

# Raising Achievement in Newham Schools:

A Review by NFER on behalf of Newham LEA

Ralph Tabberer  
Lesley Saunders  
Lesley Kendall

*nfer*

# **RAISING ACHIEVEMENT IN NEWHAM SCHOOLS**

**A Review by NFER on  
behalf of Newham LEA**

**Ralph Tabberer  
Lesley Saunders  
Lesley Kendall**



**INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**

*nfer*

Published in December 1997  
by the National Foundation for Educational Research,  
The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire SL1 2DQ

© National Foundation for Educational Research 1997

Registered Charity No. 313392

ISBN 0 7005 1477 5

# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>1. THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Aims of the Study	1
1.3 Methods	2
1.4 Structure of the Report	2
<b>2. THE CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH THE LEA WORKS</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Population and School Numbers	3
2.2 Socio-Economic and Ethnic Characteristics	3
2.3 Resources	5
2.4 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs	6
2.5 Political Perspective	6
<b>3. LEA STRATEGY FOR RAISING ACHIEVEMENT</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 The Current Strategy	7
3.2 Progress Since 1988	10
<b>4. THE STAKEHOLDERS' EVIDENCE</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1 Teachers' Evidence	11
4.2 Headteachers' Evidence	12
4.3 Governors' Evidence	20
4.4 Pupils' Evidence	24
4.5 Public Perceptions	29
4.6 Summary and Conclusions: the Stakeholders' Views	30
<b>5. STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN SCHOOLS</b>	<b>32</b>
5.1 National Curriculum Assessments	32
5.2 Public Examination Results at 16: 1987 – 1997	33
5.3 GCSE Results in Context	34
5.4 OFSTED Evidence	37
5.5 Summary of Standards and Quality in Schools	39
<b>6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>41</b>
6.1 Substantive achievements	41
6.2 What more can be done?	42
<b>APPENDIX 1. Data Sources and Numbers of Respondents</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2. Detailed Report on Teacher's Views of LEA Policy Initiatives</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3. References</b>	<b>55</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the headteachers, teachers, governors and pupils in Newham schools who participated in this independent Review by giving their views and insights. We should particularly like to acknowledge the help provided by staff in those schools who undertook the distribution and collation of pupil and/or teacher questionnaires on the research team's behalf.

We should also like to thank the officers in the Education Department at the London Borough of Newham and the elected members for their considerable input of time, information and practical help. Special thanks are owed to David Holmes for making all the administrative arrangements, including setting up the intensive programme of headteacher and officer interviews. Finally, we thank staff at the National Foundation for Educational Research – particularly Julia Rose, Wendy Crees, Mary Hargreaves, Mary Minnis, John Kimber and Jill Ware – who helped with the conduct of the study including the compilation and production of this report.

The term 'parents' has been retained throughout the report and refers to 'parents and/or carers'.

## **The NFER Research Team**

Ralph Tabberer  
Lesley Saunders  
Lesley Kendall  
Dick Weindling  
Wendy Crees

Project Director  
Principal Research Officer  
Senior Statistician  
Project Consultant  
Project Secretary

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1. Background

- ◆ In the late 1980s, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was responsible for conducting an independent inquiry into education policy and performance in Newham. The inquiry was started largely because of poor pupil performance. The report of the inquiry, *Boosting Educational Achievement* (authored by Professor Seamus Hegarty and colleagues, and published in 1989) contained many recommendations for change in education provision in Newham. In autumn 1996, the London Borough of Newham commissioned the NFER to undertake a second independent review of the progress made by the Local Education Authority (LEA) in raising standards of education, in order to identify both the successes achieved and any areas for further development.
- ◆ The review involved a study of documents, interviews with LEA staff, interviews with headteachers and questionnaire surveys of teachers, governors and pupils in Newham schools. Other sources of information included OFSTED, the London Research Centre and the Audit Commission. The NFER team undertook detailed statistical and qualitative analysis of all the data, in order to come to fair and reasonable judgements about the Borough's progress in raising achievement.
- ◆ On the basis of the evidence presented, the Review makes recommendations for further measures which might be taken by the Borough and its schools to raise achievement further.

## 2. Progress at LEA Level Since 1988

- ◆ Among the main conclusions of the previous Review were the following:
  - there was a lack of confidence in the LEA within schools;
  - low morale among teachers was widespread;
  - there were low expectations among pupils, parents and teachers;
  - there was a lack of planning in Newham's approach to its special schools;
  - there was a lack of consultation with schools over policy developments;
  - policy initiatives were not clearly related to each other within a single coherent framework or strategy.
- ◆ The current Review shows that the LEA has made significant progress in setting up processes and procedures to address these issues. There are good systems and arrangements for consulting governors, head teachers and teacher associations. The LEA has developed a strategic approach to raising achievement and expectations are now much higher than they were. Individual strategies have been developed in relation to various initiatives, such as inclusive education, and these are all brought together in a coherent way in the Education Service Strategy which was developed collaboratively by the LEA and schools and subject to extensive consultation. Newham has thus moved from being a reactive and defensive authority which sought to achieve short-term objectives through a series of haphazard initiatives and policy directives to an authority which has a clear vision and sense of purpose, a real commitment to raise achievement through a constructive partnership with all the stakeholders in the education service and coherent strategies for achieving improvements and delivering the Council's vision.

### 3. The Stakeholders' Views

- ◆ Evidence was gathered from the key stakeholder groups of teachers, pupils, governors and headteachers on the issue of raising achievement. There were many positive features to report from their perspectives, as follows:

#### **Pupils**

- ◆ Despite the socio-economic and other disadvantages in the Borough, secondary pupils' attitudes to education and their schools appeared to be as high in Newham as those found among pupils sampled within broader, national studies. Additionally, there was no conspicuous falling-off in pupils' motivation and attitudes to school between Year 7 and Year 10, as might have been expected.
- ◆ There were some areas where pupil attitudes were less positive. For example, the younger cohort of Newham secondary pupils were rather more critical than pupils nationally of their own school environment, not only the material aspects but also in terms of perceived reputation of the school, and whether the work they did maintained their interest.

#### **Teachers**

- ◆ Teachers generally had positive views of the support they received from colleagues and managers. The support of governors and of the LEA was, understandably, perceived to be more remote. In all instances, primary school teachers were more positive than those in secondary schools.

#### **Headteachers**

- ◆ There was a general feeling among headteachers that low teacher expectations were no longer a major concern within the Borough although, partly because of image problems, there were still difficulties over recruiting new staff to posts within local schools.
- ◆ In more recent areas of LEA policy initiative, headteachers considered that teacher awareness was sometimes patchy; they felt that more attention needed to be given to ensuring that the LEA and schools were pursuing policy consistently and providing continuous support and training.
- ◆ Headteachers were aware that most of their schools had improving national test results against a pattern of disadvantage affecting them. They also recognised their achievements in improving pupil attendance in recent years, especially in secondary schools. Headteachers wanted these tangible achievements to be more widely appreciated.
- ◆ There were positive feelings about the LEA's work on raising achievement and on the capabilities of LEA officials, but there were a number of areas in which headteachers could identify that they needed additional leadership and support: for example, in data collection and transmission; school improvement measures; early literacy and numeracy; and curriculum leadership in primary schools. These issues largely overlapped with governors' concerns, and there is evidence already that the LEA is taking action to address them.

## **Governors**

- ◆ There was much support amongst school governors for the work of the LEA in improving schools and raising pupils' levels of achievement. As noted above, governors' concerns about pupil performance centred on the performance of boys, on language and literacy, and on provision for the early years of education. These are areas about which concern is expressed nationally and on which the LEA is already concentrating.

## **Parental Involvement**

- ◆ Parental involvement in their children's education, as perceived by the pupils, seemed at least as high in Newham as elsewhere. Headteachers concurred that parental expectations seemed to be rising, although there were sizeable parts of the Borough in which there were still problems with low expectations and support at home. Although teachers were mostly positive about parents' support and involvement in school, they clearly felt that parents could still give a lot more direct help in improving their children's achievements.

## **In General**

- ◆ Of most significance was the evidence of a cultural shift in the LEA in recent years, whereby improving achievement had become an over-riding concern. Headteachers, teachers and governors commented on this change, and welcomed it. This has provided a climate in which it is more possible than ever to recognise achievements and yet also to appreciate that Newham children could still achieve more.

# **4. Standards and Quality in Schools**

- ◆ Overall, pupil performance in Newham schools has been low in comparison with national norms. This pattern is evident at each Key Stage.
- ◆ But pupil performance has been improving, and at a marked rate. At GCSE level, the rate of improvement has been at or ahead of the national trend in recent years. In primary schools, improvements have been less pronounced until 1997 when there was an impressive improvement in Key Stage 2 scores.
- ◆ It is also important to set performance into some kind of context which takes into account key socio-economic and other factors known to affect performance. Such contextual analyses as are available give only a broad indication of how Newham schools are doing compared with schools in 'like' LEAs. They suggest that performance in Newham secondary schools is similar to that in like areas, although performance in primary schools, especially in English, remains relatively poor.
- ◆ There is considerable variation between Newham schools. There are many examples of successful schools, of dynamic management and of effective and varied teaching on which to build more consistent standards across the LEA. There are also examples of schools which need substantial support to meet the levels of performance being achieved by other schools in the LEA who work with pupils from similar backgrounds.



- ◆ OFSTED reports indicate that, to raise performance, attention in secondary schools needs to be given to: raising teaching quality, the relationship between pupil grouping and achievement, and curriculum continuity between year 6 and Year 7. In primary schools, OFSTED has identified issues such as: improving teaching and learning strategies and better subject knowledge on the part of teachers.

## 5. Summary of Substantive Achievements

- ◆ The current Review has found that Newham has many achievements to celebrate since the previous Review undertaken by NFER. The LEA and individual schools can point to substantial improvements, including:
  - improvements in pupils' results over time, and especially in the last two years;
  - improved pupil attendance;
  - improved parental and teacher expectations;
  - improved teacher recruitment and professional development;
  - improved advisory and other LEA support for schools;
  - a renewed culture of achievement, emanating from the highest level within the LEA;
  - the successful adoption of many policies and strategies designed to raise achievement.
- ◆ Perhaps most importantly, the 'new beginning' which was advocated in the previous review has clearly been made with regard to the majority of working relationships, mutual perceptions and overall morale within the LEA. The present Review found positive views among most of those who are stakeholders in the education service in Newham and who have made some contribution to this study: the pupils, parents, teachers, headteachers, LEA staff and elected members.
- ◆ There have been many examples at the school level of outstanding features: of exceptional leadership and dynamism, of good teamwork, and of lively and varied teaching. It is the greater achievement that these examples can be found in schools which have to overcome considerable inhibitors to high pupil performance. The schools' achievements have been recognised within OFSTED reports and merit more widespread celebration. This would help to promote the area both to those who live and work there now, and to prospective new staff.
- ◆ There have also been many examples at the LEA level of innovative and well-argued initiatives. It is notable that current programmes are based on professional evidence about what works in terms of raising achievement. It is notable that many of the strategies are in line with plans set out by the new government for promoting excellence in schools. In some cases, Newham LEA has pioneered initiatives which have been taken up nationally.
- ◆ The Review has also found evidence that these improvements have been backed up by the successful restructuring of the Education Department, sound strategies to ensure value for money, and imaginative and energetic efforts to secure additional funding from varied sources. It is impressive that these improvements can be found when resources available to the Department have diminished.

## 6. What More Can Be Done?

- ◆ Current plans within the LEA already contain the major part of what is needed in a strategic approach to continuing to improve pupil performance. But the review team have six recommendations to make to the LEA which it believes will help to ensure the effective implementation of the strategic initiatives they have agreed to undertake.

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Maintain a focus on a limited number of key initiatives**

There is a good argument that, having set out its strategic priorities, the LEA should now concentrate on trying to keep its **impact on schools simple and consistent**. It should focus down on those measures which support and extend the priorities agreed.

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **Sharpen the focus on classroom practice**

The LEA and its schools should shift the focus in schools as clearly as possible back to classroom practice. The LEA should encourage greater visibility, discussion and evidence about what happens in successful classrooms. There is a strong body of research evidence and professional experience that **schools which raise achievement maintain a relentless focus on classroom practice**. There needs to be greater attention to the importance of clear and enthusiastic teaching, the use of varied and appropriate tasks, and the use of good pace and challenge.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Identify and disseminate good practice**

There is considerable work needed to ensure that LEA inspection and advisory staff provide consistent as well as clear advice in these areas. **It is necessary for headteachers, senior managers and curriculum coordinators to exemplify good teaching**. The in-service training of teachers should examine these examples. There will be value in schools and teachers more openly debating and exchanging models of good practice.

#### **Recommendation 4**

##### **Prioritise data analysis services and production of school profiles**

The demands on LEAs and schools to handle more data more effectively are rising and careful planning should be undertaken about **the range, timing and presentation of data** that the LEA makes available to schools for the purpose of monitoring performance. Newham has good information technology systems and improved statistical resources with which to support schools' use of data; this needs now to be extended. The LEA should **develop its school profiles**, taking into consideration the additional data that will be available later this academic year for LEAs and schools from OFSTED.

#### **Recommendation 5**

##### **Develop differentiated professional support for headteachers**

Evidence shows that headteachers are central to raising achievement initiatives: in Newham, **the range of school performance – in terms of standards reached and improvements made – is very wide**. In some schools, progress has been excellent. The headteachers are well-informed, dynamic, incisive and, where necessary, innovative. These headteachers need challenge and innovative leadership for themselves. Support for them should build on their successful experience, their substantial expertise and should refresh it.

In a few schools, progress has been slow. Headteachers are less skilled in diagnosing precisely what in their school is inhibiting further improvement. They are less capable of identifying specific measures that need to be taken, perhaps in terms of changing pupil grouping or adopting new classroom strategies. These headteachers need challenge and support which helps them not only to recognise problems and goals, but to find the means to change.

#### **Recommendation 6**

##### **Communicate with teachers more directly**

The LEA is naturally a more remote body for classroom teachers than is the school or even, in many cases, the governors. The drift in recent years, nationally, has been for LEAs to become more remote, yet, for an LEA's policies and priorities to be implemented effectively, they must be known and understood by all teachers, and adapted well by them to their own classroom circumstances. **There is scope for the LEA to do more to make its policies and support known to individual teachers**, so that they can take an even fuller part in the culture of raising achievement.

# 1. THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

## 1.1 Background to the Study

In autumn 1996, the London Borough of Newham commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake an independent review of the Local Education Authority's strategies for raising the attainment of all its pupils.

The NFER had been responsible for conducting an independent Inquiry into policy and performance in Newham in the late 1980s. The Inquiry was started largely because of poor pupil performance. The report of the Inquiry, *Boosting Educational Achievement* (Hegarty *et al.*, 1989), contained many recommendations for change in education provision in Newham. It led, for example, to the establishment of an LEA inspectorate team which could improve the monitoring of local schools.

By 1997, it was timely for progress to be reviewed, and the evidence to be updated, in order to identify both the successes and the areas for further development.

Additionally, consultation had begun in 1996 over the proposals to be included in the Education Bill (1997) for the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) to have powers to inspect local education authorities (LEAs). Some pilot inspections had been undertaken, with a few LEA reports already published. By early 1997, therefore, many LEAs – including the London Borough of Newham – were at the point of considering how they might best prepare for OFSTED inspection, which would primarily be focused on their initiatives and effectiveness in raising pupil achievement.

In this context, the NFER was particularly pleased to be able to respond to the London Borough of Newham's request since the project enabled the NFER to develop, with a single LEA, the requisite knowledge and skills to support other LEAs in the process of review as a precursor to OFSTED inspection.

## 1.2 Aims of the Study

The specific aims of the 1997 Review were as follows:

- ◆ to review and evaluate the progress that has been made in the LEA since 1989 in making changes and implementing initiatives in order to raise levels of achievement in schools;
- ◆ to identify further ways in which the LEA and schools can work together to raise levels of achievement of pupils;
- ◆ to develop expertise and methodology for reviewing other LEA initiatives for raising achievement.

The study involved close collaboration with the London Borough of Newham. Taking the 1988 Inquiry as the benchmark for examining the Authority's progress in the last nine years, the present study gathered evidence in specified areas in order to:

- ◆ make comparisons with 1988;
- ◆ make comparisons with like LEAs;

- ◆ provide evidence on progress related to the current London Borough of Newham Service Strategy;
- ◆ prepare evidence appropriate to an OFSTED LEA inspection.

### 1.3 Methods

In all respects, decisions about the most appropriate methods were determined by the need to secure comprehensive and robust evidence in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.

An initial analytical framework, provided by NFER, set out specific areas of investigation and comparison, and identified the most appropriate forms of evidence which would be required. This framework formed the basis of consultation with the LEA, in order to define the coverage and range of the Review.

The analytical framework provided the parameters for the subsequent data-gathering stage which involved the use of existing records, interviews with LEA staff, interviews with headteachers and questionnaire surveys of teachers, governors and pupils.

Other bodies, including the London Research Centre and the Audit Commission possessed certain comparative data relating to the performance of Newham and other LEAs in London, and more widely. For the purpose of contextualising certain of the information about Newham, corresponding data was investigated for the 'like' boroughs of Greenwich, Haringey, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) provided financial benchmarks. The sources assisted in supplying, although not analysing, data.

The NFER team undertook detailed statistical and qualitative analysis of all the data, in order to come to fair and reasonable judgements about the Borough's progress in raising achievement. On the same basis, recommendations are made for further measures which might be taken by the Borough and its schools to raise achievement further.

### 1.4 Structure of the Report

The following section, Section 2, outlines the demographic and political context within which the Borough works, with particular reference to the ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the population. Section 3 provides the policy framework for the study, by discussing the Borough's strategies for raising pupils' achievement and relating these to the earlier inquiry. The section includes details of the main educational strategies, services and programme undertaken by the LEA.

Section 4 presents and discusses evidence on pupils' performance and motivation, and the Borough's strategies for improving these, collected from key stakeholder groups: headteachers, teachers, governors and pupils themselves.

Section 5 assesses the standards and quality in the Borough's schools in respect of primary and secondary test and public examination results, as well as evidence from OFSTED inspections.

Section 6 provides an overview of all the evidence, in the form of conclusions, key issues for consideration and, where appropriate, recommendations for action.

## 2. THE CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH THE LEA WORKS

### 2.1 Population and School Numbers

The London Borough of Newham was created in 1965 when East Ham and West Ham were amalgamated with parts of Barking and Woolwich. The population is approximately 234,000 which means that it is similar in size to a number of other inner and outer London boroughs. Compared with a selected sample of 'like' boroughs in the London area<sup>1</sup>, however, the 1991 census shows that Newham has larger proportions of its population in the age ranges 0 to 4, and 5 to 15. In the 1991 census the Borough had the highest proportion of its resident population under ten years of age of any area in the country. The population in the age range 5 to 15 was approximately 36,000 in 1991-95, which is also higher than for the 'like' LEAs. The approximate numbers in each school sector were:

	Nursery (full- and part-time)	Reception (full-time)	Primary school roll	Secondary school roll
numbers (approx)	4600	2600	22000	14600

These represent higher proportions of pupils than the 'like' LEAs in full- or part-time nursery provision and on the primary school roll. The proportion of the population aged three and four in maintained nursery schools and classes is high, compared with the 'like' LEAs, at approximately 66 per cent. The LEA has 95 per cent of four-year-olds in nursery or reception classes.

Because of Newham's inclusive education policy, which places the very large majority of the Borough's special education needs pupils in mainstream schools, there are many fewer pupils in special schools (about 0.5 per cent in schools within and outside the Borough) than is the case in the 'like' LEAs (see Section 2.4 below).

### 2.2 Socio-Economic and Ethnic Characteristics

There have been many steps taken in recent years to improve the prosperity of the Borough. City Challenge schemes have brought environmental improvements and jobs. The Thames Gateway and Lee Valley Partnerships have been established to help bring about sustainable regeneration. Successful bids have been made to the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB).

<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of describing Newham and of placing its educational provision in its proper setting, it was decided to compare it demographically, and in other ways, with a group of other London boroughs which the Audit Commission has identified as 'like' Authorities. This group included Greenwich, Haringey, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark. This report does not, however, contain any specific data about these individual LEAs, in order to preserve their confidentiality. The authors would like to thank those in other LEAs, and at the London Research Centre, who were able to provide guidance and help with identifying and collating the information that already existed in the public domain and which could assist this Review.

Employment opportunities for Newham residents are set to improve over the next few years. Improved transport links with Docklands and south east and central London will be in place with the opening of the Jubilee Line extension to Stratford in 1998. The International Passenger Station at Stratford on the Channel Tunnel rail line will promote the redevelopment of the associated rail lands. Development in the Royal Docks has begun to accelerate, with a major exhibition centre, a new university campus and the relocation of the headquarters of a large pharmaceutical company all expected to be in place over the next few years. There is a wide range of further and higher education and training opportunities in the Borough, which are to be expanded with planned developments on existing and new sites.

In addition two new secondary schools and two new primary schools are planned for the docklands area with the first new secondary and two primary schools due to open in 1999.

Despite these steps, the area remains economically depressed with many residents experiencing substantial deprivation. In 1994, the Department of the Environment's Local Conditions Index placed Newham as the most deprived local authority area of the 366 in England. Newham was ranked the most 'materially deprived' local authority based on overcrowded households, with no car, lacking or sharing basic amenities and lacking central heating. It was ranked 10th most 'socially deprived' based on proportions unemployed, lone parents, youth unemployment, single pensioners, long-term illness and number of dependants in household.

The area still acts as host to people from many different parts of the world, some of them refugees. There is a perception that as families and communities become more wealthy, they move out of the Borough and are replaced by other, less prosperous groups.

The population remains largely working class. Compared with the 'like' boroughs, Newham has high proportions of economically inactive females and males in the working population. According to the 1991 Census, the percentages of economically inactive females and males were 41.1 per cent and 16.7 per cent respectively. Definitions of unemployment have changed since the 1988 study, when 11.1 per cent of unemployed residents were identified as unemployed.

The population is multi-racial. The 1991 Census indicated the following ethnic balance: white (57.7 per cent), Indian (13.1), black Caribbean (7.2), Pakistani (5.9), black African (5.6), Bangladeshi (3.8), other Asian (3.1), other black (1.6), Chinese (0.8) and 'other' (1.4). Compared with the 'like' boroughs, the white population is considerably smaller and the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese and other Asian communities considerably larger. The black communities (African, Caribbean and other) are sizeable too, but are not as large as those in many other London boroughs. Approximately 53 per cent of pupils are bilingual; over three-quarters of these (i.e. 42 per cent of the total) require support with English. (Source: English Language Service annual survey 1996.)

## 2.3 Resources

The LEA commissioned a value for money review in 1993 from Price Waterhouse which found that schools were adapting well to local management requirements and that the restructured Education Department provided a sound basis for providing services and delivering its functions and role.

However, expenditure per pupil on education in Newham is lower than the 'like' authorities for the under-fives, primary, secondary 11-16 and secondary 16+ populations. The differences for the under-fives and primary populations are particularly notable. Newham spends per pupil less than its Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) for the 5-10 and 11-15 age groups. The Council has adopted a budget policy over recent years aimed at closing the gap between the SSA and the Education budget. Progress is being carefully monitored, and the diminishing gap between the SSA and the Education budget appears as follows:

	£ million
1992/93	23.14
1993/94	17.24
1994/95	14.35
1995/96	11.05
1996/97	10.60

There were approximately 2,000 full-time equivalent teachers in 1995. The pupil-teacher ratio was higher than the 'like' LEAs, at 23.9 for primary schools without a nursery and 16.5 for secondary schools. 1996 figures indicate the overall pupil-teacher ratio was 19.5. Only one LEA in inner and outer London had a higher pupil-teacher ratio. Newham's ratio is, however, close to the national average.

The total number of schools in Newham has reduced from 120 in 1988, to 89 in 1997, reflecting amalgamations and closures. On average, Newham schools are larger than those in the 'like' boroughs. Some of the primary schools have more than 800 pupils. 13 of the schools are voluntary aided or controlled. One secondary school is grant maintained and was not included in the Review.

Available data on surplus places indicates that Newham has 3.8 per cent at primary and 2.8 per cent at secondary. These percentages fall in the middle of the range of the 'like' boroughs but are likely to decrease rapidly due to the projected population increase which is creating a need for new schools, particularly in the south of the Borough.

New schools are planned south of the A13. A new secondary school, the Royal Docks Community School, is to be built for 1999 with a planned roll of 1,200. It will replace Woodside School. Two new primary schools are also being built for 1999/2000. Capital approvals have been sought for a new secondary school in East Beckton (for opening in 2002). Brampton Manor Secondary School is being refurbished at a cost of some £12 million as part of a Capital Challenge scheme. Three primary schools are also being completely rebuilt. In May 1996, the Council estimated the backlog of major maintenance and improvement works to be approximately £30 million; but it has invested substantial resources from its balances into an improvement programme over the last three years.



## 2.4 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The LEA provides additional resources specifically to five secondary and nine primary schools, as part of their delegated budgets, in order to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. There is careful attention given to the relative costs of alternative special educational needs provision. Information about relative costs has been made available through the inclusive education strategy document for 1996-2001. The document is exemplary in providing very clear information on pupil numbers and costs per pupil. 107 pupils whose families live in Newham are enrolled in out-of-Borough special schools.

New resourced provision has been made at a number of schools in order to make it possible in 1995 to close two further special schools. A new centre for the visually impaired was opened in 1995. A Pupil Referral Unit has been established to support those excluded from schools. Central LEA services also support schools through the Learning Support Service, the Behavioural Support and Tuition Service, the Service for Deaf and Partially-Hearing Pupils, the Service for Blind and Visually Impaired Pupils, and the Eleanor Smith School and Support Service for primary pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

In 1995/96, Newham was issuing a higher proportion of statements (42 per cent) within eighteen weeks than four of the five 'like' boroughs. The proportion of pupils with statements had risen from 1.8 per cent in 1991 to 2.5 per cent in 1996, reflecting a rise in raw numbers from 688 to 1,121 over that period. Figures for 1994 and 1995 indicate that the proportion of educational psychologists per 10,000 pupils was towards the lower end of the range of the 'like' boroughs. The proportion of pupils with statements in the same two years was in the middle of the range of the 'like' boroughs.

It is indicative of the inclusive education strategy in Newham that in 1995, for instance, the proportion of pupils with new statements placed in maintained mainstream schools was 95 per cent whereas the proportion for the 'like' boroughs was about 60 per cent. In January 1996, 95 pupils (0.2 per cent) were in Newham special schools, whereas for the 'like' boroughs the proportion varied between 1.1 per cent and 2.3 per cent. (If the 107 Newham pupils sent to out-of-Borough schools are included, the proportion would still only rise to 0.4 per cent.) In February 1996, 82 per cent of Newham pupils with statements of special educational needs were enrolled at mainstream schools.

## 2.5 Political Perspective

Political control of Newham, by Labour, has not changed significantly since 1988, nor indeed since 1965.

The 1994 Labour Manifesto for the Council elections indicated that improving educational achievement would be a priority for the controlling group. The Manifesto set out the Council's intentions for the pre-school, primary, secondary, and post-16 sectors, as well as for 'Education for All'.

Specific targets were also proposed, for example for the proportion of pupils gaining A-G grades in at least five subjects at GCSE, and for school average attendance rates.

## 3. LEA STRATEGY FOR RAISING ACHIEVEMENT

### 3.1 The Current Strategy

There has been much change in national educational policy and strategy, as well as in local policy and strategy in the last nine years. The focus has moved much more clearly on to pupils' achievement.

At the senior level in the LEA, documentation is very good. Committee papers are concise, purposeful and well-written. They address the key issues involved in raising achievement. Strategy papers are also well written and many are published in an attractive and accessible form for schools, governors and the wider public audience. Additionally, there are innovative and well-presented materials designed to keep parents informed.

The 'Newham Education Service Strategy 1997 to 2000' resulted from joint work between councillors, officers and headteachers. It was agreed by the Education Committee in July 1997.

The strategy document sets out a Mission Statement, Principles, Aims and Objectives for the service and describes the local and national context. The service strategy is linked closely to the Council's vision for Newham as:

- ◆ the most exciting place to work and live in London in the near future;
- ◆ a prosperous community in which people enjoy a better quality of life, safe and attractive neighbourhoods, good housing and local services, empowered to take responsibility not only for themselves but for one another;
- ◆ a place where people will want to live and stay.

The service strategy states that the main purpose of the education service is to improve the quality of life for the children, young people and adults of Newham, through a continuous improvement in educational opportunities and achievement.

The five main aims of the strategy are:

1. To provide a quality education service in all schools.
2. To provide inclusive and comprehensive education for all in an environment that is secure and of sound quality.
3. To develop a learning community which values education for children and young people and as a life-long process for all.
4. To maximise the financial resources available for education and to ensure resources are managed efficiently and that services are 'best in class' and 'best value'.
5. To put education at the heart of urban regeneration in Newham and to develop partnerships to help to raise achievement and employability of young people and adults who live in Newham.

The current strategy replaces the last service strategy agreed in 1995 which set out various measures to raise achievement.

The strategy is supported by an annual development plan for 1997 to 1998 which describes key achievements in 1996/97, progress against objectives in the previous service strategy, action in relation to equal opportunities, and performance in relation to service standards and Audit Commission indicators. The plan then identifies key tasks with lead responsibilities defined, targets set and deadlines provided. The LEA has set out effectively what it has planned to do, when and with which officers taking the lead.

Additionally, over the last three years the LEA has adopted a range of other strategies and policies, notably relating to:

- ◆ inclusive education (see Section 2.4 above);
- ◆ equal opportunities;
- ◆ parental involvement;
- ◆ under-fives education;
- ◆ English language support;
- ◆ baseline assessment and target setting in primary schools;
- ◆ attendance;
- ◆ Department information systems;
- ◆ raising achievement in secondary schools.

Officers clearly act effectively within the framework of these policies and strategies. They have a strong allegiance to them, enable their implementation and pursue coherence between the different educational programmes that emerge.

The strategy and plans for the LEA are very well documented in a series of papers which have been shared with elected members, schools and others in the Borough. The papers demonstrate good vision, coherence, sound planning and a careful attention to the key issues affecting pupil achievement. These papers are widely appreciated and reflect very well on the senior officers and others involved in producing them.

Arising from the service strategy a number of important initiatives have taken place:

- ◆ In 1994 the LEA set a target of 35 per cent pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A-C by 1998. This was an ambitious target based on the level for outer London Authorities in 1995.
- ◆ The LEA is currently providing schools with contextualised data on their key stage and GCSE results, in order to support target-setting.
- ◆ A pilot exercise in baseline assessment of five year olds was carried out in 1995/96 and a scheme was agreed and implemented in over 85 per cent of primary schools in 1996/97.
- ◆ The LEA has worked with schools to produce a new quality assurance model based on a combination of school self-review and LEA support. Each school will have a Link Inspector to support the school in developing targets and

improvement strategies and to help produce an annual school profile and school achievement review which will be reported to the governing body.

- ◆ The LEA has taken special steps to ensure its involvement in the National Literacy and Numeracy Projects.
- ◆ The LEA has set Borough-wide attendance targets and developed strategies to improve attendance.
- ◆ The Education Department has worked with other Council Departments to produce an Early Years strategy which includes a number of proposals for improving the quality of early years services.
- ◆ The LEA is developing integrated provision of education and child care, including the establishment of Nursery Education Centres.
- ◆ The LEA has invested substantial sums in improvements to the physical environment of schools.
- ◆ The LEA has an Inclusive Education strategy which aims to extend opportunities in mainstream education for pupils with special educational needs. The LEA has invested in training and support for schools to help improve services for pupils with special educational needs and has developed an Inclusive Education Charter which sets out basic conditions in terms of support for pupils and parents that the LEA hopes to achieve in each school.
- ◆ The LEA has taken measures to reduce exclusions. Against the national trend, permanent exclusions have fallen in successive years from 84 in 1993/94 to 39 in 1996/97. Newham now has the lowest rate of permanent exclusions in London, and one of the lowest in the country as a whole.
- ◆ The development and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in schools is seen as a high priority and an ambitious ICT curriculum strategy has been agreed and has been supported by significant investment in new equipment and training for teachers in 1997.
- ◆ The LEA has adopted a 'learning community' strategy designed to support raising achievement in school by providing extended opportunities for learning outside the traditional school day and by promoting the value of education among parents and local communities.
- ◆ The LEA has opened a Saturday school at a secondary school, for pupils in Years 5 and 6 of local primary schools and plans to open two more this year.
- ◆ The LEA has introduced its first summer school, with courses for pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 on, for example, basic skills, computing, science, music, photography and fashion.
- ◆ The LEA introduced reading recovery classes within the summer school, run in at least five locations within the Borough.
- ◆ The LEA is pioneering home-school partnership projects to help parents to become more involved in their children's education. These include a homework project, a home-school agreement project and a primary-secondary links project.

- ◆ The LEA has pioneered work on study support, with some of its schools providing leading national examples of measures to extend and enhance the school day.
- ◆ The LEA has been very successful in securing additional educational funding. For example, it has succeeded in its SRB bid for £9 million over seven years to support the education of children whose first language is not English. Tate and Lyle PLC have provided £500,000 over five years for the development of reading schemes in several schools across the Borough.

It is notable that many of Newham's LEA and school initiatives for raising achievement are innovative, well-founded on evidence about strategies that work, and in line with new government initiatives set out in the White Paper, *Excellence in Schools*.

### 3.2 Progress Since 1988

Among the main conclusions of the Hegarty report into raising achievement in Newham schools were the following:

- there was a lack of confidence in the LEA within schools;
- low morale among teachers was widespread;
- there were low expectations among pupils, parents and teachers;
- there was a lack of planning in Newham's approach to its special schools;
- there was a lack of consultation with schools over policy developments;
- policy initiatives were not clearly related to each other within a single coherent framework or strategy.

The current Review shows that the LEA has made significant progress in setting up processes and procedures to address these issues. There are good systems and arrangements for consulting governors, head teachers and teacher associations. The LEA has developed a strategic approach to raising achievement and expectations are now much higher than they were. Individual strategies have been developed in relation to various initiatives, such as inclusive education, and these are all brought together in a coherent way in the Education Service Strategy which was developed collaboratively by the LEA and schools and subject to extensive consultation.

As an LEA, Newham has moved from being a reactive and defensive authority which sought to achieve short-term objectives through a series of haphazard initiatives and policy directives to an authority which has a clear vision and sense of purpose, a real commitment to raise achievement through a constructive partnership with all the stakeholders in the education service and coherent strategies for achieving improvements and delivering the Council's vision.

## 4. THE STAKEHOLDERS' EVIDENCE

This section presents the evidence gathered directly from the key stakeholder groups of teachers, pupils, governors and headteachers on the specific question of the LEA's support for raising achievement. (Appendix 1 gives details of data sources and numbers of respondents.) It also comments briefly on public perceptions of the educational service, derived from a secondary source.

### 4.1 Teachers' Evidence

The evidence from teachers was gathered through a questionnaire survey of primary and secondary staff, each of which achieved more than a 40 per cent response. A check to investigate non-response bias indicated that those teachers who responded to the survey were broadly representative of teachers in Newham in terms of gender, age and grade.

#### **Teachers' views about the support they received from different sources**

Unsurprisingly, the teachers derived their strongest sense of support from their own colleagues. In general, there were also positive attitudes to management support. Over 75 per cent of teachers found the support from senior colleagues and the headteacher to be satisfactory or better. Approximately one tenth of primary teachers and one fifth of secondary teachers rated their management support as unsatisfactory or poor.

LEA support was rated less highly by the majority of respondents in both sectors, but low ratings tended to reflect the naturally more remote nature of many LEA personnel for most teachers.

In primary schools, it was encouraging that specialist advisers were rated satisfactory or better by two thirds of the teachers who responded. In secondary schools specialist advisers were rated as unsatisfactory or poor by thirty per cent of respondents. The scope of the LEA to have a strong impact in terms of specialist advice and support for secondary teachers has been diminished in recent years, as is true in other local authorities, but the Authority should now review the support required and how best it can be provided.

Governors were also seen as more remote and were, understandably, not regarded as such strong sources of support as professional colleagues and managers within the school.

In general, primary teachers were more positive than secondary teachers on all issues. They tended to be more appreciative of the support they received from colleagues, managers and the LEA as a whole. They tended to feel more positive about parental support and about pupil performance. They tended to respond more favourably in their opinions of LEA policy and strategy.

#### **Teachers' views about parents**

Most teachers were fairly positive about parents' attitudes and involvement. It was clear, however, that there was a great deal more that teachers would have liked parents to be doing by way of active support for their own children's education. Secondary

teachers in particular would have liked parents to make a greater contribution to supporting school activities, including homework. There was felt to be scope for additional parental support in primary and secondary schools in such areas as: attendance at parents' evenings and school functions, help with reading at home, classroom assistance, choice of options at Key Stage 4, involvement with PTAs and involvement with extra-curricular activities.

### **Teachers' responses to LEA policies and strategies**

In relation to LEA policies and initiatives to support raising attainment, the findings suggested patchy awareness and/or support amongst teachers. In areas like inclusive education, where the policy had been established for many years, awareness was high both for primary and secondary teachers. In areas involving more recent initiatives, there was understandably less awareness.

Those policies which attracted most support (over two-thirds of teachers) and about which teachers seemed most knowledgeable were baseline assessment and literacy initiatives in the primary sector, and attendance initiatives and GCSE target-setting initiatives amongst secondary teachers.

*Appendix 2 provides further details of teachers' responses to selected LEA initiatives.*

### **SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' VIEWS**

Teachers generally had positive views of the support they received from colleagues and managers, although a significant minority of primary and secondary teachers found the support unsatisfactory or poor. The support of governors and of the LEA was perceived to be more remote. In all instances, primary teachers were more positive than secondary.

Although teachers were mostly positive about parents' support and involvement in school, there was a clear indication that teachers felt that parents could give a lot more direct help in improving their children's achievements.

It was evident that teachers felt that policies were not, in general, adequately resourced and that many schools failed to follow the policies up with action plans and access to in-service training with which to ensure consistent implementation.

## **4.2 Headteachers' Evidence**

Headteachers in Newham were individually interviewed about the work of their schools and of the LEA in raising achievement. All the secondary headteachers and a sample of 15 primary teachers were interviewed, each interview taking at least one hour. The intention of the interviews was to identify issues which the LEA needed to address in seeking to raise achievement across the Borough.

### **Headteachers' views on achievement**

Secondary and primary headteachers were aware of the improving profile of test results and GCSE scores in the LEA but, individually, were presiding over very different patterns of results in their own schools. Some were seeing improving raw results, some static and some declining. The results were perceived to fluctuate greatly from one year to the next.

It was a common view among all headteachers that there was a problem with achievement in primary schools in the Borough, and that various factors were contributing to the difficult inheritance that the secondary schools faced. These factors included poverty, family problems, the high incidence of refugee families, high pupil mobility and the demands on teachers' time which caused primary schools to spend insufficient time on teaching the basics.

The secondary schools were eager not to contribute to a blame culture, however, whereby their comments might be construed to be a matter of faulting professional practice in their primary school feeders. There was a feeling that their primary colleagues faced very similar, and sometimes overwhelming, difficulties which were based on multiple disadvantage.

In their own schools, the secondary headteachers also identified the following difficulties relating to pupil achievement: boys' under-achievement based on the local culture, which encouraged an unwillingness to compete and be seen to lose; under-achievement especially among indigenous white boys for whom a job selling cars or working on the market might still seem possible, and easy; boys' underachievement exacerbated by girls choosing single sex schooling; under-achievement for black African and Caribbean boys, based on low expectations; under-funding at LEA and school levels; and pupils not having access to resources (e.g. computers and rooms to study) at home.

Several headteachers commented that social circumstances in Newham were now worse than in 1988 and that there was, as before, a considerable skew in their intake towards lower performers. The headteachers provided a number of examples to illustrate the complex difficulties which individual schools faced.

On the other hand, the headteachers almost universally felt that Newham children could still achieve more and reach fuller potential. It was widely felt that many parents and teachers were now more determined to get children and young people in the LEA to concentrate on their education. One headteacher referred to a sea change in the attitude of the LEA, parents and schools to attacking the problems of low achievement. It was felt that the growth in recent years of the threat of unemployment had itself contributed to this change in attitudes. There was influence as well from the high expectations of local Indian and Pakistani families. There was room for improvement, and a stronger wish to realise the potential that existed.

### **Headteachers' views on attendance**

Attendance has been improving due, in the secondary headteachers' views, to the hard work of individual schools and the Education Welfare Officers (EWOs). Figures were almost universally approaching or exceeding 90 per cent, which was ten per cent better, on average, than figures given in the 1988 study. Individual schools talked of rises from 70 per cent to 90 per cent over four years, though certainly some of this was due to improved administrative arrangements.

For primary headteachers, attendance was not considered the same problem. This response was, however, area dependent. Most schools felt able to exceed 95 per cent attendance but a Canning Town school reported attendance at 91 per cent only after very hard work.

It was felt that there were not sufficient EWOs, but the recent improvements in numbers and quality were appreciated. The increase in telephone calls to parents, and



quicker action to take pupils off roll, had helped. There was still a need to resolve the occasional incidence of absence overseas, when pupils needed to be taken off roll in secondary schools, as they tended to be in primary.

### **Headteachers' views on parental expectations and support**

Headteachers reported that parental expectations had been raised. They said that there was increasing concern among parents about their children securing high qualifications, although this brought with it more vociferous claims from parents for their rights.

Parental bodies at the secondary level were not perceived to be strong or to be sufficiently representative of the multicultural community. The Indian and Pakistani families were thought to be contributing considerably to raising expectations locally. The LEA's Bengali project on parental involvement and pupil attendance was praised in this context.

The primary headteachers had much more to say about parental expectations. They commented on the range of parents' views: some highly supportive, some too anxious, and some who would not come into the school. In the primary schools there were many cases of parental involvement policies at work. Parents helped in class; parental involvement occurred in reading, mathematics and science.

One school talked about 'very low' parent expectations (predominantly from the white intake), and criticised those parents who were 'over-sensitive on the caring and sharing, [where] the children are indulged with money and the parents do not have high academic expectations'. Another headteacher perceived that, where parental expectations were high, pupils were meeting their potential: 'But the challenge is to move all the children on'. Another school, a nursery, talked of unrealistically high expectations, where parents were keen on literacy projects: these may not be appropriate for such young children.

Schools in general did not have difficulty with extended holidays or absences overseas although this was considered to be a growing problem for some. In two cases, the problem had been improved by better monitoring and added requirements for establishing permissions, allied to strong backing from the LEA.

### **Headteachers' views on teacher expertise, morale, expectations and mobility**

Staff were felt to be hard-working, over-burdened by paperwork and, in common with the profession nationally, under-valued. Teachers' high motivation was felt to be complemented now by a very high workload. Subject knowledge was considered to be generally good at secondary level. The age, sex and ethnic balance among staff was felt to be good, with a high proportion of younger teachers.

Mixed messages emerged about teacher morale. It was reported to be low because of the media and public presentation of teachers, but high in terms of camaraderie among colleagues. The reports on teacher morale varied on a continuum from 'very low', to 'pretty good considering we have an OFSTED in two months', and to 'high, even after special measures have been introduced'. What was called the national 'knocking' of teachers was perceived to be specially damaging.

The general view was that low expectations were largely a part of the past. There was a clearer focus now on pupil achievement. Headteachers were setting out their expectations (for example, of marking and lesson planning) more clearly, which helped. Headteachers perceived teachers to be working hard: 'it is much better than

in 1988'. New, younger teachers were felt to be very good, to be well organised and to possess high expectations. Headteachers said that teachers now wanted to know how to raise achievement, especially when pupils' basic skills were low.

For the primary headteachers, teacher expectations were considered critical: 'Teacher expectation is the main factor which affects achievement'. Staff expectations and teaching quality were considered the defining issues in the nurseries. One primary headteacher commented: 'We still have a group of very influential old-time teachers with low expectations. Three of them have gone but it is hard to shift the culture...'. Another primary headteacher felt that most inner-city teachers' expectations were not high enough. In a school where the catchment was worsening, the primary headteacher realised the pressure there would be on staff in relation to behaviour problems and the greater differentiation that would be needed.

One secondary headteacher believed that expectations were still very mixed, however. For example, there were felt to be some residual difficulties with teacher union attitudes, which the headteacher felt betrayed a 'them and us' mentality and occasionally obstructed efforts to raise achievement. New staff in general were perceived to be helping to raise expectations. There were regrets expressed about the decline of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils.

There were signals that teacher appraisal was not working well within the LEA. One secondary headteacher put this down to insufficient funding. Another commented on appraisal as a bureaucratic exercise, which staff did not value. A primary headteacher commented: 'we are getting there on teacher appraisal but the funding has stopped. Most staff see it as a chore – it takes too much time, although it has helped to identify some teachers' strengths and weaknesses.'

Teacher mobility was very variable. In one school, teacher mobility was reported to have reached a 70 per cent staff turnover within three years. In another mobility was low: only 12 per cent over three years and four per cent in the last year. In a third school, mobility had been very low until, under special measures, there had been 50 per cent change in three years. The majority of schools had sustained much more stable staffing.

#### **Headteachers' views on recruitment of staff**

Schools differed considerably. The area most commonly identified as difficult for recruitment was in attracting new headteachers and senior managers at secondary level. Subject shortages were perceived in design and technology and modern languages. It was still felt that the LEA suffered from a poor image externally, as did many inner city authorities.

In the primary sector, recruitment was not seen as so great a problem: 'I pay more and offer an extra point'. In one nursery school, the headteacher said it was easy to get those with nursery nurse training, but harder to get nursery-trained teachers. In several other schools, the headteachers reported that the main problem was in holding on to staff when funding for reception classes did not continue through the whole year. Several schools used agency help, which was variable in its effectiveness.

#### **Headteachers' views on in-service training and staff development**

Training in general was deemed 'satisfactory or better', and 'better than it was'. School-based training (or consultancy) was preferred by the secondary headteachers, both for efficacy and cost. Off-site training was not so highly regarded by them. Secondary headteachers indicated that they went where they knew individual providers

were good; several reported that they had tried to use the LEA but occasionally found better individuals outside.

Training for senior and middle management was not usually considered highly at secondary level, especially that for senior management. Primary headteachers felt better about management training. Information technology training and support were well-regarded. Governor training was well regarded too: 'there is lots and governors use it'; 'it is great stuff and I have been myself'.

Two secondary headteachers commented that induction was too much a paper exercise, and did not operate effectively in practice, especially for senior managers. The primary headteachers tended to praise the induction programme for new teachers to Newham.

The primary headteachers also reported higher proportions of teachers taking up LEA in-service opportunities and higher levels of training in school than previously. The LEA's programmes were generally felt to be good, with planning apparently based on schools' development plans. The nursery headteachers were especially appreciative of the improvements made recently to in-service training for them and their teachers.

### **Headteachers' views on assessment, monitoring and value added**

Most of the secondary schools were using standardised tests with their Year 7 intake and with Years 8 or 9. Usually the London Reading Test (LRT) and Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs) had been adopted, although it was felt that neither test was wholly suitable for the range of Newham's pupils. Pupil attitudes were also measured in Year 7 and Year 9 in one school.

Some secondary schools were already examining value added data, as well as gender and ethnic relationships. It had been proposed that all the secondary schools would take part in a value added exercise using the CATs, and working with the University of London Institute of Education. All but two of the schools had already begun their involvement.

It was recognised that new statistical demands were being made both at school and LEA level, and that there may not be sufficient staffing or expertise to meet the needs. There was still some uncertainty about how individual secondary schools and the LEA should best collaborate to analyse and use the CAT data which would become available for all secondary schools. There was a clear intention to produce and use evidence to examine pupils' progress, but the means were uncertain.

Secondary schools were still developing their internal systems for the use of CAT data. They were eager to avoid establishing any self-fulfilling prophecies through their use of individual or group data. For example, in one school, data only went to the special needs coordinator and the head of year. In this school, the data had already been useful for identifying 20 further children (out of 270) who had not been picked up by other means. High-flyers were similarly identified. Some of the schools were introducing pupil target-setting as part of their work on Records of Achievement.

There was some concern about target-setting, in particular about the need to set realistic targets based on evidence. The headteachers felt that recent experience had seen 'some people' plucking targets out of the air, rather than basing them on evidence. The LEA's strategic objectives were perceived to be more useful than the specific targets.

Primary schools were using a variety of assessment approaches, and standardised tests. Several of the primary headteachers commented on the need to become more expert in the handling of assessment data. They felt they needed assistance in particular with value added, statistical analysis and target-setting. Some primaries were already 'forecasting' and one was trying to raise, for example, Key Stage 2 English results, by employing extra teachers and deputy headteacher release to support targeted pupils in upper Key Stage 2.

### Headteachers' views on LEA support for school improvement

Headteachers felt that there were a number of positive features in the LEA's work on raising achievement. It was felt that there were a number of very good people in the LEA, notably in the leading positions, who 'got things done'. Officers also successfully produced papers on key areas such as pupil achievement, pupils' results on national tests and league tables.

It was felt by many that a culture shift had been occurring and the school improvement debate had been raised, but now there was a need for more decisive leadership on the issues involved. It was considered to have been a good idea, and timely, to revisit the 1989 Hegarty Report. Headteachers also wanted their recent achievements to be better acknowledged and supported.

One headteacher commented, 'I am sympathetic to the LEA, they work hard. But there is a lack of vision here. At school, my vision underpins what we do.' The headteacher suggested that the vision needed to be clearer in all the strategy documents: 'what is the LEA doing to raise achievement?' Another headteacher said that it was not enough to lead by writing a target. More attention was required to the means to bring things about.

Examples of comments included:

*It is a good LEA. There are some faults but it is supportive. There are budget problems, but pupil achievement is rising which is down to the schools and the LEA.*

*I take a generally positive view. There are lots of difficulties for Newham and we have to strive against the odds. There is a lack of funding too.*

*The role of officers is now more clearly defined. There has been a wave of change. I think the inspectors have also improved and responded well to OFSTED.*

*They try hard. They have a genuine concern and the officers help and promote the Borough.*

Specific divisions which received consistent praise were personnel, educational psychologists (although there were felt not to be enough of them), and information technology support. The pre-OFSTED visits were almost universally commended. There were felt to be good public relations and most headteachers reported that the LEA had become good at getting additional money for schools.

One secondary school exemplified the extra funds it had received via the LEA to free time for form tutors, to pay for further science laboratories and a flexible learning centre, and for extra revenue too, based on matched funding by the school. For another school outside the scope of the regeneration projects involved, however, it was felt that

the school was left too much to itself to raise additional funds. Primary schools felt that they had to be vigilant to seize the opportunities they needed to get additional funds or access to projects.

Areas that needed more work on the part of the LEA included data collection and analysis relating to pupil achievement, school improvement, management support and training (especially for deputy heads and senior management teams), special needs funding and support, the separate special needs and exclusions panels, and the awareness of all officers about the demands at school level of inclusive education. The secondary pupil-teacher ratio was compared unfavourably with that of neighbouring LEAs.

Specific suggestions included:

- ◆ setting up a good research and statistics department with good quality data collection and transmission to schools;
- ◆ more EWOs designated to the secondary schools and their feeders;
- ◆ a home-school liaison teacher in each secondary school;
- ◆ better inter-agency links with social services, and improved child and family guidance;
- ◆ more work on a more comprehensive approach to raising achievement which addressed all the contributing factors;
- ◆ securing staff with more skills in data analysis and school improvement strategies;
- ◆ a school improvement focus on primary schools, with a good evidence base;
- ◆ set up a working party on raising the quality of teaching and learning;
- ◆ concentration on literacy and numeracy in primary schools, to give pupils a better start;
- ◆ better management development training and support from the advisory and inspection teams;
- ◆ reducing the number of targets – (e.g. only two or three targets) so that the LEAs and schools could focus on less and do better;
- ◆ more work on the primary literacy and numeracy projects;
- ◆ the development of a learning community strategy and a family literacy approach;
- ◆ devolving more money to the schools ('beyond the 85 per cent');
- ◆ better support for curriculum development in schools from the LEAs' inspectors and advisers ('some gaps, not all the curriculum areas are covered and there are some poor people');
- ◆ the development of Newham primary schemes of work;
- ◆ improved curriculum leadership at primary level;
- ◆ provide more support staff at school level;

- ◆ better English as an additional language provision, via improved Section 11 or equivalent funding;
- ◆ improved quality of language support;
- ◆ revising the Education Department structure and personnel – e.g. to appoint more educational psychologists;
- ◆ providing for more continuity of educational psychologists' support, by ensuring that a school did not get four different psychologists in one year;
- ◆ siting advisers/inspectors and their managers together, not separate as now between Department and the teachers' centre (INSEC).

Additionally, several headteachers indicated that they were still suspicious of elected members' reverting to 'the old way of control' and reported that there were still some tensions between the Education Committee and the schools. It was suggested that too frequently it felt as if the council consulted and issued edicts, but did not collaborate. One headteacher suggested that the model was not so different from 1988, when the last Inquiry took place. Members were advised to listen better to their Officers. The term 'patronising' was used of how the LEA was felt to treat heads.

One headteacher suggested that the remedy would be to improve everyone's education in successful school improvement strategies. It was further suggested that there should be more coherence on the part of the Council and the LEA, and that the councillors should show their support for staff more clearly. One headteacher commented that the LEA did not take the lead on school improvement and that the recent drive had come from the secondary schools.

The school liaison officer system was seen to be very dependent on the quality of the individual assigned. In some cases, it was felt to be not very good. The good liaison officers were perceived to be too busy. Some were not deemed to be from the right, or most helpful, part of the education department. The LEA has now ended this system and provides each school with a link inspector as part of the quality assurance model.

Headteachers did not start with high expectations of the value of extending the link inspector idea. Some were concerned that it was leading to more checking up on schools, rather than supporting their work. Headteachers considered that there were not enough inspectors/advisers available to give the regular and specialist support required. Individual inspectors were highly commended, however.

The implementation of new headteacher support, mentoring and appraisal appeared to be patchy.

Finally, the inclusive education policy was considered to be causing resource difficulties (for example where one of the secondary schools which was not designated for specific inclusive education resources had many statemented children). The suggestion was made that all the central team and Section 11 funding should be delegated. Another headteacher considered that inclusive education had been chosen as 'a cheap option' by the LEA and as a political issue; it had not been properly resourced. Another headteacher commented, 'The inclusive education policy is a good idea and we are all in favour. But it is not funded properly. Despite this, the kids are doing well.'

## SUMMARY OF HEADTEACHERS' VIEWS

Headteachers were aware of pupils gaining improving national test results against a pattern of disadvantage affecting many of Newham's schools. Individual schools were making progress at quite different rates, however, and were coping with very varied intakes and conditions. There was evidence of a cultural shift in the LEA in recent years, however, whereby improving achievement had become an over-riding concern. There was a feeling that Newham children could still achieve more.

Marked gains were evident in pupil attendance in recent years, especially in secondary schools. Parental expectations were perceived to be rising, although there were sizeable parts of the Borough in which there were still problems with low expectations and support at home. There was a general feeling that low teacher expectations were no longer a major concern within the LEA although, partly because of image problems, there were still difficulties over recruiting staff to posts within local schools.

Secondary headteachers were more critical of in-service training than primary heads, especially in the area of management training. Primary headteachers identified new demands on them in the area of handling assessment data.

There were positive feelings about the LEA's work on raising achievement and on the capabilities of LEA officials, but there were a number of areas in which headteachers could identify that they needed additional leadership and support: for example, in data collection and transmission; school improvement measures; early literacy and numeracy and curriculum leadership in primary schools.

## 4.3 Governors' Evidence

The evidence from governors was gathered through a questionnaire survey of a randomly stratified sample of school governors, using the LEA database of governors' names and addresses. Since there was no information available on governors' status, it was not possible to ensure a representative cross-section of different kinds of governor but, in the event, 490 responses were received from governors in all categories (see Appendix 1). Compared with similar studies, this is a high rate of return.

### **Governors' views on the LEA's initiatives on raising achievement**

Most respondents made favourable responses to Newham's initiatives on school improvement and raising achievement. About three-quarters of them said the LEA's initiatives on raising pupil attainment had been well publicised, at least to some extent. About two-thirds agreed that the LEA had provided additional resources to help with raising achievement. Over three-quarters recognised that governors had received guidance from the LEA about their own responsibilities in this area.

As well as noting the negative responses – of around one-sixth of respondents on each of these items – however, it should be recognised that a number of governors said they did not have sufficient information to comment.

Secondary school governors gave rather more positive responses than those from primary schools. Parent governors were more likely than the other groups of governors to give a negative response or to say they did not know.

The main responses to governors training were as follows:

*Pre-OFSTED training:* over half the governors said they had received training provided by the LEA in this area, and most of these (nearly three-quarters) said the training had been helpful in most respects. A further 15 per cent said their training had been provided by the school or other organisation.

*Staff recruitment procedures:* only one-third of the governors had apparently received LEA-provided training in this area, which the majority nonetheless had found helpful in most respects. A further nine per cent reported school-based or some other kind of training.

*Equal opportunities:* only a small proportion, around one-fifth, of governors reported receiving LEA-provided training for equal opportunities; about two-thirds of these said it had been helpful in most respects. A further 12 per cent reported school/other training.

*SEN Code of Practice:* over one-third of governors said they had received LEA-based training in the Code of Practice, two-thirds of whom had found it helpful in most respects. A further 23 per cent said they had received some other form of training.

*School development planning:* over one-quarter said the LEA had provided training in school development planning, although well under two-thirds of these said this had been helpful in most respects. Between one-quarter and one-third said their school (or other organisation) had provided such training.

Pre-OFSTED training therefore seems to have been the most successful area of training provided by the LEA, both in terms of coverage and of how far it has met governors' perceived needs. Equal opportunities training provision was the area least well catered for.

Parent governors were less likely than other groups to have received training on OFSTED inspections, on equal opportunities or on school development planning; and less likely also to say that the training which they had received had been helpful.

### **Governors' views of the need for further support**

Questions were asked about where, in terms of five areas offered, governors believed further support was needed within the LEA to improve achievement. The main findings on each of the five items were as follows:

*Boys' performance:* just under half (45 per cent) of the respondents noted boys' performance as an area needing further support; all of them then went on to specify what aspects needed attention, including 'achievement/academic standards', 'English language/literacy', and 'behaviour and discipline'.

*Girls' performance:* a far lower proportion of respondents – only one-quarter – noted girls' performance as a concern. The areas most frequently identified were 'mathematics' and 'English language/literacy', although a handful of respondents mentioned 'science', 'IT' and 'expectations of achievement'.

*Performance of particular ethnic groups:* just over two-fifths (43 per cent) of governors expressed concern about the performance of one or more ethnic groups. Two groups mentioned by more than ten per cent of these respondents were Bengali/Bangladeshi and Afro-Caribbean/West Indian pupils; ten per cent simply wrote 'Asians'. In addition, 15 per cent noted 'new arrivals with little English' as a group causing concern. 'Refugees' were another non-specific group mentioned by several respondents.



*Performance of particular age groups:* just over one-third of governors drew attention to the performance of particular age groups, usually 'early years/nursery and reception/infants/Key Stage 1', but also 'junior/Key Stage 2' pupils. It must be remembered that the survey comprised far more respondents in the primary sector than in the secondary.

*Performance of any other groups:* over one-quarter (28 per cent) of governors mentioned specific groups such as 'children with learning difficulties' (including those with behavioural difficulties), and children who are 'gifted' or 'particularly able'. The needs and difficulties of 'refugees/new arrivals' were mentioned by some respondents at this point as well.

Parent governors seemed less likely than the other groups to express concern about pupils' performance; but up to one-third of them on each item claimed not to have sufficient information to make any judgement.

### **Governors' views on general areas of educational provision**

Governors were also asked for an overview of educational provision in their school and were invited to agree or disagree with a number of statements. Grouping the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses together, we can summarise the findings as follows:

#### *Staffing:*

- nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of governors claimed that staff morale was high in their school;
- about one-fifth (22 per cent) agreed that *staff absenteeism* was a concern, but about the same proportion strongly disagreed; a further 17 per cent said they had insufficient information to make a judgement;
- about two-fifths (44 per cent) agreed that *levels of staffing* within the school were appropriate, though 13 per cent strongly disagreed; the proportion of parent governors strongly disagreeing was even higher, at 20 per cent;
- nearly half the respondents (48 per cent) said that *recruitment of staff* was a problem; but a further 12 per cent (19 per cent of parent governors) said they were unable to make an assessment.

#### *Expectations:*

- about two-thirds (62 per cent) of governors agreed that teachers had *high academic expectations* of pupils although, again, ten per cent were unable to make a comment; however, only 51 per cent of parent governors said teachers had high academic expectations, and 15 per cent did not know;
- the great majority (80 per cent) of respondents, however, maintained that teachers had *high behavioural expectations of pupils*; though again parent governors were slightly less likely to agree.

#### *Curriculum:*

- over three-quarters (77 per cent) of governors – but only two-thirds (66 per cent) of parent governors – agreed that the curriculum in their school was *appropriate and adaptable* for all pupils.

*Communication with parents:*

- over two-thirds (69 per cent) of governors said that their school had good systems for getting and keeping parents/carers involved with their children's education; this figure fell to 60 per cent when parent governors' views only were considered;
- three-quarters (75 per cent) of respondents agreed that the views and needs of all parents/carers were taken seriously; again, it seems that only 63 per cent of parent governors felt they could agree with this.

*LEA support:*

- between two-thirds and three-quarters (70 per cent) of governors agreed that the LEA was providing good support services, although about ten per cent said they were unable to make a judgement on this. When the figures for parent governors were considered in isolation, the figures were under two-thirds (60 per cent) agreeing and over one-fifth (22 per cent) unable to make a judgement.

The wide spread of responses on each item was perhaps an indication that governors in different schools had very different experiences of, say, staff recruitment difficulties. Second, there was a marked contrast between the views of governors as a whole and those of parent governors as a group, who were more inclined than the others to give negative responses.

Since this was a question which referred explicitly to 'your school', the more critical nature of parent governors' responses might be attributable to the fact that they had more personal experience of the school (by virtue of having children there) than other governors. This finding should be considered seriously by the LEA.

## **SUMMARY OF GOVERNORS' VIEWS**

There was much support amongst school governors for the work of the LEA in attempting to improve schools and raise pupils' levels of achievement. There were clearly areas of work where that support was lukewarm, and several points at which governors felt they had insufficient information to pass comment.

Parent governors in particular often seemed not to have received – through head teachers' reports, committee meeting minutes and/or analyses of performance, for example – the kind of evidence on which to base responses to what were quite general questions. Additionally, parent governors were more likely to adopt a critical stance in respect of the difficulty of staff recruitment, the appropriateness of curriculum, teachers' expectations of their pupils and schools' efforts to involve parents. Parent governors also seemed to be at greater 'distance' from the LEA, in terms of knowing the kinds of support provided to schools and/or of receiving, and finding helpful, LEA-based training activities.

Concerns about pupil performance centred on the performance of boys, on language and literacy, and on provision for the early years of education. These are areas about which concern is expressed nationally and may be taken as providing a clear policy steer for the LEA. It is evident that these are issues on which the LEA is already concentrating.

## 4.4 Pupils' Evidence

The evidence from pupils was gathered from a questionnaire survey to a random sample of pupils in two cohorts, Year 7 (N = 556) and Year 10 (N = 550), in all the Borough's secondary schools. (See Appendix 1.) In addition, it was possible to make a few broad comparisons with data from similar surveys including that undertaken within the 1988 Newham Inquiry and two national datasets on pupil attitudes and achievement (Keys *et al.*, 1995 and Schagen, forthcoming).

### Background of pupils in the survey

There were equal numbers of boys and girls in the Year 7 cohort. They came from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being white (over one-quarter), but with around ten per cent or more in each case from African, Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds respectively.

In the Year 10 cohort, girls outnumbered boys in the proportion, 52 per cent to 42 per cent (five per cent of pupils did not specify their sex). The ethnic background of the older cohort was similar to that of Year 7. It appears, however, that the non-European school population has increased considerably since the 1988 Newham Inquiry.

### General views on school and lessons: Year 7 pupils

In Year 7, high proportions of pupils (over 75 per cent) agreed that they liked being at school and that lessons were worth doing. Very high proportions (88 per cent) believed that 'homework is important'. There was also a high level of personal motivation towards academic work, with the majority (87 per cent) of pupils saying, for example, that they worked hard in all or most lessons. Additionally, around two-thirds (68 per cent) said they found work in all or most lessons interesting.

The majority of pupils (over 50 per cent) agreed that their school had sensible rules and that other people thought it was a good school. About two-thirds of pupils (62 per cent) said they would recommend their school to other young people.

There were some notable reservations, however. For example, under one-third of Year 7 pupils thought their school to be a clean and attractive place.

Boys were more positive than girls about liking being at school, the school having sensible rules, other people thinking it was a good school and saying they would recommend the school to other pupils. But girls were more likely to agree that lessons were worth doing and that homework was important. Girls were more likely than boys to say they worked hard in all lessons, though less likely to find all lessons interesting.

Differences also emerged between ethnic groups: for instance, white Europeans were less likely than pupils as a whole to agree that homework was important.

On the issues of enjoying being at school, the importance of homework, and finding lesson work interesting, Newham responses were more positive than those of a recent national study (Keys *et al.*, 1995). However, considerably more pupils in the national study agreed that school work was worth doing (92 per cent compared with 80 per cent); that their school had sensible rules (85 per cent compared with 64 per cent); that other people thought theirs was a good school (86 per cent compared with 55 per cent); and that their school was a pleasant environment (69 per cent of the national sample said their school was always/nearly always 'clean and tidy').

### General views on school and lessons: Year 10 pupils

The responses of Year 10 pupils indicate a view of school not markedly less favourable than that of the younger cohort.

About three-quarters of Year 10 pupils (77 per cent) agreed or agreed strongly that they liked being at school; the vast majority (89 per cent) agreed that lessons were worth doing; and a similar proportion (88 per cent) agreed that homework was important. Nearly two-thirds (60 per cent) agreed that other people thought it was a good school, just over half (52 per cent) agreed that the school had sensible rules and two-fifths (40 per cent) agreed that their school was clean and attractive. The proportion saying they would recommend their school to other young people was well over half (59 per cent).

The majority (75 per cent) of pupils said that they worked hard in all or most lessons, which was a slightly lower proportion than amongst the younger cohort. About half the pupils (48 per cent) said they found work in all or most lessons interesting, but a large proportion (60 per cent) said they were bored in some lessons.

As with the younger cohort, some differences showed up between the sexes. But with this cohort, boys were more positive than girls on most items, in terms of 'agreeing strongly'. This was true for whether lessons were worth doing (43 per cent compared with 29 per cent 'agreeing strongly'), for the school having sensible rules, and for other people thinking it was a good school. Boys were also more likely to agree that homework was important (41 per cent compared with 35 per cent 'agreeing strongly') and to agree strongly they would recommend the school to other pupils.

Girls were more likely than boys to say that they counted the minutes till the end of the period in all or most lessons and that all or most lesson work was a waste of time; boys were more likely to say that work in all or most lessons was interesting. It seems that girls were the more likely to have become somewhat disaffected by the time they reached their GCSE years.

Differences were also apparent between ethnic groups: white Europeans were less likely than pupils as a whole to make the strongest positive statements, particularly on the item about liking being at school (six per cent 'agreeing strongly' compared with 14 per cent overall), whereas black African and Caribbean pupils were much more likely to agree strongly that they liked being at school (26 and 21 per cent respectively).

The results were not markedly different from those in national studies.

### Pupil perceptions of parental interest and involvement

Almost all pupils (97 per cent) in the Year 7 survey said their parents always thought that it was important for them to do well at school, though this proportion dropped to 87 per cent in response to the question about whether their parents were always interested in how they did at school. A lower proportion still (82 per cent) said that their parents always made sure they did their homework; and only two-thirds (66 per cent) said their parents always came to parents' evenings.

Parents' views on the importance of school may not, it seems, invariably translate into practical involvement. Difference between the sexes showed up most markedly in responses to the question about whether parents made it clear that their children should behave well at school: 93 per cent of boys said their parents always made it clear, compared with 84 per cent of girls.

In the Year 10 survey, as with the younger cohort, almost all pupils (96 per cent) said their parents always thought that it was important for them to do well at school, although only 75 per cent said their parents were always interested in how they did at school. Under half the pupils (48 per cent) said that their parents always made sure they did their homework; although over half (56 per cent) said their parents always came to parents' evenings – perhaps this reflects the fact that this year was the start of GCSE courses for the cohort.

These figures suggest that parents of Year 10 pupils were less involved in their children's education than those of Year 7 parents, which probably reflects the changing nature of the relationship between older adolescent children and their parents.

There was a tendency for the responses of white, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils to be less positive than those of black African, Caribbean and Indian pupils.

### **Pupils' views of teachers**

In Year 7, responses were very favourable, with 88 per cent of pupils saying that all or most teachers made sure that homework was done, for example. The majority also said that all or most teachers explained how they should behave (82 per cent) and did something about rule-breaking when it happened (83 per cent). Views were not so favourable about whether teachers gave them praise for good work: around two-thirds (67 per cent) said that all or most teachers did this. Moreover, only 70 per cent said all or most teachers could keep order in class; and only just over half the pupils (56 per cent) said they liked all or most of their teachers. No conspicuous differences showed up between the responses of boys and girls.

Further questions in this section asked pupils about how often teachers marked their work, about teachers' expectations of them, and about opportunities for individual academic reviews. Here again the picture was mostly a very positive one, with almost all pupils (92 per cent) saying that their teachers always or usually marked their work, and well over three-quarters (79 per cent) saying that their teachers tried to make them work to the best of their ability. At this stage (Year 7), only 16 per cent of pupils reported 'often' having a chance to speak with their form tutor about school work, one-third (36 per cent) 'sometimes', one-quarter (24 per cent) 'never' and one-quarter (24 per cent) 'not sure' or not responding.

In the previous Newham Inquiry, 77 per cent of Year 7 pupils said that their teachers tried hard to make them work as well as they could, which is very similar to the figure of 79 per cent in the current study.

From Year 10 pupils, responses were less favourable, but nonetheless fairly positive. Three-quarters of pupils (74 per cent) said that all or most teachers made sure that homework was done, for example; two-thirds (68 per cent) also said that all or most teachers explained how they should behave, and did something about rule-breaking when it happened. But only half the pupils (49 per cent) in this cohort said that all or most teachers gave them praise for good work; and only one-third (35 per cent) said all or most teachers could keep order in class. Finally, under one-third (30 per cent) said they liked all or most of their teachers.

On the more detailed questions, almost all pupils (92 per cent) said that their teachers always or usually marked their work, although only two-thirds (68 per cent) said that their teachers tried to make them work to the best of their ability. Surprisingly, only

14 per cent of pupils reported 'often' having a chance to speak with their form tutor about school work (fewer than in Year 7), under half (46 per cent) 'sometimes', one-third (32 per cent) 'never' and one-tenth (nine per cent) not responding.

Boys were more likely to report having had an individual interview (28 per cent said 'never' compared with 35 per cent of girls). Proportions were not that dissimilar for interviews with other staff, such as subject teachers: overall, 14 per cent reported often having the opportunity to do so, 51 per cent sometimes and 25 per cent never.

### **Pupil views of school rules and discipline**

The final series of questions in the questionnaire asked about discipline, school rules and pupils' behaviour in school, including bullying. Overall, pupils in Year 7 gave favourable responses: two-thirds (66 per cent) said that the discipline in their school was about right, and slightly fewer (60 per cent) that the school had about the right number of rules. Two-thirds of them (65 per cent) described themselves and their friends as always or usually well behaved, though one-fifth (21 per cent) said they were sometimes badly behaved. Half the pupils (50 per cent) also claimed they had never been bullied by other pupils in the school; although one-third (32 per cent) said this had happened 'once or twice'. Girls were slightly more likely to regard themselves and their friends as always or usually well-behaved.

For Year 10, findings were rather varied, as follows. Half the pupils (51 per cent) said that the discipline in their school was about right, though one-quarter (28 per cent) said discipline was too strict. Equal numbers (43 per cent in each case) claimed that the school had about the right number of rules or had too many rules. Two-thirds of pupils (65 per cent) – the same proportion as for the younger cohort – described themselves and their friends as always or usually well behaved, though one-quarter (26 per cent) said they were sometimes badly behaved. Over half the pupils (54 per cent) said they had never been bullied by other pupils in the school; although one-third (34 per cent) said this had happened 'once or twice'.

### **Pupil views on provision and guidance for the future**

For the Year 10 cohort, a final set of questions tried to elicit pupils' views about the kind of help the school had given in terms of preparing them for the future. Pupils were asked to what extent their education had covered a wide range of subjects, provided a good balance of subjects, equipped them with the right skills and knowledge, and was suitable for their individual needs. They were also asked to rate the careers education and guidance they had received so far.

Responses here were quite favourable: over three-quarters (80 per cent) said that their education had covered a wide range of subjects well or very well; the same proportion (81 per cent) said the same about the balance of subjects; about two-thirds (63 per cent) considered that they had been well or very well equipped with the right skills and knowledge; and about the same number (67 per cent) considered their education had been suitable for their individual needs. Girls were less likely than boys to say that they had been equipped with skills and knowledge or that their individual needs had been well catered for.

As far as careers education and guidance was concerned, over two-thirds (70 per cent) found it very or quite helpful; one-fifth (20 per cent) found it not very or not at all helpful; and a handful (six per cent) felt uncertain.

Pupils' own plans post-16 were also surveyed: three-quarters (74 per cent) intended, at this stage, going to college after the end of Year 11; roughly equal, but small, numbers said they planned to get any job, get a job with training or go on a training course (three per cent, four per cent and four per cent respectively). Unsurprisingly, a larger minority (13 per cent) said they were still unsure. No statistically significant differences were found between the sexes in respect of post-16 plans. White pupils were less likely than any other ethnic group to say they planned to go to college.

As far as careers education and guidance was concerned, data from Hegarty (1989) showed that fewer pupils then found their careers advice helpful; but one-quarter had not received such advice in any case. Hegarty's evidence pre-dates the enhancement of careers education and guidance in all secondary schools.

Considerable changes over time were also evident in respect of pupils' future intentions. Only half the pupils in the Hegarty study intended going on into a sixth form or college; this had increased to 74 per cent in the current survey. The proportion of pupils who were undecided also appeared to fall between 1988 and 1997.

### **Linking attitudinal data with academic performance**

Analysis of the relationship between attitudes and achievement in individual schools suggested that academic performance was good in Schools where pupils had a positive attitude towards school and home-work, and where teachers were perceived to have high expectations and to make appropriate demands on pupils.

Such evidence does not, however, reveal whether there might be a causal relationship between these variables.

### **SUMMARY OF PUPIL VIEWS**

The survey results suggested that pupils in Newham schools, whether in their first or fourth year of secondary education, were fairly well motivated towards school, and home-work. There were no major differences between pupils in Newham in 1997 and pupils elsewhere, or in earlier years in the same Borough, of a kind which would lead one to believe that Newham's current pupil population was on average any less hard-working or less convinced of the importance of education than other pupils.

Some more detailed points were suggested by the survey evidence, as follows:

- ◆ The younger cohort of Newham pupils were rather more critical than pupils nationally of their own school environment, not only physically but also in terms of perceived reputation of the school, and whether the work they did maintained their interest.
- ◆ But there was no conspicuous falling-off in pupils' motivation, etc., between Year 7 and Year 10 as might have been expected; moreover, Year 10 pupils in Newham had levels of motivation and positive views of schooling at least as high as pupils elsewhere, or previously.
- ◆ Parental involvement in their children's education – as perceived by the pupils – seemed at least as high in Newham as elsewhere.
- ◆ Newham pupils' views of their teachers showed a more critical stance amongst Year 10 than amongst Year 7 pupils – probably not a surprising finding in itself;

but there was also an indication that Year 10 pupils in Newham in 1997 found their teachers less demanding than did pupils elsewhere, or previously.

- ◆ The team found evidence, on some questions, of large differences between the average responses from different schools.

An intriguing finding was the relatively positive level of motivation and attitude to be found amongst Newham boys in both year groups, compared with girls. Another area of difference was that relating to ethnic group: broadly speaking it appeared that white pupils were showing less positive personal attitudes than those in most of the minority ethnic groups. Further analysis of the data revealed that the findings for gender and ethnic group were inter-related. Broadly, it emerged that boys in ethnic groups other than white were more likely to be positively disposed towards school.

These findings provide interesting and positive evidence about Newham's secondary school population. In summary, pupil attitudes to schools, to education in general and to their teachers, were relatively positive in Newham. Indeed, in several areas, there was less evidence of growing disaffection through secondary education than had been found to occur elsewhere. This is an area of achievement on which the LEA and schools would wish to build in the future.

## 4.5 Public Perceptions

Public perceptions of the Borough's education services have improved in recent years. Newham Council subscribes to a London-wide Annual Survey of Public Views, which is undertaken by the market research company BMRB. In October and November 1995, 1,189 personal interviews were conducted in the street and in homes in Newham, using a representative quota sample with quotas set on sex, age, ethnic origin, housing tenure and working status of women.

The survey indicated that specific aspects of educational provision were not rated as highly as many other Council services, but this may be due to the fact that not all the public know and use the services directly. For example, the highest ratings were for refuse collection and street lighting. The survey did show, however, that primary education was rated more highly than either nursery or secondary education. The views of parents tended to be more positive. Both public and parental ratings improved fairly consistently between 1990 and 1995.

It was interesting, however, that in comparison with London as a whole, across the period 1990 to 1995 the survey showed a marked improvement in public attitudes to both secondary and primary education. The average ratings for Newham's primary and secondary provision rose from a position in 1990 where the Borough's education was below the Inner London average and well below the whole London average, to a position in 1995 where Newham was well above the inner city average and very close to the London average. Ratings of nursery education rose in the same period and were high in relation to the Inner London and London averages, which remained fairly stable and low.



## 4.6 Summary and Conclusions: the Stakeholders' Views

There were many positive features to report from the stakeholders' perspectives. Of greatest importance was the finding that, despite its socio-economic and other disadvantages, secondary pupils' attitudes to education and their schools appeared to be as high in the Borough as those to be found among pupils sampled within broader, national studies. Additionally, there was no conspicuous falling-off in pupils' motivation and attitudes to school between Year 7 and Year 10, as might have been expected.

There were some areas where pupil attitudes were less positive. For example, the younger cohort of Newham secondary pupils were rather more critical than pupils nationally of their own school environment, not only physically but also in terms of perceived reputation of the school, and whether the work they did maintained their interest.

An intriguing finding was the relatively positive level of motivation and attitude to be found amongst Newham boys in both year groups, compared with girls. This runs counter to the national trend. Another area of difference was that relating to ethnic group: broadly speaking it appeared that white pupils were showing less positive personal attitudes than those in most of the minority ethnic groups. Further analysis of the data revealed that the findings for gender and ethnic group were inter-related.

Parental involvement in their children's education – as perceived by the pupils – seemed at least as high in Newham as elsewhere. Headteachers concurred that parental expectations seemed to be rising, although there were sizeable parts of the Borough in which there were still problems with low expectations and support at home. Although teachers were mostly positive about parents' support and involvement in school, there was a clear indication that they felt that parents could still give a lot more direct help in improving their children's achievements.

Teachers generally had positive views of the support they received from colleagues and managers. The support of governors and of the LEA was, understandably, perceived to be more remote, and this is an issue which the LEA will wish to review. In all instances, primary teachers were more positive than secondary.

There was a general feeling among headteachers that low teacher expectations were no longer a major concern within the Borough although, partly because of image problems, there were still difficulties over recruiting new staff to posts within local schools.

In more recent areas of LEA policy initiative, teacher awareness was sometimes patchy and attention needed to be given to ensuring that the LEA and schools pursue policy consistently and provide continuous support and training.

There was much support amongst school governors for the work of the LEA in improving schools and raising pupils' levels of achievement. Governors' concerns about pupil performance centred on the performance of boys, on language and literacy, and on provision for the early years of education. These are areas about which concern is expressed nationally and may be taken as providing a clear policy steer for the LEA. It is evident that these are issues on which the LEA is already concentrating.

Headteachers were aware that most of their schools had improving national test results against a pattern of disadvantage affecting them. They also recognised their achievements in improving pupil attendance in recent years, especially in secondary schools. Headteachers wanted these tangible achievements to be more widely appreciated.

There were positive feelings about the LEA's work on raising achievement and on the capabilities of LEA officials, but there were a number of areas in which headteachers could identify that they needed additional leadership and support: for example, in data collection and transmission; school improvement measures; early literacy and numeracy; and curriculum leadership in primary schools. These issues largely overlapped with governors' concerns, and there is evidence already that the LEA is taking action to address them.

Of most significance was the finding that there was evidence of a cultural shift in the LEA in recent years, whereby improving achievement had become an over-riding concern. Headteachers, teachers and governors commented on this change, and welcomed it. This has provided a climate in which it is more possible than ever to recognise achievements and yet also to appreciate, honestly, that Newham children could still achieve more.

## 5. STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN SCHOOLS

### 5.1 National Curriculum Assessments

Evidence was available on the performance of Newham schools in national tests over recent years, in 1996, 1997 and in some previous years (according to the timetable of implementing the National Curriculum).

#### Key Stage 1

At Key Stage 1, 1996 and 1997 data indicate that the levels of achievement of Newham pupils are considerably below the national averages in each of the core subjects, using both teacher assessment and test data. For example, 1996 data demonstrate that 64 per cent of pupils in Newham gained level 2 or above on the reading test compared with a national average of 78 per cent. In the number task/test, 74 per cent gained level 2 or above, compared with 82 per cent nationally. This degree of gap is evident in all measured areas.

There is, however, evidence of improving scores year on year in Newham, which is in line with national improvements year on year. In 1997 the percentage of Newham pupils achieving level 2 in reading increased by four per cent to 68 per cent, compared with a national average of 80 per cent. In the number task/test the percentage increased by three per cent to 77 per cent, compared with a national average of 84 per cent. However, there were marked differences between Newham primary schools both in the proportions of pupils gaining level 2 or above, and in the changes over time.

#### *Contextualisation:*

Key Stage 1 results for 1996 were analysed in the LEA by gender, ethnicity and other background factors. Boys' performance was almost always below that of girls, reflecting national trends in pupil performance. Pupils from the Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic groups had the lowest overall levels of attainment, but had around 50 per cent of their number at Stages 1 or 2 of fluency in English language. Bilingual pupils assessed at Stages 3 or 4 of fluency in English performed higher than Newham and the 1997 national averages. The number of terms a pupil had been in nursery classes was directly related to performance at end of Key Stage 1.

#### Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 results from 1996 and 1997 indicated that pupil performance in the core subjects was below national norms in all of the core subjects, both on tests and teacher assessments. In 1996, for example, Newham pupils' English results at Key Stage 2 showed 37 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 or above, compared with a national average of 58 per cent. In 1997, this had risen to 48 per cent in Newham and 63 per cent nationally.

In noting that Newham's results improved by a significantly greater amount than the national average, it is important to record that the LEA responded to what it described as unacceptably poor results in 1996 by developing both short- and medium-term measures that schools might take to increase the pace of improvement. The 11 per cent improvement in Key Stage 2 English in 1997 clearly shows that this concerted effort has started to pay dividends.

*Contextualisation:*

Key Stage 2 results have also been analysed by the LEA against contextual factors. This has shown that the trend has been for girls' performance in English, for example, to out-strip that of boys. These findings again reflect national trends. Even so, other contextual analyses of Newham's results in 1995 and 1996, whereby the raw results are adjusted to reflect high levels of disadvantage within the LEA, do not substantially change Newham's low position relative to other LEAs. Interestingly, in both published performance tables and contextualised analyses, Newham pupils perform better in mathematics than in English relative to other LEAs.

*Comparing individual schools:*

Performance in some Newham schools is good and especially commendable in the light of background factors like the high incidence of pupils eligible for free school meals and who have English as an Additional Language. The LEA has undertaken further detailed analysis of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results to examine the comparative performance of schools over time, taking into account these contextual factors. This analysis is being used to identify more clearly schools doing much better and much worse than expected. Although the models being developed within the LEA are incomplete and the datasets limited in most cases to figures from just three years, there are already indications that this is likely to prove a valuable tool for tackling the range of school performance evident in the Borough (as noted above) and, especially, the performance of schools at the bottom end of the range.

**Key Stage 3**

Key Stage 3 results indicate that the pattern of Newham pupils performing below national averages is maintained. For example, 1996 Key Stage 3 results for Newham show 35 per cent of pupils attaining level 5 or above in the English test compared with a national average of 57 per cent. The corresponding figures in mathematics were 33 per cent and 57 per cent. The position did not change significantly in 1997 with 38 per cent achieving Level 5 in English (national average 56 per cent) and 37 per cent in mathematics (national average 60 per cent).

**5.2 Public Examination Results at 16: 1987 – 1997**

Evidence is available on the performance of Newham schools in public examinations at 16 over the last decade. Educational achievement has improved continuously in the Borough from 1987, when nine per cent of Newham pupils achieved the equivalent of five or more GCSE passes at grades A-C, to 24 per cent in 1995, 28 per cent in 1996 and 33 per cent in 1997. Eighty-six per cent of pupils achieved five or more A-G grades in 1997 compared with 61 per cent in 1991. On this indicator, Newham has now reached the national average level of performance. These results are marked improvements which reflect well on the schools' and the LEA's performance in recent years. National trends have also, of course, been improving year on year: Newham's results largely improved at the national rate until 1995. The gains in 1996 and 1997 were well above average, however.

Further analysis of the results indicates that pupils from Asian backgrounds performed better than other pupils, with Indian pupils achieving the highest results. Girls performed better than boys in all the ethnic groups.

Within individual schools, radical differences have occurred in levels of pupil achievement from year to year. In one school, performance in 1993 was amongst the highest of Newham's mixed comprehensives, with over 26 per cent of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A-C. In the next year, the proportion fell to just under 15 per cent. In another school, the performance improved from 11 to 20 per cent.

### 5.3 GCSE Results in Context

Another way of looking at performance is to compare Newham's results with those of schools in similar LEAs. Data was available to examine the GCSE performance of the 13 Newham secondary schools against the performance of 50 schools in five 'like' authorities<sup>2</sup>. Information was available on pupils' average GCSE scores, average scores in each of the core subjects, and the percentages in each school achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C or better. Contextual data was available for each school concerning the number of pupils of different ethnic origin, with an entitlement to free school meals, and for whom English was a second or alternative language. (There was no prior attainment data available for this cohort.) Data was not available at the individual pupil level, which would have improved the analysis and aided comparisons; but the evidence base was robust enough to get broad indications of schools' relative performance. Rankings of schools were then created. These can be very sensitive to small differences, however, and individual school results need to be treated with some caution.

First of all, then, **Table 1** below considers the rankings of the 13 (anonymised) Newham secondary schools within this group of 63 schools in total, for the 1996 Year 11 cohort. Each of the 63 schools was ranked on the basis of average grade for English: the school with the highest average English grade was assigned rank 1, and the school with the lowest average English grade assigned rank 63. Mathematics, science and total GCSE scores were ranked in a similar way.

**Table 1: Newham secondary schools ranked by performance on GCSE indicators (1996 data only)**

School	Rank for:			
	English	Mathematics	Science	Total GCSE score
A	38	43	55	44
B	9	15	12	8
C	54	50	39	54
D	37	35	61	23
E	56	32	48	59
F	19	6	21	13
G	39	28	42	37
H	12	5	4	14
I	42	26	50	35
J	58	47	28	51
K	43	36	40	32
L	3	9	7	9
M	13	11	9	10

*Rank 1: highest performance      Rank 63: lowest performance*

*Source: based on data provided by London Borough of Newham and five Metropolitan Education Authorities.*

<sup>2</sup> Thanks are due to those authorities, including Haringey Council, who agreed to the use of their data for comparative purposes.

Although the analysis presented here is limited, and thus cannot do more than provide a broad indication of how schools in Newham were performing, it does suggest that, in terms of average GCSE performance at the school level, schools in Newham in 1996 achieved similar levels to schools in similar local education authorities, although there are clearly wide variations.

Thus another point worthy of note is that, individually, Newham schools were fairly well spread across the range: some Newham schools were achieving standards comparable with the best schools included here, while there were also schools performing at a lower level. Four of the five 'like' LEAs showed similar variations between their highest and lowest achieving schools.

Secondly, however, although the other schools included here were located in similar areas to Newham, this does not necessarily mean that *pupil intakes* were comparable. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals provides one measure of the social deprivation of pupils attending a school. So analysis was undertaken of the school-level relationship between the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals for English, mathematics, science and total GCSE score respectively. This analysis found that some Newham schools proved to have better overall performance than other schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free schools, while others had lower performance.

Schools can also be ranked in terms of the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school with the lowest percentage of pupils entitled to free schools was assigned rank 1 and the school with the highest percentage assigned rank 62<sup>3</sup>. Overall, it might be expected that ranks for free school meals and the GCSE indicators would be broadly similar. Table 2 below shows these ranks for twelve schools in Newham, i.e. excluding one school with no figures available for pupils entitled to free school meals. It can be seen that there are wide variations between schools with similar rankings based on free school meal entitlement – see, for example the schools with ranks 10, 11 and 12 respectively on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

**Table 2: Newham Secondary Schools ranked by percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals and performance on GCSE indicators (1996 data only)**

School	Rank for:				
	Free school meals	English	Mathematics	Science	Total GCSE score
I	3	42	26	49	34
G	6	39	28	41	36
H	7	12	5	4	14
C	10	53	49	39	53
L	11	3	9	7	9
F	12	19	6	21	13
J	17	57	46	28	50
D	23	37	35	60	23
B	28	9	15	12	8
A	37	38	42	54	43
E	38	55	32	47	58
M	56	13	11	9	10

Source: based on data provided by London Borough of Newham and five Metropolitan Education Authorities.

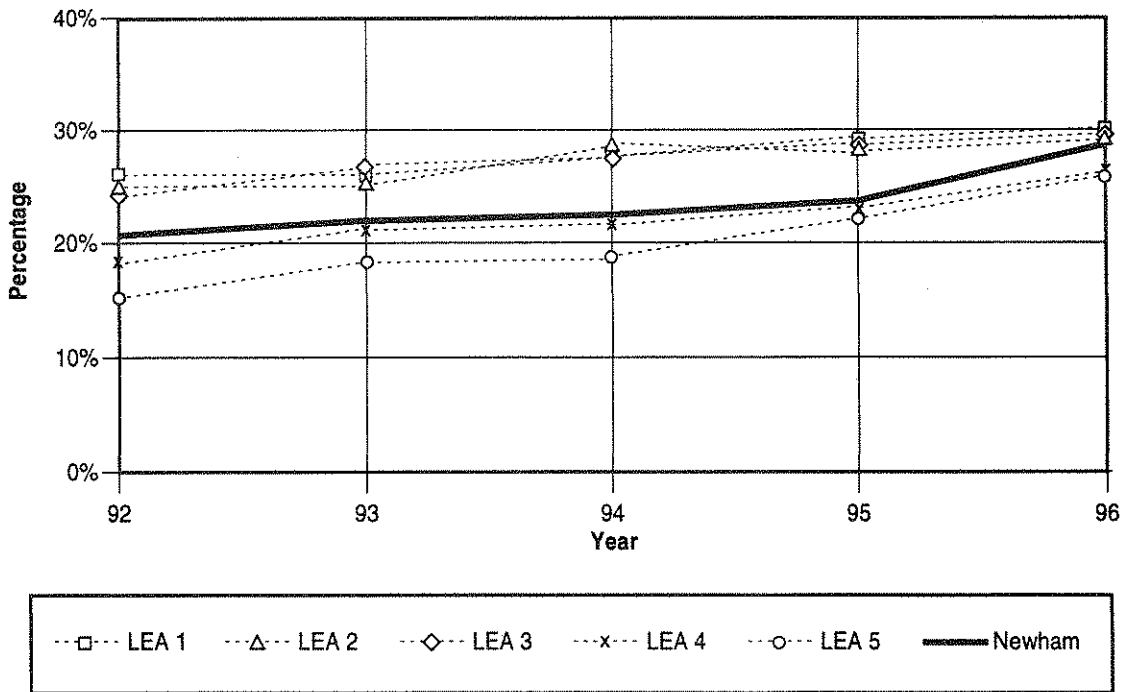
Note: the rankings on Table 2 differ slightly from those on Table 1, owing to the exclusion in Table 2 of one school with no figures for pupils entitled to free school meals.

<sup>3</sup> One school in Newham has been excluded, as the number of pupils entitled to free school meals was not available.

It has to be recognised, of course, that there are a number of factors other than those used in the above analyses which may be inhibitors to performance. These include pupil mobility, levels of achievement on entry and proportions of pupils at the early stages of English Language acquisition. Further analysis of these factors could be of benefit to the evaluation and target-setting process that schools and the LEA have agreed to follow as part of the new quality assurance model

Finally, the same dataset was used to analyse *change over time*, on various indicators, from 1992 – 1996. **Figure 1** below compares the rate of progress in Newham secondary schools as a whole to that of the five other 'like' LEAs on the Indicator **5+ A\* - C grades**. It shows that, although Newham was progressing less swiftly than the other LEAs until 1994, there was evidence of greater improvement between 1995 and 1996. Data for the other Indicators – **5+ A\* - G grades** and **1+ A\* - G grades** – showed a similar pattern.

Figure 1: % of pupils achieving 5+ A\*- C grades over time



## 5.4 OFSTED Evidence

### General overview

OFSTED reports on individual Newham schools reflect the range of pupil and school performance within the LEA. There have been a few very critical reports leading to schools requiring special measures. There are also a few very good reports, across the nursery, primary and secondary range. Most reports have indicated that schools are satisfactory or better. All of the Newham schools are inspected by teams from outside the LEA.

Those schools which receive extremely good inspection reports provide striking examples of what is possible in terms of school, teacher and pupil performance in a materially and socially deprived environment. In these schools, the OFSTED reports refer to 'outstanding features', standards which are 'high and compare well with national averages', 'exceptional leadership', 'dynamic and effective' management, 'the great sense of teamwork', and teaching methods which are 'often lively and varied'.

Those schools which have been deemed to require special measures have been described as failing in such areas as 'under-achievement in most subjects', 'unsatisfactory pupil progress in the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills', 'under-estimated' pupil abilities, high proportions of 'unsatisfactory teaching', and 'strained' relationships between staff and pupils.

### LEA use of OFSTED reports

There is exemplary practice in the way that OFSTED reports have been closely analysed for their ramifications for the LEA. The OFSTED cycle, which began in September 1993, has resulted so far in approximately one secondary school and four primary schools being inspected each term, although with the move to a six-year cycle for most schools in the future this will change slightly. Reports are made to the Education Committee on all the inspections and the LEA has made very good use of the reports in monitoring school performance as well as in evaluating progress on local initiatives.

An example of the LEA's use of the OFSTED reports to support its own monitoring was given by the handling of the fact that three OFSTED reports on local secondary schools were critical of the support for bilingual pupils who were not fluent in English (Education Committee, February 1995). The issue was examined in greater depth in Committee and recommendations were considered for examining the deployment of available resources, especially for those who entered the schools in Years 9, 10 and 11 and who therefore had limited time to prepare for GCSEs.

### Standards in schools: secondary, primary and nursery

Many of the OFSTED reports confirm that Newham pupils fall behind national averages for pupils' public examination performance, but achieve standards which appear to be commensurate with their abilities. An illustrative example from one secondary school report is (Education Committee, July 1994):

*Overall examination standards are very low in relation to national norms, as are standards in lessons in most subjects. However, standards are satisfactory in relation to pupils' abilities in a number of areas.*



Several of the OFSTED reports go further in recognising the disadvantaged conditions in which local schools may work. The report on one 'good school' which was considered to be highly successful in offering its pupils a 'sound education in difficult circumstances', despite performance below that achieved nationally by pupils of a similar age, included the following comments (Education Committee, September 1995):

*The school serves an area of considerable social disadvantage. On most criteria the ward in which it is situated is more disadvantaged than the average for Newham, which is itself very high on all of the indices for social disadvantage. 58 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, as against the Newham average of 36 per cent, and the national average of 23 per cent. There is a high rate of unemployment... Large numbers of pupils (72 per cent) come from homes where English is not the first language, and 46 per cent of pupils are entitled to special language support (Section 11). The main first languages spoken are Bengali, Punjabi, Gujerati and Urdu. The school usually has a number of travellers' children. In addition many families are housed in temporary accommodation. There is a very high turnover rate.*

In the secondary sector, several school reports include references to the need to raise teaching quality and to provide pupils with more appropriate activities. There were references in two schools' reports to the need to re-examine the relationship between achievement and pupil grouping, which suggested that there were important questions to ask about the relative effectiveness of mixed ability and setting strategies in some subjects.

In two secondary schools, there were references to teaching hours being below the recommended national minimum hours. In the schools which receive better OFSTED reports, attention is drawn to further areas in which to battle under-achievement, such as the need to improve curriculum continuity from Year 6 in local primaries through to Year 7 in the secondary school.

In the primary sector, there were regular references to the need to raise achievement levels in specified areas and, specifically, to improve teaching and learning strategies. Related references frequently mentioned the need for better subject knowledge and classroom practice. School ethos and pupil behaviour were usually well regarded.

The specialist nursery schools received relatively good OFSTED reports, in one case excellent. They appear to have good head teachers and good provision is recognised.

It may be noted in passing that, in both the primary and secondary sectors, many reports contain references to the failure of schools to meet the legal requirements for religious education and collective worship. This issue has been raised at Education Committee (July, 1994) and the LEA noted that there were special difficulties over providing worship of a mainly Christian nature in schools with high numbers of pupils with religions other than Christianity. This is a national area for concern as well as a local one. It was notable that there were frequent references in the reports on Newham's schools to good ethos, satisfactory or better pupil behaviour, and appropriate moral education.

There are several references to low attendance rates for primary and secondary schools. There are also many references to sound, and better, leadership combined with efficient management.

### Special educational needs provision

References to special needs suggest that Newham's inclusive education strategy has not led to particular difficulties for local schools in terms of meeting OFSTED requirements. In some reports, there is specific praise given to special needs provision within an inclusive education policy:

*In general, pupils with special educational needs achieve well and are fully integrated into the school. Their achievement is particularly high when they have differentiated support.* (Education Committee, December 1994)

*The integration of the pupils with severe learning difficulties has been an opportunity for pupils to learn and effectively support the particular needs of other members of the community. This opportunity has been taken by pupils and teachers successfully.* (Education Committee, July 1995)

### Further issues

Evidence from this section has been taken from written reports and not from numerical data from the OFSTED database. The numerical data was not available to this study and would be a valuable source for the LEA to use in further monitoring. It is important to note that there is considerable variability between the schools' OFSTED reports. Some of the variation appears to reflect the fact, not of school differences, but that schools have different inspection teams and the reports have different authors. The variation is evident, for example, in the key recommendations to schools, for which some inspection teams adopt a direct style, identifying specific areas for action, whereas others encourage further school reflection and review.

## 5.5 Summary of Standards and Quality in Schools

Pupil performance in Newham schools has overall been low in comparison with national norms. This pattern is evident at each Key Stage. Performance is similar to that of other LEAs in London and elsewhere which have high proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, high pupil mobility and high proportions of pupils with English as an Additional Language.

Pupil performance has been improving, and at a marked rate. At GCSE level, the rate of improvement has been at or ahead of the national trend in recent years. In primary schools improvements have been less pronounced until 1997 when there was an impressive improvement in Key Stage 2 scores.

Contextual analyses, which try to take into account some socio-economic and wider factors, give only a broad indication of how Newham schools are doing compared with 'like' schools. They suggest, however, that performance in Newham secondary schools is similar to that in like areas but that performance in primary schools, especially in English, remains relatively poor.

There is considerable variation between schools. This is an important finding that needs to be addressed by LEA policy and strategy. There are many examples of successful schools, of dynamic management and of effective and varied teaching on

which to build more consistent standards across the LEA. There are examples of schools which need substantial support to meet the levels of performance being achieved by other schools in the LEA who work with pupils from similar backgrounds.

OFSTED reports indicate that, to raise performance, attention in secondary schools needs to be given to: raising teaching quality, the relationship between pupil grouping and achievement, and curriculum continuity between Year 6 and Year 7. In primary schools, OFSTED has identified issues such as: improving teaching and learning strategies, and better subject knowledge on the part of teachers.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Substantive achievements

This Review has found that, since the Hegarty Review undertaken by NFER in 1988, Newham has many achievements to celebrate. The LEA and individual schools can point to substantial improvements, including:

- ◆ improvements in pupils' results over time, and especially in the last two years;
- ◆ improved pupil attendance;
- ◆ improved parental and teacher expectations;
- ◆ improved teacher recruitment and professional development;
- ◆ improved advisory and other LEA support for schools;
- ◆ a renewed culture of achievement, emanating from the highest level within the LEA;
- ◆ the successful adoption of many policies and strategies designed to raise achievement.

Perhaps most importantly, the 'new beginning' which was advocated in the previous review has clearly been made with regard to the majority of working relationships, mutual perceptions and overall morale within the LEA. The present Review found positive views among most of those who are stakeholders in the education service in Newham and who have made some contribution to this study: the pupils, parents, teachers, headteachers, LEA staff and elected members.

There have been many examples at the school level of outstanding features: of exceptional leadership and dynamism, of good teamwork, and of lively and varied teaching. It is the greater achievement that these examples can be found in schools which have to overcome considerable inhibitors to high pupil performance. The schools' achievements have been recognised within OFSTED reports and merit more widespread celebration. This would help to promote the area both to those who live and work there now, and to prospective new staff.

There have also been many examples at the LEA level of innovative and well-argued initiatives. It is notable that current programmes are based on professional evidence about what works in terms of raising achievement. It is notable that many of the strategies are in line with plans set out by the new government for promoting excellence in schools. In some cases, Newham LEA has pioneered initiatives which have been taken up nationally.

The Review has also found evidence that these improvements have been backed up by the successful restructuring of the Education Department, sound strategies to ensure value for money, and imaginative and energetic efforts to secure additional funding from varied sources. It is impressive that these improvements can be found when resources available to the Department have diminished.

## 6.2 What more can be done?

Current plans within the LEA already contain the major part of what is needed in a strategic approach to continuing to improve pupil performance. But the review team have recommendations to make to the LEA which it believes will help to ensure the effective implementation of the strategic initiatives they have agreed to undertake.

### Recommendation 1

#### Maintain a focus on a limited number of key initiatives

There is a good argument that, having set out its strategic priorities, the LEA should now concentrate on trying to keep its **impact on schools simple and consistent**. It should focus down on those measures which support and extend the priorities agreed.

### Recommendation 2

#### Sharpen the focus on classroom practice

The LEA and its schools should shift the focus in schools as clearly as possible back to classroom practice. The LEA should encourage greater visibility, discussion and evidence about what happens in successful classrooms. There is a strong body of research evidence and professional experience that **schools which raise achievement maintain a relentless focus on classroom practice**. There needs to be greater attention to the importance of clear and enthusiastic teaching, the use of varied and appropriate tasks, and the use of good pace and challenge.

### Recommendation 3

#### Identify and disseminate good practice

There is considerable work needed to ensure that LEA inspection and advisory staff provide consistent as well as clear advice in these areas. **It is necessary for headteachers, senior managers and curriculum coordinators to exemplify good teaching**. The in-service training of teachers should examine these examples. There will be value in schools and teachers more openly debating and exchanging models of good practice.

### Recommendation 4

#### Prioritise data analysis services and production of school profiles

The demands on LEAs and schools to handle more data more effectively are rising and careful planning should be undertaken about **the range, timing and presentation of data** that the LEA makes available to schools for the purpose of monitoring performance. Newham has good information technology systems and improved statistical resources with which to support schools' use of data; this needs now to be extended. The LEA should **develop its school profiles**, taking into consideration the additional data that will be available later this academic year for LEAs and schools from OFSTED.

**Recommendation 5**

**Develop differentiated professional support for headteachers**

Evidence shows that headteachers are central to raising achievement initiatives: in Newham, **the range of school performance – in terms of standards reached and improvements made – is very wide.** In some schools, progress has been excellent. The headteachers are well-informed, dynamic, incisive and, where necessary, innovative. These headteachers need challenge and innovative leadership for themselves. Support for them should build on their successful experience, their substantial expertise and should refresh it.

In a few schools, progress has been slow. Headteachers are less skilled in diagnosing precisely what in their school is inhibiting further improvement. They are less capable of identifying specific measures that need to be taken, perhaps in terms of changing pupil grouping or adopting new classroom strategies. These headteachers need challenge and support which helps them not only to recognise problems and goals, but to find the means to change.

**Recommendation 6**

**Communicate with teachers more directly**

The LEA is naturally a more remote body for classroom teachers than is the school or even, in many cases, the governors. The drift in recent years, nationally, has been for LEAs to become more remote, yet, for an LEA's policies and priorities to be implemented effectively, they must be known and understood by all teachers, and adapted well by them to their own classroom circumstances. **There is scope for the LEA to do more to make its policies and support known to individual teachers,** so that they can take an even fuller part in the culture of raising achievement.

## APPENDIX 1.

# DATA SOURCES AND NUMBERS OF RESPONDENTS

The evaluation findings are based on the following data sources:

- ◆ questionnaire survey of selected teachers (all sectors);
- ◆ questionnaire survey of selected pupils (secondary sector only);
- ◆ questionnaire survey of selected governors (all sectors);
- ◆ interviews with selected head teachers (all sectors);
- ◆ interviews with selected advisors and officers in Newham Education Department;
- ◆ pupil performance data, including SATs and GCSE examination results, attendance, exclusions;
- ◆ comparable pupil performance data from national and regional sources;
- ◆ analysis of background/context data for Newham;
- ◆ analysis of financial data;
- ◆ documentary analysis of policy and development planning processes.

Further details of the questionnaire surveys and interviews are given below.

### A2.1 *Teacher Questionnaire Survey (all sectors)*

Questionnaires for a random sample of teachers in the primary and secondary sectors were sent out in the spring term to their respective schools. The sample was drawn to exclude headteachers (who were the subject of a separate exercise – see A2.4 below) and included:

- 21 nursery school teachers
- 35 special school teachers
- 582 primary school teachers
- 570 secondary school teachers.

These numbers represented about two-thirds of all teachers in each of the stated categories. Those selected were broadly representative of the Newham teacher population as a whole in terms of age, sex and grade. Reminders were issued in the spring and early summer terms, resulting in response rates as follows:

Primary/nursery/special teachers' survey:	N = 273	43 per cent response
Secondary teachers' survey:	N = 282	49 per cent response.

## **A2.2 Pupil Questionnaire Survey (secondary sector only)**

Questionnaires for pupils in Year 7 and Year 10 were sent in the spring term 1997 to 13 secondary schools, with a request that the survey be completed by two entire tutor groups in each cohort in each school. Actual numbers of respondents for each survey have been provided in preference to response rates expressed as a percentage, because the number of questionnaires sent by NFER to schools for completion by whole tutor groups was based on an approximation (which was often an over-estimate).

One school declined to participate in the survey; two further schools returned questionnaires completed, by the due date, for Year 7 only and Year 10 only respectively.

Year 7 questionnaire survey: N = 556

Year 10 questionnaire survey: N = 550

It was possible to undertake some broad comparisons of this data both with the earlier Newham Review data and with some relevant national datasets, as discussed in the main text.

## **A2.3 Governor Questionnaire Survey (all sectors)**

From the database supplied by the London Borough of Newham, a random sample of 1,000 governors was drawn. In the event, some entries on the database were inaccurate in various ways and several questionnaires were returned uncompleted for that reason. The response rate given below is therefore an estimated one.

Governors' survey: N = 489 50 per cent response (estimated).

## **A2.4 Interviews with selected head teachers (all sectors)**

A programme of interviews with headteachers of all 13 secondary schools, 11 primary schools, two nursery schools and one special school was undertaken in the spring term of 1997, using a semi-structured interview schedule covering the following areas:

- ◆ Pupil achievement
- ◆ Assessment and monitoring
- ◆ Staffing
- ◆ The LEA's policy initiatives
- ◆ LEA support services
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Home-school links



## **A2.5 Interviews with selected advisors and officers**

Interviews were conducted in the spring term 1997 with the following personnel:

- Director of Education
- Deputy Directors of Education
- Assistant Director, Learning Support Service
- Assistant Director, Strategic Planning and Information Systems
- Head of Inspection and Advisory Service
- Head of Management Support Services
- Head of Client and Community Services
- Head of Youth and Community Education Service
- Head of IT Support
- Senior Inspection and Development Officer
- Principal Educational Psychologist.

A semi-structured interview schedule was used, covering the following areas:

- ◆ Service provision
- ◆ Service impact
- ◆ Service improvement
- ◆ Policy
- ◆ Schools, teachers and pupils
- ◆ Future developments.

## APPENDIX 2.

# DETAILED REPORT ON TEACHERS' VIEWS OF LEA POLICY INITIATIVES

Respondents were asked for their views on a series of five policy initiatives instigated by the LEA. Both primary (plus nursery and special) school and secondary school teachers were asked about **inclusive education**, but the other four areas listed were rather different for the two sectors, to reflect their distinct sectoral priorities. Primary (plus nursery and special) school teachers were asked about **baseline assessment, numeracy and literacy initiatives**, and **target-setting**; whilst secondary teachers were asked to comment on **attendance initiatives, pre- and post-inspection support, GCSE-related target-setting** and **language support**. It should be noted that several respondents declined to answer one or more parts of each question; findings have been reported as a percentage of the overall number of respondents to each survey.

### P1 and S1: Inclusive education

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements, or if they did not know what to say, about the LEA's policy for inclusive education.

#### **PRIMARY TEACHERS:**

- ◆ *awareness of policy*: the majority of teachers (89 per cent) said they were aware of the policy;
- ◆ *support for policy*: a smaller proportion (55 per cent) said they supported the policy, and amongst the remainder about one in four (25 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *policy too prescriptive*: under one-quarter (23 per cent) said the policy was too prescriptive, but nearly one-third (30 per cent) said it was not; over two-fifths (43 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *policy relevant to role*: nearly three-quarters (71 per cent) felt able to say that the policy was relevant to their role, but again nearly one in five teachers said they did not know (19 per cent);
- ◆ *policy relevant to raising achievement*: over one-third (38 per cent) of respondents agreed that the policy was relevant to raising pupils' achievement, but well over one-quarter in each case either disagreed (27 per cent) or felt unable to say (29 per cent);
- ◆ *adequate resources for policy*: fewer than one in ten (seven per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support the policy; three-quarters (74 per cent) disagreed and one-sixth (16 per cent) did not know;
- ◆ *INSET attended on policy*: more than one-quarter of primary teachers (28 per cent) said they had received in-service training, but nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) had not; a further seven per cent, surprisingly, said they did not know;
- ◆ *school programme for policy*: nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of respondents agreed that their school had a programme for implementing the policy, although one-quarter (26 per cent) felt unable to say.

**SECONDARY TEACHERS:**

The findings from the secondary teachers' survey could be construed as showing a somewhat lower level of support for the policy of inclusive education:

- ◆ *awareness of policy:* the same proportion of secondary teachers as primary teachers (89 per cent) said they were aware of the policy;
- ◆ *support for policy:* a smaller proportion (45 per cent) agreed that they supported the policy, and the remainder was about equally divided between those who said they did not know and those who disagreed (25 per cent compared with 26 per cent);
- ◆ *policy too prescriptive:* about one-third (34 per cent) said the policy was too prescriptive, and only one in six (16 per cent) said it was not; again, over two-fifths (45 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *policy relevant to role:* nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) agreed that the policy was relevant to their role, but again one in five teachers (21 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *policy relevant to raising achievement:* over one-third (39 per cent) of respondents – a similar proportion to that in primary schools – agreed that the policy was relevant to raising pupils' achievement, but one-third (33 per cent) disagreed; one-quarter felt unable to say (29 per cent);
- ◆ *adequate resources for policy:* slightly more than one in twenty respondents (six per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support the policy; over three-quarters (77 per cent) disagreed and one-sixth (15 per cent) did not know;
- ◆ *INSET attended on policy:* nearly one-third of secondary teachers (30 per cent) said they had received in-service training, but well over half (58 per cent) had not; a further ten per cent said they did not know;
- ◆ *school programme for policy:* two-thirds (66 per cent) of respondents agreed that their school had a programme for implementing the policy, although nearly one-quarter (24 per cent) felt unable to say.

In sum, then, although most teachers appeared to be aware of the LEA's inclusive education policy, only around half of them (but rather more primary than secondary teachers) agreed with it. It may be that the evident concern about resources to support the policy had coloured some of their views about, for example, its relevance to raising achievement or the extent to which their school had a programme for implementing the policy.

We now turn to consider each of the four other policy initiatives for the **primary sector**.

**P2: Baseline assessment**

- ◆ *awareness of initiative:* the great majority of primary teachers (93 per cent) said they were aware of the policy on baseline assessment;
- ◆ *support for initiative:* just under three-quarters of primary teachers (71 per cent) said they supported the policy; one in five (20 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiative too prescriptive:* fewer than one in five (17 per cent) said the policy was too prescriptive, and over one-third (36 per cent) said it was not; over two-fifths (45 per cent), however, said they did not know;

- ◆ *initiative relevant to role*: nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) agreed that the policy was relevant to their role; one in six teachers (16 per cent) disagreed, and a similar proportion (18 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiative relevant to raising achievement*: over two-thirds (67 per cent) of respondents agreed that the policy was relevant to raising pupils' achievement, and only one in ten (11 per cent) disagreed; one-fifth (21 per cent) felt unable to say;
- ◆ *adequate resources for initiative*: about one in six respondents (16 per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support the policy, and one-third (33 per cent) disagreed; but nearly half the respondents (49 per cent) did not know;
- ◆ *INSET attended on initiative*: only one in five teachers (19 per cent) said they had received in-service training, and well over two-thirds (70 per cent) said they had not; a further eight per cent said they did not know;
- ◆ *school programme for initiative*: just over half the primary teachers (55 per cent) agreed that their school had a programme for implementing the policy, although more than one-quarter (28 per cent) felt unable to say.

On this evidence, baseline assessment seems to be an initiative which commanded majority support amongst the teachers most likely to be affected by it, though again there would appear to be a concern about how well the policy was being resourced (including provision for in-service training).

### P3: Numeracy

- ◆ *awareness of initiatives*: two-thirds of primary teachers (66 per cent) – i.e. fewer than for inclusive education or baseline assessment – said they were aware of the LEA's initiatives on numeracy;
- ◆ *support for initiatives*: in view of this, it is perhaps not surprising that only about half the primary teachers (51 per cent) said they supported the initiatives; more than two teachers in every five (44 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiatives too prescriptive*: fewer than one in ten (7 per cent) said the initiatives were too prescriptive, and about one-fifth (19 per cent) said they were not; over two-thirds (68 per cent), however, said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiatives relevant to role*: over half the teachers (56 per cent) agreed that the initiatives were relevant to their role; only one in twenty teachers (five per cent) disagreed, but over one-third (35 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiatives relevant to raising achievement*: getting on for two-thirds (60 per cent) of respondents agreed that the initiatives were relevant to raising pupils' achievement, and only a handful (two per cent) disagreed; again, over one-third (35 per cent) felt unable to say;
- ◆ *adequate resources for initiatives*: fewer than one in ten respondents (seven per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support the initiatives on numeracy, and over one-quarter (28 per cent) disagreed; but nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *INSET attended on initiatives*: about one in six teachers (17 per cent) said they had received in-service training, and slightly under two-thirds (67 per cent) said they had not; a further 17 per cent said they did not know;

- ◆ *school planning for initiatives*: over one-quarter of the primary teachers (29 per cent) agreed that their school had a planned approach towards the initiatives, although more than two-fifths (45 per cent) felt unable to say.

This area of the LEA's work was not as well known or understood, apparently, as either inclusive education or baseline assessment; this makes it hard to assess levels of support with great accuracy.

#### P4: Literacy

- ◆ *awareness of initiatives*: over three-quarters of primary teachers (76 per cent) said they were aware of the LEA's initiatives on literacy;
- ◆ *support for initiatives*: nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) said they supported the initiatives, although one-third (33 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiatives too prescriptive*: over half (58 per cent) said they did not know whether the initiatives were too prescriptive; fewer than one in six (14 per cent) said they were, and about one-quarter (26 per cent) said they were not;
- ◆ *initiatives relevant to role*: two-thirds of primary teachers (66 per cent) agreed that the initiatives were relevant to their role; only one in twenty teachers (five per cent) disagreed, but over one-quarter (26 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiatives relevant to raising achievement*: well over two-thirds (70 per cent) of respondents agreed that the initiatives were relevant to raising pupils' achievement, and only a very small minority (two per cent) disagreed; over one-quarter (26 per cent) felt unable to say;
- ◆ *adequate resources for initiatives*: one in six respondents (15 per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support the initiatives on literacy, and nearly one-third (31 per cent) disagreed; about half the respondents (52 per cent) again said they did not know;
- ◆ *INSET attended on initiatives*: one-third of teachers (33 per cent) said they had received in-service training on literacy, whilst half (50 per cent) said they had not; one in six (15 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *school planning for initiatives*: nearly half the primary teachers (48 per cent) agreed that their school had a planned approach towards the initiatives, but over one-third (37 per cent) felt unable to say.

There was evidently more awareness of the LEA's literacy initiatives than of those on numeracy, although the substantial proportions continuing to evince uncertainty again make it hard to come to definite conclusions about teachers' views.

#### P5: Target-setting

- ◆ *awareness of initiative*: over half the primary teachers (57 per cent) said they were aware of the LEA's adoption of target-setting;
- ◆ *support for initiative*: under half (45 per cent), however, said they supported the initiative, and about the same proportion (46 per cent) said they did not know;

- ◆ *initiative too prescriptive*: nearly two-thirds of respondents (65 per cent) said they did not know whether the initiative was too prescriptive; one in six (15 per cent) said they were, and about the same number (16 per cent) said they were not;
- ◆ *initiative relevant to role*: half the primary teachers (50 per cent) agreed that the initiative was relevant to their role; fewer than one in twenty (four per cent) disagreed, but around two-fifths (43 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiative relevant to raising achievement*: again, half the teachers (49 per cent) agreed that target-setting was relevant to raising pupils' achievement, and only a small minority (five per cent) disagreed; but over two-fifths (43 per cent) felt unable to say;
- ◆ *adequate resources for initiative*: fewer than one in ten respondents (eight per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support target-setting, and one-quarter (25 per cent) disagreed; but the largest group (65 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *INSET attended on initiative*: one-tenth of teachers (11 per cent) said they had received in-service training, whilst nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) said they had not; one-quarter (24 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *school planning for initiative*: one-third of these primary teachers (33 per cent) agreed that their school had a planned approach towards target-setting, but half (49 per cent) felt unable to say.

This area of the LEA's work seems least well understood, to judge by the proportions not able to express either agreement or disagreement with a number of statements. Overall, it is perhaps this relative lack of awareness amongst primary teachers of some key initiatives at LEA level which is of more interest and importance than the extent to which teachers were in accord with the content of, and resourcing for, such initiatives.

We turn now to a discussion of each of the four remaining policy initiatives for the **secondary sector**.

## S2: Attendance

- ◆ *awareness of initiative*: over three-quarters of the secondary teachers (77 per cent) said they were aware of the LEA's initiatives to improve school attendance;
- ◆ *support for initiative*: an even higher proportion (79 per cent) said they supported the initiatives, and about one in six (16 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiative too prescriptive*: nearly half the respondents (49 per cent) said they did not know whether the initiatives on attendance were too prescriptive; fewer than one in ten (eight per cent) said they were, but two-fifths (40 per cent) said they were not;
- ◆ *initiative relevant to role*: nearly three-quarters of teachers (73 per cent) agreed that the initiatives were relevant to their role; about one in twenty (six per cent) disagreed, and around one-fifth (19 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *initiative relevant to raising achievement*: the great majority of teachers (84 per cent) agreed that initiatives on attendance were relevant to raising pupils' achievement, and only a small minority (three per cent) disagreed; about one-tenth (11 per cent) felt unable to say;

- ◆ *adequate resources for initiative*: under one-sixth of teachers (13 per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support improvements to attendance; two-fifths (41 per cent) disagreed; more than that (45 per cent), however, said they did not know;
- ◆ *INSET attended on initiative*: just over one in six teachers (17 per cent) said they had received in-service training on attendance, whilst over two-thirds (69 per cent) said they had not; one-tenth (11 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *school programme for initiative*: over half the secondary teachers (59 per cent) agreed that their school had a programme on improving attendance, but just under one-third (30 per cent) felt unable to say.

Attendance has been, from other evidence collected, a key issue in some Newham secondary schools; the findings from this survey suggest that initiatives to help improve attendance rates have been welcomed by teachers, although there were apparent anxieties about levels of resourcing. Some aspects even of this well-supported initiative were still subject to lack of knowledge.

### S3: Inspection support

- ◆ *awareness of programme*: over half the teachers (57 per cent) said they were aware of the LEA's programme of support before and after inspections;
- ◆ *support for programme*: a smaller proportion (46 per cent) said they supported the programme, and about two-fifths (46 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *programme too prescriptive*: two-thirds of the respondents (67 per cent) said they did not know whether the programme of support was too prescriptive; fewer than one in ten (six per cent) said it was; about one-fifth (22 per cent) said it was not;
- ◆ *programme relevant to role*: getting on for half the teachers (49 per cent) agreed that the programme was relevant to their role; but a similar proportion (45 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *programme relevant to raising achievement*: only some teachers (47 per cent) agreed that the programme of inspection support was relevant to raising pupils' achievement; about two-fifths (43 per cent), however, felt unable to say;
- ◆ *adequate resources for programme*: under one-sixth of teachers (13 per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support the programme; well over half (59 per cent) said they did not know, and a further one-quarter (26 per cent) disagreed;
- ◆ *INSET attended on programme*: one-quarter of teachers (24 per cent) said they had received in-service training on the LEA programme, whilst over half (52 per cent) said they had not; one-fifth (21 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *school planning for programme*: two-fifths of the teachers (41 per cent) agreed that their school had a planned approach towards the LEA programme, but a larger number (47 per cent) felt unable to say.

This area of the LEA's work – although arguably integral to how schools approach and respond to OFSTED inspections – seemed relatively opaque to many secondary school teachers.

**S4: GCSE-related targets**

- ◆ *awareness of policy*: around three-quarters of secondary teachers (75 per cent) said they were aware of the LEA's policy on setting targets for improved GCSE performance;
- ◆ *support for policy*: a similar proportion (74 per cent) said they supported the policy, and only one-fifth (20 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *policy too prescriptive*: about half the respondents (52 per cent) said they did not know whether the policy was too prescriptive; about one in ten (11 per cent) said it was, but twice that number (22 per cent) said it was not;
- ◆ *policy relevant to role*: getting on for three-quarters of teachers (74 per cent) agreed that the policy was relevant to their role; under one-fifth (18 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *policy relevant to raising achievement*: a similarly high proportion (76 per cent) agreed that the policy was relevant to raising pupils' achievement; and again well under one-fifth (17 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *adequate resources for policy*: under one-fifth of teachers (18 per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support the policy; about the same proportion in each case either disagreed or did not know (40 per cent and 38 per cent respectively);
- ◆ *INSET attended on policy*: around one-fifth of teachers (21 per cent) said they had received in-service training on the target-setting policy, whilst nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) said they had not; under one-sixth (13 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *school programme for policy*: two-thirds of secondary teachers (67 per cent) agreed that their school had a programme for implementing the policy, and fewer than one-quarter (23 per cent) felt unable to say.

Like attendance, target-setting on GCSE performance affects many secondary school teachers directly (and many others indirectly). It is not surprising that there was, relatively speaking, a high level both of awareness and of support for this area of the LEA's work, at least on the evidence of this survey (though with the usual reservations about resourcing levels).

**S5: Language support**

- ◆ *awareness of policy*: around three-quarters of secondary teachers (73 per cent) said they were aware of the LEA's policy for language support;
- ◆ *support for policy*: a lower proportion (64 per cent) said they supported the policy, and around one-quarter (26 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *policy too prescriptive*: well over half the respondents (60 per cent) said they did not know whether the policy was too prescriptive; about one in ten (11 per cent) said it was, but more than twice that number (26 per cent) said it was not;
- ◆ *policy relevant to role*: around two-thirds of secondary teachers (67 per cent) agreed that the policy was relevant to their role; under one-quarter (23 per cent) said they did not know;



- ◆ *policy relevant to raising achievement*: a similar proportion (70 per cent) agreed that the policy was relevant to raising pupils' achievement; and well under one-quarter (21 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *adequate resources for policy*: under one-tenth of teachers (eight per cent) agreed that adequate resources had been provided to support the policy; half of them (50 per cent) disagreed and two-fifths (40 per cent) did not know;
- ◆ *INSET attended on policy*: over one-quarter of teachers (29 per cent) said they had received in-service training on the language support policy, although well over half (57 per cent) said they had not; just over one-tenth (12 per cent) said they did not know;
- ◆ *school programme for policy*: well over half the secondary teachers (60 per cent) agreed that their school had a programme for implementing this policy, although getting on for one in three (30 per cent) felt unable to say.

Language support was an issue that emerged strongly in the fieldwork interviews with head teachers, so it is interesting to see that the area was one where teachers also felt the LEA had a role to play. However, on the basis of this particular survey, it appears that language support was less of a priority amongst secondary teachers than attendance and target-setting for GCSE performance.

### SUMMARY

So far as the raft of LEA policies and initiatives to support raising attainment were concerned, the findings were most indicative of a lack of awareness and/or support amongst many teachers even on those policies with which they might have been expected to be in accord. Those which attracted most support (over two-thirds of teachers) and about which teachers seemed most knowledgeable were **baseline assessment** and **literacy initiatives** in the primary sector and **attendance initiatives** and **GCSE target-setting** amongst secondary teachers. It may be that concerns about resources – which were evident in each of the policy/initiative areas surveyed – had perhaps influenced some teachers' views about, for example, their relevance to raising achievement or the extent to which their school could implement the policies.

## APPENDIX 3.

# REFERENCES

HEGARTY, S. (1989). *Boosting Educational Achievement. Report of the Independent Inquiry into Educational Achievement in the London Borough of Newham.* London: Newham Council.

KEYS, W., HARRIS, S. and FERNANDES, C. (1995). *Attitudes to School of Top Primary and First-Year Secondary Pupils.* Slough: NFER.

SCHAGEN, I. (forthcoming). *QUASE (Quantitative Analysis) for Self-Evaluation: Overview Report 1997.* Slough: NFER.









## Raising Achievement in Newham Schools

---

Following on from the 1989 Review of educational standards in the London Borough of Newham – which made many recommendations for improvement – the National Foundation for Educational Research was commissioned by the Borough to undertake a second review in 1996. This Review has found that Newham has moved from being a reactive and defensive authority which sought to achieve short-term objectives through a series of haphazard initiatives and policy directives to an authority which has a clear vision and sense of purpose, a real commitment to raise achievement through a constructive partnership with all the stakeholders in the education service, and coherent strategies for achieving improvements and delivering the Council's vision.

### **Among the detailed findings were:**

- improvements in pupils' results over time, and especially in the last two years
- improved pupil attendance
- improved parental and teacher expectations
- improved teacher recruitment and professional development
- improved advisory and other LEA support for schools
- a renewed culture of achievement within the LEA
- the successful adoption of policies and strategies designed to raise achievement.

### **Based on the evidence collected, the review team have made six recommendations to the LEA, as follows:**

- maintain a focus on a limited number of key initiatives
- sharpen the focus on classroom practice
- identify and disseminate good practice
- prioritise data analysis services and production of school profiles
- develop differentiated professional support for headteachers
- communicate with teachers more directly.

Newham LEA has welcomed the report and will use its findings to inform its first Educational Development Plan, which all LEAs will be required to produce from 1998.

---