantee trainees only one placement in a school in which citizenship is well developed. In schools where citizenship is not well developed, mentors are not specialists, the school-based training programme lacks a strong subject dimension, and there are insufficient opportunities for trainees to observe teachers who demonstrate good practice in teaching citizenship. This affects trainees' progress towards the QTS standards; although they teach lively lessons with a good balance of independent and collaborative work, they have limited experience of planning for and assessing pupils' progress. However, the developing nature of citizenship as a subject means that trainees benefit from having more opportunities than usual to take on related responsibilities.

Mandatory qualifications for specialist teachers of pupils with sensory impairment

Key points

- Those concerned with teaching pupils with sensory impairment have a high regard for the courses which lead to the mandatory qualifications required.
- The training is designed to have a direct impact on work in schools and on the achievement of pupils.
- Central training is good; workplace training is more variable.
- The courses help to raise pupils' academic achievement, their mobility, communication and life skills.

390 To teach pupils with hearing, visual or multi-sensory impairment, a teacher must hold the relevant mandatory qualification. Since 2001 eight institutions have been approved by the Department for Education and Skills to provide training in one or more of these specialisms. Training is available full time, part time, or on a distance learning basis. Most participants have relevant full time posts and follow an in-service route to the qualification.

391 An HMI evaluation of these courses during 2003/04 found that parents, headteachers, LEAs and organisations concerned with the education of pupils with SEN regard the mandatory qualification highly (see v, p76). It demonstrates that a teacher has met the SEN specialist standards and is proficient in Braille or British Sign Language.

³⁹² The courses are designed well and successfully blend face-to-face training, independent study and placements in a range of contexts which broaden participants' experience. Intensive, well focused training helps participants to develop their expertise, such as identifying pupils' needs and meeting them through a range of effective teaching methods. Training has also improved the teachers' ability to advise, support and train their colleagues. For example, one participant gave advice to teachers of a pupil with multi-sensory impairment on how to match the curriculum to the pupil's needs, modify their teaching and monitor the pupil's achievement. As a result, the pupil made significant, measurable progress. The courses have a positive impact on contributing to the academic achievement of pupils with sensory impairment and their mobility, communication and life skills.

³⁹³ Although the centrally based training is good, the quality of training in the workplace is more variable. Some participants have insufficient support to enable them to apply what they have learned in the central training. Assessment of participants' progress in developing their specialist knowledge and understanding is good. However, assessment in the workplace of the skills defined by the SEN specialist standards is sometimes weak.

Ofsted publications (2003/04) relevant to teacher training, development and supply

- i. Advanced skills teachers – 2002/03 (HMI 1767), 2003*
- ii. An evaluation of the training schools programme (HMI 1769), 2003*
- iii. Flexible postgraduate initial teacher training (HMI 1766), 2003*
- iv. Leadership and management: managing the school workforce (HMI 1764), 2003*
- v. Making a difference – the impact of award-bearing in-service training courses on school improvement (HMI 1765), 2004*
- vi. Primary modern foreign languages in initial teacher training (HMI 1768), 2003*
- vii. Remodelling the school workforce: phase one (HMI 2298), 2004*
- viii. The initial training of further education teachers (HMI 1762), 2003*

All listed publications are available on www.ofsted.gov.uk

Local education authorities

Main findings

- Twenty of the thirty local education authorities (LEAs) inspected have maintained or improved their effectiveness in supporting their schools and pupils.
- Education remains a high priority in local authority planning. At the time of their inspections, a few of the LEAs were already reshaping their services in preparation for the Children Act 2004 so that they will have a coherent structure of support in place for children when it comes into force.
- Planning for education among the LEAs inspected has improved significantly, with greater coherence between the range of school improvement strategies, including those for special educational needs (SEN) and social inclusion, and the corporate plans of the council as a whole.
- In the majority of LEAs, identification of, and intervention in, underperforming schools has improved, but in seven of the LEAs inspected there has been some deterioration.
- The role of the school link adviser remains pivotal to the LEA's strategy for supporting school management, but variation in quality, particularly at secondary level, is a concern.
- Provision for SEN has improved in significantly more of the LEAs inspected than in those in which it has declined. At best, strategies to support SEN are an integral part of their overall programmes of improvement and inclusion.
- In four of the LEAs inspected, support for health, safety, welfare and child protection was unsatisfactory, and in eight, support for race equality was unsatisfactory or worse.
- Although the provision for pupils educated other than at school was good in five of the LEAs inspected, it remains too variable and was unsatisfactory in seven LEAs.



Overview

³⁹⁴ The drive for improvement in public services and in educational standards presses as much on LEAs as it does on schools. Education remains at the heart of local government priorities and initiatives. Nevertheless, some important areas of challenge and for improvement remain in a few of the LEAs inspected if all of them are to be able to meet the demands of *Every child matters* and the Children Act 2004.³¹

³⁹⁵ In 2003/04, 30 LEAs were inspected.³² Though not representative of all LEAs, they include a cross-section of local authority types: two were inspected jointly with the Social Services Inspectorate; eight are, or had been, subject to some form of intervention, ranging from 'light touch' additional challenge and support, through to the Secretary of State's exercising of powers to direct a council to enter into a strategic partnership with an independent organisation.³³

³⁹⁶ The overall effectiveness of 25 of the 30 LEAs was satisfactory or better and the performance of eight was good; however, five were unsatisfactory or worse (see Figure 34). The capacity for progress in two of the five, whose effectiveness was unsatisfactory, was also not good enough, a concern in the light of the major changes required by the Children Act. All the LEAs had been inspected previously. A comparison of their overall effectiveness between previous inspections and those undertaken this year is shown in Figure 35. With a few exceptions, the LEAs inspected this year have maintained or improved their overall effectiveness in supporting their schools and pupils.

Figure 34. Overview of LEAs (percentage of LEAs).

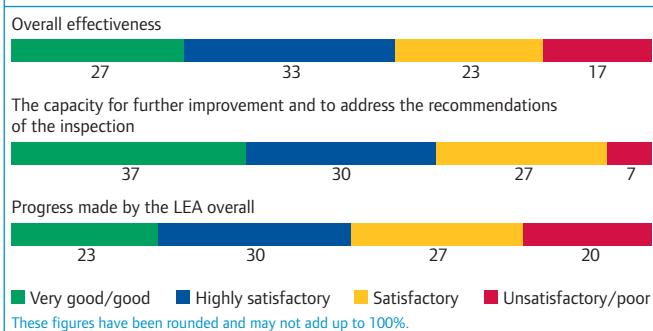
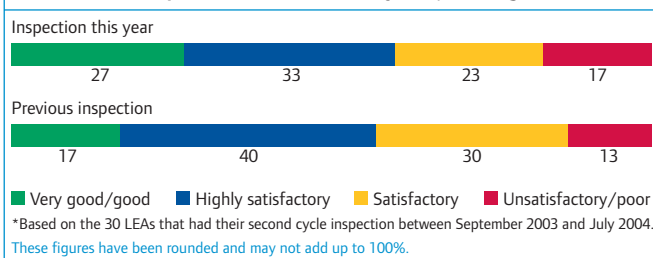


Figure 35. The overall effectiveness of LEAs in their previous inspections and inspections conducted this year (percentage of LEAs).*



³⁹⁷ **Corporate planning and implementation** continue to improve as local government leadership strengthens. Improvements are often built on good partnerships which, in a handful of LEAs, reflect developments envisaged by the Children Act. However, it is telling that, while the core of LEAs' operational role – their work in supporting schools – continues to be a strength overall, and support for SEN has generally improved since their previous inspection, some aspects of inclusion are still poorly served in too many LEAs. The effect that such underperformance can have on vulnerable pupils makes correcting these weaknesses an urgent need in the immediate future.

³⁹⁸ Good planning at a corporate and strategic level sets a sound baseline for effective work to support schools and pupils. The priority given to education in local authority planning is generally high. In over half of the LEAs inspected, the quality of corporate planning was good or very good. The implementation of plans, though not as strong as planning itself, has now become more effective, with stronger and more consistently operated performance management.

³⁹⁹ There has been a marked improvement in the **quality of strategic education plans**. Among the 30 LEAs inspected, the number with good or very good strategies increased from 5 to 17 LEAs. The links between the main education plan, major corporate plans and other education plans such as the school improvement strategy, had improved.

⁴⁰⁰ While **strategic planning for supporting SEN** has improved in most of the LEAs inspected, worryingly, in a minority, it has deteriorated. At best, LEAs have clear principles and strategic objectives backed up by robust action plans that are detailed and convincing. Consultation with schools, support groups and other stakeholders is open and thorough. Spending on SEN is better controlled than it has been. In nearly two thirds of the LEAs, delegation of funding has increased. This has been effective in promoting more inclusive practice in schools. A continuing weakness is the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of the effect of spending on pupils' achievement.

⁴⁰¹ Strong **leadership** and confident **decision-making** are fundamental components of effective LEAs. In the best LEAs, officers and elected members promote a clear vision for improvement and display commitment to achieving it. The leadership provided by senior officers is good or better in 15 of the LEAs inspected, characterised by a clear focus on school improvement and a climate of high expectations that challenges schools to improve. In two LEAs, however, this leadership was unsatisfactory.

⁴⁰² Leadership by elected members has improved; in half it is now good or better. Members are well informed, have a secure knowledge of local issues and are prepared to take hard decisions. Systems for monitoring performance are well

³¹ *Every child matters* (Cm 5860), DFES, 2003; The Children Act 2004, chapter 31.

³² Eight inspections were to the framework introduced in January 2002, 21 were to the new framework (January 2004) and one was a pilot inspection under the new framework.

³³ The Social Services Inspectorate was the predecessor body to the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

developed and procedures for scrutinising policy- and decision-making that promote continuous improvement are effective. Where procedures work best, elected members, as well as officers, regularly monitor the implementation of plans and intervene to deal with shortfalls.

⁴⁰³ Seventeen of the thirty LEAs are better at making decisions than they were; this is characterised by improved consultation, effective delegation, and openness about how and when decisions are made. LEAs now target resources to priorities more effectively, with 10 LEAs judged to be good in this area. These LEAs have clear links between policy objectives and anticipated resources, and consult schools effectively on their budgets. However, large school budget surpluses and deficits continue to be a concern for most LEAs and robust challenge and support from the LEAs have been insufficient in this area.³⁴

⁴⁰⁴ Procedures for monitoring, challenge and intervention in schools continue to improve. In the most effective LEAs, these functions are carried out proportionately in line with the needs of the schools and are kept under review. Schools are fully involved in their refinement and clearly understand the criteria that determine intervention. Sixteen LEAs have improved their identification of and intervention in underperforming schools and twelve have good or very good intervention strategies. Seven have remained static and seven have deteriorated. Where performance has deteriorated or remained unsatisfactory, the LEAs have too many schools in various categories of concern or have failed to reduce their number.

⁴⁰⁵ **Promoting inclusion** is a corporate priority in most local authorities, and a few were reshaping their services at the time of their inspections to develop a coherent structure of support for children and their families as they prepare to respond to the expectations of the Children Act (see also p82). Strategy and planning by the LEA to promote inclusion are highly satisfactory or better in 17 LEAs, but only 5 provide a good or better lead in this area.

Themes

⁴⁰⁶ Key signals of the effectiveness of LEAs are the extent to which they support and promote:

- school improvement
- educational inclusion.

The following section reports on these aspects of LEAs' work. The effectiveness of **partnerships** and characteristics of good practice are also reported on, since there is an increasing need for LEAs to work with other agencies in ensuring effective support across the range of children's services.

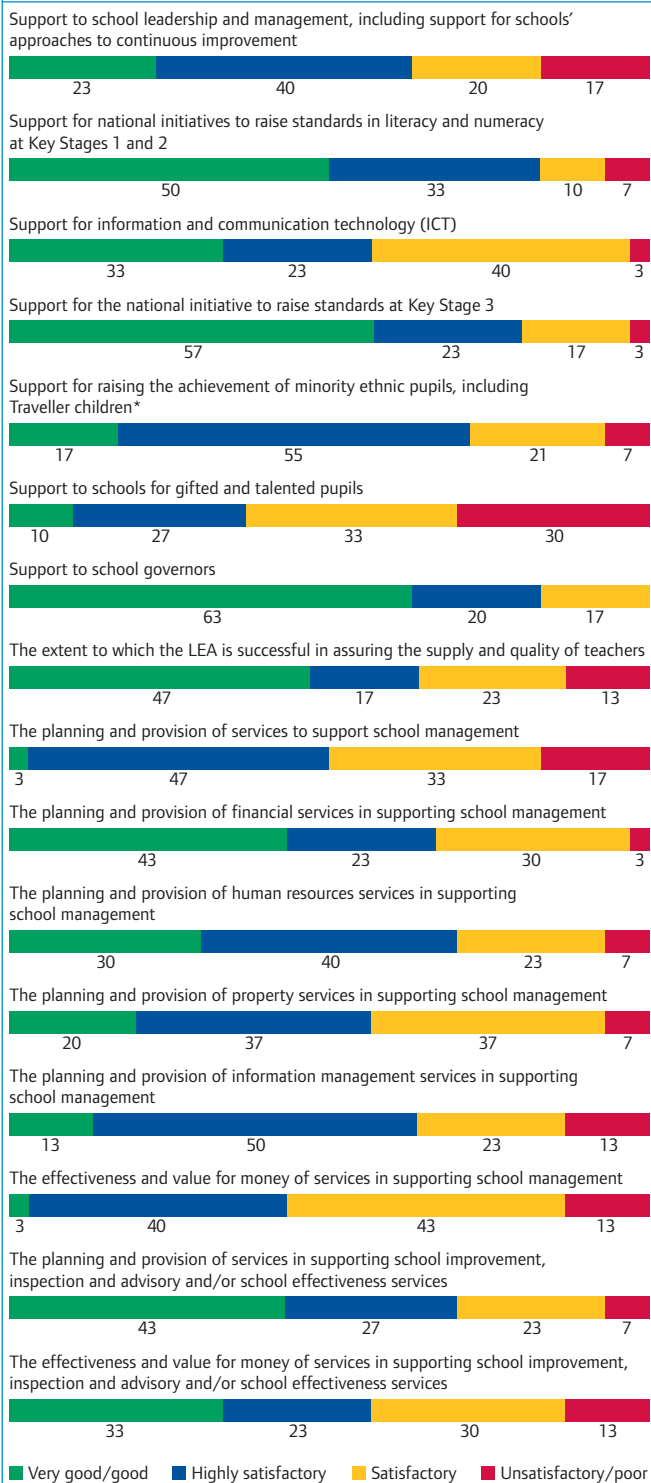
Support to improve education in schools

Key points

- Variability in the quality of advisers is a concern in one in six of the LEAs inspected; the advisory role is pivotal to an LEA's support for schools.
- Support for raising standards in literacy and numeracy is good in half of the authorities inspected.
- In more than half of the LEAs the implementation of and support for the Key Stage 3 Strategy are good or very good; support for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly.
- Focused specialist support and better use of data to target that support have resulted in improving the attainment of minority ethnic pupils that is often in line with or above the national average.
- In eight of the LEAs inspected there were clear reductions in school staff vacancies and better staff retention.
- Provision for gifted and talented pupils remains weak, with too few LEAs linking support for these pupils with their overall strategy for school improvement.

⁴⁰⁷ Support for the leadership and management of schools is an important feature of the LEA's role and covers a broad range of functions. In most of the LEAs inspected, the planning and provision of services to support school improvement are satisfactory or better (see Figure 36). The best services have credibility with schools, achieved through the recruitment of effective advisers and mechanisms such as secondments and brokered support. The better LEAs are building independent networks of schools, enabling them to drive their own improvement. In all of this, the role of link advisers remains pivotal. However, variation in the quality of advisers and their capacity to offer the level of challenge required by schools are, in a few LEAs, a concern, particularly at secondary level.

³⁴ *Education funding – the impact and effectiveness of measures to stabilise school funding* (LAR 3234), Audit Commission, 2004.

Figure 36. LEAs' support for schools (percentage of LEAs).

*Based on the 29 LEAs where this aspect was inspected.

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

⁴⁰⁸ LEAs' support for raising standards in literacy and numeracy is good or very good in half of LEAs inspected, despite most having failed to meet their Key Stage 2 targets in 2003 – a consequence of the high level at which targets were set, rather than of poor LEA support to schools. Success is particularly evident in weaker schools, which receive more intensive support and where results have improved faster. The actions of good LEAs include accurate identification of schools' needs and the careful targeting of support to meet them, for example to raise boys' attainment.

⁴⁰⁹ LEAs' support for the Key Stage 3 Strategy is much better in the LEAs inspected in 2003/04 than in those inspected in the previous year. The work of effective consultants with high credibility in schools has improved the quality of teaching and learning and raised the expectations of teachers. Support for ICT has improved significantly and all but one of the LEAs inspected give at least satisfactory support.

⁴¹⁰ Support for minority ethnic pupils, including Traveller children, continues to improve: 27 of the LEAs inspected are providing at least a satisfactory level of support and in 5 it is good or better. Good practice is characterised by focused specialist support that uses robust pupil-level data to help target particular learning needs and often results in attainment in line with or above the national average. While the best provision for Traveller children shows improving trends in attendance and attainment across all key stages, poor attendance remains a concern (see publication ii, p83).

⁴¹¹ LEAs' support for gifted and talented pupils continues to be weak, with unsatisfactory provision in nine of the LEAs and little good practice. About half of the LEAs do not have strategies spanning all their schools. Although many LEAs provide a range of enrichment activities, too few incorporate support for these pupils into their school improvement strategy.

⁴¹² LEAs' activity to assure the supply and quality of teachers is improving: almost half of the LEAs are providing good or better support, a greater proportion than last year. In almost a third of LEAs, school staff vacancies have reduced and retention has improved. In London, however, the improvement is less marked and schools in challenging circumstances continue to have recruitment difficulties. Key elements of successful support for schools include comprehensive development programmes for staff at different stages in their careers and close collaboration with higher education institutions, schools and independent agencies in providing training. A recurring weakness is ineffective data analysis to predict trends and to target support.

413 More LEAs are providing good or better support to governing bodies. At best, LEAs evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of governing bodies, enabling rapid action to be taken to redress weaknesses where necessary. An interesting development in a small number of LEAs has been self-evaluation procedures for governing bodies, running in parallel with schools' procedures.

414 The planning for school places is improving. It was at least satisfactory in all the LEAs inspected and good in over a third. In most LEAs the Admissions Forum is more effective, particularly in securing agreement from multiple admissions authorities. Increasingly, admissions criteria prioritise vulnerable children, including those with SEN and looked after children. However, despite some good practice, the readmission of excluded pupils and the management of casual admissions remain difficult for some authorities.

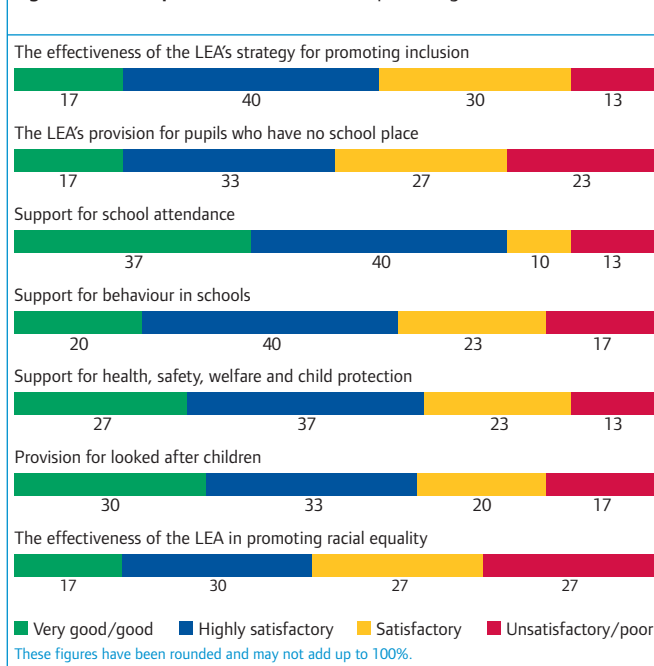
Promoting educational inclusion

Key points

- Clarity about the role of special schools in supporting inclusion is developing, but their expertise is being used only in a handful of LEAs.
- In over half of the LEAs inspected, the number of pupils permanently excluded from schools has fallen, dramatically so in eight authorities.
- Provision for pupils out of school remains variable. In five LEAs it is good or very good, but in seven it is unsatisfactory.
- Promotion of race equality is unsatisfactory or worse in eight of the thirty LEAs inspected, a slightly worse picture than last year.

415 The need for LEAs to promote inclusion effectively has been given further impetus by the Children Act. Good LEAs see inclusion as fundamentally linked to school improvement, so that potentially disengaged pupils can be brought into a culture of effort and achievement. LEAs that are good at promoting inclusion, as a minimum, have made effective provision for many of the key groups of vulnerable young people. Figure 37 shows the quality of support for inclusion offered by the LEAs inspected in 2003/04.

Figure 37. LEAs' promotion of inclusion (percentage of LEAs).



416 Good practice is characterised by an emphasis on partnership and coherent planning that ensures a continuum of provision to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families. Such planning is informed by effective consultation with young people and their parents, and a strong emphasis on early intervention, prevention and tackling the underperformance of vulnerable groups. Poor practice results in gaps in the support and provision for vulnerable groups such as asylum-seekers and children looked after by the council.

417 Provision for SEN has improved in significantly more of the LEAs inspected than in those in which it has declined. At best, strategies to support SEN are an integral part of their overall programmes of improvement and inclusion. The procedures to meet statutory requirements in respect of SEN are at least satisfactory in all but two LEAs and have improved in fifteen. In 20 LEAs, the criteria for referral and making assessments are clear and well understood. However, the quality of statements is good in only a minority of LEAs; weaknesses include lack of precision in objectives.

418 Since their previous inspection, most LEAs have improved the support for SEN in mainstream schools. Support for SEN coordinators is often good. In over half of LEAs, emphasis is being given to supporting schools' self-evaluation, with a focus on monitoring the progress of individual pupils. Clarity about the role of special schools in supporting inclusion is developing, but their expertise is being used only in a handful of LEAs.

⁴¹⁹ Measures to improve attendance and behaviour in schools provide a foundation for pupils' engagement with education: 23 LEAs provide highly satisfactory or better support for attendance and the performance of 11 is good or very good. This is characterised by the use of their legal powers, including prosecution of parents for pupils' non-attendance. Many LEAs collaborate closely with the police and Youth Offending Teams in carrying out truancy patrols. Poor coordination in underperforming LEAs is hampering support for attendance.

⁴²⁰ Support for behaviour has improved in 11 of the LEAs inspected, and in 18 it is highly satisfactory or better – a more positive picture than in 2002/03. The number of pupils permanently excluded from school has fallen in half of the LEAs inspected. Good practice is characterised by monitoring of the main causes of exclusion and use of that information to target multi-agency support for specific schools, vulnerable groups and individual pupils.

⁴²¹ Some young people attending alternative centres of education, for reasons of disaffection or exclusion, are frequently positive about the academic, social and emotional support they receive (see i, p83). While half of LEAs inspected made highly satisfactory or better provision for pupils educated other than at school, the picture remains variable, with unsatisfactory provision for these pupils in seven LEAs. Five of the LEAs inspected failed to meet the requirement to provide permanently excluded pupils with 25 hours per week of curriculum provision.

⁴²² Good practice is typified by effective multi-agency working: for example, the involvement of other professions in referral panels often leads to better assessment of pupils' needs and successful placements. Generally, LEAs' analysis of data is improving, albeit not yet to the extent of focusing actions for improvement clearly enough. Many schools and LEAs are not tracking pupils and do not have a comprehensive view of their whereabouts, achievements or destinations. It remains the case that the safety net that should catch children and young people who drop out of education is not sufficiently robust. The disadvantages already being experienced by pupils out of school are made more complex by gaps in the very systems designed to help, protect and support them.

⁴²³ Although most LEAs' support for health, safety, welfare and child protection is at least satisfactory, worryingly, four of those inspected fail to provide satisfactory support. Work to redress such shortcomings as failing to meet statutory duties or provide risk assessment of security on school sites must be undertaken as a priority. Good practice includes high quality training and reliable tracking of pupils.

⁴²⁴ LEA work to support one potentially vulnerable group – looked after children – is at least satisfactory in 25 LEAs, but is unsatisfactory in 5. Good practice includes the development of reliable data and sharing of them across education and social services. The most noticeable success has been when these data have led to challenging targets for improvement in attainment and attendance, and work to locate foster placements close to the home authority. Successful LEAs regularly report on the progress of this group of pupils to members, who take their corporate parenting seriously, as demonstrated, for example, by their involvement in multi-agency award schemes that highlight the achievement of individual pupils.

⁴²⁵ Although 22 LEAs provide satisfactory or better support in promoting race equality, provision is unsatisfactory in 8, a slightly worse picture than in 2002/03. Good practice includes a corporate emphasis on promoting race equality and combating racism with clear priorities and sharing of action with local community groups. Race-related incidents are confidently identified and reported. The weakest performing LEAs have been too slow to respond to the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Partnerships

Key points

- The quality and effectiveness of LEAs' partnership work continue to strengthen.
- Strategic and operational infrastructures are being developed, particularly between education, health and social services, that better meet the needs of children, young people and families, and prefigure the requirements of the Children Act.

⁴²⁶ The Children Act, among other things, places a duty on each local authority to make arrangements to promote cooperation with its partners, including the police authority, local probation board, Youth Offending Teams, the Strategic Health Authority, Primary Care Trust and others.

⁴²⁷ The emphasis on partnership and cooperation between agencies is designed to deliver improvements both in education and in children's well-being. So it is welcome to see that LEAs' partnership work continues to improve; more than a third have improved since their last inspection and a similar proportion are now good or better. As partnerships become more fundamental to the work of an effective LEA, collaboration with major external agencies and other council directorates illustrates a clear commitment to cross-cutting and multi-agency approaches in the delivery of corporate priorities.

428 At the time they were inspected, seven local authorities were well placed to be able to respond effectively to the requirements of the Children Act. Significant progress had been made by these authorities in bringing together the main stakeholders to create strategic and workable infrastructures. Importantly, links between education, health and social services have been strengthened in moves toward integrated services for children and young people and Children's Trusts. Traditional divisions are breaking down to facilitate joint planning, service delivery and pooling of budgets, with some good use of jointly funded posts.

429 These strategic and operational developments, attuned both to local needs and the children's services agenda, represent practice that other local authorities could learn from in approaching the establishment of their own children's services department. Effective practice is typified by:

- corporate prioritisation, with strong advocacy from elected members
- a clear vision and comprehensive strategy, emanating from a secure and shared understanding of the education-care continuum, coupled with systematic monitoring, review and evaluation of plans
- openness to imaginative and flexible service configurations to promote cross-service working, multi-agency approaches and partnership with the local community
- securing and maintaining the confidence of schools.

Ofsted publications (2003/04) relevant to local education authorities

- i. *Out of school: a survey of the educational provision for pupils not in school* (HMI 2294), 2004
- ii. *Provision and support for Traveller pupils* (HMI 455), 2003
- iii. *School funding: strategies adopted by local education authorities* (HMI 1629), 2003
- iv. *Special educational needs in the mainstream – LEA policy and support services* (HMI 556), 2003

All listed publications are available on www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex A. Inspection evidence

Ofsted inspections

Table 5. Inspection frameworks.

Type of inspection	Framework	Effective since	Legislation
Maintained schools	Inspecting schools	September 2003	Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996
Independent schools	Inspecting independent schools	September 2003	Section 163 of the Education Act 2002
Post-compulsory education and training	Common inspection framework	February 2001	Sections 60–64 and 69–71 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000
Area inspections	Area inspection framework	September 2003	Section 65 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 as amended by the Education Act 2002
Connexions Partnerships	Connexions Partnerships A Framework for Inspection	April 2002	The Learning and Skills Act 2000 section 118 (1)
Local authority youth services	Local authority youth services A Framework for Inspection	September 2004	Section 38 of the Education Act 1997 and section 60(1)(c) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000
Local education authorities	Framework for the inspection of local education authorities	January 2004	Sections 38–41 of the Education Act 1997
Initial teacher training	Framework for the inspection of initial teacher training	June 2004	Section 18A of the Education Act 1994 as inserted by the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998
Initial training of further education teachers	Framework for the inspection of initial training of further education teachers (consultation document)	March 2004	Section 60(1)(d) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 in conjunction with the Post-16 Education and Training Inspection Regulations 2001
Childcare	Framework for the regulation of childminding and day care	July 2001	Part XA of the Children Act 1989 as inserted by Section 79 of the Care Standards Act 2000
Nursery education and day-care providers	Framework for inspecting nursery education	April 2002	Section 122 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Ofsted undertakes a wide range of statutory inspections of education and care. Each type is governed by a framework which sets out what is inspected and how inspections are carried out and reported. The frameworks include the quality standards related to the core work of the institutions, organisations or areas and are aligned with other national standards and criteria.

Table 5 lists the frameworks that are in current use, relating to different types of inspections.

Inspection evidence

Inspections of maintained schools

The numbers of inspectors on roll at 31 August 2004 are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Numbers of inspectors.

Registered inspectors	755
Team inspectors	4,943 ³⁵
Lay inspectors	338

Inspectors who did not complete training on the framework for inspection introduced in 2003 were removed from the roll. In addition, between September 2003 and August 2004, one inspector was deregistered.

The number of section 10 inspections carried out in 2003/04 is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Numbers of inspections.

Primary schools	3,520
Nursery schools	45
Secondary schools without sixth forms	324
Secondary schools with sixth forms	303
Special schools	196
Pupil referral units	64

A further 50 inspections were carried out by HMI as pilot inspections for the new arrangements to be introduced in September 2005, subject to legislation.

³⁵ Includes registered inspectors.

The practice of weighting inspection data to provide a balanced evidence base has been used again this year. However, care should be taken when comparing inspection judgements in 2003/04 with those in 2002/03 because of differences in the frameworks for inspection and the guidance offered to inspectors.

Childcare inspections

Table 8. Numbers of childcare inspections.

Type of inspection	Numbers
Inspections of funded nursery education	8,659
Inspections under the Children Act	48,490
Registrations of childcare providers	988

Other inspections

Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) inspected 82 general further education, tertiary and specialist colleges and 24 sixth form colleges.

Ofsted inspected 96 independent schools not affiliated to the Independent Schools Council.

In addition, HMI undertook a wide range of other types of inspection, including surveys. The extent of these inspections is indicated in the relevant sections of this report and in published reports. Reports published by Ofsted are listed in a bibliography at the end of each chapter.

Expressing proportions in the text of the Annual Report

In this report, proportions are expressed in a number of ways such as percentages, common fractions and general descriptions such as 'majority', 'minority' or 'most'. Where general descriptions are used they relate broadly to percentages as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Expressions of proportions in words.

Proportion	Description
97–100%	Vast/overwhelming majority or almost all
80–96%	Very large majority, most
65–79%	Large majority
51–64%	Majority
35–49%	Minority
20–34%	Small minority
4–19%	Very small minority, few
0–3%	Almost no/very few

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Annex B. Statistical summary

The following tables summarise the main inspection judgements for schools and colleges. For school inspections, the judgements are those made in section 10 inspections. Comparative data for 2002/03 are not included because of changes in the framework for inspection from September 2003. Further statistical analyses, including judgements about subjects in schools and curriculum areas in colleges, are included on the CD-ROM which is in the Summary accompanying this report. The CD-ROM also includes a small number of charts showing trends over time.

Data are provided for:

- primary schools
- secondary schools
- sixth forms in secondary schools
- special schools
- colleges.

Contents of the CD-ROM

The CD-ROM contains:

- *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2003/04*
- the Summary of the report, including the list of particularly successful schools and colleges
- school subject reports
- college curriculum area reports
- tables of inspection judgements on schools, colleges and individual subjects
- summary charts of inspection judgements.

Primary schools

Aspects of the school

Percentage of schools

		Excellent/ very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory/ poor
The effectiveness of the school					
Overall effectiveness of the school	School	19	48	28	5
Inclusion	School	46	39	13	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its previous inspection	School	17	45	30	8
Value for money provided by the school	School	17	46	31	6
Parents' satisfaction with the school	School	46	42	10	2
Pupils' satisfaction with the school	School	50	43	7	0

The standards achieved by pupils

Pupils' achievement	Foundation Stage	13	65	20	2
	Key Stage 1	10	55	29	5
	Key Stage 2	12	54	28	6
	School	13	55	27	5
Achievement of pupils with SEN	Foundation Stage	15	68	16	1
	Key Stage 1	15	65	18	2
	Key Stage 2	15	64	18	3
	School	17	64	17	2
Achievement of pupils with EAL	Foundation Stage	15	65	18	2
	Key Stage 1	11	60	26	3
	Key Stage 2	11	57	27	4
	School	14	57	25	4
Achievement of gifted and talented pupils	Key Stage 1	10	48	35	7
	Key Stage 2	13	47	32	8
	School	14	47	32	7

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Ethos	School	45	46	8	1
Attendance	School	22	24	29	25
Punctuality	School	20	37	34	9
Pupils' attitudes	Foundation Stage	50	45	5	0
	Key Stage 1	45	47	7	1
	Key Stage 2	47	44	8	1
	School	48	45	7	1
Behaviour, including exclusions	Foundation Stage	49	44	7	0
	Key Stage 1	42	49	8	1
	Key Stage 2	42	46	10	2
	School	43	47	8	1
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	School	38	51	10	1

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Primary schools (continued)

Aspects of the school		Percentage of schools			
		Excellent/ very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory/ poor
The quality of education provided by the school					
Quality of education	School	15	54	27	3
Teaching	Foundation Stage	22	58	18	2
	Key Stage 1	12	58	27	3
	Key Stage 2	12	59	25	4
	School	12	60	25	3
Learning	Foundation Stage	22	58	18	2
	Key Stage 1	11	58	28	3
	Key Stage 2	12	58	26	4
	School	12	59	25	4
Assessment	Foundation Stage	25	47	24	4
	Key Stage 1	13	36	37	13
	Key Stage 2	12	35	38	16
	School	13	35	37	15
Breadth of curricular opportunities	Foundation Stage	22	50	25	3
	Key Stage 1	15	44	38	3
	Key Stage 2	14	43	38	5
	School	16	43	37	4
Opportunities for enrichment	School	39	47	13	1
Accommodation and resources	Foundation Stage	13	39	39	9
	School	9	40	45	5
Care, welfare, health and safety of pupils	Foundation Stage	51	40	8	1
	School	46	44	10	1
Support, advice and guidance	School	31	45	21	3
Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views	School	29	45	25	2
Links with parents	School	38	43	17	2
Links with the community	School	36	48	15	0
Links with other schools and colleges	School	32	50	18	0
The leadership and management of the school					
Leadership and management	School	27	45	22	5
The governance of the school	School	21	44	29	6
The leadership of the headteacher	School	48	35	13	4
The leadership of other key staff	Foundation Stage	29	45	22	4
	School	20	45	28	7
Effectiveness of management	Foundation Stage	28	45	23	4
	School	25	42	27	6

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Secondary schools

Aspects of the school		Percentage of schools			
		Excellent/ very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory/ poor
The effectiveness of the school					
Overall effectiveness of the school	School	20	49	22	10
Inclusion	School	51	31	13	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its previous inspection	School	16	45	28	11
Value for money provided by the school	School	22	43	26	9
Parents' satisfaction with the school	School	33	43	19	5
Pupils' satisfaction with the school	School	37	42	15	5
The standards achieved by pupils					
Pupils' achievement	Key Stage 3	13	54	24	9
	Key Stage 4	17	48	26	9
	Post-16	18	57	21	3
	School	15	54	21	9
Achievement of pupils with SEN	Key Stage 3	16	60	20	4
	Key Stage 4	19	54	22	5
	Post-16	26	59	14	1
	School	18	58	20	5
Achievement of pupils with EAL	Key Stage 3	15	53	27	5
	Key Stage 4	18	50	26	5
	Post-16	20	58	20	2
	School	19	52	24	5
Achievement of gifted and talented pupils	Key Stage 3	12	45	33	9
	Key Stage 4	16	40	35	9
	Post-16	24	44	28	4
	School	14	44	33	9
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development					
Ethos	School	32	43	18	7
Attendance	School	22	22	28	28
Punctuality	School	17	29	36	18
Pupils' attitudes	Key Stage 3	32	42	19	7
	Key Stage 4	31	43	20	6
	Post-16	62	31	5	1
	School	33	42	19	6
Behaviour, including exclusions	Key Stage 3	26	41	23	10
	Key Stage 4	27	40	24	9
	Post-16	67	29	4	0
	School	27	41	23	9
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	School	25	46	24	5

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Secondary schools (continued)

Aspects of the school		Percentage of schools			
		Excellent/ very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory/ poor
The quality of education provided by the school					
Quality of education	School	17	52	23	7
Teaching	Key Stage 3	10	57	23	9
	Key Stage 4	17	57	20	7
	Post-16	32	62	7	0
Learning	School	14	58	19	9
	Key Stage 3	11	56	24	9
	Key Stage 4	17	55	21	7
Assessment	Post-16	32	61	7	1
	School	15	57	20	9
	Key Stage 3	7	35	43	15
Breadth of curricular opportunities	Key Stage 4	10	40	38	12
	Post-16	23	52	23	3
	School	9	37	41	14
Opportunities for enrichment	Key Stage 3	10	42	37	11
	Key Stage 4	17	38	29	16
	Post-16	25	40	27	9
Accommodation and resources	School	14	41	31	14
Care, welfare, health and safety of pupils	School	42	43	13	2
Support, advice and guidance	School	4	26	47	23
Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views	School	41	37	18	3
Links with parents	School	33	43	21	3
Links with the community	School	24	42	29	5
Links with other schools and colleges	School	23	44	28	5
	Key Stage 4	44	41	14	1
	Post-16	47	36	13	3
	School	48	41	11	0
The leadership and management of the school					
Leadership and management	School	29	46	18	8
The governance of the school	School	20	34	23	23
The leadership of the headteacher	School	62	27	7	4
The leadership of other key staff	School	27	49	18	6
Effectiveness of management	School	23	41	28	9

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Sixth forms in secondary schools

Aspects of the sixth form	Percentage of schools			
	Excellent/ very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory/ poor
The effectiveness of the sixth form				
Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	27	42	28	3
How the effectiveness of the sixth form has changed since its previous inspection	16	46	33	5
Cost-effectiveness of post-16 provision	20	38	33	9
Students' satisfaction with the sixth form	46	39	12	2
The standards achieved by students				
Students' achievement	18	57	21	3
Achievement of students with SEN	26	59	14	1
Achievement of students with EAL	20	58	20	2
Achievement of gifted and talented students	24	44	28	4
Students' attitudes, values and personal development				
Attendance	25	27	33	15
Punctuality	20	30	39	11
Students' attitudes	62	31	5	1
Behaviour, including exclusions	67	29	4	0
The quality of education provided by the sixth form				
Teaching	32	62	7	0
Learning	32	61	7	1
Assessment	23	52	23	3
Breadth of curricular opportunities	25	40	27	9
Accommodation and resources	7	27	43	23
Support, advice and guidance	39	41	17	4
Involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views	29	38	28	4
Links with the community	47	35	18	0
Links with other schools and colleges post-16	47	36	13	3
The leadership and management of the sixth form				
The governance of the sixth form	21	32	24	22
The leadership of key staff	33	48	14	5
Effectiveness of management	27	43	24	5

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Special schools

Aspects of the school

Percentage of schools

		Excellent/ very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory/ poor
The effectiveness of the school					
Overall effectiveness of post-16 provision	Post-16	36	45	12	8
Overall effectiveness of the school	School	21	55	18	6
Inclusion	School	54	25	15	6
How the effectiveness of post-16 provision has changed since its previous inspection	Post-16	21	52	14	14
How the school's effectiveness has changed since the previous inspection	School	25	43	22	10
Value for money provided by the school	School	22	49	21	8
Cost-effectiveness of post-16 provision	Post-16	29	48	17	6
Parents' satisfaction with the school	School	59	34	5	2
Pupils' satisfaction with the school	Post-16	71	23	6	0
	School	66	26	5	2

The standards achieved by pupils

Pupils' achievement	Foundation Stage	44	39	16	1
	Key Stage 1	24	56	16	4
	Key Stage 2	18	62	16	3
	Key Stage 3	15	57	22	7
	Key Stage 4	18	56	20	6
	Post-16	32	52	10	6
	School	19	58	18	6
Achievement of pupils with EAL	Foundation Stage	29	50	17	5
	Key Stage 1	24	56	10	10
	Key Stage 2	22	60	12	6
	Key Stage 3	18	59	17	7
	Key Stage 4	21	56	13	10
	Post-16	31	50	12	7
	School	18	57	18	7

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Ethos	School	62	29	6	4
Attendance	Post-16	23	43	32	1
	School	19	38	32	10
Punctuality	Post-16	23	41	32	4
	School	21	41	31	7
Pupils' attitudes	Foundation Stage	77	22	1	0
	Key Stage 1	78	20	2	0
	Key Stage 2	71	24	5	0
	Key Stage 3	65	22	8	5
	Key Stage 4	66	23	7	4
	Post-16	80	16	4	0
	School	67	22	7	3
Behaviour, including exclusions	Foundation Stage	70	30	0	0
	Key Stage 1	70	27	2	1
	Key Stage 2	64	29	5	2
	Key Stage 3	55	29	9	6
	Key Stage 4	56	29	8	6
	Post-16	72	22	3	3
	School	58	30	7	5
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	School	53	35	8	3

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Special schools (continued)

Aspects of the school		Percentage of schools			
		Excellent/ very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory/ poor
The quality of education provided					
Quality of education	School	20	56	19	5
Teaching	Foundation Stage	47	38	16	0
	Key Stage 1	28	62	7	3
	Key Stage 2	22	65	9	3
	Key Stage 3	16	62	14	7
	Key Stage 4	22	58	13	7
	Post-16	35	52	6	6
	School	19	64	12	6
Learning	Foundation Stage	45	39	16	0
	Key Stage 1	27	64	7	3
	Key Stage 2	22	65	9	3
	Key Stage 3	16	61	15	7
	Key Stage 4	22	57	14	7
	Post-16	35	52	6	6
	School	19	64	12	6
Assessment	Foundation Stage	52	21	25	2
	Key Stage 1	25	33	33	9
	Key Stage 2	19	37	34	10
	Key Stage 3	15	35	35	15
	Key Stage 4	18	40	31	12
	Post-16	30	37	26	7
	School	17	38	32	13
Breadth of curricular opportunities	Foundation Stage	46	34	17	3
	Key Stage 1	22	50	23	5
	Key Stage 2	21	51	24	5
	Key Stage 3	17	48	23	13
	Key Stage 4	23	44	21	13
	Post-16	42	32	17	9
	School	20	46	23	11
Opportunities for enrichment	School	47	36	14	3
Accommodation and resources	Foundation Stage	21	33	26	20
	Post-16	14	31	29	26
	School	11	39	31	19
Care, welfare, health and safety of pupils	Foundation Stage	62	21	12	4
	School	57	26	12	5
Support, advice and guidance	Post-16	51	31	11	7
	School	44	38	14	4
Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views	Post-16	45	30	21	3
	School	36	35	24	5
Links with parents	School	51	34	13	2
Links with the community	Post-16	63	24	10	2
	School	55	31	14	1
Links with other schools and colleges	Key Stage 4	50	27	18	6
	Post-16	56	26	12	7
	School	53	27	15	4

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Special schools (continued)

Aspects of the school		Percentage of schools			
		Excellent/ very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory/ poor
The leadership and management of the school					
Leadership and management	School	29	45	18	8
The governance of the school	Post-16	19	42	24	15
	School	20	41	24	15
The leadership of the headteacher	School	55	33	10	2
The leadership of other key staff	Foundation Stage	49	31	19	1
	Post-16	33	41	17	9
	School	26	49	19	7
Effectiveness of management	Foundation Stage	47	29	22	1
	Post-16	34	37	20	9
	School	27	46	18	9

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Colleges

Aspects of the college	Percentage of colleges							
	Excellent/very good 03/04 02/03		Good 03/04 02/03		Satisfactory 03/04 02/03		Unsatisfactory/poor 03/04 02/03	
The overall effectiveness and efficiency of the college								
The overall effectiveness and efficiency of the college	19	15	33	36	37	39	11	9
How well do learners achieve?								
Success in achieving challenging targets, including qualifications and learning goals, and trends over time	18	13	34	36	35	44	13	7
The standard of learners' work in relation to their learning goals	16	13	43	47	36	37	5	3
Learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential	15	9	35	45	43	43	7	4
The development of personal and learning skills	16	12	49	48	31	40	4	0
How effective are teaching, training and learning?								
How well teaching and training meet individuals' needs and course or programme requirements	11	10	43	49	40	38	6	3
How well learners learn and make progress	13	10	41	46	40	43	7	1
How are achievement and learning affected by resources?								
The adequacy and suitability of staff	21	16	42	57	36	27	1	0
The adequacy, suitability and use of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation	14	11	29	42	48	44	10	3
How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress?								
The suitability and rigour of assessment	13	12	34	42	50	43	3	3
The uses of assessment in planning learning and monitoring learners' progress	10	14	35	27	46	53	8	6
How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs of learners?								
Courses or programmes match learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience	19	11	50	61	30	27	1	1
How far programmes or the curriculum meet external requirements, and are responsive to local circumstances	19	15	54	55	22	30	5	0
How well are learners guided and supported?								
The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance to learners	19	20	60	61	20	19	1	0
The diagnosis of, and provision for, individual learning needs	23	14	41	39	28	34	8	12
The access learners have to relevant, effective support on personal issues	27	25	58	67	15	8	0	0
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?								
How well leaders and managers set a clear direction leading to high quality education and training	22	23	39	30	29	38	10	9
Quality assurance and self-assessment and their use to secure improvement	18	10	24	30	31	43	27	17
Equality of opportunity is promoted and racism and discrimination are tackled so that all achieve their potential	17	14	36	35	42	48	5	3
The extent to which governors or other supervisory boards meet their responsibilities	25	31	46	33	22	32	8	4
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	18	11	30	34	38	46	13	9
Students' views								
Students' view about their courses and college	29	34	57	47	13	19	1	0

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

Colleges (continued)

Inspection judgements published in inspection reports

Percentage of colleges

	Numbers inspected	Outstanding		Good		Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Very weak	
		03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03	03/04	02/03
The leadership and management of the college	106	14	6	32	39	41	47	11	9	2	0
Overall effectiveness of curriculum areas*											
Business administration, management and professional	92	11	6	34	39	47	50	8	5	1	0
Construction	48	0	0	23	31	48	56	27	13	2	0
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	53	2	3	34	43	51	36	13	18	0	0
English, language and communications	70	16	14	43	54	36	30	6	3	0	0
Foundation programmes	139	5	2	35	36	42	45	17	16	2	1
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	55	9	7	33	34	36	51	18	8	4	0
Health, social care and public services	77	6	5	45	38	42	54	6	3	0	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	82	9	2	50	49	33	42	9	7	0	0
Humanities	85	18	12	41	38	39	42	2	8	0	0
Information and communication technology	89	3	1	35	38	56	51	6	11	0	0
Land-based industries	46	9	0	43	27	43	59	4	14	0	0
Sciences and mathematics	94	12	9	37	36	36	48	14	7	1	1
Visual and performing arts and media	115	18	10	38	49	38	37	5	4	0	0

These figures have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

*Inspectors may make judgements about more than one sub-curricular area under these headings.

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