

OfSTED Report Summary 2003



Raising educational standards

IN Salford



Councillor John Merry, Leader, Salford City Council

Achieving the best possible quality of life for the people of Salford is only possible if we provide a good education service. The provision of such a service is one of the Council's highest priorities.

I am delighted, therefore, that OfSTED has recognised that elected members provide good leadership for education that in the last two years, Salford LEA has made substantial progress and that senior officers and elected members are committed to raising standards and improving the quality of educational provision for children and young people in the city. I am proud of what has been achieved so far and I share OfSTED's view that we have the capacity for further improvement.

Salford Local Education Authority (LEA) was visited and inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) in September 2003 and a report was published on its findings in December 2003:

45 areas of service were judged to be either satisfactory or highly satisfactory, with the following services and functions being rated as good:

- The leadership provided by elected members
- The quality of leadership provided by senior officers
- The quality of advice given to elected members
- The effectiveness of the co-ordination of actions in support of priorities involving collaboration between several agencies
- Cleaning and Caretaking
- Catering
- The extent to which the LEA meets its statutory requirements in relation to provision for looked after children

"The LEA has made significant progress in the last 18 months under the strong and sensitive leadership of the new director of education and leisure and the re-established senior management team."

"The LEA has been proactive and largely successful in restoring and developing relationships with its schools and with other partners. This has resulted in good capacity for further improvement."

The Inspection Team also reported that:

"The LEA has a sound knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. There is a close correlation between the findings of this inspection and its self evaluation"

"The council has clear priorities and a well articulated understanding of the relationship between school improvement, social inclusion and regeneration. This understanding underpins its vision in the city and the drive for improvement"

"Education is now a key contributor to the delivery of the council's community strategy and to promoting inclusion"

OfSTED commented favourably on a number of particular areas of the work of the LEA.

- Corporate Planning for education and its implementation

"Education is a high priority and is central to fulfilling the council's vision "to create a city in which people choose to live and work."

- Leadership by elected members and advice given to them

"Elected members continue to provide good leadership of education in Salford"

"The council's long term record of securing and allocating resources to education demonstrates members' commitment to education"

- Leadership by senior officers

"There is good capacity for further improvement because the new senior management team is now fully staffed"

"Activity on established priorities such as special educational needs has been accelerated, and consensus built on emerging priorities. The director has secured the trust of schools, elected members and partners who recognise her strong commitment, and that of the senior management team, to working with them for the benefit of the children and young people of Salford."

- Strategic Partnerships

"There is now a strong culture of partnership working across directorates and with major external partners, and a clear corporate commitment to multi-agency, cross-cutting approaches to delivering strategic priorities, for example in the development of more integrated children's services and the city's own Children's Trust."

"The education and leisure directorate has very good relationships with the police, social services and health at the level of strategic planning."

- School Place Planning

"The reorganisation of secondary schools has been vigorous. There are three fewer schools than formerly, and by September 2003 secondary surplus"



Councillor Keith Mann, Lead Member for Education and Jill Baker, Director of Education and Leisure

In our different roles, we are totally committed to ensuring that Salford citizens, whatever their age, have access to the best educational opportunities. The Ofsted report confirms our own view that we have established strong partnerships, which are having a significant impact on pupils' achievements. There is much to celebrate about the education service in Salford and the Ofsted report gives us confidence to believe that we will continue to improve our performance in the interests of every Salford citizen.

places had fallen to 11%. Further firm plans to replace and refurbish schools will both reduce capacity and improve conditions in others”

- Asset management planning

“The LEA is making good use of the increased level of capital funding available to it in recent years”

“There has been good progress in reducing the maintenance backlog in school buildings. The need to invest in high priority work has reduced by about a third over the last three years”

- Property services

“The quality of property services was satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. There has been further sound progress since then and services are now highly satisfactory”

- Admissions to schools

“The LEA administered the admissions process in a highly satisfactory manner at the time of the last inspection and continues to do so”

- The strategy for school improvement and progress in its implementation

“The Education Development Plan focuses appropriately on support, challenge and building capacity in schools. Schools recognise and support the management challenge implicit in this approach”

• The effectiveness of the LEA’s identification of and intervention in underperforming schools are highly satisfactory”

“The LEA’s identification of and intervention in underperforming schools are highly satisfactory”

- Support to school leadership and management

“The restructuring of the school improvement service, following a Best Value review, is well designed to improve the support available to schools, and particularly secondary schools, from school improvement officers”

- Issues around Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Strategy for SEN “Good progress has been made over the last 18 months and the strategy for SEN is now highly satisfactory. The SEN and inclusion policy is clear and reflects the government’s programme of action to increase the inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools”

Meeting legal obligations for children with SEN “Despite highly satisfactory progress in many aspects of the LEA’s duties, the meeting of statutory obligations is now unsatisfactory because of the low level of statements issued within 18 weeks. However, the recent improvements and good plans for the future indicate good capacity for further improvement. Good parental information and guidance are provided in clear leaflets. There is a well-established parent partnership scheme which has recently been expanded”

Value for money of provision for children with SEN “The LEA has implemented the recommendations from the previous inspection to review SEN funding and to develop transparent and equitable criteria for allocating resources. However, currently there is no systematic monitoring of schools’ SEN expenditure or the progress of pupils. The LEA recognises this weakness and has good plans for improvement in place. The capacity for further improvement is good. Schools have been provided with clear information on the respective roles and responsibilities of the schools and LEA”

- The overall effectiveness of the LEA’s strategy for promoting social inclusion

“There are active and effective partnerships at all levels with the police, social services and health through the primary care trust. Education now contributes well to the council’s and other directorates’ major plans and initiatives to support social inclusion. The LEA is now monitoring the achievement of most groups of pupils at risk of social exclusion and is beginning to use the data to identify areas needing improvement and additional support”



- Provision of education for pupils who have no school place

“The LEA has been effective in reviewing its provision. Good progress has been made in procedures for tracking individual pupils. The vulnerable children inclusion policy currently being developed has the potential to develop further the multi-agency approach to improve the education of children otherwise than at school”

- Attendance

“Support for improving attendance is satisfactory, as is progress since the last inspection. Support to schools is allocated according to need, based on clear and appropriate criteria. The LEA meets its statutory and legal responsibilities and is making increasing use of its legal powers when appropriate”

- Behaviour Support

“There is a satisfactory behaviour support plan, which has a range of appropriate activities. The new draft behaviour strategy is clearly linked to wider developments in inclusion and SEN support and will bring the developing initiatives together”

- Child Protection

“The LEA continues to provide satisfactory support for child protection and plays an active role in protecting children from harm. This is largely as a result of the council’s strong focus on multi-agency support for vulnerable pupils and good co-operation and joint working between the education and leisure directorate and social services”

- Looked after children

“The LEA’s contribution to the care, welfare and attainment of children looked after by the local authority was satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. It has improved significantly and, as a result of the priority given by the council and highly effective multi-agency approaches, it is now good”

- Measures to combat racism

“The council has recognised the importance of work to combat racism and has strengthened its commitment. It is taking positive action to improve support for asylum seekers through the strategic group established by the Chief Executive”

The report also makes a number of recommendations about ways the LEA can:

- Improve the quality of performance management
- Raise attainment and the rigour of monitoring and evaluation in the LEA and schools
- Ensure that the LEA’s strategy for education has a greater impact on the achievements of children and young people
- Improve the effectiveness of some areas of provision for special educational needs
- Raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils
- Improve provision for pupils who have no school place
- Support schools further in the management of pupils’ behaviour
- Monitor racist incidents in schools and evaluate the effectiveness of the revised procedure

The LEA will now produce an Action Plan, which will detail the steps which will be taken to ensure that the areas of concern are addressed as soon as possible. **Full copies of the OfSTED report can be obtained from www.ofsted.gov.uk**