



**OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION**

**INSPECTION OF
THE ISLE OF MAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

June 2002

OFFICE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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OFSTED INSPECTION – JUNE 2002

Dear Colleague,

I commissioned this report on the work of the Department of Education eighteen months ago. My reasons were twofold:

- My belief that although we can be proud of having a good standard of education in the Island, it could be even better;
- My conviction that independent, impartial scrutiny of any organization will provide it with valuable pointers for its future development.

The Department therefore welcomes this external Report's confirmation that the educational attainment of pupils attending its primary and secondary schools is at, or above, the English average. Parents can continue to have confidence in the quality of the education their children receive at schools in the Isle of Man.

The Report recognises the areas of the Department's work which are satisfactory and better. But it also contains criticism of areas of weakness. This criticism is constructive, and it is accepted – clearly, the Department must become much more effective in delivering support for school improvement, in order to raise standards even further, and must tackle deficiencies in the provision of central services to schools.

The Department of Education in the Isle of Man is in the unique position of being both a government department, and also a Local Education Authority (LEA)-like body. As such it is obliged both to set education policy for schools, and provide them with the support services they need and can use with confidence. The key is to strike this balance correctly.

For instance, the last decade or so in Education has been a period of enormous change for schools in the UK. The Department, being independent of the DfES in England, has devoted energy to ensuring that Isle of Man schools continue to develop and offer a high a standard of education, relevant to today's society.

More /

Examples of this are the National Curriculum – adapted to suit the Island’s situation – with excellent ICT facilities, and teaching of French in all our Primary Schools. The results have been good – look at what our schools achieve:

- GCSE results more than 8% higher than England’s average;
- A-level point scores well above the average in England;
- 44% of our students gaining university places compared with only 36% in England.

However, this emphasis on developing policy for schools has not been matched with corresponding advances in all of its central service functions, including school support.

In short, the time has come for the Department itself to modernise. I am determined that it should do so. The Inspection Report makes clear recommendations on how this should be achieved.

In line with the practice which follows OFSTED-style inspections of our schools, an Action Plan will be drawn up, to enable Department Officers to implement those recommendations, address present weaknesses, and strengthen the education service.

Work has already commenced, and further changes in the Department’s structure, management and procedures will be identified. These will impact upon the regulations intended to follow the new Education Act, and upon forthcoming business plans.

Progress will be directed, and monitored by the Director with his senior management team, reporting to the Minister and his political colleagues.

I, and my political colleagues, welcome this frank report and the agenda for action it establishes for us. We are confident that the Department will rise to the considerable challenge, and will take the unique opportunity offered by the Report to strengthen its work.

Harnessing the enthusiasm and determination of our educational community in this task will undoubtedly ensure that our children’s education will continue to thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julwade', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Minister for Education.

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INTRODUCTION

1. This inspection of the Isle of Man Department of Education was carried out by OFSTED working under contract to the Manx government. At the request of that government, the scope of the inspection was broadened from the scope applied in England to include the youth service and further education. Although the inspection was based on the OFSTED Framework for the inspection of local education authorities (LEAs) in England, that framework could not be consistently applied because of the different educational legislation and administrative arrangements of the two countries. For the same reason the criteria on which judgements of English LEAs are based could not all be applied. The inspectors therefore arrived at their judgement of the effectiveness of Manx government's support for school improvement on the basis of the requirements of Manx legislation, of the stated intentions of the Department of Education, and of OFSTED criteria, where those were applicable.

2. The evidence upon which the inspection was based was gained from the scrutiny of the Department's documents and from discussions with politicians, officers and the staff of schools. In the course of the inspection visits were made to the Isle of Man College, to all five of the secondary schools and to seven of the primary schools. A questionnaire seeking views on aspects of the Department's work was sent to 40 schools. The response rate was 93 per cent.

COMMENTARY

3. The Isle of Man has become prosperous owing to its status as a major offshore finance centre. Education is well-funded. Unemployment is very low and a significantly lower proportion of the pupils are entitled to free school meals than in England. Although the population has grown sharply in recent years because of inward migration, very few of the population are from minority ethnic groups or do not have English as a first language.
4. The pupils' attainment in primary schools is broadly in line with that of England, but in secondary schools it is above the English average. Attainment has risen in recent years and the results are never less than sound, but they are not good enough in all schools and they have risen largely because of the efforts of the schools, and not necessarily because of the work of government. The Department has, under the current legislation which is soon to be replaced, little power to intervene in order to raise standards. Given the favourable social and economic circumstances, were the Department to become more effective in supporting school improvement, further gains in attainment would be possible. Securing a rise in standards, particularly in primary schools, is now the major task confronting the Department. However, the planning and evaluation of the work of the Department of Education is weak and only when this problem is overcome will the Department be able, single-mindedly to do what needs to be done in school improvement.
5. As things stand at the moment, the school improvement services are weak. They have not based their work on a rigorous assessment of the current standards and quality in the schools and so are not properly deployed. In any case the services are limited in size and scope. The appointment and deployment of the Department's staff is further harmed by the strict personnel controls which operate on the Island. Another problem of deployment derives from the dual roles of the officers of the Department who are civil servants whose task is to advise government and enforce its policies, as well as to be advisers to the schools themselves. At times these roles conflict and the first of them diverts time and energy from the second. Some reorganisation of the work of the officers will be necessary in order to strengthen their role in school improvement and make it more effective.
6. Only two of the Department's functions are discharged well. The first is the support for information and communications technology (ICT) in schools which is, in many respects, at the leading edge of developments internationally. The second is support for health and safety in schools.
7. The following functions are discharged in a satisfactory way but need some improvement to become good:
 - support for literacy;
 - support for numeracy;
 - support for personnel management;

- the discharge of statutory duties in provision for special educational needs (SEN);
- the provision of property services;
- the provision of grounds maintenance;
- admissions to schools;
- support for school attendance;
- support for the youth service ; and
- work to combat social exclusion.

8. The remainder of the functions are weak and, both because of their number and their centrality to school improvement, they give rise to an overall judgement that the work of the Department is weak. It does not offer satisfactory value for money.

9. The Department has much to improve. However, there are grounds for confidence in its capacity to introduce the necessary changes. The Island's educational community is a compact one in which it should be possible to establish clear, straightforward policies and practices. Moreover, there are some things that the Department already does well in the area of school improvement. These are notably in connection with ICT, but highly satisfactory work is also done in the youth service and in dealing with truancy. All of these areas have in common that the task to be done has been clearly defined and that the necessary emphasis has been placed by the Department on doing the task.

10. There has already been some improvement in the work of the Department's officers, for example in improved consultation on the strategic development of educational policy; in establishing improved relationships with the schools, and in beginning to analyse the work that officers actually do with schools. Such change sets up a model of what must be further developed in the future. The corporate centre of government also has plans, albeit yet to be implemented, to improve planning and evaluation across the whole of government and to ensure that the work of government is more strategically driven.

11. There is a political will to address the weaknesses identified in this report, and to act upon its recommendations. Indeed, the Department itself has shown its determination to identify weakness and to remedy it by commissioning this inspection. The Department's commitment to publish the report further indicates its determination to act upon it. There is reason to have confidence in the Department's capacity to improve.

SECTION 1: THE STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Context

12. The Isle of Man is a self-governing Crown Dependency. It is 221 square miles in size and has a population of approximately 76,300. Its school population is approximately 12,000. The Island's population is rising sharply, mainly as a result of inward migration. The school population has risen by over 11 per cent since 1996.
13. The statutory body responsible for the provision of education on the Isle of Man is the Manx government's Department of Education. This consists of the Minister of Education, assisted by two other members of Tynwald, the Manx parliament. The legislative basis for education in the Isle of Man is the 1949 Education Act Isle of Man which gives the Department powers to provide schools, but very limited other powers. The shortcomings of the legislation have been recognised and are to be addressed by the 2001 Education Act which is awaiting the writing of regulations to bring into force. This means at the time of the inspection the Department was operating with a very dated mandate. The Department's central services are provided by officers working under the Director of Education. The Department is responsible for 35 primary schools, five secondary schools, a further education College, a newly founded international business school, the youth service, the careers service and the library service.
14. In recent years, the Island has experienced a dramatic increase in prosperity as it has become an offshore centre for banking and finance. Its gross domestic product per head of population is now slightly higher than that of England, having been only 57 per cent of the English figure as recently as 1985. Unemployment is less than one per cent of the economically active population. Very few of the population are from minority ethnic groups, and few pupils are learning English as an additional language.
15. There is, however, some unevenness in the distribution of the Island's prosperity. Overall, 11 per cent of its pupils receive free school meals, compared with equivalent figures of 19.7 per cent for English primary schools and 17.6 per cent for English secondary schools. Among the 35 primary schools on the Island, the percentage taking free school meals varies from less than one per cent to 46 per cent.
16. After the age of 16, 68 per cent of the pupils continue in education and the percentage of students entering higher education is 44 compared with 36 in England. The Manx government pays the higher education tuition fees of its students and provides maintenance support.
17. As a self-governing community, the island is not bound by United Kingdom statute. It sets its own legislative framework for education. Nevertheless, in many respects its legislation and practice follow the pattern in England and Wales. With certain, fairly small, modifications it follows the English National Curriculum and the pupils sit the same tests as their

counterparts in England. The English public examination system is used at age 16 and above. The Department has commissioned an English inspection contractor to carry out inspections of its schools, using a slightly modified version of the OFSTED Framework for school inspection. The changes which have been introduced in schools have been achieved through the Department's policy directions but the Department has not changed its own structure and systems through legislation or otherwise to keep abreast of the developments in schools. The pace of change has been slower than in England and Wales. The reasons for this is to take the time to evaluate and reflect on the merit of any developments for the island's situation. Recent examples of this have been the staged introduction of delegated financial management some 10 years after it began in England. Likewise the English strategy for numeracy in primary schools was introduced a year later. The legislation from which the Department's powers derive has not kept pace with the changes in legislation in England and does not enable the Department to have the power of intervention of an English LEA.

Performance

18. The data available to the Department on the comparative performance of its schools is limited. The National Curriculum tests taken by pupils in English schools were taken for the first time by the island's pupils at the ends of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 1999, and at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000. Rates of improvement in the performance of schools can only be judged over the last two years for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (2000-2001) and over a maximum of three years for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (1999-2001). The Department does not have the long-term data necessary to know whether its recent actions and policy initiatives to provide additional support to schools are leading to higher standards.
19. In 2001, the average attainment of pupils at the ends of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was broadly in line with the average for schools in England. However, evidence provided by inspection reports reveals that, at the time of their inspection, as many as one third of primary schools were significantly underperforming at the end of Key Stage 2 compared with similar schools in England. The performance of secondary schools in 2001 was significantly better than the average for England.
20. At the end of Key Stage 1, in 2001, attainment in the tests for reading and writing (87 and 88 per cent of pupils respectively achieving Levels 2 and above) was slightly higher than the average in English schools (84 per cent and 86 per cent respectively). Attainment in mathematics (91 per cent) was in line with that in English schools. Improvements in performance between 1999 and 2001 were broadly in line with that in England.
21. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English in 2001 (79 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 and above) was above the average in English schools (74 per cent). Results in mathematics (70 per cent) were again in line with that in English schools. Attainment in science (84 per cent) was below the national average in England (87 per cent). The rate of

improvement in mathematics was broadly in line with that in England. Results in English, however, have improved at more than twice the rate in English schools, and results in science at almost twice the rate in England.

22. At the end of Key Stage 3, attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the average in English schools. Results in English and science also improved at well above that in English schools; in the case of English, they improved eight times faster. Performance in mathematics, whilst well above that in English schools, improved at around the same rate as in England.

23. In 2001, 58.4 per cent of pupils attained five or more A*-C grades at GCSE or GNVQ equivalent, significantly above the average in English schools (50 per cent). The percentage attaining one or more A*-G grades (97 per cent) was well above that in England (94.5 per cent) and the percentage attaining five or more A*-G (90.7 per cent) was slightly above (94.5 per cent in English schools). Performance at higher levels of GCSE (ie 5+A*-C) has improved at four times the average rate of schools in England. Improvement in other GCSE results has been in line with that in England.

24. The average attainment of pupils taking GCE Advanced level (A-level) examinations in secondary schools (19.5 average points score) is above that in England (17.4).

25. Attendance at the island's schools is good. Between 1989 and the present it has shown a steady rise and has never fallen below 91.6 per cent. In the school year 2000/2001 it was 94.4 per cent, and unauthorised absence was only 0.53 per cent. These figures are a little better than the equivalent figures in England.

26. Exclusion from school is not used.

Funding

27. Over the last few years of economic growth the government has been able to expand its financial reserves, reduce income tax and increase expenditure. On 31 March 2002, the reserve fund was £239 million which was expected to increase by £24 million in 2002/3. Overall net government expenditure has increased by 46.3 per cent since 1998/9, to a total of over £388 million in 2002/3.

28. Education has benefited a little less than other government services from the healthy financial position. Revenue expenditure has increased by 42.7 per cent between 1998/9 and 2002/3. Education's annual share of total government spending is 18.3 per cent or £70.1 million in 2002/3. Education's increase in expenditure between 2001/2 and 2002/3 was 11.4 per cent compared with an overall government increase of 9.5 per cent.

29. Within the education service, in 2002/3 primary education accounts for about 28 per cent of education revenue expenditure, secondary education

28.7 per cent, further education 8.5 per cent and the youth service 1.2 per cent. The Isle of Man's policy of aid to students in further, and particularly higher, education accounts for 12.1 per cent of the total.

30. It is impossible to provide any specific comparisons of education expenditure in the Isle of Man with England because the circumstances are so different. Under the schemes for delegated management in the Isle of Man, 73 per cent of the total primary budget is delegated to schools, compared with 87 per cent of the secondary budget. There are no current plans for any further delegation. No analysis has been undertaken of exactly what central costs, both within the Department of Education and other departments can be attributed to supporting schools. Most significant of all, the Isle of Man education service is fulfilling the roles undertaken in England by central government, as well as by LEAs.

31. Care must be taken in interpreting headline figures both for overall expenditure and pupil:teacher ratio comparisons but Tynwald was informed in June 2002 that, for 1998/9, public expenditure on education as a percentage of the gross domestic product was 5.9 per cent in the Isle of Man as compared with 4.9 per cent in the United Kingdom. Pupil:teacher ratios in the Isle of Man in 2001/2 were 1:18.4 in primary schools and 1:14.4 in secondary schools, comparing with January 2001 figures for England of 1:22.9 and 1:16.9 respectively.

32. Education has also benefited from considerable capital expenditure in recent years. The education capital programme has provided for annual expenditure of between £3.8 million and a planned £6.4 million for 2002/3 in each of the last five years.

33. All the above expenditure, both capital and revenue, is met within the government's own resources without recourse to external borrowing.

Government structure

34. The Manx parliament, Tynwald, consists of a lower house, the House of Keys, which has 24 directly elected members, and an upper house, the Legislative Council which has eight members, elected by the House of Keys. The present ministerial system, under which the Department has been established, was set up in 1987. Before that, the education service was under the control of the 15 directly elected members of the Board of Education. That body continues to exist. Its members are represented on all of the schools' governing bodies, providing the chairs of all of the recently established primary school governing bodies. They also organise themselves into committees which have responsibilities in further education, primary education, the youth service, the music service, and religious education. Where the Board has a clearly defined role to fulfil, for example in its religious education committee which is responsible for the production of the religious education syllabus, it works very effectively. More generally, however, its potential to contribute to school improvement is under-exploited by the Department, and its members see themselves as under-used.

35. These political structures and the responsibilities discharged through them are unique to the Isle of Man. It is important to distinguish them from the structures which govern education in England and Wales. The Department's primary responsibility is to provide the infrastructure within which schools deliver education: it is a Department of state. However, it has also developed a role in monitoring and supporting the work of the schools, particularly through the work of its officers: to that extent it is also like a LEA in England. These two roles are not clearly defined.

The strategy for school improvement

36. The current legislation does not enable the Department to introduce a formal school improvement strategy such as those required of English LEAs. This legislation does not give the Department any powers to monitor schools or to set targets for raising standards, these powers are only held by governors and headteachers on the Isle of Man. Therefore the Department has not, until very recently, considered the use of pupil performance data to set formal targets for improved standards nor to enable advisers to challenge schools on their performance. The new 2001 Act will enable the Department to deal more effectively with school improvement, given specifically drafted regulations. In the survey, schools show they judge the clarity of such strategy as there is, to be poor; secondary schools judge it to be very poor. Primary schools, in particular, feel that the Department has too little knowledge and understanding of their needs and rated the Department's ability to support improvement in schools' performance as poor. Secondary schools also rated this aspect of support as less than satisfactory. Inspection evidence supports their judgement.

37. Although there is no explicit strategy, there is a range of activities which, taken together, form elements of an implicit strategy. These are the elements:

- primary schools are setting performance targets;
- all schools are being inspected by the external contractor;
- there have been moves to promote schools' autonomy, with the recent introduction of delegated financial management and primary school governing bodies;
- there is a commitment to develop the quality of school management through the use of the United Kingdom training schemes for serving and aspiring headteachers; and
- a patch adviser system has just been introduced.

38. Neither the development nor the implementation of a school improvement strategy is helped by the framework within which the Department works. Its dual role means that, historically, the island's

education advisers have been advisers to the Department and government on the formation of education policy. Although their role has also been to provide support to schools, until very recently the notion of school improvement as being driven by the Department has not been central to government's or the Department's thinking. In reality, the limited size of the advisory team, a lack of clarity and consistency in their precise role in supporting schools, weaknesses in monitoring and evaluating the performance and individual needs of schools, combined with, until very recently, a lack of systematic consultation with schools on the strategic development of education policy, has meant that the advisory service has often lacked sufficient knowledge of its schools to perform either function adequately.

39. The Department has a strategic and operational plan which sets out activities planned for each of the phases of education. It is not an effective strategy for school improvement because it is not based on an analysis of present performance and fails to set goals for improved performance which will result if its proposed activities are carried out. In 2001 a new Education Act was passed by Tynwald and regulations are currently being drafted prior to the act coming into statutory force. These present the Department with an opportunity to establish a strategy, The Department has also made a start on evaluation with a survey of teachers' opinions but has yet to take any systematic action in response to it.

40. The lack of strategy results in uncertainty on the part of the schools that weakens their trust in the Department. In particular, they are unclear about the level and nature of the support they can expect from the Department and any expectations which the Department has of them in raising their pupils' standards of attainment.

41. The absence of targets for the attainment of pupils in the island as a whole, and in secondary schools as distinct from primary schools, illustrates the weak link between the Department's activities in school improvement and the educational achievement of the pupils.

Allocation of resources to priorities

42. Though procedures adopted for allocating resources to education priorities contain some sound features, overall they are unsatisfactory, particularly when considering the principle of value for money. Steps, which promise well, are now being taken to improve some of the procedures.

43. There is a well-established process for producing policy and budget estimates in which the production of business cases to justify increased expenditure for a particular area of activity plays a key role. Through this process, education resources have increased in the last two years in many areas, for example SEN, ICT, repairs and maintenance, central curriculum support and teacher recruitment initiatives. The schools visited had little sense of what the specific government education priorities were and would welcome more consultation.

44. The Department, like all government departments, has the ability to vire funding within its budget, subject to financial regulations, and has proper procedures for monitoring the budget during the financial year. In spite of this, the budget estimate of £60.2 million for 2000/1 was overspent by 2.2 per cent and that of 2001/2 of £67.6 million by 1.6 per cent and funding for special education at the beginning of the 2002/3 budget was insufficient to meet existing commitments. Procedures for ensuring both the correct funding to deliver policy for particular activities, such as the advisory service, and for financial control are weak because the budget headings do not reflect the organisation of the services and there is little emphasis on individual budget management.

45. The Department introduced delegated financial management for both secondary and primary schools, over a phased period. The scheme for secondary schools, as with the College, is now well-established. However, in spite of the Department's production of sound operational guidance notes, primary schools as a whole, both in the school survey and visits, see little or no benefit to the school arising from their scheme of delegation presently being introduced. Despite recent improvements, most primary and secondary schools visited reported their frustration with the bureaucratic procedures that they have to follow in processing financial transactions. Many of the stated purposes of delegated management, such as reducing bureaucracy, allowing decisions to be taken by those most closely involved and providing the opportunity for schools to target resources more effectively in line with school priorities are not being achieved, especially in primary schools.

46. Whatever its merits as a corporate government policy, the effect of the government's personnel control mechanism is of major concern to the schools and the College. The mechanism place a cap on the number of staff with permanent government contracts. It results in inflexibility which limits their ability to exercise delegated authority properly. Action taken to side step the cap by the appointment of teachers on short-term contracts, is regular and well known, and often not in the best interests of students. Though there will always be a need for short-term contracts, particularly in the College, the fact that 100 of 842 teachers in schools and 213 of 304 lecturers in the College are so employed is excessive. In terms of personnel practice, the cap, aided to a lesser degree by what is perceived in some schools as the excessive bureaucracy of the work permit system, militates against the effective functioning of schools.

47. The ability of headteachers to provide administrative structures most suitable to the school and to amend them as necessary, in consultation with staff and their representatives, is limited by the need to refer, often with resultant delay, to the civil service commission.

48. The Department's strategic and operational plan is supplemented by business or development plans for the constituent parts of the department. However, the documents make little reference to funding, particularly the strategic and operational plan and so fail to align service planning with financial planning. Proposed new corporate government and business

planning arrangements have the potential to provide improved corporate decision making on priorities within an annual timetable designed to establish links between policy and resource planning.

49. Preliminary work by the Department suggests that some activities which are contracted out, either to avoid the personnel cap, or for other reasons, may be more economically provided in-house. Examples are some nursery education provision and some work with pupils who are either suspended or at risk of suspension from school. On the other hand, with few exceptions, the costs of directly provided services have not been tested against other potential providers. The opportunity to produce effective benchmarking of service delivery expenditure against other possible providers is limited on the Isle of Man. Nevertheless, there has been too little analysis of comparative service costs in order to assess whether the services are providing value for money.

50. There is a staff appraisal system but no formal system of performance management. The government plans to introduce one in parallel with a new corporate planning system.

Recommendations

- Use the regulations being drafted to implement the 2001 Act to enable the production, publication and implementation of a strategy for school improvement which defines the respective duties and responsibilities of both schools and the Department of Education in raising pupils' attainment and which sets national targets for raising attainment in all schools.
- Improve the deployment of officers' time and expertise to school improvement by resourcing and reorganising their work in such a way as to separate the role of advising the Department from the role of school improvement.
- Allocate resources to priorities more effectively by aligning service planning more closely with financial planning and ensure effective budget management by presenting the education budget under headings which reflect the organisation and activities of the Department of Education.
- Improve the administration of the delegated financial management schemes, by making transactions quicker and easier for schools.
- Enable schools and the College to exercise more flexibility in appointing staff from within their delegated budgets by either amending or removing the current central personnel controls.

- Compare the costs and quality of different service providers so as to determine whether or not present service delivery offers the best value for money.

SECTION 2: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Summary

51. The Department of Education's support for school improvement is unsatisfactory. Support to enable schools to improve their capacity to manage improvement was unsatisfactory in all primary schools visited and in all but one of the secondary schools. Weaknesses in the overall strategic management of support services and the absence of clear priorities and associated resources for educational development, combined with insufficient systematic monitoring and support for senior managers, was undermining the ability of the schools to plan effectively for long-term improvements in their performance. Support had been sufficient to fully meet schools' needs in only one school visited and had been sufficiently effective in only two schools.

52. The picture is not totally bleak. Decisions to implement the English National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and to introduce a system of external inspection of schools have been timely. Specific areas of support for literacy and numeracy, particularly in primary schools, have proved to be effective, and overall support for ICT is very good. Recent initiatives by the new Director of Education and temporary Assistant Director have now set about addressing some key strategic weaknesses. However, these developments are still at a very early stage and have yet to be consolidated.

53. Other services bear upon the teaching and curriculum support services. Support for school improvement in meeting SEN has the weakness that it offers too little support to schools to increase their capacity to manage the work themselves for the management of the work of the schools and planning for the education of pupils aged 16-19 lacks strategy. Management support services, except for finance are satisfactory. Although support for attendance is highly satisfactory and that for health and safety is good, support for behaviour, for children being educated other than at school, for child protection and children in public care is weak.

Monitoring, challenge and support, including support to schools causing concern

54. The role of the advisory service centres on monitoring the work of schools, supporting, initiating and managing educational change, and supporting innovation, including policy formation. This remit includes providing support and expertise, including training and professional development, and acting as 'critical friend' to headteachers and senior managers, in order that schools can implement policy. Some aspects of this role have been performed adequately. However, the monitoring of schools and their performance, and provision of the necessary support and challenge to schools to improve their performance have not.

55. Schools are unclear about procedures for monitoring, challenge and support. The nature and purpose of monitoring is insufficiently defined and, in

general, data available to the advisory service has not been used effectively to differentiate the support that the small number of phase advisers can provide. The Department has recognised the need to differentiate its support to schools, but the pace of developments and decision making has been too slow.

56. In 1998, the Department's own evaluation recognised that its practice of biannual school reviews conducted by specialist phase advisers lacked sufficient rigour and so it introduced the system of external inspections. The cycle of inspections of primary schools, including a second round of short review inspections to follow up improvement in the schools, will be completed by 2004. The secondary school inspection cycle is already completed.

57. Analysis of external inspection evidence by phase advisers has been partial and, in the case of primary schools, it has been poor. The analysis that advisers have undertaken has identified some common areas of weakness in schools, for example in assessment and in leadership and management, and these have underpinned areas for development and improvement in school in the current Strategic and Operational Plan. However, no systematic, detailed analysis of the inspection evidence has taken place to identify particular strengths and weaknesses in teaching, in the quality of education, in the ethos, or in the management and leadership of schools from available inspection evidence.

58. In addition, analysis by other services, such as ICT and SEN, has not been brought together systematically to provide a sufficiently comprehensive picture of the performance of schools. A database of all evidence available from external inspection and advisory work is only now being created. It has the potential to be an excellent tool, and to provide the evidence needed for the Department to target its resources for monitoring and supporting schools more effectively, but its initiation has been too slow.

59. No final decision has been made about the form of the next cycle of monitoring and inspection of the schools. Current proposals involve another full inspection programme by inspection teams of external inspectors, advisers and senior staff from the island's schools. This element of 'peer' inspection is potentially productive, and could provide a useful adjunct to the professional development of headteachers and senior managers. However, how such inspections might be differentiated according to the relative performance and needs of schools has not yet been formally discussed, nor has the training necessary for school staff to take on the role of 'peer' inspectors.

60. Most importantly, a clear framework for school self-evaluation and planning has yet to be developed and the role such an evaluation might play in the inspection arrangements has not been formally discussed with the schools. Schools are keen for these developments to be introduced and are rightly frustrated by the lack of demonstrable progress and action so far.

61. Support for those schools that are underperforming and are a cause for concern is unsatisfactory. Schools that have been in difficulties and have been most in need of support have not always received timely or sufficient support from advisers to help them to plan and manage their improvement effectively. The Department took the decision that the external inspections should be essentially developmental and that the OFSTED categorisation of schools causing concern would not be part of them. The island has no formal definition or categorisation of schools causing concern and no formal procedures for challenging or intervening in them. Evidence from inspection has not been sufficiently analysed and used to target resources effectively or to provide all schools or Ministers with important contextual information about their performance.

62. Additional evidence commissioned by the Department from the inspection contractor identifies around one in eight primary schools as having serious weaknesses. Visits to two of these schools showed that the Department has used inspection evidence to target its limited advisory support programmes to good effect, for example in supporting literacy and numeracy and in its Investors in People programme, to help address some areas of weakness identified in these schools. However, in these schools, as in virtually every other school visited, it has not provided sufficient, or consistent, monitoring by the relevant phase adviser to fulfil adequately its identified role as critical friend in supporting and challenging schools in their efforts to improve. The recently introduced patch adviser system has not so far dealt with this weakness. Primary schools are highly critical of the Department's support to schools experiencing difficulties, rating it as poor; secondary schools also rate it as less than satisfactory.

Management of services to support school improvement

63. Many of the weaknesses reported above are the result of a lack of effective strategic planning and management of the work advisory and other support services. They have lacked a sufficiently clear framework for planning and managing their work, both in developing policy and supporting school improvement. There is no comprehensive system of performance management. Systematic monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the work of co-ordinating advisers and support services has only just begun to take place. The new system has the potential to improve the planning of the service. At present service planning is poor. Plans are inconsistent in format and many do not include clear timescales, outcomes, or criteria to judge progress and success. In particular, they fail to allocate financial resources to the priorities set and the activities proposed.

64. The advisory and support service is small. It consists of 12 full-time equivalent staff. The three co-ordinating advisers for primary, secondary and post-16 education, the ICT Adviser and the Assistant Education Officer for SEN make up the senior advisory team and act as link advisers to schools. The service recognises the limitations of its size and range of expertise and makes significant efforts to ensure that expertise from other sources, principally through education consultants, and advisory services, schools and

higher education in England are made available to its schools. Nevertheless, this support is not deployed in such a way as to provide the systematic monitoring and support that the Department's remit requires, and schools need. Schools visited were critical of the new patch adviser system which some saw as depriving them of direct access to phase expertise. The advisory service lacks sufficient expertise in senior secondary school management in order to provide the necessary support and challenge for secondary headteachers.

Other support services

65. Peripatetic services to schools, provided by the **Music Service**, **Primary Modern Languages Service (PMLS)** and **Manx Language Unit** are managed by the advisory service. The overall size of these services far outstrips that of advisory support services. The Music Service employs 10 full-time and nine part-time peripatetic teachers working with around 10 per cent of pupils. The PMLS employs 12 full-time peripatetic staff teaching all pupils in Key Stage 2. The Manx Language Unit, however, is too small. Its four full-time staff are unable to meet the service's key objective of offering tuition to all those pupils aged seven and above who wish to study the language: around 16 per cent of pupils.

66. These services perform their role effectively and the pupils they teach achieve generally satisfactory or good standards. The Music Service regularly achieves high numbers of pupils attaining its Music Awards. In 2002, the PMLS assessed an average of 55 per cent of Year 6 pupils as attaining National Curriculum Level 3 and above in French. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C GCSE grades in French in 2001, the first cohort to have fully experienced the Primary Modern Language course, was significantly above that in England and since 1995 attainment rates have increased at 10 times the rate in England. Neither the Music Service nor the Manx Language Unit have developed the means of monitoring and comparing patterns of performance and attainment year on year. However, the 2001 Census on the island indicates that there are 1700 Manx speakers on the island, a three fold increase since the last Census in 1991. Just under half of these were under the age of 20, suggesting that the work of the unit has had an impact.

67. Schools visited were generally satisfied with these services and found them to provide effective tuition. However, the role of the services is limited and has relatively little impact on the general curriculum of the schools. There is no requirement for the services, nor any formal requirement of schools, to try to ensure that the work of the pupils and their experiences are integrated into other related language work or creative activity. Their experiences are, therefore, often isolated from their general education. The extensive expertise of these services does not contribute formally to curriculum development programmes, or in-service programmes for teachers.

Effectiveness and value for money

68. The Department spends just over £1 million on its central advisory and support service. It spends around the same amount on its three peripatetic services. There is little evidence of a clear rationale in the strategic planning and development of levels of educational support needed to deliver key education priorities. There are inconsistencies in the resourcing of services relative to demand and resources for core advisory functions have been overstretched. It is difficult to draw direct comparisons in the funding and costs of advisory and support services with other such services in England. The funding systems are different. Nevertheless, general weaknesses in its strategic planning and co-ordination means that the Department has lacked the ability to monitor and evaluate the relative performance of these services in relation to costs. Given the strategic and operational weaknesses and unsatisfactory performance in many aspects of its central role, the advisory service as a whole has not provided satisfactory value for money.

Recommendations

- In consultation with schools, and in the regulations being drafted to implement the new legislation, define the functions of advisory services in monitoring, challenging and supporting schools and specify how these functions will be carried out in order to meet the differing needs of the schools, and to reflect their progress and performance.
- Establish an agreed system for school self-review, specifying how this will be integrated with systems for monitoring and evaluating schools, including external inspection.
- Improve the management and organisation of school improvement services by evaluating and planning the work in relation to clear, measurable targets for improving pupils' attainment.
- Improve the work of the peripatetic support services to ensure that they play a full role in delivering the Department's educational priorities and objectives and in supporting curriculum development and teaching.
- Decide if the intended level of Manx language provision set when the language was introduced in schools is to be met and, if it is, resource the work to meet the objective.

Support to schools for the use of performance data

69. Overall the Department's support to schools in the use of performance data is unsatisfactory. The data provided enables the schools to compare their individual performance with the island average, with other schools and with the average for England. There are some significant strengths in the data provided for secondary schools but the analysis of performance data provided to primary schools is very basic. The weakness in both phases is that there is too little support for the schools in using the analysis of data to raise standards.

70. The Department's work on improving the range and quality of data available is sound and its introduction of some of the key elements of compulsory assessment has been effective. Schools are now required to administer the National Curriculum tests at the ends of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and to use the optional tests Years 3, 4 and 5. This has resulted in the island now becoming increasingly rich in performance data and the Department is now buying into a data analysis package produced by an English LEA. It should soon be able to produce comprehensive analysis of the progress of all pupils and the performance of schools.

71. Nevertheless, much remains to be done to ensure that all schools are able to use this information effectively to set challenging targets and raise standards. Even though they are now required to set targets for pupils' performance at the ends of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, support to primary schools in this respect has been particularly poor. Moreover, despite the Department's introducing, and providing some significant training to support the effective use of data to predict pupils attainment in secondary schools, those schools have not been required to set similar targets for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

72. Headteachers are well aware of the importance of using data in their efforts to improve their schools, and are keen to engage in the process. They are frustrated by the slow progress of the Department and its apparent diffidence in driving this agenda forward. Primary schools in particular are highly critical of the Department's efforts, with three-quarters of the schools surveyed rating guidance and support as poor or very poor. This inspection confirms their views. Support to schools in using performance data, and related target setting, to help them improve was unsatisfactory in all schools visited.

Recommendations

- Improve the performance data provided to schools by presenting the data provided to primary schools in a way which makes it easier to interpret and by accompanying it with an analysis which enables them to identify trends and patterns in performance and to compare their performance with like schools.

- Improve the support for schools in analysing performance data and setting targets by developing with the schools clear guidance on both the interpretation of data and target setting, and by training headteachers, subject managers and advisory staff in its use.
- Ensure that schools set performance targets for the end of all key stages, including Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

Support for literacy and numeracy

73. Support for literacy and numeracy in primary and secondary schools is satisfactory overall. There are strengths, for example in the support to primary schools provided by the two literacy and numeracy consultants. However, there are some weaknesses. Teaching resources to support the primary strategies have not been sufficiently developed. The primary strategies are not having the impact on helping schools to improve whole-school strategies for assessment, target setting and raising expectations of pupils attainment that the strategies are proving to have had in English LEAs. There has not been sufficient co-ordination in planning and developing a comprehensive strategy for literacy and numeracy throughout primary and secondary education, or in the implementation and resourcing of initiatives and support across the two phases.

Support for literacy and numeracy in primary schools

74. The island acted promptly in implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies at the same time as schools in England and has had success in raising attainment. Two primary headteachers have now been seconded full-time to act as consultants for both initiatives. The Department has supported both consultants in attending the training for both initiatives and this has helped to ensure that most aspects of the two strategies have been implemented effectively. The expertise and knowledge of the consultants and the quality of the practical advice and support they provide were praised during school visits. Support for literacy and numeracy was judged to be at least satisfactory in all primary schools visited; support for literacy was good in over half these schools and support for numeracy was good in a third.

75. The training provided has been effective, and support in schools, particularly those receiving intensive help for either literacy and numeracy, has generally been good. Planning for the implementation of both strategies is well co-ordinated. Action plans are sound and identify sufficiently clear targets for activities, timescales and success criteria. However, this planning does not identify clear targets for improvements in standards and the performance of schools.

76. The initial work of consultants focused on centrally provided induction and training for all schools and on responding to individual requests for support from schools. It was not until 2001 that the Department developed criteria for identifying schools most in need of intensive support. Consultants

are currently providing intensive support to 12 schools. They are also continuing to offer substantial support to all schools, through central training, supporting newly qualified teachers and through meetings with clusters of schools across the island. This limited resource is becoming over-stretched. There has also been no analysis of school targets to identify what level of improvement can be expected across all schools or in those receiving intensive support.

77. The Department is aware of the need to develop clear criteria with schools on the levels of support that can be expected and to further differentiate the support that is provided, now that the strategies are sufficiently well implemented. They are seeking to identify leading teachers to provide an additional resource for supporting schools. However, clear criteria for identifying the next group of schools requiring intensive support have yet to be determined and planning for the future allocations of differentiated levels of support has been slow. Decisions will be too late to help schools, particularly those most in need, to plan effectively for the start of the school year.

Support literacy and numeracy in secondary schools

78. The Department's support for improving literacy and numeracy in secondary schools is linked to the English Key Stage 3 strategy. Specific support for early developments in literacy and numeracy has been sound. The Department has generously funded and facilitated the release of teachers from three schools to attend training programmes in England for consultants leading the Key Stage 3 strategy. Good use has been made of their expertise in arranging training for heads of departments in all schools and in running a pilot literacy Summer School. Subsequent developments are still at an early stage but, overall, have been more effective in numeracy than in literacy. Support for literacy was judged to have been satisfactory in all but one of the schools visited. Support for numeracy was at least satisfactory in all schools, and was judged to be good in one.

79. However, the Department has yet to finalise decisions on how, precisely, it is to support the development of literacy and numeracy, or to what extent it intends to implement all aspects of the Key Stage 3 strategy. Decisions have not yet been taken on whether key aspects, or all required elements, of the strategy as a whole, such as the development of cross-curricular elements of literacy and numeracy will be implemented by schools. Nor has adequate consideration been given to how the overall strategy can be used to support improvements in teaching and learning.

Recommendations

- Improve support for literacy and numeracy in schools by differentiating the support provided to the schools and planning the work of the consultants according to criteria based on pupils' attainment and the targets set for its improvement.

- Develop, in consultation with schools, a strategy improving literacy and numeracy throughout both primary and secondary schools and decide with schools the extent and nature of the implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy.

Support for information and communications technology (ICT)

80. The Department, and its ICT support services, provide very good support for the use of ICT in the curriculum and for administrative use in primary schools. They provide good support for curriculum ICT in secondary schools. Many aspects of ICT support are ahead of comparative work in England. Schools surveyed rated support for curriculum ICT very highly. They were, however, more critical of the Department's support in developing effective electronic transfer of data between schools, secondary schools rating this as poor. The inspection confirms schools' views. Support for ICT was judged to good or very good in all primary schools visited; curriculum support was at least satisfactory in all secondary schools and good in over half.
81. The Department has a clear vision and strategy for ICT in its schools. It is at the forefront of the government's overarching strategy for ICT development, which sees electronic communications and commerce as central to the island's economic future. The Department's ICT strategy was launched in 1999, with a very substantial financial commitment from government to provide £4.5 million over three years and an additional revenue budget of £500,000 per annum. The Department's strategy has a clear focus on raising attainment in ICT capability and in the use of ICT across the curriculum, and is well linked with the effective use of ICT for school management and administration. For the most part it has implemented its strategy very well.
82. The ICT team provides a fully managed service to primary schools and all have bought back fully into this system. The service has developed its own excellent information management system which supports all aspects of ICT provision for administrative and curricular use. At the outset of devolved financial management to secondary schools, however, the Department failed to give a sufficiently firm steer and schools each selected entirely different hardware solutions for their curricular networks. The Department has made determined moves to ensure that there is sufficient compatibility between hardware and software that it has provided to schools. Nevertheless, problems in transfer of data between schools stem from this initial reluctance to provide clear guidance.
83. The Department's targets for ICT developments are challenging, with many of the requirements of the United Kingdom National Grid for Learning (NGfL) initiative to be achieved earlier than in England. It has made very good progress in meeting these targets. All schools and the College, for example are connected to the NGfL and there is a computer:pupil ratio of 1:7 in primary schools and 1:5 in secondary schools. An education intranet is

being actively developed, though it is not yet being systematically used by schools for sharing curriculum materials.

84. All full-time teaching staff and most part-time and supply staff in schools have been issued with a wireless lap top computer. This has had a significant, and positive, effect on the flexibility of teaching and the confident and consistent use of computers by staff and pupils. It has also enabled a very flexible approach to training and in-service support for ICT. The out-reach service to primary schools, through its mobile computer bus, is very good. All schools visited rated this support as excellent. The Department has developed its own equivalent to the New Opportunities Fund training in England. This training package and associated curriculum and teaching materials is very good and the Department estimates that, by the end of this financial year, 80 per cent of teachers will have received the training.

85. Attainment at GCSE in ICT and Computer Studies is well above the average for English schools. In 2000 for example, 67.4 per cent of pupils achieved an A*-C grade compared with 54 per cent of pupils in England. Ninety-one per cent of pupils left school with a recognised ICT qualification in 2001 and the island is well on the way to meeting its target of 100 per cent. The ICT service uses inspection reports, examination results, and information from its in-service programmes to target its support. However, although the Department can measure its effect on improving results at Key Stage 4, it has not developed the means to monitor and evaluate the performance, and progress, of pupils in primary schools and in Key Stage 3.

86. The government's overarching strategy includes a target for the development of effective access and transfer of data throughout all its departments. The database currently being developed by the ICT service will provide comprehensive access to information on pupils to all services within education. However, this is currently not compatible with data systems in other key services such as Social Services.

Recommendation

- Improve the monitoring of standards and the performance of schools in ICT by collecting systematic information on the standards attained by pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Support for Governors

87. School governance has undergone much recent change. These developments have given rise to an extensive need to support the governors and to develop the role they play in the schools. The support has some strengths, but these are outweighed by the weakness that the support has yet to become effective in realising the potential contribution to school improvement that the governors can make. The support was judged unsatisfactory in the school survey.

88. Until April 2001, Manx primary schools did not have governing bodies. The Board of Education fulfilled the function through a series of regional primary committees, each responsible for the governance of primary schools in their area. The extension of delegated financial management to the primary phase was the occasion for the establishment of the new governing bodies, chaired by Board members and also consisting of parents' and teachers' representatives and other co-opted members. A survey of governors has been used to establish their training needs. This is a sound procedure in itself, but the schools visits showed that governors are not yet fully exercising their roles as advisers to headteachers or in evaluating the schools' academic performance. The governors are unclear as to the full nature of their role. These weaknesses are particularly evident in primary schools. In secondary schools, the phase adviser presents the governors with an analysis of examination results, but it is not possible for the single primary adviser to provide the 35 schools with a similar analysis. Many of the Board members have substantial experience of the governance of education, but the new governors need more help than they are receiving at present in order for them to provide the headteachers with adequate support.

Recommendation

- Improve school governance by providing better support and guidance to the governing bodies, particularly of primary schools.

Support for school management

89. On balance, the Department's support to school management is unsatisfactory. There are strengths, notably in its support for headteachers and senior managers of schools to undertake the United Kingdom national training programmes for serving and aspiring headteachers, in aspects of its support to middle managers in secondary schools, and in its support to newly qualified teachers. The Department provides good support to subject teachers in secondary schools to enable them to keep abreast of developments in national examinations.

90. This work notwithstanding, the Department does not have a systematic or, in the view of many headteachers, credible, strategy for supporting the management of schools or in supporting headteachers in planning and managing the improvement of their schools. Primary schools surveyed were most critical, rating support for headteachers and senior managers, and for middle managers, as less than satisfactory; secondary schools rated these aspects as satisfactory or better. Both primary and secondary schools rated the Department's support for the development of effective self-evaluation and associated strategic planning and management of improvement as poor. Inspection confirms this picture.

91. Weaknesses in consultation with headteachers on the focus of educational developments, and the lack of strategic direction in education policy and initiatives has meant that headteachers and schools have not been

able to plan effectively for the longer-term development of their schools. Support for school self-review and development planning has been inadequate. Where inspections have identified weaknesses in the leadership and management of primary schools, the Department has tried, occasionally to good effect, to use its limited advisory support, or brokered some mentoring support using experienced headteachers from schools and LEAs in England. However, specialist phase adviser support has not been well enough used and has not been adequate or effective.

92. Recent initiatives led by the temporary Assistant Director have improved consultation and the involvement of schools in strategic developments but, until recently, there has not been enough guidance and support for the implementation of central initiatives. Too often this has left individual headteachers and schools to re-invent the wheel in their efforts to manage change.

93. The Department makes significant efforts to ensure that teachers and managers in schools have access to training and professional development from a wide range of providers. However, the absence of any long-term outline of the continuing professional development programme has constrained schools' ability to plan and manage their training and development needs effectively. There are plans to address this in conjunction with schools. The island's Co-ordinated Teacher Release (CTR) programme provides a good mechanism for identifying and meeting the training needs of heads of department, curriculum managers, and subject teachers in secondary schools. In the past, the CTR programme in primary schools has, in principle, provided an efficient and generally effective mechanism for training and professional development. This programme lapsed last year. The Department is now considering its re-introduction, with a greater involvement of schools in planning its focus and content.

94. The Department provides a well balanced programme of support for newly qualified teachers appointed to its schools. It has taken positive action to ensure that this programme is recognised, and ratified, by the Department for Education and Skills so that teachers moving to work in England are not required to complete a further induction programme.

Recommendation

- Improve support for primary school management by increasing support to those schools where leadership and management is identified as a weakness.

Support for careers education and guidance

95. The Careers Service operates from within the Youth and Community Service. It provides support to the secondary schools and the College. The support it provides is poor.

96. There is no clear statement of entitlement relating to careers service support to the schools and no agreed strategy for this provision. The service strives to support and maintain liaison with the schools, to provide careers advice to 16 year olds and to offer impartial careers guidance in the community, but it is over-stretched.
97. The Careers Service Manager chairs meetings of the schools' careers co-ordinators but the meetings have been infrequent and do not succeed in reviewing new developments or spreading good practice. Budgets allocated by the schools for careers vary widely and some are inadequate.
98. The service's support for schools is very variable. It supports Year 9 and Year 10 pupils in only some schools. Careers advisers aim to provide individual interviews in-school for all Year 11 students, but in 2001 only 57 per cent of Year 11 pupils had them. Individual guidance interviews are provided to sixth-form students on request, but only 29 such interviews were completed in schools in 2001. The support has improved this year in the schools for Year 11, as more effective access has been achieved by the careers advisers and staffing has been increased.
99. However, the service's access to and support for the sixth-forms remains inadequate. The careers advice to Year 12 students moving into employment or training is much valued but heads of sixth-forms and careers co-ordinators in the schools do not have complete confidence in the advice provided by the service on choosing examination courses or on progression to higher education.
100. The careers service's support for independent careers advice to students at the College was judged unsatisfactory at the inspection in 2000/2001. The service has improved its support to the College through a service level agreement but improving this service has cut the available support for the schools.
101. The careers service's partnerships with outside agencies and with other sections of the department, such as the youth service and the SEN advisory service are underdeveloped. The provision of independent careers support for students with SEN is inadequate and there are insufficient links between the careers service, the youth service and social services to provide adequate support for young people in the 11 to 19 age group who are at risk of social exclusion.

Recommendations

- Improve careers education and guidance by working with the secondary schools and the College to identify their entitlement to support, to ensure consistent and effective support for young people in all aspects of the provision.

- Establish closer working between the careers service, the youth service and other agencies to develop strategies for promoting social inclusion and equality of opportunity.

SECTION 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Corporate Planning

102. Corporate arrangements within the Isle of Man government are weak. There are plans in hand by both officers and Ministers to strengthen them but these plans will not come into operation until April 2003. At present more strength lies with the individual Departments than with the centre. The government's current statement of purpose sets out eight central policies which are framed at such a high level of generality that it is not clear how education fits in, except in fulfilling the intention, "to ensure that the Island has a population which is sufficient in skills to serve the needs of the community and the economy."
103. This broad intention is not then developed in more specific detail to enable the Department of Education to plan its contribution to the corporate whole and to set its priorities in relation to that whole. Nor is it possible to see from these documents the relative priority attached to education compared to other services.
104. The new plan, "Corporate government and business planning – the way ahead" will not be presented to Tynwald until February 2003 and is therefore not yet policy. As it stands at present, however, it has the potential to address some of the weaknesses in the present system, providing for education a clearer place in the whole. Its weakness is that by placing education within only the aim to promote social well-being and the aim to promote economic progress, it fails to demonstrate the contribution it should be making to other aims.
105. Within the education service itself the strategic and operational plan sets out core policies and more short-term objectives for each of Department's main areas of activity. It is a weak document in that it is not based on an analysis of the current performance of the education system. It sets out which officers are responsible for carrying out the proposed activities, but fails to set specific deadlines for the completion of tasks or measurable indicators of their successful completion, nor does it set out costs. In particular, it fails to make enough use of pupils' attainment as a success measure and so to demonstrate how the activities will raise standards. The document has not been brought up-to-date in the current year.
106. Here again there are some signs of positive change which, like others, have followed on the appointment of the new Director. A replacement plan is being developed in consultation with the schools. Consultation has been poor in the past but there is now an effective and carefully structured procedure. Schools welcome the new spirit of openness in the work being delivered by the temporary Assistant Director and are committed to taking part in the planning process. Furthermore, if the new corporate planning procedures are implemented, they too have the potential to improve education planning by requiring greater precision in setting out policies and the use of measurable criteria for success.

107. A result of the lack of such criteria at present is that the Department's evaluation procedures are weak. Although there is a system of staff appraisal for the officers it cannot fully appraise their performance because of the lack of measurements of success and because the tasks required of particular officers are not clearly related to corporate objectives.

108. The small scale of the education service brings a potential advantage to its management. The Department meets fortnightly and can call directly on senior officers. As a result, the decision making process can be brisk. However, there can be significant delays when decisions about education issues are taken elsewhere in government, for example, over financial matters requiring decision by the Treasury. Even within the Department, the decision making process has not led to the establishment of clear and purposeful policy, particularly in the matters of school improvement and in allocating resources to priorities.

109. The small size of the island community as a whole also brings advantages to education. The Department and its officers are able to establish effective relationships with external bodies, such as the police, the museums service and businesses. The business links have brought about improvements in the schools. However, relations with other Departments of government are less secure, for example with the Department of Health and Social Security over pupils in public care. These difficulties within government provide further evidence of the problems which come from the current independence of the Departments and lack of a strong corporate centre. The government's establishment of a new body, the Children and Young People's Strategy Committee, to co-ordinate services for children suggests that it is becoming aware of the problem and is beginning to deal with it, in at least one area.

Management services

110. Most management services are funded centrally and not delegated to schools. Some preliminary work has been undertaken on the establishment of service level agreements with schools, by the works division in particular. However, this activity is not co-ordinated throughout the Department. It was clear from the school visits that the production of these agreements, setting out schools' entitlement to the delivery of the services is needed.

111. The service for **personnel** is at present satisfactory. Its strengths outweigh its weaknesses. The school survey and visits demonstrated a wide range of views. Overall, schools rate the service as satisfactory. However, although many of the fundamentals of the service are sound, there are particular concerns about basic administration, such as the speed and accuracy of appointment letters, and the quality of case work in schools. The Department itself has recognised that existing management information on staff records is not always kept up-to-date and there is insufficient capacity to provide good personnel advice to schools. As a result, and belatedly, a dedicated human resources section will be established, allowing the present

human resources manager, in whom schools have confidence, to improve the quality of service. Current activity to promote recruitment to key posts, including those in schools is diverse and poorly co-ordinated. The improved staffing will allow the necessary drive to be provided from a central human resources unit.

112. Though regarded by some schools as good, the overall **financial support** provided for schools, except for the provision of financial audit, is unsatisfactory. This is not so much a reflection on the few people providing the service as the general concerns of primary schools about the current position in respect of delegated financial management and the frustration of many primary and secondary schools about the delays caused by the inefficient processing of financial transactions by the school, the Department of Education and the Treasury. Furthermore, some schools visited expressed concern over inaccurate financial statements.

113. The information provided to schools to monitor their budgets throughout the year has been satisfactory and considerable additional assistance has been provided to primary schools to sort out any issues arising at the end of the first year of delegation. However, final delegated budgets were issued to schools too late and well after the beginning of the current financial year. The schools surveyed were highly critical of support on the planning and control of the school budget.

114. Support for **ICT in school administration** is good; it is very good in primary schools. The school survey rates it as such, as did schools visited. The government has invested heavily in a range of measures, including major resources to education. As a result, there is generally good electronic communication information exchange between the Department of Education and schools and good provision of hardware in schools with appropriate arrangements made for effective maintenance. There are, however, problems in transferring data between primary and secondary schools which have still to be solved.

115. Education ICT developments fit well with those of the corporate government strategy and plans are in hand to integrate school financial systems with the Treasury payment system. Representative primary schools were correctly involved in the planning behind the introduction of the locally developed information management system. Secondary schools use an imported commercial system. Work is in hand to improve the interface between these different systems. There are effective arrangements both for consultation with schools and for ensuring that the service provided offers value for money compared with other potential providers.

116. Services for **property maintenance** are very satisfactory overall. This was confirmed by the school survey and by visits to schools. Prior to the introduction of financial delegation, all building work on education premises was carried out by the Department's works division. On delegation, schools became free to hire other contractors. Nevertheless, schools' confidence in the works division has been demonstrated by many of them continuing to use

it. Business planning is thorough and effective, proper account is taken of schools' feedback.

117. The **catering** service is satisfactory. All secondary schools manage their own provision, with informal support from the school meals organiser. Catering in primary schools is organised centrally. Good efforts are being made to improve the quality of meals through the promotion of well-balanced menus. An external consultancy report in 1999 on the provision of school meals compared with that in England brought some useful improvements but the comparative information is now out-of-date. More specific targets for the service should be established, in particular financial ones, if the aim of the development plan to work towards the goal of nil deficit is to be pursued.

118. **Grounds maintenance, caretaking and cleaning** are very satisfactory and rated as such in the school survey. Grounds maintenance is not delegated to schools, and has sufficient funding and staff to provide an effective service. Caretaking and cleaning is delegated, with generally well-received advisory support available from the centre.

Recommendations

- Improve corporate planning by producing a planning system across government which will establish the place of education in the government as a corporate entity and establish the priority attached to it.
- Develop and implement planning procedures within the education service which will show how the Department's and officers' activities contribute to corporate priorities and which, through the use of costings and measurable criteria of success, will improve the evaluation of activities and the value for money they provide.
- Improve the quality of management services by introducing service level agreements to regulate the delivery of the services to schools and by make the services, particularly the financial service, more responsive to schools' needs.
- Establish more specific financial targets for the school meals service.

SECTION 4: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVISION

Strategy

119. The general SEN strategy of the Department to promote inclusion is clear, and understood by all schools. However, planning for the implementation of the strategy as a whole is unsatisfactory.
120. There are currently special units in about a third of primary schools, and in four of the five secondary schools. Each school's special unit is generic, catering for all the pupils with various significant SEN in its area. For other pupils with SEN, provision is made broadly along the lines of the school-based stages of the SEN Code of Practice in England and Wales.
121. The exceptions to these arrangements include some provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (paragraphs 162-165), and two school-based special units for severe hearing and communication difficulties, which provide for children across the island. A small number of young people are placed by the Department of Health and Social Security in care provision in England. A pre-school SEN centre provides multi-disciplinary assessment, individual programmes and preparation for school for a large number of children each year.
122. The Department's staff and the vast majority of schools regard these developments as in accord with inclusion principles. The pattern of provision has evolved gradually, based on a combination of centrally identified need, the availability of accommodation in schools and local consultation. There is a clear personal commitment amongst officers and politicians to promote inclusion. Equally, schools warmly embrace that concept and welcome the role they could play. However, there is no published or clearly understood policy or strategy that goes beyond the status of a desirable policy objective. Consequently, there is both debate and doubt in the field over broad matters such as what inclusion means in practice and what sort of schools the Department wants to create. This is coupled with uncertainty over specific matters such as the shape, timescale and resourcing of future developments, and the balance of special provision between units and in mainstream. Several schools question the rationale for the development of off-site provision, which they feel contradicts the inclusion principle.
123. In the course of school visits, many schools visited expressed concern about the level of current resourcing for pupils with SEN, both in terms of adequacy and in terms of the equitability of its distribution. Primary schools were mixed in their judgement of the Department's performance in SEN issues; secondary schools considered it unsatisfactory. Arrangements for the smooth transition of SEN pupils from primary to secondary and, particularly secondary to further education were criticised in a number of cases.

Statutory obligations

124. There are few statutory duties apart from the general one to identify and assess pupils with SEN and make appropriate provision for them. The Department takes reasonable steps to meet these statutory duties.

125. The Department has adopted a model based on the staged approach to assessment and planning in the SEN Code of Practice as it operates in England and Wales. Each school has an SEN co-ordinator. The significant variant is that there are no statements of SEN for those pupils who are beyond the school-based stages. For these pupils, assessments, consultations, decisions and transfers are normally made quickly and placements are reviewed regularly, though a minority of schools visited considered that procedures were sometimes too slow. Schools do not have a governor responsible for SEN.

126. Parental representations are mainly dealt with locally and informally, and effectively, with the intention to pre-empt a more formal appeal. Parents have good direct access to elected members, who take an active interest in special education and deal with concerns speedily, often through direct involvement with the school.

Improvement and value for money

127. Support for improving schools' capacity to provide effectively for SEN has some strengths but, overall, is unsatisfactory. In the main, SENCOs carry out their assessment, external liaison and case review role effectively, despite what they see as a lack of clarity over certain resource decisions made by the Department. Generally, they have too little encouragement from the Department to develop their internal consultancy and training role. Support and training for SENCOs is more in relation to procedures than in relation to the strategies needed to develop whole-school practice. One secondary school has appointed a senior manager, initially to oversee SEN developments and in the longer term to lead the whole-school drive towards inclusion. Although supported by the Department, this initiative does not, as yet, form part of a blueprint for further development and more widespread adoption.

128. Despite improvements in recent years, the number of the Department's SEN staff – both at officer level and in the field – is still limited. SEN team leaders and educational psychologists each have a large number of schools to cover. Schools value the regularity of visits, the personal approach, the continuity of personnel and the often quick and sympathetic response to unforeseen difficulties. The structured support provided by the area co-ordinators is particularly valued by most primary schools visited. Schools are much less satisfied with the ability of support staff to work with them in a more strategic and sustained way. Many schools regard senior officers as 'wearing too many hats' and as having too many important initiatives to manage.

129. There are few recognisable links between the Department's support for SEN provision and its support for school improvement and other functions. In part, this is attributable to the lack of clarity and shared vision about the meaning and implications of inclusion, as it relates to all pupils' learning. Monitoring and evaluation of SEN provision in schools are carried out, much of it systematically. For example, there is periodic sampling and analysis of pupils' cases, but in practice this focuses mainly on whether correct procedures have been followed. The overriding impression gained by schools is that the emphasis is on the Department's needs rather than on other aspects of quality and pupils' progress. Some work is underway to devise appropriate outcome measures that would do justice to the range of SEN, but these are not yet in use.

130. A substantial and still increasing number of learning support assistants (LSAs) have been appointed to provide SEN support in schools. This is the main resource to support the development of SEN provision in schools, as there is no delegation of finance for SEN. The basis on which the support is deployed is unclear to the schools. Learning support assistants are almost always temporary appointments and are managed by the Department's SEN team. This makes it difficult for schools to plan how best to deploy LSAs both in the long-term and in their particular context. There is no centrally driven strategy to train LSAs in the knowledge and skills involved in working with pupils with a wide range of SEN. A few schools; chiefly secondary schools and one or two large primary schools, have appointed LSAs from their own budget and can therefore overcome these restrictions.

131. The SEN budget continues to be held centrally and disbursed to support schools. Government expenditure on special education has grown significantly in recent years and in 2002/3 is estimated as 6.7 per cent (£4.7m) of the education budget as compared with a spend of 4.5 per cent (£2.1m) in 1997/8. However, at the beginning of 2002/3, the established budget was insufficient to meet needs. The Department recognises that budget monitoring requires improvement and that the continued development of SEN, through the growth of specialist provision and the planned expansion of the number of LSAs, underlines the requirement for a much closer relationship than hitherto between service and financial planning.

132. It is difficult to reach a definitive view about the adequacy of current SEN expenditure, given the absence of any composite benchmarking information with SEN funding in England. At present there is no longer-term development plan for SEN on the island accompanied, not just by costed proposals but by comparison with equivalent expenditure levels in England and an estimate of a reasonable level of SEN spending as a percentage of Isle of Man education expenditure. The weaknesses in school improvement, together with the weaknesses in budget management, result in it being impossible to say if the Department's exercise of its SEN functions provides value for money.

Recommendations

- Improve the strategy for inclusion by agreeing with schools a timescale for its further development, by making clear its expectations of schools and setting out what it regards as good practice.
- Clarify the formulae and criteria for allocating SEN resources to schools.
- Support the management of SEN in the schools by improving consultancy so that SENCOs are helped to shape whole-school approaches to learners' needs and so that officers emphasise monitoring procedures less and measuring progress and outcomes more.

SECTION 5: 16-19 EDUCATION

Strategy

133. The Department of Education provides 16-19 education in school sixth-forms and at the Isle of Man College of Further Education. The policy is to set a minimum group size of five students. With small group sizes, this unco-ordinated provision is not an economic structure for post-compulsory education. The provision is unco-ordinated and for a cohort of 800 to 1000 16 year-olds staying on in education and training, is unlikely to provide good value for money even though the sixth-form results are good. The Department is aware of this weakness and is currently seeking to encourage more collaboration between providers

134. The Department's strategic intention is to co-ordinate the sixth-form provision with the provision made by the College but this intention has yet to be realised and the scale of any collaboration has been very small and slow to develop. The College mainly provides vocational education and training for young people and adult learners. Just over one-fifth of the Year 11 students from the schools go into full-time courses at the College. Traditionally the College has offered a limited range of A-level subjects not available in the sixth-forms. The range has widened in recent years to meet demand, but does not include sciences. The average A-level points score per student is considerably lower than in the sixth-forms.

135. The strategic plan for the College includes aims to improve collaboration, but identifies problems of continued competition from the schools, especially the four with newly equipped sixth-form centres. Overall, the schools are not convinced of the need for collaboration and fear that the College is held in low-esteem by parents and by students, except for those wishing to take vocational or training courses. However, the focus of discussion of collaboration has moved forward recently in response to the United Kingdom government's 14-19 Green paper, and a 14-16 working party has made good progress. As a result, officers estimate that more than 100 14-16 year olds from four of the secondary schools will participate in vocational courses provided by the College from September 2002. There are some difficulties in the planning because of the lack of harmonisation between school timetables, the timings of school days and the College's approach to session planning.

Adequacy of provision

136. Unco-ordinated though the provision is, there is a generally good range of choice for young people wishing to continue their education or training post-16. Despite the small size of two of the sixth-forms, all five offer at least 20 or more A-level subjects and allow a satisfactory range of choice and combinations for their students. Since the range of vocational courses provided varies in different parts of the island, students do not all have equal access to the curriculum. There is no overall effective policy to regulate the range of courses provided.

137. The College provides, free of charge, courses in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in the College and across the island, for 80 to 100 students. These courses are co-ordinated through four regional centres. The courses aim to improve students' skills in communication, and application of number and to encourage them to progress into further education or training. However, most of their attainment is not accredited and the courses have not been up-dated to improve their match to the needs of the students. In addition, provision for students with learning difficulties is inadequate.

138. The College is the main provider of work-based training for the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) training services. It has been responsive to training demands identified by the DTI, for example by recently increasing construction apprenticeships to a total of 70 trainees. However, some strategic aims included in the College's plans, for example, to provide small business training for the DTI have not been met, and the DTI has commissioned other providers. In practice, co-operation and arrangements for the deployment of resources between the College and the DTI are weak.

Improvement

139. Weaknesses outweigh strengths in the work to improve 16-19 education. The advisers to the Department of Education have supported the sixth-forms and the College in curriculum development linked, for example, to the introduction of Curriculum 2000 and the new A/S awards, mainly through visits from the awarding bodies. However, they have provided no co-ordinated approach to these developments, nor any evaluation of the outcomes.

140. School inspection reports judge sixth-form teaching to be good and the A-level results in the schools are good. Although officers collect and publish attainment data, there is no analysis of it to set targets for improving the results of students, following their normally good performance at GCSE. Not all sixth-forms are using value-added data they have to set targets for examination grades, despite evidence from England that, when carefully handled, this can raise attainment in even the best sixth-forms.

141. In its inspection, the College received three unsatisfactory grades, respectively for student services, quality assurance and for general education. It has worked on improvements in these areas in the last 18 months, having drawn up an action plan which was submitted to the Department. There has been no formal external evaluation of the plan by officers of the Department, nor of the progress made to date, and there are no plans for re-inspection.

Recommendations

- Improve and implement the Department's strategy for collaboration between the schools and the College, defining, after consultation, the contribution to be made by each, so that range and level of provision of

16-19 education meets the needs of the whole cohort, including those with learning difficulties.

- Rationalise the range of A-level courses, including vocational ones in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.
- Improve and up-date the curriculum and assessment of basic skills courses for adults in literacy and numeracy, to ensure that the courses meet the needs of the students and recognise their achievements.
- Improve the provision of work-based learning in the College in collaboration with the Department of Trade and Industry.
- Evaluate the development of Curriculum 2000, in order to identify good practice and disseminate it so as to secure improvements.
- Work with schools to improve the use of value-added data to set targets for students and so improve attainment.
- Establish an external evaluation and re-inspection of the College to ensure that the necessary improvements have taken place, following the inspection of the College.

SECTION 6 : YOUTH AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Strategy

142. The Department provides a play service for 8-10 years-olds and a youth service for young people aged 11-21. The service is managed by the youth and community adviser. This satisfactory service has few areas of major weakness. The managers and youth workers have a good understanding of youth work principles and are committed to improving the delivery of services for young people. The youth service offers a good breadth of provision for young people within its priority age range of 11-18 years, but works too little in partnership with schools.

143. The youth service is well-funded. It reaches a very high proportion of people in its priority age-range and provides a good range of work. Resources and staffing are good, although there is an over-emphasis on youth officer posts and insufficient provision of full-time youth workers to meet the service's aims. The service offers value for money, which would be improved by re-deployment of staff, and clarified by a closer analysis of unit costs of provision.

144. The main aim of the service is to extend the personal and social education of young people, through engaging positively with individuals and groups to develop their potential and support the growth of a caring and tolerant island community. The curriculum is clearly described in a youth work handbook and follows the recommendations of the National Youth Agency, covering personal identity and relationships, citizenship and equality, skills training, health, housing, money, sport, leisure and travel. The service is working effectively toward the implementation of these strategic aims.

145. The Youth and Community Service has a vision for the future which is set out in operational and strategic plans for 2002 to 2005. For the youth service, key tasks are identified to be performed and evaluated by named officers, with set timescales and resources. However, the tasks are often very general and the criteria for monitoring and evaluation are not clear. The service has rightly declared its intention to improve links with the schools, in order to contributing more specifically to the inclusion agenda by bringing youth work skills to the support of disaffected pupils who are at risk of suspension. However, there is not enough detail in the planning documents to describe how and why this should take place, or to evaluate the effects of progress made on improving the service through these changes.

Adequacy of provision

146. The provision is extensive and the service achieves very high levels of participation. It works with a large number of young people. Total annual membership was 2,700 in 2001, representing an average contact with 25 per cent of the age cohort with a good balance between males and females.

Participation is particularly high among 11-13 year olds, 37 per cent of whom attend youth clubs.

147. In addition to the youth clubs, there is other, extensive provision. There are also three day-time projects in Castletown, Peel and Ramsey which work with the young unemployed and young mothers. The service also provides three residential outdoor pursuits and education centres, four community mini-buses and an extensive range of equipment for use by registered youth organisations. The projects include detached youth workers in three main towns, outreach provision using mobile facilities and some projects working with young people at risk. The average costs of contact time including full-time staff is high and the service is well-resourced.

148. The service consists of 24.2 full-time equivalent posts. The head of the service is supported by six youth officers (together comprising, four full-time equivalents) who manage the 148 part-time youth workers. This overall staffing is adequate but there are too many youth officers, whose role is essentially administrative and not enough full-time youth workers. The service is aware of this problem.

Improvement

149. The service has worked hard to extend its more established provision through community projects and through detached and outreach work which takes resources to where young people are. The work includes life skills, music, dance, theatre and sports. For example the island is a top performer in the North West for Duke of Edinburgh awards, with nearly 300 entrants each year.

150. This work has also been facilitated by increased allocation of annual grants to voluntary youth organisations, including an island-wide motor project, a young carers project, community trusts, scouts and guides. The provision is overseen by the youth officers who produce and receive written reports on the projects but make no formal reports on quality and standards of work.

151. The service is well managed on a day-to-day basis, with good financial planning and budgetary systems, backed by collection and analysis of data on attendance. There is a well-structured programme of induction training for youth-workers and in-service development of core competency training. Youth officers require their staff to have personal action plans for appraisal and training. It is a strength of the service that it engages young people in its evaluation and management so as to ensure that the provision matches their needs. For example, the youth club management committees include elected club members.

Recommendations

- Reduce the number of youth officers and increase the provision of full-time youth workers.
- Improve evaluation and reporting so as to measure effectiveness and improve standards.
- Strengthen operational and strategic plans to enable better monitoring, support and challenge and to improve collaboration with schools.

SECTION 7: ACCESS

The supply of school places

152. The supply of school places is managed satisfactorily, though the weaknesses influence the school survey, which was critical. At first glance, the school planning issues seem straightforward: a small number of schools, each with defined catchment areas and limited pupil movement between schools. However, the increase in the school population of some 20 per cent since 1991 and, more recently, 11.6 per cent since 1996, with the anticipate continuing increase from movement into the island, necessitates careful attention to school place planning. Though the annual school review provides useful current population detail, the lack of a school place development plan and the reliance instead on specific option appraisals for considering individual developments is a weakness. In the absence of such a plan, there is not enough regular consultation with schools on planning school places. This has resulted in the criticism, voiced by some schools visited, that the Department is slow to react.

153. The Isle of Man operates its own measures of sufficiency of space and this shows primary schools to be 97 per cent full and secondary schools 91 per cent full. When mobile accommodation is taken into account, no school has a significant number of pupils above its assessed accommodation figure. Forecasting of future numbers is satisfactory, assisted by much improved and now effective co-operation with relevant other government departments. Current and recent planning for the building of new primary schools suggests that the places provided will be able to meet any future growth needs in the part of the island involved.

154. There are good examples of local consultation on the provision of school places, as in the case of the future organisation of primary education in Ramsey. The provision of a new secondary school to meet the demands of the increasing population is a more complex issue. The siting of the new school in Douglas is generally agreed but, as yet, insufficient detailed discussion has taken place with other secondary and local primary schools and parents about the specific proposals and how the new school will fit within the existing system, in respect of pupil catchment areas and deployment of existing school staff, both in the long-term and during the period of implementation. The new school will have post-16 provision. This will also have implications for the future pattern of post-compulsory education on the island.

Asset management planning

155. Though the Department does not have an established asset management planning (AMP) process, in practice its policy for managing its education premises possesses many of the AMP features. These are carried out now in a satisfactory manner but are less good than they might be in the

absence of a comprehensive plan for providing school places and managing the existing building stock.

156. The Department has invested substantially in new school building in recent years and for the next five years plans that almost £46 million will be spent on 16 capital schemes. In addition, a 10-year minor works programme has provided valuable improvements and refurbishment. The programme, costing £1.9 million in 2002/3, is at present due to end in 2003/4. Maintenance expenditure has increased significantly since a 47 per cent cut in 1993/4 but is still barely enough to meet maintenance needs. The delegation to schools of funding to meet their responsibilities in building maintenance is supported by good technical advice from the works division.

157. In recent years, on some occasions, final expenditure on building projects has significantly exceeded the estimated costs. Effective working arrangements with outside consultants have provided improved rigour in the programme of building works, at the same time as maintaining high specifications.

158. Annual condition surveys of all education premises are already carried out and good records of sufficiency of accommodation are maintained. The collation of suitability data, and the use of the AMP software module, already available, will allow for the collation of all the necessary AMP data. Some consultation already takes place with schools on schemes to be included in the capital programmes. However, the production of an AMP policy statement, together with the possible formulation of a representative consultative group will provide clear criteria, and increased transparency and understanding as to how the Department of Education commits funding on education premises.

Admissions

159. The management of admissions is conducted satisfactorily. This is confirmed by the school survey, though schools are more critical of the handling of admissions appeals. In practice the system which operates for admissions is well established and uncontroversial, being based on defined catchment areas. Information produced centrally for parents is necessarily brief, in that since 1998 the process has been handled very largely at school level.

160. All pupils living in a catchment area are guaranteed a place at the relevant school and so the appeals process is concerned just with pupils who live outside the catchment areas of the schools their parents wish them to attend. In 2000/1, 38 primary school appeals were upheld and 23 dismissed by the Department of Education, the appellate body. Appeals are conducted in good time before the forthcoming academic year and via correspondence, rather than a personal hearing, for which as yet there has been little demand.

161. There is minimal transfer between schools during the school year. On a few occasions in each year the Department is asked to rule on specific

cases where there has been a breakdown in relations between school and family. A school directive follows Departmental consideration of the case.

Provision of education otherwise than at school

162. These arrangements are unsatisfactory. No pupil is without a school place because pupils are not permanently excluded from a school. They may, however, be excluded for up to 10 days in any one term by the headteachers and for longer periods of time by the governing body. Both types of exclusion are designated "suspensions" by the Manx system. Although permanent exclusion is not possible, suspension without time limit amounts to much the same thing. The provision made for suspended pupils is educationally inadequate. It varies in form and quantity and for some pupils is as little as five hours a week. Officers of the Department explain that this complies with Manx law, but they take the view that it should be increased.

163. The Department does not maintain a pupil referral unit but has recently opened a specialist centre, The Glen, which provides six places for suspended primary aged pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It has been able to show some progress with the children who attend it, but only one of them has yet been fully reintegrated into a mainstream school. There are plans to open a similar centre for secondary aged pupils next year. Even when that centre is opened, the need for provision for this category of pupils in both primary and secondary phases will remain larger than the number of places provided.

164. A further element of provision is made under contract to the Department by a private provider. This body seeks to combat exclusion from school through a project in primary schools. It has a secondary reintegration project for pupils in Key Stage 3 and in Year 10 which is intended to prepare suspended pupils for readmission to school. This project offers varying quantities of education to different individuals but an analysis of a single week of this summer term showed that none had full-time provision. The "Bridge Project" for Year 11 pupils provides 25 hours of per week tuition, including two days at the College and two days of work experience. It is, however, poorly attended. A snapshot analysis of single week's attendance during this term showed that, after allowing for one pupil who was in hospital, none of the remaining six pupils attended for the full week.

165. This diverse provision is ad hoc in nature and not planned coherently as a means of dealing with pupils whose poor behaviour has led to their suspension, nor is it part of any total strategy for improving behaviour in the island's schools.

Behaviour support

166. At present, support to improve behaviour is unsatisfactory. There are some areas of effective practice but overall support is fragmented and the Department and its officers have no system for assessing the contributions made to improving behaviour of the various initiatives, nor of linking them with

the various approaches to dealing with suspended pupils. As a result, neither the relative effectiveness of the various programmes, nor the value for money they offer can be assessed.

167. The survey showed that the schools regard the Department's support for behaviour as poor. The Department's inclusion policy places some very difficult pupils in the mainstream schools. Those visited, and those with whom discussions were held expressed considerable concern about this aspect of the Department's work. Nevertheless, the school inspection reports show that behaviour in the island's schools is not a serious problem and that most secondary schools have high, or very high standards of behaviour. The Department has not clearly identified with schools what constitutes poor or unacceptable behaviour, nor what action schools should take in given circumstances.

168. The Department is not required, as are English LEAs, to produce a behaviour support plan. Nevertheless, officers have produced a draft plan which is now due for further revision. The approach to behaviour outlined in the plan is similar to that in the service description produced for this inspection in that its concern is with the extremes of behaviour which border on, or are in, the SEN category of emotional and behavioural difficulty. This is, of course, an important need to meet, particularly so, given the Department's policy of inclusion. However, by concentrating on it rather than attending to promoting good behaviour in the schools, officers and teachers are distracted from seeking to improve classroom management so as to prevent poor behaviour from developing.

169. The project, provided for primary schools, has had some success in dealing with more extreme needs. The project is aimed mainly at those who are at risk of long-term suspension. It can, in the last period for which it has complete figures, demonstrate that three-quarters of the pupils who had been through the project successfully returned to mainstream provision. This is, however, a small service and no similar preventative work is available for Key Stage 3 pupils.

170. Recently, small units have been established in three primary schools to deal with behaviour problems. These units are referred to as nurture groups. The units provide special teaching for pupils whose behaviour is causing problems in mainstream classes. Next year they are to be formally extended to secondary schools. The units are highly regarded by the schools but it is too soon, and they are at present too few in number, to assess their effect on behaviour overall in the schools which have them.

Attendance

171. Attendance at the island's schools is good. Between 1989 and the present it has shown a steady rise and has never fallen below 91.6 per cent. In the school year 2000/2001 it was 94.4 per cent, and unauthorised absence was only 0.53 per cent. The support for attendance provided by the

Department through its two school attendance officers and their managers is highly satisfactory.

172. There is no service level agreement to specify schools' entitlement to support but attendance officers make visits to primary schools on request, and regularly to secondary schools. Attendance is centrally monitored and problems are identified through the monthly attendance figures which all schools have to send in to the office. The service carries out a heavy workload effectively. Last year 269 pupils were referred to it, a total of 400 home visits were made and four prosecutions were instigated.

173. Although the work in dealing with absence is effective, the officers do not see the promotion of good attendance as part of their role and, given the high levels of attendance, the failure to attend to this aspect of attendance work is not a major weakness. Some of the schools visited had introduced their own schemes

Health, safety, welfare, child protection

174. The survey judged the arrangements for health and safety satisfactory. This inspection found them good. Effective, regularly up-dated guidance is made available to the schools. They also have access to a risk assessment service and to information which comes from health and safety audit. Any accidents which do happen are promptly investigated and training is provided in first aid and fire safety for all schools and for the youth and community service.

175. The Department's support for child protection is rated satisfactory to good in the survey. The service has clear procedures through which any concern expressed by a teacher is passed swiftly to the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) which has the statutory responsibility for the matter. Schools are provided with written guidance on the procedures to be followed when concerns arise and each school has a nominated person, usually the headteacher who is responsible for this matter and DHSS provides the necessary training for the nominated person. These procedures are sound, but the weaknesses in the protection of children in public care are such as to make its child protection weak overall.

Children in public care

176. All the children in public care are, like other children on the island, on the roll of a school. However, information about the children is poor and, as a consequence the Department's support for them is weak. At the simplest level, there is no formal system to identify the pupils concerned for the schools, although most do know who the pupils are. One school visited reported that a list of children in public care was recently sent to it by DHSS with a request that the school should indicate which of the pupils on the list were on its roll.

177. A new policy to be adopted jointly by the DHSS and the Department of Education has now reached its third draft but is not yet in its final form. The draft sets out plans for improved communication between the officers of the two departments and for the monitoring of the educational attainment of pupils in public care. At present, there is no system to check on their attainment even though officers believe that it will be, on the island as elsewhere, poorer than the averages attained by their contemporaries who are not in care. The Department already knows from its special needs register that a third of these pupils have SEN at least stage four of the Manx system. In view of the vulnerability of these pupils urgent action is necessary to ensure that the whereabouts of all them are known and that their educational needs are assessed.

Social exclusion

178. Although the government has at present no formal policy initiative on combating social exclusion, there are elements of the Department's work which bear upon it and make an effective contribution to it. The most successful element is the work of the youth service. The most striking feature of the other work is the extent of special needs inclusion and the degree to which that policy is supported in the schools. Here, however, there remain weaknesses in the implementation of the policy. There are weaknesses in behaviour support, as there are in provision for suspended pupils. The knowledge of, and support for, children in public care is a cause for concern.

179. The feature which all of these weaknesses have in common is a lack of information about the vulnerable pupils concerned. There is no way of assessing the provision made for them in terms of the educational outcomes it produces. There is a need for such an assessment if the Department is to take forward its work on social exclusion. The planned comprehensive computer database offers the potential of facilitating the necessary analytical work but it is not compatible with other government services, particularly the DHSS and so will not be able to provide the necessary flow of information.

Recommendations

- Improve the provision of school places by producing, in consultation with schools and the College, a medium-term planning document for school and College premises to incorporate asset management with the planning of school and College places.
- Improve provision for pupils suspended from school by planning it as a coherent service, by extending the specialist provision made for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and by providing all pupils with full-time education.
- Improve support for behaviour by seeking through policy, in-service training and consultancy work in the schools to promote good behaviour

APPENDIX: RECOMMENDATIONS

This report makes a number of recommendations to improve the Isle of Man Department of Education. The following are crucial to enable the Department to move forward.

Improve corporate planning by producing a planning system across government which will set out the place of education in the government as a corporate entity and establish the priority attached to it.

Use the regulations being drafted to implement the 2001 Act to enable the production, publication and implementation of a strategy for school improvement which defines the respective duties and responsibilities of both schools and the Department of Education in raising pupils' attainment and which sets national targets for raising attainment in all schools.

We also make the following recommendations.

Recommendations to improve the strategy for school improvement. The first of these is crucial.

Improve the deployment of officers' time and expertise to school improvement by resourcing and reorganising their work in such a way as to separate the role of advising the Department from the role of school improvement.

Allocate resources to priorities more effectively by aligning service planning more closely with financial planning and ensure effective budget management by presenting the education budget under headings which reflect the organisation and activities of the Department of Education.

Improve the administration of the delegated financial management schemes by making transactions quicker and easier for schools.

Enable schools and the College to exercise more flexibility in appointing staff from within their delegated budgets by either amending or removing the current central personnel controls.

Compare the costs and quality of different service providers so as to determine whether or not present service delivery offers the best value for money.

Recommendations to make school improvement more effective. Again, the first is crucial.

In consultation with schools, and in the regulations being drafted to implement the new legislation, define the functions of advisory services in monitoring, challenging and supporting schools and specify how these functions will be

carried out in order to meet the differing needs of the schools, and to reflect their progress and performance.

Establish an agreed system for school self-review, specifying how this will be integrated with systems for monitoring and evaluating schools, including external inspection.

Improve the management and organisation of school improvement services by evaluating and planning the work in relation to clear, measurable targets for improving pupils' attainment

Improve the work of the peripatetic support services to ensure that they play a full role in delivering the Department's educational priorities and objectives and in supporting curriculum development and teaching.

Decide if the intended level of Manx language provision set when the language was introduced in schools is to be met and, if it is, resource the work to meet the objective.

Improve the performance data provided to schools by presenting the data provided to primary schools in a way which makes it easier to interpret and by accompanying it with an analysis which enables them to identify trends and patterns in performance and to compare their performance with like schools.

Improve the support for schools in analysing performance data and setting targets by developing with the schools clear guidance on both the interpretation of data and target setting, and by training headteachers, subject managers and advisory staff in its use.

Ensure that schools set performance targets for the end of all key stages, including Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

Improve support for literacy and numeracy in schools by differentiating the support provided to the schools and planning the work of the consultants according to criteria based on pupils' attainment and the targets set for its improvement.

Develop, in consultation with schools, a strategy improving literacy and numeracy throughout both primary and secondary schools and decide with schools the extent and nature of the implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy.

Improve the monitoring of standards and the performance of schools in ICT by collecting systematic information on the standards attained by pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Improve school governance by providing better support and guidance to the governing bodies, particularly of primary schools.

Improve support for primary school management by increasing support to those schools where leadership and management is identified as a weakness.

Improve careers education and guidance by working with the secondary schools and the College to identify their entitlement to support, to ensure consistent and effective support for young people in all aspects of the provision.

Establish closer working between the careers service, the youth service and other agencies to develop strategies for promoting social inclusion and equality of opportunity.

Recommendations to improve strategic management

Develop and implement planning procedures within the education service which will show how the Department's and officers' activities contribute to corporate priorities and which, through the use of costings and measurable criteria of success, will improve the evaluation of activities and the value for money they provide.

Improve the quality of management services by introducing service level agreements to regulate the delivery of the services to schools and by making the services, particularly the financial service, more responsive to schools' needs.

Establish more specific financial targets for the school meals service.

Recommendations to improve special education provision

Improve the strategy for inclusion by agreeing with schools a timescale for its further development, by making clear its expectations of schools and setting out what it regards as good practice.

Clarify the formulae and criteria for allocating SEN resources to schools.

Support the management of SEN in the schools by improving consultancy so that SENCOs are helped to shape whole-school approaches to learners' needs and so that officers emphasise monitoring procedures less and measuring progress and outcomes more.

Recommendations to improve 16 – 19 education

Improve and implement the Department's strategy for collaboration between the schools and the College, defining, after consultation, the contribution to be made by each, so that range and level of provision of 16-19 education meets the needs of the whole cohort, including those with learning difficulties.

Rationalise the range of A-level courses, including vocational ones in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

Improve and up-date the curriculum and assessment of basic skills courses for adults in literacy and numeracy, to ensure that the courses meet the needs of the students and recognise their achievements.

Improve the provision of work-based learning in the College in collaboration with the Department of Trade and Industry.

Evaluate the development of Curriculum 2000, in order to identify good practice and disseminate it so as to secure improvements.

Work with schools to improve the use of value-added data to set targets for students and so improve attainment.

Establish an external evaluation and re-inspection of the College to ensure that the necessary improvements have taken place, following the inspection of the College.

Recommendations to improve youth and community education

Reduce the number of youth officers and increase the provision of full-time youth workers.

Improve evaluation and reporting so as to measure effectiveness and improve standards.

Strengthen operational and strategic plans to enable better monitoring, support and challenge and to improve collaboration with schools

Recommendations to improve access to education

Improve the provision of school places by producing, in consultation with schools and the College, a medium-term planning document for school and College premises to incorporate asset management with the planning of school and College places.

Improve provision for pupils suspended from school by planning it as a coherent service, by extending the specialist provision made for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and by providing all pupils with full-time education.

Improve support for behaviour by seeking through policy, in-service training and consultancy work in the schools to promote good behaviour as well as to deal with extremes of poor behaviour, and by extending preventative work with pupils at risk of suspension in secondary schools.

Evaluate the relative merits and costs of the different projects currently in use to improve the behaviour of pupils both attending school and suspended from school so as to further develop the most cost effective ones.

Improve support for children in public care by taking urgent action to ensure that all of them are properly identified in the school system, that their educational attainment is known, and that their educational needs being met.

Improve support for vulnerable children by establishing a database compatible between all relevant government departments so that information about the children is accessible to all.

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